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German Military Tradition and the Expert Opinion on Werner Mölders: Opening a Dialogue among Scholars

KLAUS SCHMIDER

Abstract
Since their foundation in 1955, the armed forces of Germany have struggled to find a compromise formula that might allow them to integrate elements of recent German military history into a corporate image which is both modern and democratic. Specific guidelines to steer this process have often been left deliberately vague, leading to some questionable choices with regards to the *Bundeswehr's* relationship with military personalities of the Third Reich – both living and dead. A new set of ministerial guidelines from 1982 managed to strike a practical compromise between the need to visibly disassociate the armed forces from individuals obviously at odds with the democratic system on the one hand, and the desire to maintain a tradition that still has a place for martial qualities on the other. In the late 1990s, this balanced view was increasingly challenged in a number of ways by extreme left-wing groups, with the remainder of the country's political class showing an obvious reluctance to take sides. This was partly due to the perceived need not to compromise the brittle consensus established with regards to the *Bundeswehr's* first overseas operations, but also the simple fact that visibly siding with a cause that is dear to the armed forces rarely makes for a vote-winner in present-day German society.

It is this article's contention that when these developments culminated in a controversy over the wisdom of using the name of World War II fighter ace Werner Mölders for *Jagdgeschwader* (Fighter Wing) 74, the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* (MGFA; Military History Research Institute) in Potsdam discharged its duties in a manner which stands in strange contrast to its otherwise exemplary scholarly track record.

Furthermore, the article endeavors to draw attention to the fact that the expert opinion produced by the institute – and which was the main

rationale for depriving JG 74 of its honorific title – has since been challenged so comprehensively by independent scholars that a stage has been reached where it is the *Forschungsamt's* reputation, rather than that of Werner Mölders, which is at stake.

Keywords
Braatz, Kurt; *Bundeswehr*; Condor Legion; Dietl, Eduard; Ebro battle; *Fürstenfeldbruck* academy; German military tradition; Guernica; Hagena, Hermann; JG 74; *Luftwaffe*; MGFA; Mölders, Werner; Schneiderhahn, Wolfgang; Spanish Civil War; Stieglitz, Klaus-Peter

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Introduction

When the Berlin wall was bulldozed into history and Germany was reunited, few people asked themselves any hard questions about the future of the *Bundeswehr* (the armed forces of Germany). It was obvious that the end of the Cold War would facilitate a large-scale reduction of the army in particular, thus facilitating the re-direction of a substantial part of the tax *Deutschmarks* dedicated towards this end. As for any future missions, virtually no one thought in terms that went beyond the occasional blue-helmeted United Nations mission. Eighteen years after these momentous events, we are nowhere nearer to having an answer to this question than we were back then. By and large, German politicians of most factions have shown an increasing appetite for deploying German troops abroad while at the same time going out of their way to ensure that the *Bundeswehr* should keep a very low, unwarlike profile. The former tendency took the form of intervention in Kosovo ("to prevent another Auschwitz")[1], a pledge to stand by the United States in Afghanistan that was cast in rhetoric which would not have been out of place in the Germany of 1914 ("Germany's security will have to be defended at the Hindukush")[2], and constant, almost routine, pledges to stand by Israel in case of aggression from a Muslim power (probably given in the secret knowledge that Israel is perfectly capable of looking after its own security)[3].

All this sabre-rattling stands in stark contrast to the instruction, training, and rules of engagement which German troops receive prior to deploying into theater. At the *Bundeswehr's* own university in Munich where its officer candidates study for their degrees, modern military history leads an existence barely worthy of the term "marginal": interested

1. In the words of the then foreign minister, Josef Fischer (24 January 1999).
2. In the words of defense minister Peter Struck (4 December 2002).
3. A commitment reinforced by the German chancellor during Benjamin Netanyahu's recent visit to Berlin. See *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 28 August 2009, pp. 1, 4.

students browsing through the lecture timetable are invariably referred to the section devoted to the optional curriculum of "*Studium Plus*." This is a disparate collection of seminars comprising subjects ranging from theology to the biology of marine mammals, out of which students are free to choose a couple at their own discretion.[4] This will usually (though not always) include the odd seminar on military history. In theater, the Rules of Engagement issued to German troops when they began operating in Afghanistan all but ruled out the victorious outcome of a firefight, because they only allowed for return fire and specifically prohibited engaging a retreating enemy who had dropped or lost his weapon.[5] Very much in keeping with such doctrine, in March of 2004 army units gave ground before a Kosovar mob in Prizren in a manner which was not too different from the way in which the Dutch battalion had conducted itself at Srebrenica.[6] The navy also deployed to Lebanon in 2006 and to Somalia more recently with instructions that seemed to place a premium on avoiding any form of clash rather than fulfilling its assigned task. Last but not least, the commitment to "defending Germany at the Hindukush" appears to have cooled off significantly in recent years, with German refusal to deploy even helicopters to Helmand province on a temporary basis leading to a souring of relations with the United Kingdom and the United States.[7]

While a case could be made for German society not being quite ready yet to support military missions involving more than a minimum of human and material cost, its politicians do not appear to be in any hurry to show visible support of their own for the armed forces. The newly-planned Berlin memorial for soldiers killed in action since 1955 is virtually hidden from view and in fact will only be publicly accessible for a few official ceremonies; the first swearing-in ceremony for recruits in front of the *Reichstag* (the German parliament) was nearly torpedoed by the veto of the Berlin department for parks and meadows and the pathetically feeble protest this caused among the country's top politicians;[8] the attempt to finally give the *Bundeswehr* a gallantry medal was solved by

4. See <www.unibw.de/sowi/institute>.

5. "Wie robust darf es denn sein?," by Eckart Lohse, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 5 July 2009, p. 6. A month after this article was published, a number of alterations were made to the ROE.

6. "Grob beschönigt. Aus dem Versagen lernen und schweigen: die Bundeswehr nach den März-Pogromen im Kosovo," by Peter Carstens, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 August 2004, p. 3.

7. "Das Afghanistan-Abenteuer," by Konstantin von Hammerstein et al; "Sterben für Kabul," by Susanne Koelbl; both in *Der Spiegel*, 47/2006, pp. 20-30, 34-44.

