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Allies manage to close the gap.

There are other chapters whose historical tweaking is just a bit much to accept. David Isby posits that Bernard L. Montgomery's training for D-Day includes more postlanding combined arms work rather than concentrating—as all Allied commanders did—on just getting ashore. This struck me as too much of a change in Monty's outlook. Andrew Uffindell's version of Operation Market-Garden has the British 1st Airborne Division land close to the vital Arnhem bridges, rather than miles away. This, as with Isby's chapter, is pure 20-20 hindsight.

Regardless of the level of historical variation that went into the chapters, all are well written and plausible. James Arnold's "history" of a narrow thrust by George Patton through the Ardennes is probably the best chapter in the book—an outstanding blend of novel and history—even if Dwight D. Eisenhower's alternate decision to support Patton (rather than Montgomery's "narrow plan" or his own historical broad front approach) is hindsight as well.

The final chapter is the most intriguing. Tsouras presumes that the Bulge offensive was successful—reaching Antwerp and cutting off a million Allied soldiers in what is termed the Holland Pocket. Franklin D. Roosevelt dies from an early stroke, and many Allied heads roll as well: Eisenhower, Montgomery and Winston Churchill. Tsouras then weaves a tale that could be the outline of the next military-political thriller, with Patton and Douglas MacArthur trying not only to relieve the Holland Pocket and defeat Germany but also to save the United States from a Communist takeover. While it is a bit more than might be expected in a book subtitled *Hitler's Alternate Scenarios*, the chapter was fun to read.

Overall, *Battle of the Bulge* delivers the goods in the alternate history genre, complete with maps and fictitious end-notes (my favorite: George Mangano's *Patton and Napoleon: Who Was the Better General?*). If you get it for what it is, rather than what the title implies, you won't be disappointed with what you find inside.

John D. Burtt

**Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., and Joseph Stilwell**

edited by Nicholas Evan Sarantakes

Texas A&M University Press,  
College Station, 2004, \$29.95.

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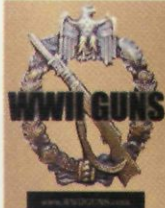


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mander of the Tenth Army on Okinawa, visited a forward observation post occupied by elements of the 1st Marine Division. Only after a nearby battalion command post radioed a warning that it could clearly see the three silver stars on his helmet did Buckner consent to replace it, but by then—as the Marines had feared—a Japanese artillery position had seen it, too, and fired a shell his way. The round struck a nearby rock, driving a fragment into the left side of his chest. Minutes later, Buckner became the highest-ranking American general to die in combat.

At the headquarters of the Japanese Thirty-second Army, staff members cheered, but their commander, Lt. Gen. Mitsuru Ushijima, remained silent and later said a quiet prayer for his counterpart, who had died a warrior—and whom he knew he would soon be joining. Indeed, on the morning of June 22, Ushijima and his chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Isamu Cho, marked the breakdown of organized Japanese resistance on Okinawa, and the end of their mission to delay and inflict as many casualties on the Americans as possible before the island's fall, by committing ritual suicide.

Although Ushijima's reaction to Buckner's demise is not mentioned in Nicholas Evan Sarantakes' new book *Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., and Joseph Stilwell*, the epilogue describes the accolades that his death drew in the United States for what the Louisville *Courier-Journal* in his home state of Kentucky called "a professional soldier" who "died as such a man would choose to die, in action with his men." Criticism by some journalists for his handling of the joint Army-Marine Okinawa operation, which troubled Buckner through much of the campaign, was swept away.

If he had to die, Buckner certainly could have done worse. His only previous wartime command had been in the sideshow of Alaska and the northern Pacific, but Okinawa provided him with what proved to be the last chance to display his worth in a major campaign.

Meanwhile, Buckner's place in command of the Tenth Army was taken up by General Joseph Stilwell, whose tactics were as swift and thrusting as Buckner's had been conventional and by-the-book. Unfortunately for Stilwell, whose previous experience had combined a brilliant fighting retreat from Burma in 1942 and an equally stunning resurgence there and in China with the frustrations of working with Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault, the Okinawa campaign ended before he could bring his talents into play. That left him with nothing to do but prepare for

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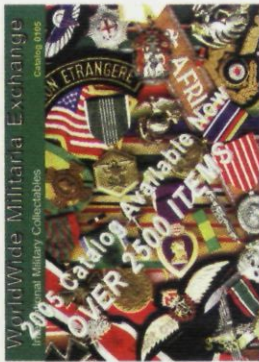
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the invasion of Japan—until the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, along with the massive Soviet victory in Manchuria, compelled even the most die-hard Japanese to surrender. After attending the formal surrender ceremony aboard the battleship *Missouri*, Stilwell returned to Okinawa to supervise the demobilization of U.S. Army forces there.

*Seven Stars* is centered around the combat diaries that both men kept—in violation of Army regulations against such chronicles, for security reasons. Apart from an introduction, an epilogue and a lot of annotations to provide full names, ranks and contexts for some of the generals' otherwise cryptic references, editor Sarantakes lets them do the talking, as both record their personal reflections on the challenge of conducting a joint Army-Navy-Marine operation.

The major value of *Seven Stars*, of course, is as a primary research tool. From the entries, the reader can gain insights into how each commander dealt with problems of maneuver, logistics and handling the press—the latter something that Buckner tried to avoid or ignore, but in which Stilwell was ready, willing and able to engage. The diaries also inevitably reflect the traits of two distinct personalities. Buckner often wrote detailed accounts of activities and progress in the course of the campaign, as well as private remarks that reveal typical prejudices of a Southern-born American of the time, but that in public the general tended to keep to himself.

Stilwell's entries are far more terse than Buckner's and more opinionated. When the film *To Have and Have Not* starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall made it out to Okinawa, Stilwell concluded his entry for September 7, 1945, with: "Movie. Bogart and his tart Bacall. She can't act." That and equally outspoken remarks toward his fellow officers, as well as his unmitigated satisfaction upon seeing the ruins of Japanese cities during his visit to that country, confirm how Stilwell acquired the sobriquet of "Vinegar Joe."

The personal insights of the generals' diaries offset somewhat the fact that *Seven Stars* is not for the casual reader. Much of the book can only be understood by reading the entries in constant parallel with the editor's accompanying notes in the back. If, however, one has an interest in the Okinawa campaign, in the generals involved or in the inner workings of battlefield command, *Seven Stars* may prove to be a valuable and enlightening resource.

Jon Guttman

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