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Flags of Our Fathers

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interesting questions for covert operations of the future.

If this were all *The Secret War against Hanoi* accomplished, it would be a significant contribution to our understanding of the Vietnam conflict, thereby earning a place on our bookshelves. But Shultz has also performed a long overdue and badly needed service in recognizing the tremendous human cost associated with SOG's operations. The casualty figures are simply staggering. For example, of approximately five hundred agents placed in North Vietnam, apparently all were killed or captured; some were "doubled." Only slightly less appalling are the casualty rates suffered by the U.S.-led reconnaissance teams that operated against the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The worst year was 1969, in which counter-trail operations in Laos experienced a 50 percent casualty rate. It is only fitting that the danger these soldiers faced and the sacrifices they made be part of the public record of the Vietnam War.

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Bradley, James, with Ron Powers. *Flags of Our Fathers*. New York: Bantam, 2000. 353pp. \$24.95

On the northern perimeter of the Arlington National Cemetery, clearly visible from the adjacent highway, stands a huge bronze monument embodying perhaps the world's most famous war photograph: the flag-raising on Mount Suribachi during the seizure of Iwo Jima in February 1945. *Flags of Our Fathers*, told by the son of one of the men represented by the figures, is an intensely personal history surrounding this event, a riveting story guaranteed to evoke emotion in any reader interested in what

Tom Brokaw has called "the greatest generation."

Although Bradley is neither a strategist nor a military historian, he understands the significance of Iwo Jima and places it properly in the context of World War II. This is not revisionist historiography. Bradley solidly affirms Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb to save American—and Japanese—lives, because the alternative would have been even more horrific. The author's depiction of the training regimen, camaraderie, and exploits of the U.S. Marine Corps will make all Marines proud. However, he is not so kind to other services, often portraying them as weak willed, unprofessional, even incompetent.

James Bradley is the son of John "Doc" Bradley, a Navy corpsman who joined five Marine brothers-in-arms during the Herculean struggle to wrest "Sulfur Island" from the Japanese. In the course of the battle, these six members of "Easy" Company were memorialized for raising the American flag, an image captured by Joe Rosenthal's Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph. Three of the six never returned home—a testimony to the overall casualty rate of 84 percent for E Company in the thirty-six day conquest of an island a third the size of Manhattan.

The complete story of the flag raising was never told, because the principals considered the photograph insignificant when compared to the sacrifice of those who did not return. Like many of their fellow veterans, the three survivors adamantly refused to discuss the details of their war experiences, even keeping secret their awards for heroism under fire. Following his father's death in 1994, Bradley interviewed the friends and loved ones of all the men to tell the "real story" behind the photograph.

The author delights in the pure integrity and patriotism of his protagonists. Nonetheless, Bradley's anecdotal evidence makes a strong case that the principal source of battlefield bravery has little to do with national allegiance—it's your buddies who count. He wrestles with the term "heroes"—a title of honor strenuously rejected by all the flag raisers. There is little doubt, however, where the author places these men who stood atop Suribachi, beneath their flag.

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Jablonsky, David, ed. *Roots of Strategy*, Book 4 (Four Military Classics). Mechanicsburg, Penna.: Stackpole Books, 1999. 533pp. \$19.95

In this useful fourth installment of Stackpole's "Roots of Strategy" series, David Jablonsky of the Army War College presents substantial selections from four classics of strategy: *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, by Alfred Thayer Mahan; *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, by Julian S. Corbett; *The Command of the Air*, by Giulio Douhet; and *Winged Defense*, by William Mitchell. The editor provocatively pairs American authors with non-Americans writing on the same subjects and bonds them with two unifying arguments. Jablonsky contends that all four writers were coping with monumental technological changes in warfare and were struggling to reconcile continuity with change, while peering into the future.

The two naval theorists, Mahan of the United States and Corbett of Great Britain, sought inspiration and guidance for future warfare in the putatively unchanging principles of the age of sail. The airpower innovators, Brigadier General

Mitchell of the U.S. Army and Brigadier General Douhet of Italy, concluded that the heavy bomber rendered the study of past warfare antiquarian and irrelevant to those planning for future combat.

As an American born in 1879 (one year before Douglas MacArthur and eleven years before the "closing of the frontier"), "Billy" Mitchell remained convinced that the vastness of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans gave the United States a security from land invasion unique among great powers. In the editor's opinion, Mitchell consequently was slow to confront Douhet's truly horrifying prescription for mass bombing of cities to pulverize "the material and moral resources of a people" in order to achieve "the final collapse of all social organization." For most of his contentious career, Mitchell envisioned large land-based American bombers primarily as instruments for sinking enemy warships advancing toward the American coastline, with fighter aircraft indispensable for downing long-range bombers headed for inland U.S. cities, which were now "as subject to attack as those along the coast."

Defense also plays a large role in Sir Julian Corbett's 1911 masterwork, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, the distillation of a lifetime of careful reflection upon the age of fighting sail from Drake to Nelson. A lawyer by training and a minor novelist by avocation, Corbett is the only author in this volume who never served in the military. He was, however, an intimate of Admiral Sir John Fisher, who presided over the dawn of the age of the dreadnought.

Some Principles of Maritime Strategy shows a linguist's familiarity with the figure considered today the Zeus of strategic thinkers, Carl von Clausewitz. It contains the best short summary of Clausewitz's