8. "Fremde Soldaten. Deutschlands Nichtverhältnis zu seiner Armee," by Paul Nolte, *Der Spiegel*, 48/2008, pp. 184-185. Arguably the first mainstream media article to tackle the problem of the relationship between modern German society and its soldiers head-on, it is without doubt destined to become a classic.

creating a beefed-up version of the "medal of merit" which is awarded for longevity of service – re-introducing the Iron Cross of 1813 was seen as too politically risky.[9] This litany of embarrassments could of course be written off as a sorry – though not necessarily exceptional – tale of a political class hopelessly out of its depth; what makes it relevant for the readers of *Global War Studies* is the way in which one of these episodes led to history being mixed up with politics and a widely respected institute for historical research inflicting damage to its own reputation.

For obvious reasons, the German armed forces of the 1950s faced a major problem in dealing with the question of how to create a corporate image which would do justice to the record of previous German armies in general and the *Wehrmacht* in particular. Virtually all officers and most senior NCOs which made up their cadre in 1955 had served in the war and had thus experienced the toboggan ride of *Blitzkrieg* victories, increasing attrition, defeat, disarmament, a spell in a POW camp, return into civilian society, and finally re-enlistment under the watchful eyes of an increasingly anti-militaristic society. Though their professionalism and anti-communism made them a definite asset in the eyes of NATO, the views of the recent past held by quite a few of them are best described as ambivalent.[10] This appeared to make their integration into the army of a democratic state challenging to say the least.[11] It was to this end that a couple of staff officers in key positions developed the doctrine of "*Innere Führung*," which stressed the idea of a "citizen in uniform" who did his duty out of the perceived need to defend the newly constituted democracy against a well-defined threat and not because a military system based on unquestioned obedience told him to.

Even so, the question of how to relate to the *Wehrmacht's* deeds and misdeeds still remained to be answered. Both the first doctrinal pamphlets purporting to deal with this subject as well as the defense ministry's first formal directive on tradition in 1965[12] all but avoided the sub-

9. "Tapferer als zu erwarten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 July 2009, p. 1.

10. It was with a view to weeding out the worst "problem cases" that officers applying for a position of major and above were questioned by screening boards, which lay great stress on ferreting out each candidate's views on the July plot against Hitler. The best account of how these boards came to be set up is still Donald Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross: The Search for Tradition in the West German Armed Forces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 136-147.

11. A priceless anecdote which gives an idea of the attitude prevailing among some of the first generation of *Bundeswehr* officers is given by Eric Brown, *Wings on My Sleeve* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2006), pp. 236-237. Brown served as Head of the British Naval Air Mission with the German Navy from 1958 to 1960.

12. "Bundeswehr und Tradition," Erlass vom 1. Juli 1965. Bundesminister der Verteidigung Fü B I 4 – Az 35-08-07, in Loretana de Libero, *Tradition in Zeiten der Transformation: Zum Traditionsverständnis der Bundeswehr im frühen 21. Jahrhundert* (Pader-

ject by stressing the need to reconnect with values and beliefs which had always been part of German military tradition and which had been compromised by the Hitler regime. Linked to this was the hope that in due course the *Bundeswehr* would develop a tradition of its own. In the meantime, the decision to use names of soldiers who had distinguished themselves during the Third Reich for the naming of barracks and bases was effectively left to the initiative and discretion of subordinate military commanders and the lord mayors of local communities. The one thing that was made unambiguously clear by the 1965 directive was the equal importance of moral commitment to a democratic regime as well as the "military virtues" (sense of duty, patriotism, leadership skills) without which a high degree of military effectiveness would be unachievable.

A major reassessment of this policy was initiated by the so-called Rudel affair of 1976. One of the *Luftwaffe's* wings had invited Stuka ace Hans-Ulrich Rudel to a dinner night which was also attended by a senior politician of the opposition Christian Democratic party. Rudel was well known to have been a Neo-Nazi sympathizer who had never reconciled himself to Germany's political transition after 1945. On being questioned by journalists about the wisdom of this invitation, *Luftwaffe* general Walter Krupinski (himself a highly decorated fighter pilot) attempted to make light of the whole affair by comparing Rudel's recent past with that of the chief whip of the ruling Social Democratic party, who had been a Communist party member in the 1930s. The upshot of all of this was the sacking of Krupinski and a renewed debate about what sort of past should be seen as "acceptable" for the *Bundeswehr*.

After several years of public controversy, the defense ministry under Hans Apel produced a new decree on tradition in 1982[13] which predictably failed to satisfy either *Bundeswehr* conservatives or the left-wing fringe of his own party which had demanded the abolition of both the military salute and swearing-in ceremonies. In stark contrast to the 1965 decree, its successor stressed the need for an intellectual dialogue with the past and the need to use the values enshrined in the German constitution as the gauge against which to measure personalities and deeds from the past. Even though it failed to specifically name periods of German history deemed to be more worthy of commemoration than others, it stated unambiguously that the Third Reich could not serve as a foundation stone for a German military tradition of the present. The *Waffen-SS*, though not the *Wehrmacht*, was singled out for special refer-

born: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), pp. 212-217.

13. "Richtlinien zum Traditionsverständnis und zur Traditionspflege in der Bundeswehr." Gültiger Erlass vom 20. September 1982. Bundesminister der Verteidigung Fü S I 3 – Az 35-08-07, reproduced in de Libero, *Transformation*, pp. 218-224.

ence as being beyond the pale. Even though senior politicians of the Christian Democratic/Liberal coalition which was voted into office only weeks after the publication of the decree initially threatened to alter or even abolish it, in the end it was left as it was. In due course, the three services endeavored to take their cue from Apel's work. This would lead to a greater emphasis on periods or personalities of German history which had already been previously deemed to be carriers of values compatible with a democratic Germany, such as the reformers of early 19th century Prussia, the 20 July 1944 plotters against Hitler, as well as traditions generated by the *Bundeswehr* since its inception (the so-called "three pillars"). Over and above this, the question needed to be addressed whether the current practice with regards to the naming of ships, barracks, or fighter wings was still compatible with the new decree. This was a fairly straightforward business for the navy since the majority of its ships – in keeping with a tradition dating back to the days of the Kaiser – bore the names of cities or provinces.[14] The army faced rather more of a dilemma since the lack of specific guidance in the 1950s and 1960s had led to some questionable choices. The decision to use the names of army generals from the Second World War was certain to cause problems if only because by virtue of their rank they belonged to the elite group most likely to have been morally compromised by its proximity to Hitler.[15] Even though recent research has tended to vindicate *Generalfeldmarschall* Erwin Rommel both with regards to his likely complicity in the July plot as well as his repeated refusal to carry out illegal orders,[16] the same cannot be said of mountain warfare expert *Generaloberst* Eduard Dietl. Over and above his recently discovered views on intermarriage between his soldiers and Scandinavian women – extreme even by the standards of the Third Reich[17] – there is the simple

14. Names of military heroes were mostly reserved for battleships, battlecruisers, aircraft carriers, and heavy cruisers, which no longer figured in the *Bundesmarine's* order of battle. The only exception to this rule were the three U.S.-built Charles F. Adams-class destroyers, which were phased out in the 1990s.

