

# REVIEWS

**Spirit, Blood, and Treasure**, edited by Donald Vandergriff, Presidio Press, Novato, Calif., 2001, 424 pages, \$34.95.

Editor Donald Vandergriff has compiled a useful, if slightly unfocused, collection of articles examining what he considers the central challenge of the modern defense establishment: how to adapt to the new paradigm of warfare in the 21st century. The editor, an *ARMOR* contributor, believes that our third-generation armed forces are hamstrung, spiritually and physically, when faced with the lurking threat of fourth-generation combat. This requires fundamental changes in equipment, culture, organization, and acquisition... well, just about everything.

Vandergriff offers an excellent introduction that summarizes his view of the problem, while his line-up of authors address various slices of the reform pie. The articles are grouped into three categories: People, Ideas, and Hardware/Budgets. The subjects covered range from revamping the infantry squad to overhauling the federal budgetary process. There is a central theme, however, running through these otherwise disparate pieces, that gives this book a modicum of coherence. It is a reflection of the Toffler-esque observation that a society makes war like it makes money. Vandergriff *et al* want the Defense Department to use information technology to allow for greater decentralization while exploiting the talents of specialists working within a commander's intent. This applies to tactics, to assignment and promotion of personnel, or to the purchase of hardware. In other words, we need to embrace the tenets of fourth-generation warfare, or risk defeat.

The smorgasbord of articles is both a strength and weakness of the book. In general, the quality is high — no Hackworth-style diatribes or ghostwritten glorified press releases that seem to fill most of the professional journals nowadays. There are a few exceptions. John Poole's article on minimizing the use of force suffers from radical-chic operational theory and egregiously bad history; John Tillson's suggestions on reforming the personnel system is on target in identifying the problem, but I shudder to think of the consequences if his solutions are ever foisted on the Army. The rest of the selections range from pedestrian (albeit useful) to truly innovative or revelatory. Most of them cover ground that will be very familiar to thoughtful professionals — there is actually very little here that I would categorize as revolutionary in scope or tone — but I suspect that everyone will find some material here to learn from. I certainly found Franklin Spinney's excellent piece on the budget process an eye-opener, and Daniel Moore's and Christopher Yunker's article on carrier operations should be required reading in Newport.

I offer, then, a qualified recommendation for this book. It will have a very short shelf life, as all works of this nature do, but it is a well-

balanced and judicious look at issues that must be resolved soon if we are to adapt successfully to life after the Cold War.

STEVE EDEN  
LTC, Armor  
Fort Knox, Ky.

**Somalia on \$5.00 a Day, A Soldier's Story** by Martin Stanton, Presidio Press, Novato, Calif., 2000, 299 pages, \$24.95 hardcover.

**Read this book.** Marty Stanton has done all of us a service. Stanton wrote of his experiences, warts and all, during his tour of duty in Somalia on Operation Restore Hope. He pulls no punches talking about what went well, what was fouled up, and how he and his battalion S3 section and the battalion command team and staff of TF 2-87 IN played the hand they had been dealt in the poker game that was Somalia. He gives the "big picture" and then what he and his battalion did when faced with a series of situations dealing with bandits, NGOs, clan elders, and our own national policy.

I was serving on the XVIII Airborne Corps staff when Operation Restore Hope started. The driving concerns coming from Washington appeared to be: keep the number of troops in theater under the strength ceiling, and suffer no casualties. Stanton faced the on-the-ground reality of the troop ceiling. He describes the incredible challenges of covering a huge area with a light infantry battalion that walked to the fight. The missions changed, the conditions changed, but the troopers of TF 2-87 soldiered on.

The struggle of the troop ceiling as a means of controlling "mission creep" and the need to accomplish missions in the name of force protection comes across loud and clear. Deployed commanders are hard pressed to say, "No, we can't do that." They are in theater and must deal with the situation as it changes on the ground. Stanton shows us that the troop ceiling effectively limited legitimate operations that were needed to accomplish force objectives. I know that the ceilings come from policy makers, but as war is an extension of policy, those of us who serve, or will serve, in D.C. must make civilians understand what is needed to attain policy objectives and ensure it is enough to afford the field commander freedom of action.

Personnel policy mandates also plagued the battalion. Stanton described having to take a company commander out of command in theater in order to meet the requirements of the captain's functional area education requirements. Stanton's battalion lost men to ANCOC, CAS3, as well as the steady drain of emergency leaves and non-battle injury. He effectively describes the feeling of "no one outside Somalia" understands what we are doing, and he was right. If our Army corrects one thing based on this

report and our growing experience with the new forms of war we are facing, it must be that our personnel policy must realize the nature of deployments and leave troops in place for the duration of the operation.

