

BOOK REVIEW: David Neft

The Old Core

by John Gunn, J. & J. Publishing, 1992

404 Brighton Springs, Costa Mesa, CA 92627), \$19.95 (California residents add \$1.60 in state sales tax)

John Gunn, a veteran newspaper reporter and a retired U.S. Marine Corps Reserve colonel, has written a history of major Marine Corps football from its start just before World War I to its end at the conclusion of World War II. Despite its compact size (198 pages, 5 1/4" X 8 1/2" page size), this hardcover volume is really two books in one, a reference work and a prose history.

The reference material is very well done and is a major addition to historical football research. There are rosters, schedules, game scores, awards, post-football achievements of the players, a terrific list of the Marine Corps V-12 football players in World War II (and the colleges they attended before, during, and after military service), and some photographs. All serious students of football history should add this book to their library.

The text is interesting but less successful than the information listings. The main problem is that Col. Gunn is such a booster of USMC football that he sometimes loses perspective.

For example, he says that "Frank Goettge, one of the greatest of the Marine players, rejected a New York Giants' offer in 1925 that might have made him as famous as Red Grange." Such over-zealous hype makes it difficult for the reader to evaluate how good some of these players really were.

A second problem is the absence of accounts of actual games, particularly where USMC teams played college elevens. There could have been space for this material because Col. Gunn tends to mention the list of players in the text and then repeat the rosters in the reference listings.

However, the flaws in The Old Corps are small compared to the achievements. This is a most welcome addition to our knowledge of the history of football in the United States.