15. By far the most comprehensive analysis of this multi-layered subject is Johannes Hürter, *Hitler's Heerführer. Die deutschen Oberbefehlshaber im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion 1941/42* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006).

16. The claim by de Libero, *Transformation*, p. 73, that Rommel is nothing but a "Widerstandsphantom" (essentially, bogus resister) ignores the latest research. See Sönke Neitzel, *Abgehört. Deutsche Generale in britischer Kriegsgefangenschaft 1942-1945* (Berlin: Propyälen, 2005), pp. 60-62. For his refusal to carry out orders contravening international law, see Horst Boog et al., *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Vol. 6, *Der globale Krieg. Die Ausweitung zum Weltkrieg und der Wechsel der Initiative 1941-1943* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1990), p. 620 as well as Peter Lieb, *Konventioneller Krieg oder NS-Weltanschauungskrieg? Kriegführung und Partisanenbekämpfung in Frankreich 1943/44* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), pp. 152-153.

17. Dietl had circulated an order describing Finnish and Norwegian women as "racial flotsam." In the end, *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler – hardly known to be a moderate

fact that he was practically a founding member of the Nazi Party and as a young officer refused to aid the civil power in crushing the 1923 coup attempt against the Weimar republic.[18] The barracks in Füssen named after him in 1964 eventually had its name changed to Allgäu-Kaserne in 1995. What needs to be highlighted at this point is that during the more than seven years which the debate over his name raged, the facts about Dietl's early Nazi party membership and his ambivalent role in 1923 were already known. Even so, a number of conservative politicians persisted in fighting what was essentially a lost battle against their better knowledge by constantly referring to Dietl's folksy nature and martial virtues. It would appear that after all this wasted and misguided effort, the sense of defeat was so overpowering that nobody in any position of influence felt inclined to start searching for, say, a World War I veteran of the mountain troops who might combine an admirable military record with rather less weighty political "baggage" and hence might serve as an example to young recruits. It may also have reflected the simple fact that the *Bundeswehr's* own tradition, no matter how strenuously invoked, was not yet in a position to furnish a name over and above the two it had so far provided in the forty years of its existence.[19] Instead, the completely meaningless "Allgäu" (the region Füssen is located in) was chosen.

It is at this point that we need to turn to the air force and its handling of the Mölders affair.

The Werner Mölders Controversy

Werner Mölders (1913-1941) belonged to the comparatively small first generation of *Luftwaffe* fighter pilots who, having joined the army or (in a few cases) the navy before 1933, were in a position to draw maximum benefit from extensive peacetime training and the intervention in the Spanish Civil War. Some of these men were already squadron leaders at the beginning of World War II and after a reshuffle in the middle of the Battle of Britain, then went on to become *Gruppenkommandeure*[20] or *Geschwaderkommodore*,[21] where they were able to exert an increasing

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when it came to racial politics – had to intervene to have it rescinded. See the excellent biographical sketch by Winfried Heinemann, "Eduard Dietl. Lieblingsgeneral des 'Führers,'" in Ronald Smelser and Enrico Syring, eds., *Die Militärelite des Dritten Reiches. 27 biographische Skizzen* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1995), pp. 99-112.

18. Dietl was among the first 160 individuals to join the party. Heinemann, "Lieblingsgeneral," pp. 100-102.

19. *Feldwebel* Erich Boldt was killed in 1961 when he shielded two recruits from an exploding charge; *Oberleutnant* Ludger Hölker rode his jet down in 1964 rather than let it crash into a town. A *Bundeswehr* facility each is named after them. De Libero, *Transformation*, pp. 81-82.

20. A *Gruppe* was made up of three *Staffeln* (squadrons), totalled approximately forty aircraft, and was usually commanded by a *Hauptmann* or Major.

21. A *Geschwader* was made up of three *Gruppen*, totalled approximately 120 aircraft,

influence over the waging of the *Luftwaffe's* way of war at the operational and policy level. Mölders stood out from among this group for a number of reasons: German top-scorer in the Spanish Civil War, second soldier of the *Wehrmacht* to be awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knights Cross (September 1940), second soldier of the *Wehrmacht* to be awarded the Swords (June 1941), first soldier of the *Wehrmacht* to be awarded the Diamonds (July 1941), first fighter pilot to top 100 kills[22], and *Luftwaffe* top scorer throughout much of the fourteen months between May 1940 and July 1941. He also had a contributory role in the development of the "finger-four" formation, which gave German fighter pilots additional tactical flexibility and which was subsequently copied by all the worlds' major air forces. A devout Catholic, Mölders preferred to keep a certain distance between himself and the regime. Allegations that he had clashed with Hitler and Göring over the conduct of the air war and the harassment of the Catholic Church emerged as early as the winter of 1941/42 (weeks after his death in an accidental plane crash); the evidence available to support this, however, was mostly circumstantial. After his death, the fighter wing he had commanded until July 1941 (*Jagdgeschwader* 51) was given the honorary title "Werner Mölders"; in 1973 the same title was awarded to *Jagdgeschwader* 74 of the West German Air Force after an admittedly perfunctory research into his personal background.

The starting point for the Mölders controversy was the 60th anniversary of the German bombing of the Basque town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Although the devastation caused by the attack (between 200 and 300 fatalities) did by no means constitute a sea change in the history of air warfare,[23] the attendance of the correspondent of *The Times* (London), George Steer, guaranteed that it would become a byword for willful massacre of innocents virtually overnight.[24]

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and was usually commanded by an *Oberstleutnant* or *Oberst*.

22. On being grounded on 15 July 1941, his score stood at 101 kills, plus fourteen in Spain. The next pilot to exceed a score of 100 was *Oberst* Günther Lützow (24 October 1941).

23. On 13 June 1917, a daytime raid on London by twenty Gotha bombers dropping four tons of bombs left 162 people dead; C.M. White, T*he Gotha Summer: The German Daytime Air Raids on England, May-August 1917* (London: Robert Hale, 1986), pp. 218-219. In the case of Spain, the first nine months of the war had seen the targeting of urban areas by both sides right from the start, with the Republicans actually flying more sorties and inflicting more casualties during the period in which they enjoyed air superiority (summer and early autumn 1936). So far, only one scholar has attempted to analyze the issue of aerial bombing in Spain as a whole, while taking into account the context of both sides' political, operational, and propaganda priorities; Robert Stradling, *Your Children Will Be Next: Bombing and Propaganda in the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008).

