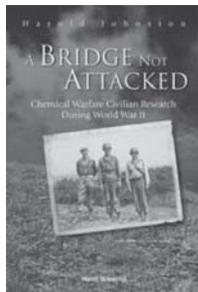

Book Reviews

By Mr. Reid Kirby



A Bridge Not Attacked: Chemical Warfare Civilian Research During World War II, Dr. Harold Johnston, World Scientific Publishing, 2003.

Unfortunately, this book escaped my attention when it was first published, but it is available in paperback now and well worth reading. Dr. Johnston writes of his personal involvement in World War II chemical warfare research with the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC) at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and Berkeley. Official histories are available, but *A Bridge Not Attacked* offers more of an oral history and adds depth to the people involved.

The title, *A Bridge Not Attacked*, is after the poetic reasoning of Dr. Johnston's mentor, Professor Roscoe G. Dickinson, who introduced the research mission to his graduate students at Caltech by saying, "We are guarding a bridge that may never be attacked; we hope it will not be. If it is not attacked, our work has succeeded."

The first part of the book is an autobiography of the author, and subsequent chapters have biographical sketches of the other researchers presented. Caltech researchers investigated sulfur decafluoride (Agent Z or S-10), cyanides, and monitoring equipment used in field trials. There is also a considerable presentation of micrometeorology investigations made by the group. Although not the focus of the book, the Chemical Warfare Service appears in several recollections of ironic situations. The search for a chemical proving ground and the experiences of researchers in the field trials at Mount Shasta, Dugway Proving Ground, Bushnell, and San Jose Island make up the later half of the book. One of the interesting facts that the author offers is the percentage of fatalities attributed to war research within the NDRC, which was comparable to the percentage of fatalities suffered by the military at large (1.7 percent and 1.8 percent, respectively).

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