I was struck by one portion of the book, one that reminded me of an episode in Larteguy's book about a French colonial parachute regiment in Algeria, *The Centurions*. Stanton describes a counter-bandit operation wherein TF 2-87 beat the bushes for bandit hideouts, much like they'd operated at the Joint Readiness Training Center when fighting OPFOR guerrillas. He then realized that the bandits were living in the town, and thus the task force had to adapt its operations to patrolling the towns where the bandits lived. Based on this and other experiences, Stanton outlines extremely useful lessons learned in this book.

This is a superb book written from the heart. Here is what American soldiers will face in the new age we live in — war that is not quite war, but men still facing fire. Stanton and his troopers faced fire with honor.

Stanton's book has an honored place on my bookshelf. I'll read this one over and over again. This is a soldier's report written for soldiers. I intend to recommend it to my civilian friends as well. As I wrote in the opening line, **read this book!**

COL KEVIN C.M. BENSON  
U.S. Army War College Fellow  
MIT Security Studies Program

**The Battle for Kursk 1943: The Soviet General Staff Study** translated and edited by David M. Glantz and Harold S. Orenstein, Frank Cass Publishers, London, 1999, 349 pages, \$62.50.

Until the 1990s, most students of World War II recognized that the Red Army was the force most responsible for defeating Nazi Germany, but there was an unwillingness to give the Soviets their due. Many writers argued that the Russians overwhelmed the Germans with manpower ratios as high as 15-1. The problem with this interpretation is that the Germans proved in 1940 that they could defeat a force superior in size with better weapons. The reluctance to give the Soviets the credit they had rightly earned is easy to fathom. The West had to rehabilitate the Germans if they were going to be accepted as allies. There was an equal reluctance to build up a nation that might easily become the next great enemy. The Soviet regime denied historians access to their archives because the Red Army planned to use the same tactics and doctrine against NATO forces should the Cold War turn into World War III.

The beginning of the end for the Third Reich came in 1943. The Battle of Kursk was Hitler's last offensive in the East. For a week the Germans made only limited gains. Then,

outside the village of Prokhorovka, the Fourth Panzer Army and the Fifth Guards Tank Army fought the biggest tank battle ever. The Fifth Guards failed in their mission of going on the offensive, but their defensive victory brought the German effort to an end. A Soviet counteroffensive then sent the Germans reeling. Anyone doubting the factors behind the outcome should read this study. In 1940, the Germans defeated the British-French-Belgium force with local superiority at the various points of contact and a better tactical use of tanks. Three years later, the Soviets dominated the local scenes of action and used better defensive tactics than their Western allies had employed earlier in the war. The organization of this study makes sense, starting with a chapter that provides an overall assessment of the situation the Red Army faced on the eve of the battle. Chapters follow on defensive preparations, German operations, and the battle itself. The study then moves into a topical examination of the combat and combat support branches during this engagement. The only shortcoming of the Soviet General Staff was their failure to devote full chapters to the important issues of logistics and intelligence. As the editors note, the study also tends to overestimate the German strength, which is understandable given the limited information of combat, and ignores an examination of the costs of the engagement. The study focuses on operational matters and is free of ideological baggage even if it uses some loaded terms to describe the Germans.

Maps are the main shortcoming of this volume. The editors used the Soviet originals, but the quality of these 50-year-old images was never that great to begin with and are often irregular in size. As a result, the published versions have weak, thin lines, are missing important terrain details, and often appear on two pages making it difficult to make sense of things when the binding gets in the way. The editors have added several maps at the end of this work, which makes up for some of the problems with the originals, but a couple of them are also poor in quality.

Should active duty Armor personnel bother to read this work? Yes, this work was designed for a professional audience. A reader can profit from examining this study as a good example of a through report and a staff producing optimal work even while operating under the stress of war.

NICHOLAS EVAN SARANTAKES  
Texas A&M University-Commerce

**Clash of Arms, How the Allies Won in Normandy** by Russell A. Hart, Lynne Rienne Publishers, Boulder, Colo., 2001, 469 pages, with index, \$79.95.

Professor Russell Hart is the newest in a line of academic military historians to attempt the resurrection of the reputation of the American army in the Second World War. In

this effort, he is largely successful. This work is the most comprehensive, academically grounded and logical evaluation of the relative combat capabilities of the four armies in Normandy to date. Hart's evidence is solid, his arguments reasonable, and in *Clash of Arms* he brings something new to the table, a comparative analysis of American, British, Canadian and German combat effectiveness that no other scholar has attempted to date in this depth. I strongly recommend this book to professionals.