24. Nicholas Rankin, *Telegram from Guernica. The Extraordinary Life of George Steer,*

This was compounded by the bumbling attempts of the Nationalist leadership to claim that most of the destruction had been perpetrated by retreating Republican troops, a transparent lie which was quickly seized on by a Republican propaganda machine which was incomparably more skillful than its Nationalist counterpart. The painting produced by Pablo Picasso for the Paris World Fair then sealed Guernica's status as a 20th century icon. Rather predictably, the town's place in history as a memorial to the victims of Fascist aggression in the 1930s and 1940s, or the increasing victimization of civilians in the wars of the 20th century in general, became intertwined with the Condor Legion's alleged deliberate targeting of civilians and/or a Basque cultural shrine[25] on that April afternoon. A thorough refutation of this idea by a historian of the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* (MGFA; Military History Research Institute) in 1975,[26] while gaining credence among contemporary historians, failed to make much of an impression on the disparate coalition of publicists and politicians on both sides of the Iron Curtain to whom Guernica seemed to be the obvious vantage point from which to contextualize all of Germany's wrongdoings in the 20th century.

It is in this context that a public apology to the citizens of present-day Guernica from German President Roman Herzog in 1997 during an official visit has to be seen. In the aftermath of this visit, a campaign was initiated by parties from the left-wing political spectrum in Germany which aimed to call into question the morality of using the names of Condor Legion veterans as props for a politically acceptable military tradition.

The two most vocal groups were the then *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus* (PDS) and *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*. The former was the relabelled communist party which had ruled East Germany until 1990, while the latter were a product of the peace movement of the 1980s; although *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* had since travelled a politically bumpy road and had been forced to shed some of their more extreme views (among other things, after a great deal of soul-searching, they would vote for the *Bundeswehr's* participation in the 1999 NATO air campaign in Kosovo), their old anti-military agenda still shone through on many occasions. On the afternoon of Friday, 24 April 1998 these efforts finally bore fruit when both parties' factions in the *Bundestag* (the German parliament) found themselves in the majority due to most deputies having

War Correspondent (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), esp. pp. 114-147.

25. Guernica is home to an ancestral oak tree under which each new Spanish monarch had to swear allegiance to the laws guaranteeing the autonomous status of the Basque Country. The practice was discontinued after the central government's victory in the Third Carlist War in the 1870s.

26. Klaus A. Maier, *Guernica 26.4.1937. Die deutsche Intervention in Spanien und der "Fall Guernica"* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1975).

left for the weekend. Accordingly, a motion that called for the discontinuation of any form of commemorative use of names of Condor Legion veterans was carried with only one vote cast against it. It is important to realize that this did not translate as yet into anything legally binding. The defense ministry could choose to ignore it or act on it in any way it deemed appropriate. What is interesting is that this attempt by two minority parties with a long history of hostility to all things pertaining to the western military alliance to redefine the etiquette of German military tradition was not met by a robust response in the following weeks and months by the parties then making up the overwhelming majority of the *Bundestag*.[27]

The odds against such a move became considerably more daunting on 27 October 1998. On this date, a coalition government of Social Democrats and *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* with Gerhard Schröder at the helm was sworn in after their electoral victory four weeks previously. The Social Democratic faction had so far been vaguely supportive of the campaign against the *Bundeswehr's* use of veterans' names, but had until now shied away from unambiguously casting their lot with Greens and Socialists. From now on, support for or opposition to the April motion on the part of the Social Democrats was bound to impact on the internal politics of the coalition, which formed the basis of the federal government. For the next five and a half years the matter rested there until at some point in early 2004 the MGFA was given the task to produce an expert opinion (*Gutachten*) to examine whether the name Mölders was still representative of the core values of the present-day *Luftwaffe*. In April 2004, a television documentary provided the critics with additional momentum when it made claims about his involvement in "war crimes" in Spain. Since he was physically absent from Spain during the bombing raid on Guernica, the village of Corbera d'Ebre (a locality which changed hands repeatedly during the Ebro battle in the summer of 1938) had to make do instead. At some point in November/December 2004 the decision was finally made by defense minister Peter Struck (him of Hindukush fame) – who had been in receipt of the expert opinion since July/August 2004 – to go ahead with the name change both in the case of the fighter wing as well as the barracks; it was formally announced on 28 January 2005. Remarkably, over the following months and years officials who found themselves in the position of having to justify this move did so in a highly inconsistent manner: some would refer to the *Bundestag* motion of 1998, others to the expert opinion furnished by the MGFA in June 2004, others finally to an alleged incompatibility of Mölders' personality with the *Bundeswehr's* 1982 directive on tradition

27. Social Democrats (SPD), Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU), Liberals (FDP). The government was made up of the latter two.

in the modern German armed forces. As already discussed, the first reason is manifestly untrue. The third can claim at least a degree of credibility: the *Luftwaffe* actually made a little-noticed (and it might be added, strictly irregular) alteration to the original text of the 1982 ministerial directive on tradition, thus changing the meaning of a key paragraph to indicate that only soldiers from the post-1945 era are worthy of serving as pillars of tradition. Interestingly enough, this begs the question as to why both JG 74 as well as the three *Luftwaffe* wings and the barracks still named after World War I fighter aces[28] were not subjected to a purge as early as a quarter century ago. Obviously, neither the 1982 directive nor the 1998 *Bundestag* motion can be seen as valid reasons for the decision to terminate the Mölders tradition in the *Luftwaffe*. It is at this point that we need to turn to the role played by the author of the expert opinion, Lieutenant Colonel Wolfgang Schmidt, and – by extension – the MGFA.

