From Omaha Beach to Dawson's Ridge: The Combat Journal of Captain Joe Dawson

Citation metadata
Author: Robert Bateman
Date: Winter 2006
From: Parameters(Vol. 36, Issue 4)
Publisher: U.S. Army War College
Document Type: Book review
Length: 844 words

Main content

Article Preview:


First-person contemporary accounts of war are the bread and butter of the military historian. They sustain us. Such records are among those known as "primary sources," and they are vital to our understanding of the past. More than the staid accounts one finds in the log-books of ships, or the wealth of information one may pull from a regimental operations map overlay stored in the National Archives, both of which are also "primary sources," because they are contemporaneous, it is the archetypical "letters found in an attic" which excites the historian's heart. Such a find is the sort of material which can breathe the humanity back into a larger account of the past. The collected letters of Captain Joe Dawson are a perfect example of just this sort of material, and in this book Cole Kingseed does a masterful job in arranging the letters and placing them in their proper context.

Joe Dawson was the product of the same central Texas towns which produced...
Stephen Ambrose, Simon & Schuster, 1994, ISBN 0-684-80137-X. Further reading Edit. Omaha Beachhead. The letters Dawson sent home reveal the tremendous strains and demands placed on a small unit infantry commander. In "From Omaha Beach to Dawson's Ridge" we find a courageous, reflective and compassionate young soldier from Texas who reacts quickly, professionally and humanely under the most adverse and crucial conditions. The First Infantry Division was constantly thrust into intense fighting and harrowing situations. Dawson shares his most personal thoughts before and after the Big Red One's engagements from North Africa, Sicily, Normandy and the bloody road to Germany. K Editor of From Omaha Beach to Dawson's Ridge: The Combat Journal of Captain Joe Dawson; author of Old Glory Stories: American Combat Leadership in World War II. Colonel Cole C. Kingseed, USA (Ret.), Ph.D. is a thirty-year Army veteran who commanded at the platoon, company, and battalion level. The former chief of Military History Division at the U.S. Military Academy and a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College, Colonel Kingseed is the New York Times best-selling author of Beyond Band of Brothers: The War Memoirs of Major Dick Winters and five other books, including Conversations with Maj Based on Dawson's own combat journal, this book focuses on leadership in combat during the greatest human drama of the twentieth century. Dawson is at the heart of the drama as he describes the strain of constant combat and its effect on the combat infantryman. His writings have been edited by the former chief military historian at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Col. Cole C. Kingseed, who succeeds masterfully in capturing the essence of combat leadership through the actions of this citizen-warrior. Although Dawson was an Army officer, the lessons his journal offer cut across ser