

1971

## Professional Reading

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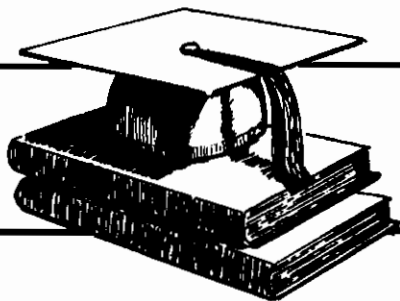
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## PROFESSIONAL READING

Belote, James H. and William M. *Typhoon of Steel: the Battle for Okinawa*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970. 368p.

This book, by the authors of *Corregidor: the Saga of a Fortress*, is the first comprehensive history about the last military campaign of World War II. The writers labored 4 years sifting through the mountain of source material executing the arduous research task of selecting the most representative individual recollections to support each phase of the complex operation. In this manner the work was developed into a dynamic, popular history that provides excellent reading to both the professional military man and casual reader alike. The rendition of selected episodes, in conjunction with the description of battle sequences, vividly portrays the essence of the conflict on land, sea, and in the air. As in a good novel, the reader is carried along as a participant in the entire campaign.

The brothers Belote provide a complete story of the Okinawa operation from the inception of the planning phase to the cessation of organized resistance in June 1945. Each chapter reflects a specific portion of the battle with frontline encounters, air engagements, sea actions, and logistic buildup receiving the attention deserved in relation to the grand scheme. Areas of significant interest are the personalities of the opposing leadership triads, Admiral Spruance, Vice Admiral Turner, and General Buckner versus General Ushijima, Lieutenant General Cho and

Colonel Yahara; the scripts of the conflicting battle plans, static defense against juggernaut offense; and the tactics utilized by each side in an attempt to achieve its desired goals. In addition, the naval enthusiast might find extremely interesting the attack and sinking of the Japanese battleship *Yamato*, the ordeal of the aircraft carrier *Franklin*, and the frantic efforts of the destroyer-type radar pickets in warding off the fanatic kamikaze attacks. Nothing is forgotten in this one-volume history.

In all aspects, *Typhoon of Steel* illustrates that the key to the Okinawa victory went to the commander who could best overcome the problem of attrition. The Japanese had to conserve their ground and air forces in order to delay and destroy their enemy; the U.S. command had to preserve their naval forces with their planes, equipment, and supplies in order to maintain support of the landing. The key went to Spruance. The ability of the U.S. sea and air units to develop air intercept and attack procedures, anti-air defense surface formations and combat air patrols established the necessary measure of success. The Japanese were able to sink 38 ships and damage 368 others, but no ship larger than a destroyer was sunk. The total naval casualties, however, were higher for this campaign than in any prior engagement in U.S. history.

The authors are to be congratulated on their easy style, extensive research and detailed attention to facts. The work is impressive in all respects. Only

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one minor imperfection should be mentioned and that concerns the quantity of the maps depicting the battle progress. A map of the Motobu Peninsula plus more charts of the Southern Okinawa area dispersed throughout the book in the appropriate chapters would have provided a better pictorial representation of the printed word and would have made it easier for the reader to follow the total action.

*Typhoon of Steel* is an exciting, scholarly publication that is a fitting tribute to all the men who served in the battle for Okinawa.

WALTER S. PULLAR, JR.  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

Miller, Wayne C. *An Armed America: Its Face in Fiction, a History of the American Military Novel*. New York: New York University Press, 1970. 294p.

The present disrepute of the military, in the eyes of many Americans, is disconcerting to members of the Armed Forces, but, as Wayne C. Miller shows in his new book, a study of the American novel over the past century and a half reveals a history of recurring disenchantment with the military profession. From James Fenimore Cooper's *The Spy* (1821) down to Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) and even later, the military man has been viewed in fiction with emotions ranging from occasional enthusiasm to frequent distrust.

Professor Miller, who has taught at the Air Force Academy and now teaches at the University of Cincinnati, attempts to provide "a better historical and cultural perspective from which the American military man and military machine may be understood and controlled." By surveying the American novel from 1821 to 1964 (*Dr. Strangelove*) and discussing at some length the war novels of such major writers as Cooper, Melville, Crane, Dos Passos, Faulkner, and Hemingway, he demon-

strates that the main thrust of many fiction writers against the military institution reinforces the criticism of such social and economic analysts as Fred J. Cook, Tristram Coffin, Samuel Huntington, Morris Janowitz, Walter Millis, and C. Wright Mills.

The attitudes of the novelists toward the military have been as diverse as their works and their personalities. Cooper, William Gilmore Simms, John P. Marquand, and James Gould Cozzens have tended to look upon military life realistically without any overt criticism of the system, while many of the others have seen the Armed Forces as authoritarian (even tyrannous), brutal, stifling, vain, and self-serving, a danger to American society and its freedoms. Some have suggested that the American military is symptomatic of increasing disorientation in society, that the uneasiness of many people about the Armed Forces is an extension of their fears about the direction our civilization is taking.

But Professor Miller is not a pacifist or antimilitarist; as he says in his introduction, "It is important . . . that it [the American military] remain an arm of the state and not the brain at the center of the state's activities." Maintaining this relatively objective point of view throughout his analysis, he has produced an interesting book of social criticism and literary history which ought to be of interest to those of us who fret about our professional image.

ROBERT C. STEENSMA  
Commander, U.S. Naval Reserve

Steenberg, Sven. *Vlasov*. New York: Knopf, 1970, 230p.

All those who expressed or felt indignation when a Lithuanian seaman was forcibly returned to Soviet control in November 1970 should not fail to read this tragic portrayal of an episode infamous in Western history. The author, Sven Steenberg, with firsthand knowledge and extensive contacts with