The MGFA was founded in 1957 and is part of the *Bundesministerium der Verteidigung* (Ministry of Defense). Its mission over the last fifty years has been on the one hand to support and advise all three services of and institutions within the *Bundeswehr* on historical issues, and to pursue purely scholarly research on the other. Currently, the former task is in the hands of the "*Ausbildung-Information-Fachstudien*" (training-information-specialized studies) department, while the latter is carried out mostly by the "*Forschung*" (research) department. While "*Forschung*" has so far always been headed by a civilian, the MGFA as a whole is run by a career officer of the rank of full colonel or brigadier. Over the last 20-30 years, World War II has been very much at the center of the MGFA's efforts, with the well-received 13-volume series *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg* (Germany and the Second World War) being something of the institute's flagship. Presently, the focus is shifting, with only one of the four sub-departments of "*Forschung*" dedicated to the period of both world wars. Other activities have included the organization of numerous conferences and workshops, the hosting of foreign and domestic speakers, the publication of a peer-reviewed journal, the edition of new sources in electronic form as well as hard copy, and the upkeep of an excellent and user-friendly website. Both in terms of sheer productivity as well as size (it currently employs thirty-eight full-time historians and librarians), the MGFA is without a doubt in a class of its

28. The World War I aces are Max Immelmann (*Aufklärungsgeschwader* 51), Oswald Boelcke (*Jagdbombergeschwader* 31), Manfred von Richthofen (*Jagdgeschwader* 71), and Wilhelm Frankl (*Luftwaffe* barracks Grünau/Neuburg a. d. Donau). Readers looking for information on the lives of these pilots should turn to Norman L. Franks, Frank W. Bailey, and Russel Guest, *Above the Lines: A Complete Record of the Fighter Aces of the German Air Service, Naval Air Service and Flanders Marine Air Corps, 1914-1918* (London: Grub Street, 1993).

own in Europe. Since it inherited the burdensome mantle of pre-war German military official history,[29] conflicts as to the shape and form of the future "officially sanctioned" (as opposed to "official") history were bound to arise; by and large these have been beneficial rather than harmful and historians at the MGFA have enjoyed greater leave to criticize their own side and disagree amongst themselves than most of their colleagues abroad. It is probably quite symptomatic that the volume of *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg* which, in its day, caused the greatest strife within the institute was also the one which by a wide consensus has had the greatest historiographical impact.[30] By the turn of the millennium, the MGFA had carved out for itself a reputation for impartiality, level-headedness, and diligent work, which meant that turning over the Mölders issue to it was without a doubt a decision acceptable to both the bulk of the defenders as well as detractors of the deceased fighter ace.

Dr. Schmidt, while an accomplished scholar in a number of fields,[31] had very little in his publication list which would have made him a natural choice for handling the subject of either World War II air power in the European theater of operations or the ideological commitment of the *Wehrmacht's* middle-ranking officer corps to the Third Reich. The MGFA had among its historians a number of noted experts on World War II; additionally, Dr. Horst Boog, though already retired from the MGFA, was – and still is – widely acknowledged to be one of the premier experts on the *Luftwaffe* in the Second World War and was still un-

29. Even though the MGFA does not stand in a direct line of succession to the pre-war *Reichsarchiv*, the parallels between the two organizations are obvious. The *Reichsarchiv* (literally “Imperial Archive”) was founded in October 1919 as a result of the Versailles Treaty decreeing the dissolution of the General Staff (including its military history section). Even though it went on to produce scholarly works of note, political pressure led it to side-step thorny subjects like Germany's road to war in 1914 or the "stab-in-the-back" conspiracy which allegedly led to Germany's defeat in 1918. A comprehensive and balanced history of German official military history in this period is provided by Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik: Der Erste Weltkrieg. Die amtliche deutsche Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1915-1956* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2002).

30. Horst Boog et al., *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Vol. 4, *Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983), includes chapters which deal extensively both with Nazi Germany's predatory agenda for the occupation of the USSR and the issue of the Red Army's possible plans for a pre-emptive strike.

31. See Wolfgang Schmidt, *Eine Stadt und ihr Militär. Regensburg als bayerische Garnisonsstadt im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Regensburg: Mittelbayerische Verlags- und Druckgesellschaft, 1993); Wolfgang Schmidt, "'Maler an der Front'. Zur Rolle der Kriegsmaler und Pressezeichner der Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg," in Rolf-Dieter Müller and Hans Erich Volkmann, eds., *Die Wehrmacht. Mythos und Realität* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag 1999), pp. 635-684 as well as his recent contribution to Bernd Lemke, Dieter Krüger, Heinz Rebhahn, and Wolfgang Schmidt, *Die Luftwaffe 1950 bis 1970. Konzeption, Aufbau, Integration* (München: Oldenbourg, 2006).

der contract with the MGFA to write chapters on the air war for the remaining volumes of *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*. Dr. Schmidt's appointment was rendered even more irregular by the fact that requests for expert opinions are usually passed on to the "*Ausbildung-Information-Fachstudien*" department and are in the normal run of things only delegated to "*Forschung*" in the event that a member of the latter department should already be a subject matter expert. This was most manifestly not the case in this instance. Dr. Schmidt delivered his expert opinion after working on it for approximately three months. It ran to a total of forty pages (about 15,500 words); it examined both Mölders' career in the 1930s and 1940s as well as the way in which his name had come to be chosen by the post-war *Bundeswehr* for a barracks, a destroyer, as well as a fighter wing. A comparative dearth of sources[32] did not stop Dr. Schmidt from reaching some fairly damning conclusions. Mölders' Catholicism is made out to be either a post-war construct or an indication of his commitment to fight for a criminal regime (the author seems undecided on this score)[33]; furthermore, he stands accused of willingly acquiescing in the use of his name for propaganda purposes and his virtues as a leader of men are seen as being of a purely military nature,[34] i.e. limited to military matters only and without allowing for the political implications of one's actions (in this case, serving a regime bent on conducting wars of expansion and aggression). His alleged help for opponents/victims of the regime (a French POW, a Jewish classmate, and the bishop of Münster) is dismissed with a sleight of hand as "unsupported by any evidence" and hence, "almost certainly the invention" of interested parties. Interestingly enough, a problematic piece of evidence – Mölders's bestselling 1941 memoirs ghosted by his friend Fritz von Forell – turns into exhibit A for the prosecution when it happens to suit the author. The accounts given therein of close air support missions flown for Nationalist Spanish forces during the Ebro battle (summer 1938) are seen as proof positive that Mölders carried out his missions in a manner "devoid of all inhibitions" while "willingly accepting the death of non-combatants."[35] In his conclusion, Dr. Schmidt admitted that the

32. Neither Mölders' personal file nor the war diaries of the fighter units (*Jagdgeschwader* 51 and *Jagdgeschwader* 53) in which he fought in 1939-41 survived the war.
33. See *Gutachten*, pp. 28, 39-40. For a complete version of the *Gutachten* (expert opinion), refer to Hermann Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders. Die Würde des Menschen reicht über den Tod hinaus* (Aachen: Helios Verlag, 2008). In the work, the author preserves the pagination of the original *Gutachten*.
34. The author's choice of words is an interesting one at this point: even in a purely military context, virtues such as courage, discipline, and willingness to serve are deemed to be of "secondary" relevance only and are hence described as "*militärische Sekundärtugenden*."
35. *Gutachten*, p. 14.

available evidence on which to base any judgement was "meagre," but nevertheless had no problem in seeing him as a soldier "eager to conform to the regime's expectations."[36] Any positive traits were strictly limited to a purely military sphere and hence unacceptable for the present-day armed forces of Germany.

