

**AMMA JOURNAL VOL 13 ISSUE 2**

**OCTOBER 2004**

**BOOK REVIEWS**

## **Plague Wars: A true story of biological warfare<sup>1</sup>**

by

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"BIOLOGICAL WARFARE HAS ALREADY BEGUN. In the former Soviet Union, the military has perfected small-pox, anthrax and plague as biological warheads on intercontinental missiles can reach London, New York and Los Angeles. There is no evidence the Russia has destroyed the technology. In South Africa and Zimbabwe, biological weapons have already been used to kill innocent civilians. In Iraq, a covert offensive biological warfare program capable of delivering anthrax through 'drones of death' threatens neighbouring countries and will soon threaten the whole region. Biological terrorism - the use of deadly bacteria and exotic viruses to destroy, maim, infect or incapacitate the enemy - is now widely acknowledged to be inevitable." Or so the cover claims...

Tom Mangold and Jeff Goldberg have certainly produced one of the best books on the subject of biological warfare that has been written in the past few years. Whilst other books, like Ken Alibek's *Biohazard* have addressed the Russian biological weapons program in depth, this is the first book which has provided a comprehensive review of not only the Russian program but also the Iraqi program, the North Korea program, the South African program and to a lesser degree, biological terrorism. Indeed, the authors have built on Alibek's book and provided an update on both the Russian program and the Trilateral Process, which was established to close it down.

Written in a typically journalistic style, the book is comprehensible and easy to read. Unlike much of the current writing in newspapers and the popular literature on the use of biological weapons, and despite the claims on the cover, this enthralling, balanced and comprehensive review neither believes nor sensationalises its subject. For all those with an interest in either military medical history or biological defence, this is an essential text to have in your library.

1. Reviewed by Andy Robertson
2. Preston R. *The Hot Zone*. Sydney: Doubleday; 1994-334 pp.
3. Reviewed by Andy Robertson
4. Mangold T. Goldberg. *Plague War: A true story of biological warfare*. London Macmillan Publishers Limited: 1999. (ISBN 0 333 71614 0)