

REVIEWS

dedicated to African American troops.

Welcome to *Narrow Escapes*, an offbeat and often-absorbing new series. Its theme: the hopeless to near-hopeless situations that are war's most implacable face. Such as Colonel James Doolittle's 1942 raid on Tokyo, with astronomical odds against its crews reaching friendly China after dropping their bombs; those found by the Japanese were tortured and killed. Or General Orde Wingate's 1943 forays into Burma. An eccentric Brit who trained Jewish commandos in 1930s Palestine and liked to greet visitors naked, Wingate helped pioneer modern long-range penetration warfare. But his Chindit guerrillas, after wreaking behind-the-lines havoc, were encircled in Burma by the Japanese; one third died, the rest fled back to India.

Good footage, moving witnesses, and solid commentary. —*Gene Santoro*

campaigns late in the war, where the Wehrmacht lost more tanks to break-downs than to enemy gunfire.

Why Germany Nearly Won centers largely on the mammoth struggle on the Eastern Front, with considerably less focus on the Western European and Mediterranean Theaters. The battles in Russia are often described in excruciating detail, complemented by rather busy maps. The Soviet victory only came after the Red Army developed the experienced leadership, better weapons, mass production, new tactics, and efficient manpower policies that enabled it to exercise and sustain a superior form of operational art across vast distances. In the meantime, the Soviet Union's American and British allies drained German resources with strategic bombing and land campaigns in North Africa, Italy, and northwest Europe, and also eventually became qualitatively better than their foes.

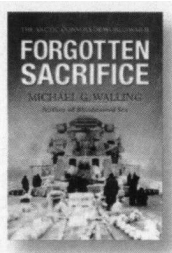
Mercatante, a corporate tax attorney, crafts the book like a legal brief, intent on proving his point without going into much detail on counterarguments. He relies heavily on secondary sources, especially those by David Glantz, instead of broad research. As a result, he sometimes espouses some truly outlying assertions—such as emphasizing postwar American brutality in occupied Germany. His repeated recounting of massive Soviet casualties to emphasize German prowess actually makes it hard to ignore the brute force theory he wants to undercut. And he never provides the evidence to explain how Germany could have established and maintained a self-sufficient empire capable of defeating the United States. So this thought-provoking book is most suitable for readers with enough expertise to judge its merits against the vast array of relevant literature. But its case deserves to be heard. —*Conrad Crane*

[BOOK BRIEFS]

Forgotten Sacrifice The Arctic Convoys of World War II

By Michael Walling. 320 pp.
Osprey, 2012. \$26.95.

If the Nazis didn't get you, the weather would on this truly hellish front: the icy U-boat and Luftwaffe-patrolled lend-lease lifeline to Russia.

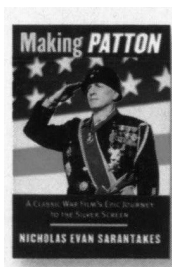


unexpected light on the relationship between the Jewish founder of psychoanalysis and the Nazi appointed to oversee his assets.

Making Patton A Classic War Film's Epic Journey to the Silver Screen

By Nicholas Evan Sarantakes. 280 pp.
Kansas, 2012. \$34.95.

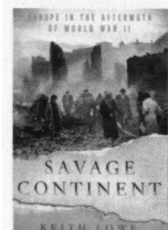
It took producer Frank McCarthy 18 years to get his movie made. Here's a hard-nosed look at why and how, and what it ultimately meant to Americans.



Savage Continent Europe in the Aftermath of World War II

By Keith Lowe. 480 pp.
St Martin's, 2012. \$30.

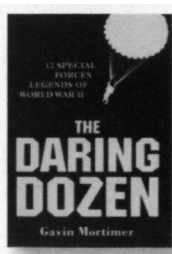
This stark, harrowing overview sifts through years of massacres, starvation, ethnic cleansing, and civil wars to unveil the engulfing postwar chaos that the author sees as the war's extension.



The Daring Dozen 12 Special Forces Legends of World War II

By Gavin Mortimer. 304 pp.
Osprey, 2012. \$24.95.

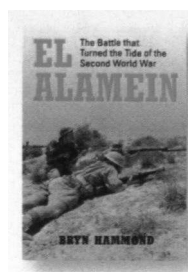
Stirring, well-told tales about David Stirling, Evans Carlson, Orde Wingate, and nine more dashing creators of the modern concept of Special Forces.



El Alamein The Battle that Turned the Tide of the Second World War

By Bryn Hammond. 344 pp.
Osprey, 2012. \$24.95.

Revisits this pivotal battle through the eyes of the men who fought on the line.



Code Name Caesar The Secret Hunt for U-Boat 864 During World War II

By Jerome Preisler and Kenneth Sewell.
304 pp. Berkley Hardcover, 2012. \$26.95.

In February 1944, desperate Germans packed U-864 with their best technology and sent it to Japan, hoping their upgraded ally could buy them some time. The Allies' access to the Enigma codes and HMS *Venture* snuffed that shot in history's only sub-versus-sub underwater sinking.

—*Gene Santoro*