Last but not least, the author of the expert opinion contended that the research carried out by the *Bundeswehr* in the late 1960s/early 1970s into Mölders' war record appeared to have been exceptionally superficial and not commensurate with the political weight of such a decision. Since – in contrast to the case of Mölders' background – the author was able to back up this finding with plenty of documents from that period, it is difficult to question his analysis on that score.

Public reaction to the removal of JG 74's name was mainly limited to editorials in a couple of conservative newspapers and outrage from (mainly retired) officers, but also included Hans Apel, Social Democratic defense minister from 1978 to 1982. Contrary to standard policy, the MGFA finally acquiesced to post the entire document on its website in April 2005. It crucially failed to include, however, the directive from the ministry of defense which had led to Dr. Schmidt being tasked with putting together the expert opinion in the first place.

A move virtually guaranteed to keep public interest alive came from an unlikely direction. In February 2006 *Generalmajor* Thomas Gericke, general officer commanding Fürstenfeldbruck *Luftwaffe* academy in Bavaria took it upon himself to remove all the street names honoring airmen from the early decades of flight in his base and replace them with the generic term "*Luftwaffe* street." A majority of the names in question were those of German airmen of World War I and World War II, but also included some civilians as well as non-German fliers. Gericke justified this at a press conference with the need "to keep in touch with the political mainstream." In retrospect, this may well have been the beam that broke the camel's back. Over the previous months, both defense minister Struck and the *Bundeswehr's* senior soldier, *Generalinspekteur* (Chief of the Federal Armed Forces Staff) Schneiderhahn had either refused to discuss the Mölders issue or had been evasive at best in their statements. The new defense minister, Franz Jung (CDU)[37], while forced by coalition politics to tread very carefully, now went on the record in April and August 2006 with statements to the effect that the Fürstenfeldbruck purge had been "unfair" and "indiscriminate." Shortly thereafter (February 2007), the son of a friend of the Mölders family made public

36. Ibid., p. 39.

37. On 22 November 2005 a new government based around a coalition of Social Democrats (SPD) and Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) was formed. It was – and at the time of writing still is – presided over by Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU).

the discovery of two letters proving conclusively that the fighter ace had indeed shielded his father and grandparents from the harassment they were being subjected to as "half-Jews." Almost concurrently, documentary evidence emerged which indicated that ghostwriter Fritz von Forell, (portrayed as a rabid National Socialist in the MGFA's *Gutachten*) had himself fallen foul of the repressive apparatus of the regime in the last year of the war.[38] The progressive deterioration of the rationale behind the name change imposed on JG 74 and the refusal of the minister to take an unambiguous stance brought about a situation in which the top military leadership decided on a form of damage control which was as bizarre as it was ill-advised. In view of the *Generalinspekteur's* unwillingness to stick his neck out,[39] the *Inspekteur der Luftwaffe*, *Generalleutnant* Klaus-Peter Stieglitz, had to step into the breach instead. Appropriately enough, the venue was the MGFA itself, where he addressed the staff and assorted guests on 22 November 2007.[40] Despite the obvious context of his speech, he chose to address the Mölders issue only in an introductory sentence and dealt with the German soldier's self-image in the 21st century instead. According to the *Inspekteur*, the German military are in a position completely different from that of their peers in other countries. The latter, shackled by oaths which are essentially a leftover from a bygone age, unquestioningly allow themselves to be shipped off to missions they know little about and care even less for. Their German comrade, on the other hand, "retains his status as a discerning citizen, to whom the defense of his people, the law, and liberty are absolutely paramount." Any doubts as to the kind of yardstick the general had in mind when he came up with this interesting comparison are dispelled by the paragraph which makes it quite clear that the tradition currently practiced by British and French regiments is "devoid of a differentiated analysis" and commemorates events "which are completely out of place in our armed forces in a democracy."[41] The very idea of military feats of any kind being acceptable pillars for a tradition seems to be one that does not sit well with him. By and large he appears to reject it outright, but at one point seems to be willing to make an exception for the *Luft-*

38. For these developments, see Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders*, pp. 158-163.
39. General Schneiderhahn was merely on record as stating that the matter of using the names of *Wehrmacht* veterans who, while deserving individuals, were not known to have participated in acts of resistance against the regime required "very careful handling" ("Aber man muss sehr behutsam damit umgehen"). See interview in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 13 March 2005.
40. "Die Bedeutung von Geschichte und Tradition für die Luftwaffe im 21. Jahrhundert." Rede des Inspekteurs der Luftwaffe Generalleutnant Klaus-Peter Stieglitz anlässlich des Besuches beim Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt in Potsdam am 28. November 2007; accessed from <www.mgfa.de> on 2 February 2008.
41. Stieglitz, "Geschichte und Tradition," p. 11.

waffe's brief appearance in the skies over Serbia in 1999. Given the lack of a UN mandate for this mission and his earlier stress on the need for German soldiers to defend international law, this is quite a remarkable admission; it stands to reason that his parochial interests as an airman briefly got the better of him.

In the end, seeing as the Stauffenberg plot or the military reform movement of the 19th century did not feature a sizable involvement by the air force, general Stieglitz' idea of a tradition for the *Luftwaffe* in the 21st century rests on only one pillar: the role played by the *Luftwaffe* in assorted emergency relief operations since the 1960s. For good measure, the mere act of belonging to the same club as other air forces of NATO and the alliance with the U.S. are also highlighted as "core elements" of the *Luftwaffe's* corporate image.[42] It is perhaps no surprise that with such an innovative approach to redefining the very concept behind tradition the general should have felt the need to emphasize that the *Luftwaffe's* "code of conduct" (*Verhaltenscodex*) has made the mere mention of the word "tradition" superfluous.[43]

He finished his address by admonishing his predecessors and, by extension, their senior subordinates for "not doing their homework":[44] their alleged failure to properly implement the *Luftwaffe's* version of the 1982 directive had led to a completely unnecessary controversy. In the meantime, one of Stieglitz' fellow airmen had been quietly putting the finishing touches to his own homework.

