

Militia



Ranger

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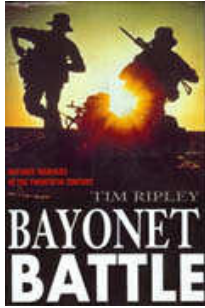
Your comments and criticisms are welcome. We need more staff writers.

Think About It ?

by Major Donald R Doyle



There's always a lot of talk about the next replacement for the M-16 especially in this newsletter. One thing that is mentioned as an afterthought is whether or not to have a bayonet lug on a rifle, with most manufacturers saying no or a very reluctant yes. Most of us tend to link the bayonet with the far distance past like the American Revolution or the Civil War, but not with the modern battlefield. Well if you are one who feels that the high-tech machines of war, communications, airpower, supply of ammo to the troops, smarter soldiers, etc. render the bayonet obsolete in the 21st century then you are *wrong* !! The British Army was riding down the road outside of Amara, Iraq when they drove into an ambush. Now the normal procedure is to speed up and quickly get out of the fire zone. Not this time, the Brits stopped got out of their Land Rover vehicles and returned fire, quickly running out of ammo, the officer in charge ordered "*Fix bayonets and Charge!!*" This was done over 200 yards of open terrain in which the hard charging Brits *bayoneted and killed 35 insurgents* while suffering no fatalities. The last time the British had a bayonet charge was during the Falklands conflict. You can't overestimate the psychological effect of a soldier running and yelling with the bayonet or the effect on the guy seeing it coming at him. A rifle may not be loaded but *a knife always is*.



book review by Major Donald R Doyle

This great French invention came about in the seventeenth century in the small town of Bayonne, France in the Pyrenees Mountains. A small group of French infantry almost out of ammo, was about to be overrun by Spanish cavalry when one infantryman got the bright idea of jamming his knife handle down the barrel of his musket. His fellow troops did likewise and turned their empty muskets into improvised pikes that turned the Spanish cavalry away. By 1647 it was considered “high-tech” to have “la bayonet.” The first real bayonets were as long as a man’s arm and were not designed for hand to hand fighting but as an anti-cavalry weapon. The Swedes in 1696 came up with the idea to secure the bayonet to the outside of the musket, allowing the musket to serve double duty as a firing weapon and a pike. As firearms became more accurate and reliable, cavalry decreased in importance and a shorter blade became more practical in clearing a room or a trench and hand to hand with opposing infantry. The biggest impact of the bayonet was *psychological*, no one wants to be shot but you don’t see the bullet coming at you. But anyone seeing a blade coming at them is terrified. Soldiers quickly learned that polishing their bayonets to shine in the sunlight would put any mob to flight as well as rookie soldiers. Officers learned that training with the bayonet helped keep troops pumped up. They would yell, “What is the spirit of the bayonet” and the troops would reply, “To Kill To Kill.” The Japanese took the bayonet to a spiritual level, like the samurai sword preferring screaming charges as machine guns mowed them down. Some want to put the bayonet in the museums and not have the lug put on new rifles. However modern firearms eat a lot of ammo and jam, while a bayonet is *always loaded*. The psychological aspects alone is reason enough to keep the bayonet a permanent fixture on all future rifles. *Tom Ripley did a good job on this book its 255 easy to read pages and I strongly recommend it.*

By the Way

More than 300 people were evacuated from the outskirts of Marseille, France recently after the French Foreign Legion started a brush fire with tracer bullets from a training exercise. It took 130 firefighters to get the fire under control.

170 armed Swiss soldiers got lost on an FTX and accidentally crossed the border in to Liechtenstein, a tiny country of 36,000 people that borders Switzerland. The troops soon learned their mistake and quickly crossed back to their homeland. Liechtenstein officials were not upset realizing it was an honest mistake by the neutral Swiss. Could remedial compass and map reading be in store for those troops?

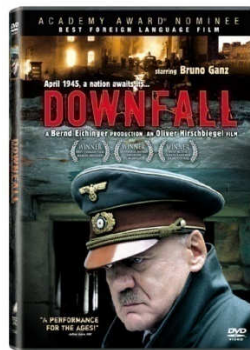
More horror stories coming out of the Russian military. If beatings, limited rations and selling their labor out to local businesses were not enough, now comes a story of a new recruit being buried alive after being beat by officers for not mopping the floor properly. Local residents found him still alive and the military is investigating.

Within a few hours of hearing that her fiancée had been killed in Iraq. A New York woman got her engagement ring in the mail. U.S. Army Sgt. Yevgeniy Ryndych, 24 was killed in Ramadi. He was born in the Ukraine and immigrated to New York with his family as a teenager.

