

BOOK REVIEWS

The Life and Death of the Afrika Corps. RONALD LEWIN. London. B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1977. P. 199. £5.50. Illustrated.

The Author in some 200 pages covers the rise and fall of the Afrika Corps. The Corps was by no means a hand-picked formation but was a typical cross-section of the German Army. It was welded and tempered by Rommel into that superb weapon so much respected by the British and is a lasting monument to the martial qualities of the German race.

The Author, who has personal experience of the Western Desert, has studied his subject deeply and his conclusions are sound. His narrative prose does not match his skill in research and I found it a definite effort to wade through so that which should have been a pleasure became a labour.

The book is handsomely produced and the illustrations and maps excellent.

Surprisingly no detailed Orders of Battle are included. It would have been interesting to have seen the complete composition of the Corps including supporting Arms and Services.

The definitive history of the Afrika Corps has still to be written.

A. MACLENNAN

The Sky Belongs to Them. Dr. ROLAND WINFIELD. London. W. Kimber. 1977. £4.75.

The title of this book is misleading in that it suggests another Dambusters operation or yet another bridge over the Rhine. It is in fact an account of the research and solution of medical problems of aviation warfare in the Second World War, ultimately leading to the founding of the now famous Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough.

It is written posthumously by his wife Chris from records Winfield had compiled and is essential reading to any military medical historian and a lesson in methodology to the would-be participant in the ever increasing realm of medical research.

Winfield joined the Royal Air Force (R.A.F.) having no other paper qualifications than his M.B.(Edin.) and ended the War as the only serving medical officer to be awarded the A.F.C. and D.F.C. It is greatly to the credit of the Senior R.A.F. medical staff that his ability was soon recognized from his detailed reports as a station medical officer and he was posted to medical research.

The book illustrates the well known medical problem that lessons from previous campaigns were forgotten on the outbreak of the new war and it is reassuring to know that it was not only the army planner who sometimes forgot to think of the limits of human physiology when designing sophisticated weapon systems and campaigns.

It was Winfield who pointed out that while the Spitfire was an excellent fighter its pilot needed oxygen to ensure its full battle potential and one can imagine his popularity with senior air officers when he showed that more planes were being lost from crew fatigue than enemy action.

His research illustrates beautifully how essential it is to identify with ones subject to which end he became a qualified pilot, navigator, rear gunner, parachutist and spy despatcher defying many conventions including sometimes the Geneva, on the way in his efforts to help the aircrew to whom he was dedicated.

It is not surprising that his name appears on most early medical references on research on oxygen demands, flying fatigue, and parachute injuries.

To those of us who had the privilege of his tutorship at Cambridge in the 1950s the name of Roland Winfield is already legend.

T. C. HINDSON

The Battle of Trafalgar. GEOFFREY BENNETT. London. B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1977. P. 256. £5.95. Illustrated.

The Author is to be congratulated on his work which is one of the best accounts of the Battle of Trafalgar which I have read.

Excellent introductory chapters on the organisation of the Navy, its ships, guns and manning and finally Nelson's place in the French Revolutionary War sets the scene for the reader.

The description of the battle is first class and is materially aided by quotes from eye-witnesses. The illustrations are good and the maps and descriptions of the various phases of the battle in particular are deserving of praise as they are so clear and easy to follow. Printing and production are of an equally high standard and the book represents excellent value.

It can be strongly recommended.

A. MACLENNAN

Uniforms of Trafalgar. J. FABB and J. CASSIN-SCOTT. London. B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1977. P.96. Colour Plates 4, Illustrations 89. £4.50 casebound. £2.95 limp.

This book can be recommended to all who are interested in the Naval history of the Napoleonic Wars.

The illustrations are good and the reader will find the pictures of the French and the Spanish seamen of particular interest because (I suspect) like the reviewer he has not seen them before.

A. MACLENNAN

A Dictionary of Military Uniforms. W. Y. CARMAN. London. B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1977. P. 140. Colour Plates 9, Illustrations 179. £6.50.

As one would have expected Mr. Carman has produced a first class work which represents a life-time interest and knowledge of uniforms. The text is short, concise and informative. Excellent illustrations add greatly to the interest of the book.

It is difficult to see how this book could be improved on and it should prove to be the standard work on the subject for many years to come.

A. MACLENNAN

Surgical Diagnosis. G. QVIST. London. H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd. 1977. Pp. viii + 699. £15.00. Illustrated.

This is a new book devoted entirely to the subject of clinical diagnosis in surgery. Mr. George Qvist, who recently retired from the Royal Free Hospital, has produced as his magnum opus a comprehensive guide to surgical diagnosis based on a life-time's experience. There are well over a thousand excellent photographs, radiographs and line drawings and these are used to illustrate the basis for diagnosis as it is done in clinical practice. We all know that our methods of diagnosis and treatment are actually done in ways that are different from those described in many textbooks. Our clinical practice depends, in the majority of cases, upon a fairly accurate differential diagnosis. Those conditions that do not fit into this scheme are usually rarities or uncommon manifestations of common diseases and it is upon this approach that Mr. Qvist has based his book. The text is concise and is laid out in clear fashion and it contains many classifications which are useful in covering the whole subject in considerable depth.

