

The Recent Past

THE BATTLE FOR GERMANY

by H. Essame

Scribners, 228 pp., \$7.95

THE BATTLE FOR ROME

by W. G. F. Jackson

Scribners, 224 pp., \$7.95

THE THOUSAND-MILE WAR:

World War II in Alaska
and the Aleutians

by Brian Garfield

Doubleday, 351 pp., \$7.95

WORLD WAR II:

A Compact History

by R. Ernest Dupuy

Hawthorn, 334 pp., \$6.95

YEARS OF DEADLY PERIL:

The Coming of the War 1939-1941

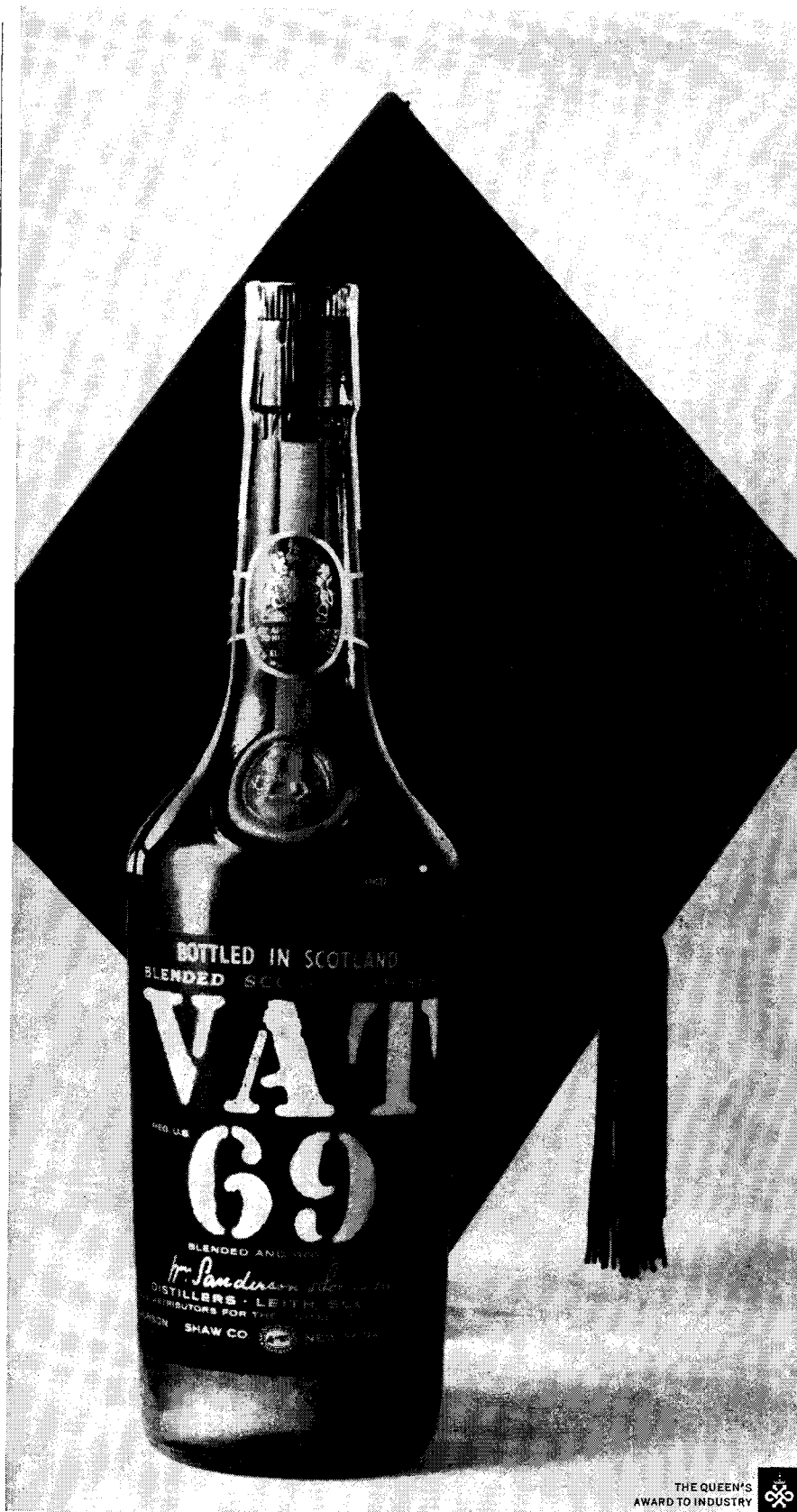
by Henry H. Adams

McKay, 559 pp., \$9.95

BOOKS ON THE LAST WAR (or is it next to the last?) continue to pour from the major publishing houses. As the 1939-1945 conflict moves further and further back into the dim and distant past, the volumes become more and more esoteric and the trees tend to take over the forest. There are, however, some good ones in the new crop that appear general enough for the non-pedant.