As historian Dennis Showalter notes in the foreword to this work, "since 1945 a virtual cult of the Wehrmacht has emerged among its former enemies." Hart notes that until the emergence of a broader strain of military history appeared in the 1970s and 1980s, Germany's former opponents (and most especially we Americans) generally accepted the sanitized version of German army military history that emerged in the immediate post-war period. Much of that history relied upon the testimony of German army generals and generally subscribed to the idea that the *Heer* (army) was apolitical. A sort of "Nazis? Nope, no Nazis here," approach developed for several reasons, not the least of which was our very real need to rearm the Germans in the face of Soviet intransigence and the developing Cold War. The reverse side of that trend was a general denigration of American combat abilities and the idea that we won the war only through the mass of material that we, as a nation, could produce and throw at the Germans. Hart reverses this trend with authority. America's greatest strength, it appears, was not just our ability to wage "materialschlacht," but our ability to adapt and change to the conditions as they were, not as we wanted them to be.

The book is divided into two parts. Fully half the book is taken up with an analysis of what went on in the development of the national military forces of all four subject nations prior to the Normandy Campaign of 1944. Starting with the Interwar period (WWI to WWII) Hart delves deeply into the foundations of military theory, the relation of theory to practical resource limitations, and the interaction of both with the culture of the armed forces of all four nations. Although this portion of the book rests fairly heavily upon secondary scholarship, Hart is generally on solid ground here. If there is any critique to be made it is that he is probably too soft on the Americans during this period, setting them up as adaptive and willing to learn when the reality was that the interwar period was one of our worst, not just economically but culturally. The interwar U.S. Army fostered a divisive culture of reactive "us against them" conflict, and both sides were American. (Branch warfare inside the ground forces, the ground-vs.-air fighting, Army vs. liberal civilians, etc.) So in this one small area, it appears that Hart is too kind by half.

The next four chapters, however, make this book worth the purchase price in a variety of ways. Each chapter delves deeply and deals

with the experiences of one nation between 1939 and June 1944. Each chapter could stand alone as a monograph, which makes them perfectly suited for OPDs, or to supplement a battalion commander's "Required Reading List" for lieutenants pulling duty (assuming the unit is creating a "Battalion Library" and will foot the cost of purchase of a copy). The chapter on the Americans alone is fascinating. Learning how the American Army expanded from around 225,000 to 1.5 million in 18 months, then from there to more than 7 million in another year and a half, is interesting. Learning how we did all of this and simultaneously managed to learn (or unlearn as required) how to beat the Germans on the battlefield is a perfect case study for professionals today. Although Hart devotes a chapter to this, it boils down to a simple sentence. The Americans, unlike their allies, were culturally willing to toss aside equipment and ideas that did not work as demonstrated on the battlefield and search for things (equipment, doctrine, organizations) that did work. That is no small statement, and it takes Hart a chapter to prove it, but it is a chapter well worth reading.

In contrast to the Americans, our British allies, according to Hart (himself an Englishman), were hamstrung initially by a strong aversion to professionalism in the officer corps, and more importantly to a cultural tendency to follow a top-down approach. To be sure, there were bright spots. The British developed a very effective air-to-ground system that brought in effective Close Air Support (CAS). (Which, it should be noted, the Americans copied quickly and shamelessly, because it worked and their method did not.) At the same time he noted what he refers to as, "a weakness that plagued the British Army throughout the war: its vulnerable morale." As generally sympathetic as Hart is with the Americans, he seems to be very critical of British performance throughout. Still, by 1944 they had largely overcome their lack of interwar doctrinal foresight and developed a doctrine of firepower-based attrition that worked well enough to defeat most German forces arrayed against them.

Hart also addresses the Canadians and the Germans, and a more sophisticated picture of both emerges from his analysis. The Canadians suffered from the effects of near total demobilization in the interwar period, and, as a result, ended up fighting with equipment and doctrine that was essentially British. Hart's assessment was that they were a "poor clone" of the evolving British way of war. The Germans, with sound doctrine from the start, generally did well, and adapted to circumstances throughout the war. Here Hart's evaluation closely echoes that of some other recent scholars as he points out that while the tactical proficiency of the German *Heer* was fairly high, it was a lack of foresight and a cultural predisposition to undervalue supporting arms that created a fatal weakness in their system. In short, they made great tanks (and other weapons) that were useless because they could not be