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Ridgway Duels for Korea

Douglas Kinnard

Roy E. Appleman

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by the recollections of many of the participants. These anecdotes range from funny (the cow shot for disobeying a lawful order to halt, steaks subsequently confiscated by the medical officer), to sad—a seasoned campaigner remembering the replacement who wanted to see some action his first night in combat because it was his twenty-first birthday. He did and he died.

To the best of my knowledge the history is accurate, and the author does not overlook any problems or mistakes of the Raiders. Early on there were serious training deficiencies (such as how to get into a boat) which resulted in the abandonment on Makin Island of marines, who were subsequently beheaded by the Japanese. Coordination between units and the supporting forces was, at times, a serious problem.

In addition to combat history Rosenquist has included some interesting chapters on the Navajo code talkers, war dogs, the wide variety of weapons used, and an appropriate tribute to Sergeant Jacob Vouza of the Solomon Island Scouts and to Major Martin Clemens, who was an Australian coastwatcher.

Death was a way of life for the Raiders. Of the surprisingly numerous Raider poets quoted in the book perhaps one said it best with these words that were found written on the label of a fruit can during the fighting on Bougainville: "To you, pal, a prayer from a weary heart / How true I know the best of men must part. / Each passing pair

of eyes now lowered in sorrow / Plans vengeance as evening gives promise of tomorrow."

W.P.C. MORGENTHAUER, JR.
Naval War College

Appleman, Roy E. *Ridgway Duels for Korea*. College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1990. 665pp. \$39.50

Ridgway Duels for Korea is the fourth and final volume in Roy Appleman's history of the first year of the Korean War. It covers the period from Ridgway's assumption of command in December 1950 up to the "negotiation" phase of the war in July 1951. Drawing on contemporary and postwar interviews, correspondence, and extensive research, Appleman recounts the planning, execution, and outcome of those critical days for the Eighth Army.

After American troops had landed at Inchon in September 1950, they captured Seoul and later Pyongyang; it was to be their last victory for many months. By the end of November, General MacArthur's plan to drive north to the Chinese border and end the war had failed. Chinese troops drove the U.N. forces (mostly Americans and South Koreans) into a rapid retreat on the Chongchon River, at Chosin, Kunu-Ri, and elsewhere in the frozen hills of North Korea. Then on 23 December, Eighth Army commander Walton H. Walker was killed in a jeep accident.

Ridgway, who had led the 82nd Airborne Division and later the XVIII Airborne Corps in World War II, succeeded Walker as commander of the Eighth Army. Wearing his trademark grenade and first-aid kit on his paratrooper's harness, he landed at Seoul on 27 December 1950. Although the army was in full retreat southward, Ridgway told his chief of staff that they would be soon going the other way. Ridgway did turn the army around, and with it, the United Nations' fortunes in the war.

Appleman's thesis is that Matthew Ridgway's command of the Eighth Army merits recognition equal to that of the "Great Captains" such as Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Napoleon Bonaparte, Frederick the Great, and Julius Caesar—because he turned the Eighth Army around!

Other officers have inherited their predecessor's mistakes and found armies in disarray, with morale low and performance poor, but have not been ranked among the immortals. I do not argue that Matthew Bunker Ridgway was an extraordinary officer; but the comparison, albeit dramatic and justifiable as literary license, falls short in credibility. Appleman fails to support his thesis in this competent but too dry technical history.

To his credit, Appleman has patiently and comprehensively amassed his primary sources; his prose, however, merely paraphrases the language of the original after-action reports. He employs far too much the passive voice and highly colloquial syntax; the book is also flawed by the

lack of an editor's aggressive blue pencil.

Though Appleman provides a solid account of the battle action, his commentaries are frequently gratuitous. For example, "[General Edward] Almond earned laurels and should have the gratitude of all patriotic Americans." Well past mid-book, Appleman rhetorically asks, "does an individual sometimes make a difference in battle?" (Thankfully he answers yes.) Notwithstanding the informal tone of the book, individual combat anecdotes are few and far between. Appleman's emphasis is on command decisions, dispositions, and large unit movements, but in short, this book seriously lacks color and sufficient human dimension.

DOUGLAS KINNARD
National Defense University

Ranft, Brian, ed. *The Beatty Papers: Selections from the Private and Official Correspondence of Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty, Volume 1: 1902-1918*. London: Scholar Press, and Brookfield, Vt.: Gower Publishing, 1988. 600pp. \$69.95

This volume is the first of a set compiled from the personal papers of Admiral Beatty (1871-1936) which were donated by the Beatty family to the National Maritime Museum in 1981. It was edited by Professor Brian Ranft, the well-known naval historian, formerly of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. This Navy Records