Brigadier General (retired) Hermann Hagena had served in the *Luftwaffe* from 1956 to 1989 and become an adviser to various aeronautical enterprises afterwards. A JG 74 veteran himself, he set out to write a detailed rebuttal of the MGFA's expert opinion in 2005. The end result of this endeavor saw the light of day in March 2008 fresh from the printing presses of the small Helios publishing house.[45] The author's degree in international law has left a clear imprint on the book's structure: it reads like a lawyer's brief rather than an orthodox biography and presupposes at least a minimum of previous knowledge on the general subject of the *Luftwaffe* of the *Blitzkrieg* years. It is a book which is also unashamedly partisan – the wording of the title[46] makes it clear that Mölders' "dignity"

42. The problems which would inevitably arise from slavishly following the theory of the "three pillars" had been accurately predicted by Winfried Heinemann, "Militär und Tradition," in Sven Gareis and Paul Klein, eds., *Handbuch Militär und Sozialwissenschaft*, 2nd revised edition (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), pp. 449-458.
43. Stieglitz, "Geschichte und Tradition," p. 14.
44. Ibid., p. 15.
45. Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders.*
46. "Die Würde des Menschen reicht über den Tod hinaus" roughly translates as "the dignity of man transcends his death."

(*Würde*) has been sullied – and should be read with this cautionary note in mind. Having said that, the author has gone to considerable lengths to produce a book which is readable and, through its excellent structure, very user-friendly, with the idiosyncratic placing of the index being the only minor quibble. The three main chapters deal with the allegations regarding Mölders' time in Spain, his Catholic faith, the helping hand he offered to victims of the regime, as well as the inconsistencies and contradictions of the *Bundeswehr's* concept of tradition in general and that of the air force in particular. Anyone not already familiar with all the ins and outs of the case will certainly applaud the author's idea to include a chronology at the back of the book, which is an invaluable tool to navigate one's way through all the countless memos and press statements which littered this affair. A documentary appendix includes both a copy of the 1982 ministerial directive and the MGFA's expert opinion. The latter is a particularly welcome addition since the original was removed from the MGFA's website a few months ago. The accusations levelled at Mölders over his time in Spain are little more than meat on the table to Hagena; both the expert opinion as well as the television documentaries that preceded it had struggled with the twin problems that Mölders had neither been a bomber pilot nor even been in Spain during the notorious Guernica raid. Instead, the fact that he had aided and abetted air warfare against the Spanish civilian population in a general sort of way had to do with his part in the Ebro battle being singled out for special attention. Even though Hagena manages to make a good case for Guernica having been nothing more than a case of battlefield interdiction gone wrong (at the time of the attack, the frontline was only ten kilometres away and the town the most likely route of retreat for a large body of Republican troops)[47], he then goes on to analyze the role of air power in Spain more specifically. He completely discredits Dr. Schmidt's claim about "tens of thousands" of civilians being killed in the Ebro battle[48] by making quite clear that it was fought over a mostly rural area interspersed with a few villages and a couple of small towns (Gandesa and Flix). A factual morsel, which while admittedly not quite basic A-level knowledge for any serious student of modern warfare, it is made relevant enough by Dr. Schmidt's choice to link this particular charge to the image of a battlefield teeming with civilians; effort expended on some additional research would most definitely have been time well spent.

The academic equivalent of a killer blow, however, comes in the guise of something so sorely lacking from the MGFA's expert opinion: an untapped primary source. In early 1938 the Republican government had asked the League of Nations to send a military mission to Spain which

47. Hagena, *Werner Mölders*, pp 25-30.
48. *Gutachten*, p. 13.

would be in a position to make an impartial record of the damage inflicted by Italian and German bombers on Republican urban areas. Their report[49] arrived at the conclusion that both the small numbers of aircraft usually involved as well as the bombing patterns pointed towards a doctrine which prioritized the destruction of specific targets like bridges or railway stations. In the case of the Condor Legion, this should come as hardly a surprise since this exactly reflected the *Luftwaffe's* doctrine for air warfare at the time, which called for a well balanced combination of air defense, close air support, and strategic bombardment of selected targets.[50] The nearest Franco's allies ever got to unleashing their bombers against the civilian population in the way air theorist Giulio Douhet had preached was the series of raids which the *Regia Aeronautica* flew against Barcelona between 16-18 March 1938.[51]

In the following chapter, Hagena again produces sources which dispute another of Dr. Schmidt's main allegations: that Mölders' membership in the Catholic youth group "*Neudeutschland*" should somehow be seen as indicative of his zeal to lay down his life for the "*Führer*" at the earliest opportunity. Public statements from some of the group's leading clergymen as well as some of the Nazi Party's vitriolic reactions to them lay bare the antagonism which existed between both organizations. While this could of course be called into question by pointing out that it does not necessarily say a great deal about his personal attitude, the next chapter deals with deeds as opposed to thoughts and feelings. Witness statements as well as two surviving handwritten letters which Mölders sent to the family of his "half-Jewish" classmate Georg Küch prove that Mölders intervened with someone in an official position to stop the harassment to which Küch's family were being subjected. The photograph of himself with personal dedication which he sent to Küch is further evidence of the lengths to which he was willing to go in order to offer visible support to his friends.[52] In the case of Mölders intervening with *Luftwaffe* C-in-C Hermann Göring to prevent the punishment of a French

49. "Commission chargee de l'enquete sur les bombardements aeriens en Espagne," in *Societe des Nations Journal Officiel*, vols. 19 and 20 (1938/1939).
50. For a thorough discussion of the 1935 *Luftwaffendienstvorschrift* (L.Dv.) 16, see James S. Corum, *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War, 1918-1940* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1997), pp. 124-144.
51. The Italian foreign secretary and *Regia Aeronautica* officer Galeazzo Ciano is quite candid about the purpose of these raids in his diary: his father-in-law, Benito Mussolini, ordered them with a view "to collapse the morale of the Reds while the troops are advancing through Aragon" ("…per piegare il morale dei rossi, mentre le truppe avanzano in Aragona"). See Renzo di Felice, ed., *Galeazzo Ciano. Diario 1937-1943* (Milano: Supersaggi, 1994), p. 115 (entry for 20 March 1938). For a recent Italian assessment of these attacks, see Ferdinando Pedriali, *Guerra di Spagna e aviazione italiana* (Roma: Aeronautica militare italiana, Ufficio Storico, 1992, rev. ed.), pp. 351-355.
52. Hagena, *Mölders*, pp. 72-83, 158-160.