One cannot obtain such a vast experience in any way other than by the hard grind of many years of clinical practice. In the process of learning, man can distinguish himself from the higher primates by his ability to learn from the written word and by studying this beautifully illustrated atlas of the common surgical conditions he will undoubtedly learn to recognise many of them. In addition the illustrations of uncommon surgical conditions that are not met with in this country are very useful to those surgeons in the Armed Services who have the good fortune to practice in countries like Nepal, where many of these conditions will be met with for the first time. This book is intended to emphasise the clinical approach to diagnosis in general surgery and I believe that it has succeeded in this aim. The book is dedicated to McNeill Love and inevitably one would have to compare it with the principal surgical textbook of this country.

At £15.00 it may be outside the budget of many young surgeons, however, I am certain that it will be a very useful revision book both for medical students and for Fellowship candidates and is to be recommended.

M. S. OWEN-SMITH

Postgraduate Medicine. 3rd ed. I. J. T. DAVIES. London. Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Ltd. 1977. Pp. x + 467. £8.00.

This is the best book I have seen for the young physician about to take the M.R.C.P. examination. I do not suggest that it should take the place of other larger or perhaps more specialised textbooks which he will use to acquire his primary fund of factual knowledge. Rather I see it as the ideal book to carry around for a month or two before the examination, to be opened whenever he has a few spare minutes, on the train (it is suitably unobtrusive and almost un-illustrated) or as bed-time reading.

Scattered throughout the book are useful lists of causes and of differential diagnoses; but the text is not just a simple vade mecum of facts. It also seizes on vital points of controversy, such as those concerning the significance of abnormalities of serum lipids and the value of anticoagulant therapy in coronary thrombosis, and enumerates the pros and cons in a lucid manner so that the student will be able to discuss the subject in an informed way.

In all this is an excellent book and will be a Godsend to Membership students.

D. M. ROBERTS

Textbook of Medicine with Relevant Physiology and Anatomy. R. J. HARRISON. Sevenoaks. Hodder & Stoughton. 1977. Pp. xxii + 442. Boards £6.95. Unibook £3.96. Illustrated.

This small book covers a remarkably wide field. Initially established as one of a series directed mainly at nurses, this volume is intended to serve a wide range of medical, nursing and ancillary professions. It presents a wider range of subjects than most conventional textbooks, including sections on geriatrics, ionising radiation, psychiatry, skin diseases, medical disorders of the eye and ear, and therapeutics.

The text is economical and the line drawings are lucid. As usual in texts of this nature, brevity has been attained at the expense of oversimplification (for example, under hiatus hernia one reads: 'age over 50 years', a statement which is at once true and untrue).

More reprehensible is the occasional lack of balance in emphasis. For example, in the section on investigation of gastric disease, four lines are devoted to endoscopy, and more than a page to the obsolete and quite useless fractional test meal.

Despite its faults, this book will be useful for examination reading and as a reference for nurses, physiotherapists, radiographers and the like.

D. M. ROBERTS

Publications by Officers — 1976

The following is a list of publications by Officers, or late of, the R.A.M.C., which have appeared during 1976, other than in the Journal of the R.A.M.C.

- ABRAHAM, P.** (Et al) The CNV and its Relation to Specific Psychiatric Syndromes. In. *The Responsive Brain*. Ed. W. C. McCallum and J. R. Knott. John Wright & Sons Ltd. Bristol. Pp. 144-149.
- ABRAHAM, P.** (Dubrovsky, B.) Slow Potentials and Psychiatry. In. *The Responsive Brain*. Ed. W. C. McCallum and J. R. Knott. John Wright & Sons Ltd. Bristol. P. 216.
- BETHELL, I. L.** (et al) The Red Blood Cell Esterase D Polymorphism in Europe and Asia. *Hum. Genet.* **33**, 161-166.
- DREW, SIR ROBERT** (Bedford, D. Evan and Hartston, W.) An Early Account of Rheumatic Heart Disease by Joseph Brown (1784-1868). *Medical History* **20**, 76-79.
- McEWAN, J.** Liver Function Tests Following Anaesthesia. *Brit. J. Anaesth.* **48**, 1065.
- MILES, R. N.** (et al) Q Fever—Cyprus. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.* **25**, 131.
- SPICER, A. J.** (et al) Q Fever—Cyprus. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.* **25**, 131.
- SPICER, A. J.** (Crowther, R. W.) Abortion in Sheep and Goats in Cyprus Caused by *Coxiella Burneti*. *Veterinary Record* **99**, 29.
- STEWART, J. B.** (Kessel, L. J.) Malignant Lymphoma of the Tongue: A Case Report. *Brit. J. oral. Surg.* **14**, 31-35.
- VELLA, E. E.** A Man and His Dog (A Cautionary Tale). *Biologist* **23**, 183-184.
- VELLA, E. E.** Lasser Fever. *Hospital Life (Update) January* 31-37.
- VELLA, E. E.** (et al) Q Fever—Cyprus. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.* **25**, 131.