A group of American commercial divers has found the wreck of the HMS Fantome off the coast of Nova Scotia. It sank while leading a convoy back to Halifax after the 1814 sacking of Washington D.C. The dive team found artifacts that include White House china, silverware, Capital relics and coinage from the U.S. Treasury. The British High Commission has claimed ownership and its contents under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The site is now off-limits since Nova Scotia has rejected anymore recovery permits.

Movie Reviews by Major Donald R Doyle

“Inglorious Bastards” is a foreign film for all intentional purposes. It stars Brad Pitt in a small role as a hillbilly 2lt leading a small group of Jews that specialize in scalping Nazi’s. I’m really surprised that Pitt took this corny role. The blond gal that played in “National Treasure” did a good job playing a famous German actress and if you’ve seen a few foreign military films lately some of the faces may look familiar. The plot revolves around blowing up/burning down a crowded movie house loaded with every Nazi official you can imagine with no guards around. Don’t waste the \$9.25 I did to see it. Come to think of it don’t buy it on DVD when it comes out either.



“Downfall” is a movie not at the theatre but out on DVD. It’s a German movie about Hitler’s personal secretary Traudl Junge and all she witnessed in the Berlin bunker. If you’re even remotely interested in the subject you’ll really like this movie. The actors are German with English subtitles but it flows along at an easy to read pace. The color is great sometimes it seems that I’m watching a video tape instead of film. Like most foreign war films it’s brutally graphic, no sugar coating of history here. I thought I knew this topic rather well, Hitler ranting at his generals, ordering troop movements where none exist, but there were a number of surprises like what gung-ho Nazis some of the women were. Everyone coming in and out of the bunker knew the end was near, while some where in denial, some committed suicide and others would fight to the bitter end. Included is some actual film footage of interviews with the real Traudl Junge. For many years *“Das Boot”* was my favorite foreign military film, now it’s *“Downfall.”* Look hard look long but find this DVD and buy it. This is an outstanding movie !!



STG-44 the worlds first Assault Rifle

The definition of an assault rifle according to the Dept. of Defense is *“A rifle of medium sized caliber capable of semi-automatic fire and with a switch or lever can change to sustained full-auto fire.”* Now the M-1 Carbine came out in 1940 and if it had a heavier caliber bullet would have been the world’s first assault rifle. But that title goes to the Germans who invented the first assault rifle as well as the name in late 1943. The Germans were impressed with the American M-1 Garand semi-auto rifle since everyone else in WWII was using bolt action rifles. The German design guys invented the STG-44 it had semi and full-auto capability, fired the medium sized 7.92 Kurz round. The STG-44 was accurate out to 300 meters and the German troops in the field loved it, begged for more and like all German weapons, then and now, it was heavy weighing in at 12lbs. Hitler did not believe in full auto weapons for the individual troops thinking it was a waste of ammo being a WWI veteran. So his generals sneaked a document past him to sign listing STG-44 machine pistols for mass production and he signed it.



Now the name, Joseph Goebbels the propaganda minister who invented the name, promoted it in a special way. *“The Sturmgewehr 1944 (in English Assault Rifle) will only be issued to soldiers who have aggressively assaulted the enemies of the Reich.”* No troops in the rear with the gear would get any only front line troops and the first batch went to Iron Cross winners (the German equivalent of our Medal of Honor.) A total of 426,000 would be made by wars end. American troops would not see them until the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. That’s because most went to the Eastern front where the Russians that weren’t killed by them were very impressed with them. A young Russian tank Sgt named Mikhail Kalashnikov was wounded in the hospital, while hearing the other troops talk about the fierce new rifle the Germans had, tinkered on and designed his own rifle. The Russian military adopted it and began producing his design in 1947 calling it the Automatic Kalashnikov of 1947 or AK-47. Now Kalashnikov denies copying the STG-44 although there are similarities, there are also some striking differences like looser tolerances and practically no maintenance required. Over 50 million have been made world wide. The STG-44 changed forever the individual soldier’s abilities. Thank God for the Allies the SGT-44, like the V-2 Rocket and the ME-262 jet fighter came too little too late to save the German war effort.

NOTICE

This may be the last issue posted for awhile. Major Doyle and I have had very few articles submitted for publication. Trying to maintain any kind of schedule for posting has become darn right impossible.

Nebraskamilitia.com will hold off on any further publication until we have sufficient articles to make it worthwhile.

Sorry for the inconvenience,

Rudy