

The story is full of heroism, blood, and gore. It's nasty business all around. It's war. It's D-day. Tsouras hasn't sacrificed any of the historical bloodiness, tragedy, and farce for his intellectual exercise, his lesson about war. Moreover, Tsouras keeps the excitement of an oft-told story, almost as a sleight-of-hand maneuver to divert attention from his tinkering with history.

For those interested in the construction of the alternate history, Tsouras itemizes the pivot points that take D-day from history to his story. He even adds fictitious footnotes and historical photos with nonhistorical captions to lend authenticity.

This work succeeds on a couple of levels. As alternate history, it's well put together, with the proper blend of fact and fiction and a good, logical consistency. One can read it as an interesting and sophisticated what-if exercise or as an exciting and dramatically presented fiction. Either way, the book is fine. The important level is the second, the lessons learned. Without hammering a message into his reader's head, Tsouras makes clear the iffiness of war, the criticality of chance, in this most serious of human endeavors. All who engage in humanity's most perilous enterprise, war, should keep in mind how narrow are the differences between success and failure—and how costly even success can be.

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Modern Bombers: Aircraft, Weapons, and Their Battlefield Might by Anil R. Pustam. Stackpole Books (<http://www.stackpolebooks.com>), 5067 Ritter Road, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17055-6921, 2004, 72 pages, \$14.95 (softcover).

Anil Pustam's *Modern Bombers* presents a pictorial history of America's bomber force in action. The third volume of Stackpole Books' US Air Power series, which examines aircraft and crews of the different military services over the last decade, it offers a brief chronological account of the B-52, B-1, and B-2, including information about planned upgrades. Brilliant photos (both black and white and color) acquired from numerous sources depict the bombers' contributions to recent US operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Brief narratives that accompany each picture provide additional information on the aircraft and their weapons. Not only do the photos show the bombers releasing their mighty payloads, but also they capture the numerous sup-

port functions required to put these aircraft over target. In short, *Modern Bombers* gives us an effective snapshot of the world's most formidable bomber force.

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Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., and Joseph Stilwell edited by Nicholas Evan Sarantakes. Texas A&M University Press (<http://www.tamu.edu/upress>), John H. Lindsey Building, Lewis Street, 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354, 2004, 224 pages, \$29.95 (hardcover).

Sociometrics—the science of using the personality of individuals to analyze how organizations work and to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of organization and function—appears, on the surface, to represent the exact opposite of what military science is supposed to be. As war fighting becomes more complex, military historians have come to look at operational art as a series of interrelated but essentially independent acts. Logistics, strategy, tactics, the principles of war, and so forth are means of understanding complex situations. This review certainly does not intend to call into question the effectiveness of such tools or their applicability to the operational art. They work very well for planners and analysts, contributing mightily to the military historian's task; indeed, no effective military historian can do work without those tools in his or her intellectual toolbox. For these historians, however, the problem is somewhat different. Too often one measures the success or failure of generals by how they act in accordance with preconceived understandings and operational models, minimizing the human element or, worse, ignoring it altogether. Considering the role of a commander's personality in formulating battlefield decisions, even for historians inclined to consider such intangibles as "charisma," is too frequently seen as a throwback to an earlier day—a kind of archaic hero worship that has become obsolete in modern history.

Enter now Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, who has edited the battlefield diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. and Joseph Stilwell. Each of these men in turn commanded Tenth Army during the invasion of Okinawa, the last and costliest of the island-hopping campaigns in World War II. Buckner was killed in June 1945, and Stilwell became Tenth Army commander. From the beginning of the Okinawa cam-

paign, the Japanese resisted furiously, and throughout the early summer of 1945, the Imperial High Command mustered every resource possible to dislodge the Americans. Between April and June, for example, the Japanese hurled no less than 11 major kamikaze operations, involving 1,465 planes, at the American invasion force. By July, after the island was declared secure, Stilwell began planning for the invasion of Japan itself. The dropping of the atomic bombs in August and the official surrender of the Japanese on 2 September did not end Tenth Army's operations. On 7 September 1945, Stilwell and Tenth Army accepted the surrender of the last fighting units of the Imperial Army.

In addition to diary entries, Sarantakes has included personal letters, memos, orders, speeches, excerpts from interviews, and press releases. Together, these give a remarkable view from the ground, not merely of combat but of strategic problems besetting the Americans in the final months of the war. Both Buckner and Stilwell write with the candor that comes from not expecting publication of one's letters about the impending invasion of Japan and the problem of peace. By itself, this would make *Seven Stars* indispensable to students of the Okinawa campaign, the Pacific war, postwar Japan, generalship, and staff operations. Such effectively collected and edited primary sources are rare enough. But relegating this work to the position of a mere sourcebook does a disservice to its editor.

The editor's vision and crafting of this collection make it truly valuable. Rather than reducing each general to a common denominator, Sarantakes, a talented and accomplished historian, looks for and emphasizes their differences, using these sources to explain command decisions. He even painstakingly describes the way each general writes and provides clues to how each one thinks. Stilwell made his entries on a flip-top notebook or whatever was at hand, including kanji and abbreviations that in some cases are indecipherable; Buckner's entries, however, are more formal and organized. Sarantakes edits out the personal parts of the entries, leaving us the views of two vastly different men responding to the same problem of combat leadership. One finds no hero worship here; rather, the editor brilliantly shows the human face of command.

Sarantakes's introductory comments in the text and the chronology allow readers with a cursory understanding of the campaign to use *Seven Stars*. For more advanced students, his epilogue (called "Taps" in the book) both finishes the story and addresses some of the tactical and historiographical problems associated with the campaign. Sarantakes addresses and evaluates the controversy over Buckner's

fitness for command, high casualties, and his use of what some people describe as World War I-style tactics. He offers us both Buckner's and Stilwell's views on the operation as a means of understanding the situation and the tactical response of the commanders.

"The end of the war in the Pacific was far more complex, dangerous, and uncertain than many have allowed" (p. 135). As a collection of primary documents, *Seven Stars* certainly demonstrates the difficult, intricate nature of military operations in Okinawa and the way operational complexity drove tactical responses. Sarantakes's assessment of Buckner's initial operations is compelling. However, his fusion of sociometrics and military science creates a new dimension in the study of modern command. One also sees the role of personality as a driving force in operations, but the real strength of the work lies in Sarantakes's ability to show the role that personality plays in operational development. This study is both a history of the Okinawa campaign and a personal history of the generals involved. What makes the book effective—and unique—is its ability to show how understanding one leads to understanding the other. *Seven Stars* makes an important contribution to our understanding of leadership, generalship, and the end of the war in the Pacific.

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21st Century U.S. Air Power by Nicholas A. Veronico and Jim Dunn. MBI Publishing Company (<http://www.motorbooks.com>), Galtier Plaza, Suite 200, 380 Jackson Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101, 2004, 176 pages, \$29.95 (hardcover).

What is airpower? According to *50 Questions Every Airman Can Answer*, a 1999 US Air Force pamphlet, "airpower is the fundamental ability to use aircraft to create military and political effects. . . . It is military power that maneuvers through the air while performing its mission." Although slightly dated, that basic definition still applies. Fortunately for airpower enthusiasts, many books focus on military aviation. Veronico and Dunn's *21st Century U.S. Air Power* appeared in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the need for improved homeland security in the air and elsewhere. The authors profile the various technologically advanced aircraft that protect US skies.