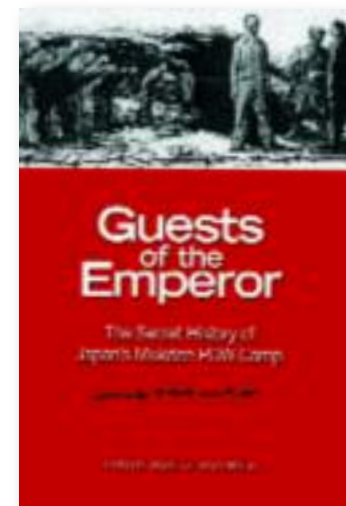


omy of total war evolved during the interwar period—a daunting subject, and easily turned drier than dust. But Maiolo combines his numbers-crunching research with a storyteller's flair for scene setting and character. His command of his vast canvas's moving parts humanizes the torrents of data. In the process, he also reminds us that events in the late 1930s posed immense questions, especially for open societies facing aggressors with a jump on the global arms race and a willingness to play chicken.

What happens when you transform a fractious democratic society into one completely girded for war? How long before the command-and-control aspects of a militarized economy overwhelm or permanently subvert notions like individual freedom? How much censorship and propaganda can be dished out before the habit of indoctrination and credulity becomes ingrained in government and people alike? How do you fight totalitarian opponents in a total war effectively, without eventually becoming just like them? These uncomfortable questions have profound echoes in our tangled times.

Most of the wildly varied perspectives Maiolo has synthesized clashed at some point in the prewar maze of half-truths, misunderstandings, intrigue, deceit, bluffs, projection, even stabs at reason. His hundreds of characters shared the fog of preparing for war. They desperately, confidently, hopefully read everyone else's intentions to figure out the next moves in the arms and economic races. We have the comfort of knowing how it turned out. But reading history backward is usually the least successful way to learn its lessons. Maiolo's meticulous work reveals what was really at stake in that deeply troubled prewar decade, and why. In the process, he makes "appeasement," the dirty word we use to label and dismiss those extraordinarily complicated times and decisions, subject to more informed—and hopefully useful—debate. —Gene Santoro

**BOOK BRIEFS**



**The Ice Road**  
**An Epic Journey from the Stalinist Labor Camps to Freedom**  
 By Stefan Waydenfeld. 400 pp.  
*Aquila Polonica, 2010. \$28.95.*  
 In September 1939, Stalin emptied 1.5 million "enemies of the people" from his portion of Poland into his gulag. The author, then 14, and his family were among them. His masterful recounting spares nothing except self-pity.

**Skorzeny**  
**The Most Dangerous Man in Europe**  
 By Charles Whiting. 256 pp.  
*Pen & Sword, 2010. \$24.95.*  
 Fluently hits the high points: Mussolini's mountaintop rescue, intrigues with the Gehlen organization and OSS and CIA, postwar affair with Eva Peron.

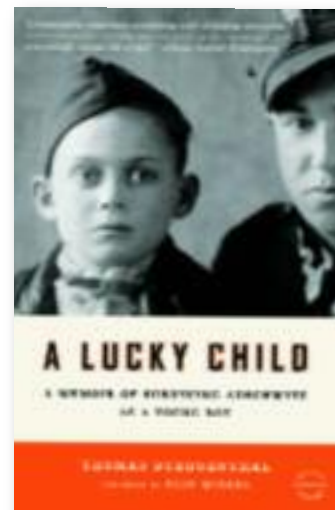
**Guests of the Emperor**  
**The Secret History of Japan's Mukden POW Camp**  
 By Linda Goetz Holmes. 192 pp.  
*Naval Institute Press, 2010. \$29.95.*  
 This vital complex manufactured parts for Zeros, using the slave labor of American POWs. Some became guinea pigs for the infamous Unit 731. After the war, our government focused on Unit 731's bio-warfare horrors and ignored much of what happened here.

**A Lucky Child**  
**A Memoir of Surviving Auschwitz as a Young Boy**  
 By Thomas Buergenthal. 272 pp.  
*Back Bay, 2010. \$14.99.*  
 A remarkable, harrowing, triumphant story by an internationally respected jurist.

**The Envoy**  
**The Epic Rescue of the Last Jews of Europe in the Desperate Closing Months of World War II**  
 By Alex Kershaw. 288 pp.  
*Da Capo, 2010. \$26.*  
 The entwined tales of Raoul Wallenberg and Adolf Eichmann, revisited with new research and this best-selling writer's narrative flair.

