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Rogue Warrior,

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some said that tasking a multi-platoon Seal force to secure Noriega's airfield was "unfair," not suited to "SEAL doctrine," etc. "So what?" answered Admiral George Worthington, the senior Seal commander. The Seals, he said, were the best America had to offer at the moment.

One can see his point. But then why have special forces at all? *Brave Men, Dark Waters* should be required reading for anyone concerned about the future of the Seals. After reading it, however, you will not feel confident that anything will change. It is not in the nature of the beast.

JEFF STEIN
author of
A Murder in Wartime

Marcinko, Richard with John Weisman. *Rogue Warrior*. New York: Pocket Books, 1992. 339pp. \$22

You will not find this book on the Navy's official professional reading list. As a matter of fact, it is the sort of book that public affairs officers wisely avoid questions about. *Rogue Warrior* is the autobiography of Commander Richard Marcinko, commissioning commanding officer of Seal Team Six, the Navy's counter-terrorist organization. Marcinko formed and commanded Red Cell, a unit designed to use terrorist tactics in testing the security of naval installations. Then he was found guilty, after two trials, of conspiracy to defraud the government. To a great extent, the book is Marcinko's way of getting even with

those officers—mostly retired—who thwarted or challenged his professional or personal ambitions. Yet despite (or perhaps because of) the author's motives, this book is less an embarrassment to the Navy as an institution than an indictment of particular personalities, both patrons and enemies, who launched an unguided missile into the most politically sensitive of tasks: counter-terrorism. The lesson it contains goes much deeper than the jacket blurbs, innuendoes of broken faith, or sanitized details of Seal operations. I would recommend it for the reading list as a category of its own—"bureaucratic wars of the ego."

One cannot accurately review the book and avoid reviewing the person. No one can deny that Richard Marcinko is a very brave man. He is also (despite a twenty-one-month prison sentence that he describes as a vacation) a success story; a high school dropout with an obviously unhappy childhood who becomes a frogman, a naval officer, a Seal, and a three-time commanding officer. Unfortunately, he carries with him what his collaborator, John Weisman, politely describes as "warrior's hubris" but others might refer to as the utmost egotism. It is evident in this book that Commander Marcinko's combat experience never taught him that making enemies for fun is a deadly game, particularly in peacetime. In his eyes there are no peers and no rules. There were few below the rank of three stars whom he would not insult or ignore.

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Blaming the negative reactions to his snubs and end-around maneuvers on "conventional attitudes" towards unconventional warfare, Marcinko portrays himself as an agent of change—the one who made the Navy accept new roles for Special Warfare and built one of the top counter-terrorism organizations in the world. He argues passionately that he operated as he did to support his men and develop unit integrity.

Perhaps this is true, but it is hard to understand why his profane and public disdain for the "system" was either necessary or productive. Even before he launched into his greatest orgy of bureaucratic enemy-making, the "system" had already provided his creation, Seal Team Six, with more training ammunition than the *entire* Marine Corps. Part of Marcinko's defense lay in the fact that he was a true "shooter," a Vietnam and Cambodia combat veteran operating in a world of pencil-pushers. But like its protagonist, the book is clearest when it describes death-defying missions against defined enemies. In the murk of budget battles and empire building, everyone else appears an enemy. Even other combat veterans are viewed as mere pencil-pushers if they have alternatives to Marcinko's methods.

Although autobiographies can be mere attempts at self-aggrandizement—*Rogue Warrior* being a fine example—the good ones unwittingly reveal much of their subject's inner character. In this respect, Marcinko's book is a classic. In creating Seal Team

Six, Marcinko broke or bent many rules and that had brought him success. In operating Red Cell, he disregarded even more rules. This not only caused his promotion to be revoked but brought on an investigation by the Naval Investigative Service. Marcinko is still unable to discern that the personal qualities, attitudes, and methods necessary for the creation of the Seal team did not fit the task of running the Red Cell. More importantly, he does not admit to himself what eventually becomes clear to the reader: that while Marcinko the warrior was a reflection of his own courage and total commitment, Marcinko the commander was the creation of three and four-star patrons who let a useful instrument run amok. The establishment of Red Cell was more a bureaucratic method by seniors to keep Marcinko in the Navy than an organization with a practical purpose. That Red Cell agents, comprised mostly of Seals trained by the master, could penetrate typical naval base security and embarrass those responsible seems hardly a revelation. Apropos of this superfluous mission, Marcinko claims to have operated the unit primarily out of a bar in Alexandria, Virginia. Persistent rumors of physical abuse of victims of Red Cell "training" are not mentioned in the book.

Why do I recommend this book—which, by the way, has more four-letter words per page than your average soft porn? First, it contains illuminating (albeit vetted) depictions of Seal

training and operations and will probably be a choice (albeit one-sided) source for future naval historians to blend with more objective material. Second, it reveals fascinating (and mostly unflattering) vignettes of key national security officials of the 1980s and makes (unsubstantiated) charges of criminal negligence on the part of the senior Foreign Service Officer responsible for security of the bombed Beirut embassy in which sixty-three personnel were killed. However, it is primarily important for what it teaches our future warrior-leaders: beware the temptation of an unrestrained ego. Perhaps (as if Tailhook were not enough) it will also remind senior officers that they are responsible for protecting subordinates from their own worst instincts. The downfall of the successful commander, like the successful rebel, occurs when he or she can no longer distinguish between what is good for one's organization and what is good for one's pride. Commander Marcinko was both commander and rebel, but his bold victories have been overshadowed by his downfall.

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Leckie, Robert. *The Wars of America*.
New York: HarperCollins, 1992.
1,281pp. \$50

Robert Leckie, a superb narrator, military historian, and prolific author, set himself a formidable task in this

book. In one volume he has sought to place the wars of America in perspective. His object is to make his students better citizens by improving their knowledge of the good and bad in our history. In the main, Robert Leckie succeeds.

Historians shoulder an awesome responsibility. They must be precise, accurate, and reasonably objective. They are the reader's surrogate in sifting through the primary source material and in differentiating information from primary, secondary, and hearsay sources. The narrator comes into conflict with the icons of fact while seeking to breathe life into the record of the past. Here also, this reviewer believes that Robert Leckie succeeds.

Leckie escorts the reader from Samuel de Champlain's war against the Iroquois in 1609 to the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War in 1991. Curiously, the author seems to be on firmer ground up to World War I than with more recent events. One feels a degree of superficiality in the discussion of events that led to World War II: little note is taken of the prescient moves of George Marshall, Dwight Eisenhower, and Brehon Somervell in creating the logistic architecture for victory. One senses also in Leckie's treatment of Korea and Vietnam a degree of the polarization in opinion and attitude that occurred after those eras.

This review is intended for an audience with strong interests in the sea services of the United States. There is an intriguing thesis advanced on page