

passing in review

BOOKS OF
INTEREST TO
OUR READERS

Central Pacific War . . .

NEW GUINEA AND THE MARIANAS
—Volume VIII of History of United States Naval Operations in World War II—Samuel Eliot Morison, 435 pages, illustrated. Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown Co. \$6.00

Admiral Morison gives us, in the eighth volume of his history of Naval operations in World War II, the full story of the epic Marianas campaign. It must be admitted that the ground combat phases are discussed in abbreviated form and that some minor errors do exist. However, there is sufficient information to give the feel of the fighting, and details are available elsewhere, particularly in the Marine Corps monographs.

It is in the naval phases at sea where the admiral places his details. The story of the "Turkey Shoot" is a vivid piece of work. Of particular interest is the excellent recital of Japanese movements as obtained from official documents and post-war interrogations. The maps and charts, showing in two colors the activities of U.S. and Japanese forces, lend considerable understanding to the narrative itself. To Admiral Morison's credit, it must be added that he gives praise, when due, not only to our forces, but also the enemy's, and is equally ready to mention shortcomings or errors.

In addition to this there is an account of submarine activities during the period. While of interest, this particular section suffers from a minor degree of monotony. The contribution of submarine operations was vital and certainly encompasses a field filled with incidents of highest courage. Yet the treatment given in this book is somewhat too long to summarize activities which could best be merely placed in a chart, and far too short to give a full picture of what the submariner faced and what he produced.

The stress is, of course, on the Marianas campaign. However, the

first 146 pages of the volume deal with operations on or near New Guinea, as well as the aforementioned brief account of submarine patrols. General MacArthur's campaign brought the southwest Pacific forces to within 800 miles of the Southern Philippines. The Central Pacific front, however, was still only at Eniwetok, 1,000 miles east of Guam. A decision had to be made: push north from New Guinea or push west from the Marshalls. The Marianas campaign was the answer.

Few persons in a war ever see a directive. Yet these documents evolve the numerous orders which send men and ships to battle. Admiral Morison adds to his work an absorbing background which includes the conflicts, compromises and reasoning that went into the decisions of the Joint Chiefs. The result is a valuable contribution to American history.

Reviewed by LtCol V. J. Croizat

Afrika Korps . . .

THE ROMMEL PAPERS—Edited by B. H. Liddel Hart. 545 pages, illustrated. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company \$6.00

This is one of the most important books about World War II yet to appear. It is certain to become indispensable for every student of things



military. In addition, it is an exciting adventure story as well as the dismaying story of a man's personal dilemma.

It was Rommel's intention to publish a book on his campaigns when the war was over. With this in mind, he carefully recorded day-to-day events, impressions and military lessons. When Rommel failed to survive the war, B. H. Liddel Hart undertook to assemble and edit his papers. Most of the book is the writing of Rommel himself.

Interspersed through Rommel's work are passages contributed by Liddel Hart by way of amplification, correction of fact and facilitation of transition. Where large gaps in the chronology occur (because Rommel's notes were lost or purposely destroyed after his falling-out with Hitler), important complete sections are contributed by Manfred Rommel and General Bayerlein, Rommel's chief of staff. Also included are pertinent personal letters, mostly written by the general to Frau Rommel.

The book is rich in military lessons. Indeed, a series of maxims for soldiers could be compiled from it. Many of them could be pondered with profit by leaders concerned with the tactics and techniques of present and future American formations.

For the military man it has more than military lessons. It is a revealing picture of how the course of events forces a man, whose profession has been his whole life, out of his uncomplicated milieu into a savage jungle of political intrigue for which he is unprepared.

From Rommel's activities and plans for the repulse of an amphibious operation, Marines will be able to make intriguing inferences as to how he thought such an operation should be conducted. His views on the value of air support and naval gunfire are also thought-provoking.

The book leaves a reader with the impression that Rommel's successes were of his own making and his fail-