

Book Reviews/Boekbesprekings

Boer War Tribute Medals by M.G. Hibbard, published by Constantia Classics Publications, Sandton. Profusely illustrated, rolls of recipients, etc. Collectors edition R290-00 + GST Standard edition R112-00 + GST.

When the soldiers of Great Britain and the Empire came home after serving in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 some of the places to which they returned, their regiments and other bodies chose to reward them with unofficial medals which were usually presented at a formal function held in their honour. This book is about the history of these medals and includes the unofficial medals presented to the defenders of Kimberley and O'kiep.

The book is illustrated with superb colour photographs by Mr Gerald Hoberman who is probably the most outstanding numismatic photographer of our time. It is so expensive that many medal collectors who would otherwise have purchased a copy will not be able to afford to do so. Museums and libraries with limited budgets will also not be able to afford it and the information it contains will not be easily accessible. One can only hope that it may be possible to publish an inexpensive edition in the not too distant future.

Nonetheless its publication is an important event because some of the medals illustrated are the only ones known and it is obviously vital that they should be adequately recorded. Most of the medals are in the private collections of two Cape Town collectors, Mr M.G. Hibbard, the author of the book and Dr F.K. Mitchell and South Africans can feel proud that their countrymen have gone to considerable trouble and expense to build up their collections and have been the first to draw attention to this neglected subject.

Those unfamiliar with these medals will be struck by their variety. Some closely resemble Victorian campaign medals, some might easily be mistaken for enamel bowling badges or masonic jewels and some are similar to the gold medals awarded by the Victorians for prowess on the sportsfield.

For many years most of the medals described in this book were ignored by collectors and dealers and it is virtually certain that many of the gold

ones were melted down. To some extent they may be regarded as a barometer of the patriotic fervour which prompted those who had stayed at home to reward those who had fought in the Anglo-Boer War. Their recipients probably saw them as reminders of the all too brief hour of glory which marked their homecoming and probably remembered with bitterness how quickly their war service was forgotten. Perhaps this is why so few of the medals have survived.

Lt Cdr W.M. Bisset

Richard M. Nixon: 'The Real War' (Warner Books, New York, Mei 1980)

Die Bedreiging wat die USSR inhou

Nixon doen 'n beroep op alle leierselemente in die VSA om te besef dat die Weste in 'n worstelstryd met die USSR gewikkel is waarin sy vermoë om tot die volgende eeu te oorleef ernstig bevraagteken word. Die tyd om tot besinning te kom gaan vinnig verby en teen 1985 sal die USSR 'n onbetwiste kernsuperioriteit, oorweldigende oormag op land asook minstens superioriteit ter see behaal het.

Die VSA het gedink dat eensydige magsbeperking en welwillendheid die USSR sal beweeg om ook sy militêre mag te beperk. Lg het egter sy militêre mag volgens koherente strategiese doelwitte met rasse skrede uitgebrei en 'n uitdaging op militêre, ekonomiese, politieke diplomatieke en filosofiese vlakke gerig om sy opperheerskappy wêreldwyd te vestig. In hierdie totale oorlog beweeg hy vinnig om sy doel te bereik.

Dit is egter meer waarskynlik dat die VSA sonder 'n oorlog verslaan kan word want hoewel hy die vermoë het om sy paraatheid op te knap, het hy 'n tekort aan bereidwilligheid om op te offer en wilskrag om te wen. Die VSA beleef 'n strategiese uitdaging van globale dimensies en 'n nuwe strategiese gewaarwording en reaksie word benodig.

Terwyl die Weste aan die Derde Wêreldoorlog dink in terme van 'n kernslagting en die afwesigheid van kernoorlog as vrede beskou, dink die