**The "Good War" in American Memory**  
 By John Bodnar. 310 pp.  
*Johns Hopkins, 2010. \$40.*  
 Uncovers many genuine historical cracks lurking beneath varnished popular "memories" of World War II.

**A Flawed Genius**  
**Field Marshall Walter Model**  
 By Marcel Stein. 304 pp.  
*Helion, 2010. \$59.95.*  
 Argues Model was brilliant but brutal, erratic, and deeply involved in war crimes. —Gene Santoro



**[ NISEI ROUNDUP ]**



■ Some crucial works that tackle the experiences of Japanese Americans:

**BOOKS**  
**JAPANESE AMERICAN RESETTLEMENT THROUGH THE LENS**  
**Hikaru Carl Iwasaki and the WRA's Photographic Section, 1943-45**  
 By Lane Ryo Hirabayashia. 221 pp.  
*University Press of Colorado, 2009. \$34.95.*  
 Thoughtfully examines the War Relocation Authority's controversial role and results.

**RISING SONS**  
**The Japanese American GIs who Fought for the United States in World War II**  
 By Bill Yenne. 292 pp.  
*Thomas Dunne Books, 2007. \$25.95.*  
 Leading historian expertly examines and synthesizes the field.

**JUST AMERICANS**  
**How Japanese Americans Won a War at Home and Abroad**  
 By Robert Asahina. 2007. 340 pp.  
*Gotham Books. \$27.50.*  
 At times contentious and overstated, the book underlines the racist expectations confronting loyal Japanese Americans.

**NISEI LINGUISTS**  
**Japanese Americans in Military Intelligence Service During World War II**  
 James McNaughton. 514 pp. U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2007. \$29.  
 Traces the development and pivotal contributions of Japanese American intelligence operatives.

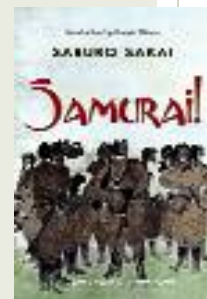
**MOVIES**  
**GOING FOR BROKE**  
 ■ Hosted by former Senator Daniel Inouye and narrated by *Star Trek*'s George Takei, this 2006 documentary combines archival footage and contemporary interviews in 75 eye-opening minutes.

**GO FOR BROKE**  
 ■ Written and directed by acclaimed Robert Pirosh (*Battleground, Combat!*), featuring many veterans as actors, this little-known 92-minute film from 1951 stars Van Johnson as a prejudiced Texan who learns to respect his Nisei troops. —Gene Santoro

**[ COLLECTOR'S VAULT ]**

**Samurai!**  
 By Saburo Sakai. 384 pp.  
*Naval Institute Press, 2010. \$24.95.*

A supreme Japanese ace, Saburo Sakai logged more than 200 dogfights and 1,500 hours flying his deadly Zero. His memoir, first published nearly 50 years ago, captures his warrior and human sides. The tales of his life and heroism are legend and legion: His epic 560-mile flight from Guadalcanal to Rabaul after being shot up, partially paralyzed and blinded. Uncanny aerial deriding-do from the Philippines to Iwo Jima, during which he claimed to down 64 American planes. And confronting the bitter realities of the war's latter days, including kamikazes and overwhelming American might. Sakai's straightforward, bracing narrative became internationally popular in the 1950s. Now it's back, with an incisive introduction by air historian Barrett Tillman. —Gene Santoro



**[ GRAPHIC NONFICTION ]**

**Shadow Knights:**  
**The Secret War Against Hitler**  
 By Gary Kamiya, 160 pp.  
 illustrations by Jeffrey Smith.  
*Simon & Schuster, 2010. \$19.99.*  
 Britain's top-secret spy network, the Special Operations Executive (SOE), comes to vivid life in this kickoff for a smart new series of books aimed at grownups and older kids alike: historically accurate, tautly written, and smartly illustrated. Mixing bits of imaginative flight into well-researched fact while dropping comic panels amid actual photos, *Shadow Knights* follows a few of the thousands of individuals who made SOE work as their dangerous

trails wound through war-torn Nazi Europe. Take Noor Inayat Khan, a gentle Indian princess. Before the war, she played the harp and wrote children's books. In 1943, she's in Paris, sent by the SOE to act as a wireless radio operator for a resistance network dubbed Prosper. Her problem: the Nazis rolled Prosper up before she landed, know her code name, and have set their crack wireless detection teams to tracing her. The average life expectancy of an SOE agent on the ground in Europe at the time: six weeks. Think *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight Returns* with more text, genuine history, and real people, and you're in the zone. —Gene Santoro

