



The Lives of Wars: Military Books 2012

When it comes to writing about wars, they are never over.

By Lucinda Dyer

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*Unlike Gen. Douglas MacArthur's old soldiers who "never die; they just fade away," books on military history often refuse to disappear, retaining their popularity for decades or even hundreds of years. Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* hit the shelves—or more accurately the bamboo scrolls—more than 2,000 years ago and is still required reading in military academies and boardrooms around the world. And as generations of students can attest, Caesar's Commentaries are still very much in print. Alfred Thayer Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783* was published in 1890 and not only retains its place on bookstore shelves, but is the only book to be named a Milestone in American history by the Office of the Historian of the U.S. Department of State.*

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World War II

With shelves continuing to groan under the weight of titles about WWII, publishers are constantly looking for stories that can offer readers a new perspective on the now seven-decades-old conflict. ////

"For a reader, there is no greater joy than to discover something new and fresh about a topic you love," believes Aquila Polonica president Terry Tegnazian, who sees World War II titles continuing to find an audience with readers in search of new ways into this pivotal era of history. *The Auschwitz Volunteer: Beyond Bravery* by Witold Pilecki (Apr.) details his three-year undercover mission as a prisoner in Auschwitz, and *They Returned by Night* by Jędrzej Tucholski (Jan.), describes the experiences of an elite group of Polish special forces paratroopers called Cichociemni—"the unseen and silent." ////

Social Media

While their books may peer back in time, military history publishers are definitely forward-looking when it comes to social media. ////

Aquila Polonica began its social media campaign in 2010 and has attracted more than 1,200 Facebook fans and 1,400 Twitter followers. "To our delight," says Tegnazian, "we've found that history buffs are extremely active online and share a global camaraderie. They provide a barometer of what this audience finds interesting." ////