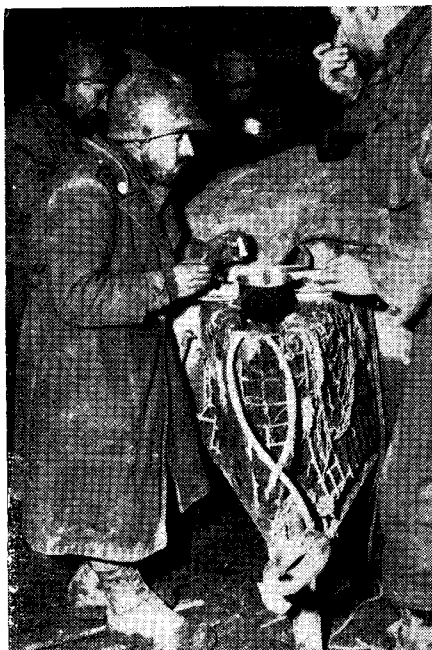
One popular topic has always been the Battle of the Bulge, in which Adolf Hitler's final miscalculation succeeded in pushing back the Allied forces at the edge of Western Germany just before and after Christmas 1944. Major General H. Essame has written about this vital and critical time in *The Battle for Germany*, one of two from Scribners in the latest batch of WW II manuscripts. The trouble with General Essame's book is twofold: first, he writes quite woodenly, and second, he falls for most of the clichés about the major dispute between Montgomery and Eisenhower, but always from the British point of view—which is to say the least irritating and probably not supportable by the facts. Somewhere between September and December 1944 the Allies lost the initiative on the Western Front and Hitler's last futile orgasm of blood and destruction delayed the surrender of Germany until May 1945, by which time the Soviet Union had seized the political advantage in Eastern Europe and moved irrevocably ahead in the race for Berlin. We're still paying for it.

The other Scribners book is W. G. F. Jackson's *The Battle for Rome*, and,



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—From "The Battle for Germany."
**U.S. soldiers in Germany, 1944—
 "Hitler's final miscalculation."**

while it is better written than General Essame's and probably better balanced, it will be of interest only to historians and those GIs who made the hazardous move known in World War II as Operation Diadem, ending in the capture of Rome two days before D-Day. It is an irony of fate that Diadem's tremendous success—it was the greatest single Allied achievement in the entire Italian campaign—was immediately upstaged by Overlord, the dramatic cross-channel landings at Omaha and Utah Beaches. Though Major General Jackson is also of British military background his book is, I think, less biased and therefore more persuasive. Each book contains excellent illustrations and maps.

Way over on the other side of the world goes Doubleday with *The Thou-*

sand-Mile War, by Brian Garfield, a fascinating tale of fighting in the foggy Aleutian Islands and in Alaska. It is no coincidence that the book is much more readable than either of the other two; Mr. Garfield is a professional writer and not a professional soldier. It recounts the first substantial victory by the United States over Japan after Pearl Harbor, fought for more than a year in a climate so hostile that supply, indeed mere survival, was more vital on both sides than combat strategy. I had forgotten this fact, but it is true that this was the only military campaign fought on North American soil in World War II.

Hawthorn's contribution is a work by Colonel R. Ernest Dupuy, the man who handled public relations for General Eisenhower at SHAEF and who was, in his modest way, a highly useful citizen in 1944-45. His book is entitled *World War II: A Compact History*, and it is surely that, even perhaps a bit too compressed. For someone who wants a once-over-lightly, headline-skipping history, this will be useful, as will the charts, appendix, bibliography, and index. I am sorry to say, however, that it does not brim with fresh phrases, and it may be that Colonel Dupuy composed one too many communiqués and press announcements for Ike for the good of his own writing style. In any case, most of the highlights of the war are here in this volume, part of a series on the military history of the United States for which Colonel Dupuy is also general editor.

It's a bit difficult to weigh Henry H. Adams's *Years of Deadly Peril*, since I was not aware that this was the second in a series of four volumes until I was well through the book. By itself (this book covers the war before Pearl Harbor) it seems to have no precise beginning or end, but that obviously will be taken care of when all four volumes have been published. Dr. Adams writes with momentum and an occasional sense of dry humor I found ingratiating, though the style is a bit self-conscious. There are many valuable details here about the early stages of the war in Europe, and I particularly liked those passages involving Dunkirk and the Nazi invasion of Norway and Denmark. I have a notion that Dr. Adams did considerable homework on this one. It is obvious that he made extensive use of newspaper and magazine files often overlooked by historians, a fresh and valuable source that helps make his book absorbing if slightly diffuse.

Richard L. Tobin

Richard L. Tobin, associate publisher of SR, covered SHAEF as a war correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune in 1944-45.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

by **Charles E. Bohlen**

Norton, 130 pp., \$3.95

THIS BOOK IS A DISAPPOINTMENT. It's like going to the home of a great host and being served only tid-bits. The appetite is whetted but all you get is a few savories, and you leave the table hungrier than when you sat down. If the author were not the almost legendary "Chip" Bohlen, the disappointment would be less keen. But this is the Charles Bohlen who was Roosevelt's Russian interpreter at Yalta, the man who was at Teheran and Potsdam, who served long periods as ambassador to Moscow and Paris, the tough, no-nonsense foreign service officer whom five Presidents called on when things got rough.

It's frustrating rather than provocative to have Bohlen casually toss in front of you the fact that General Marshall had doubts about the harsh anti-Communist tone of the historic Truman Doctrine speech of March 1947. Bohlen writes: "I was in Paris at that time with General Marshall, on the way to Moscow. When we received the text of the President's message, we were somewhat startled to see the extent to which the anti-Communist element of this speech was stressed. Marshall sent back a message to President Truman questioning the wisdom of this presentation, saying he thought that Truman was overstating the case a bit. The reply came back that this was the only way in which the measure could be passed."

Here is a book called *The Transformation of American Foreign Policy*, and here is a speech that more than any other in the postwar years, marked that transformation. Yet the above, except for five or six unrevealing sentences, is all Bohlen says about the Truman Doctrine, a policy that did no less than change the course of world history.

Again casually, Bohlen mentions that he wrote the first draft of the Marshall Plan speech, relates some interesting background material, but then confines his discussion of this absolutely crucial program to a banality: "In retrospect, I think the Marshall Plan was one of the great initiatives of American diplomacy and certainly one of the most successful." Certainly we want more than that from the man who had an important hand in writing one of the most significant speeches of postwar history.

But, despite the constant frustration, there is plenty that's interesting, particularly anecdotes about Roosevelt and Churchill and Stalin and even