civilian, Edmond Caron, who had ill-treated him on his capture in France in June 1940, Hagena himself is unsure of whether this actually occurred in the manner described by a number of popular authors[53] and very properly points out the missing links in the chain of evidence to his readers. In recent months, however, new primary sources have come to light in France which prove Mölders' intervention on behalf of his captor who had been languishing in Siegburg jail since his arrest on 2 October 1940 and the subsequent sentencing to twelve years' hard labor.[54] Last, but not least, Hagena addresses any support Mölders may have given the bishop of Münster, Cardinal Clemens August Graf von Galen, who in three sermons (13 July, 20 July, 3 August 1941) launched withering attacks against the regime in general and its policy of murdering patients with disabilities in particular. Popular authors have asserted that in order to keep the Gestapo off the cardinal's back, Mölders intervened in his favor during the audience he had with Hitler on being awarded the Diamonds to his Knight's Cross (17 July 1941). Evidence supporting this claim emerged in early 2006 in the form of the original diaries of the cardinal's secretary, Heinrich Portmann, which had formed the basis for his postwar memoirs.[55] Two entries told the story of how a member of JG 51 actually turned up at the diocese to ask for copies of the sermons and that according to a functionary at the ministry of justice, Mölders had intervened in von Galen's favor. On being confronted with it, the MGFA informed Hagena in a letter from June 2007 that likely as not, any interest on the part of Mölders stemmed not from his concern for the fate of the cardinal, but fear of himself being subjected to medically sanctioned murder in case of an incapacitating wound.[56]

Hard on the proverbial heels of Hagena's defense of Mölders followed a book which was completely different in focus, yet complemented it in an almost ideal way. Author Kurt Braatz had been a successful media advisor before taking early retirement, founding a small publishing house and establishing himself as a freelance author. After editing four memoirs of *Luftwaffe* fighter pilots and writing a biography of *Oberst* Günther Lützow (1912-1945),[57] he made the decision to follow these up with

53. Ernst Obermaier and Werner Held, *Jagdflieger Oberst Werner Mölders* (Stuttgart: Motorbuch Verlag, 1993), p. 18.
54. The documentary record of this intervention can be traced back to the insistence of Caron's employer writing to numerous French and German officials in order to bring about the early release of his works manager. See Archives départementales de l'Oise, 33W8242.
55. Heinrich Portmann, *Der Bischof von Münster. Das Echo eines Kampfes für Gottesrecht und Menschenrecht* (Münster: Aschendorf, 1947).
56. Hagena, *Mölders*, p. 63.
57. Kurt Braatz, *Gott oder ein Flugzeug. Leben und Sterben des Jagdfliegers Günther*

a book on the hotly debated figure of Werner Mölders. Unlike Hagena, he did not propose to write a point-by-point rebuttal of the MGFA's expert opinion, but a full-length biography,[58] an idea made practical by Mölders' widow granting him access to their correspondence as well as a diary Mölders kept between the years 1932 and 1936. Though heavily footnoted, it is a highly readable book with numerous graphics and contemporary photographs. Newcomers to the subject who might drown in the profusion of *Luftwaffe* wartime jargon can turn to a glossary and a list of acronyms for help. Given his priority of writing a proper biography, Braatz spends considerable time on Mölders' childhood and youth before moving on to the young man's first impressions of National Socialism. The diary and correspondence make it clear that Mölders was no opponent of the regime, but certainly reveal a sense of creeping unease coming over him, especially when the unavoidable conflict of interests between church and regime begins to take shape. In Spain (April to December 1938) his focus appears to have been mainly on flying and fighting without giving the politics of the conflict much thought; this did not preclude him, however, from stating respect and even admiration for the feats of an outgunned enemy. Once the action moves from Spain back to Germany, Braatz addresses a subject which was at the core of the MGFA's expert opinion, but featured only briefly in Hagena's account. While to Dr. Schmidt, Mölders had been a willing tool of the regime's propaganda machine, Braatz has unearthed new evidence which suggests that Mölders in fact dragged his heels over this particular issue for as long as he possibly could. By the simple expedient of quizzing the son of Mölders' ghostwriter, Fritz von Forell, the author was directed to the repository of the entire wartime correspondence between Mölders and Forell: the archive of the *Landschaftsverband* Westfalen-Lippe in Münster.[59] It proves beyond a reasonable doubt that Mölders not only ignored the first summons from the *Luftwaffe's* propaganda department to put pen to paper, but then hand-picked his close friend Forell because he felt he would be able to exert greater influence through him than anyone else and in this fashion make sure that the credit was equally shared by all

Lützow (Moosburg: NeunundzwanzigSechs Verlag, 2005). Lützow was *Kommodore* of *Jagdgeschwader* 3 from August 1940 to August 1942 and spent the rest of the war in a succession of important staff positions. Braatz' biography of him dispels the myth perpetuated in many memoirs that the pilots of the fighter arm always kept a united front in the face of Göring's incompetence.

58. Kurt Braatz, *Werner Mölders. Die Biographie* (Moosburg: NeunundzwanzigSechs Verlag, 2008).

59. The fact that the author in a number of footnotes fails to fully spell out the name of the archive holding this treasure trove is an annoying omission which will need to be rectified in an upcoming revised edition.

members of his unit.[60]

On the issue of Mölders' help for victims of the regime, Braatz turned to the records of post-war de-Nazification trials to provide additional proof of his intervention in the Küch case; he thus managed to identify the dignitary he successfully appealed to (the lord mayor of Brandenburg, *SS-Sturmbannführer* Wilhelm Sievers).[61] With regards to the Galen case, he voices a couple of misgivings, mainly because of the timing involved (Galen had yet to deliver two of his three sermons when Mölders spoke to Hitler) and the fact that the messenger of JG 51 arrived at the cardinal's office after Mölders had ceased being the commander of the fighter wing.

Paradoxically, the sources needed to clarify the issues deemed to be most contentious by the MGFA's expert opinion (Mölders' help for the Küchs and his willingness to become a propaganda tool) were easily accessible in French and German archives. Retracing his steps as a pilot and wing commander turned out to be a much greater challenge for Braatz and might well have been completely inpractical but for the letters provided by the widow. This holds true particularly for the last four months of his life. On being grounded after his 101st victory, Mölders lost command of his fighter wing and was promoted to fill the position of "*General der Jagdflieger*" (General of the fighter arm) instead. This was the equivalent of an inspector general of the fighter arm (including close support aircraft) who served as a link between front-line units and the *Luftwaffe* High Command, thus ensuring (in theory) uniformity in doctrine and a speedy feedback of the latest combat experience to the key decisionmakers in Berlin. Being *General der Jagdflieger* carried the twin burden of very limited powers and having to deal routinely with a C-in-C (Göring) known to be both capricious and work-shy. Partly as a result of this, the post was not held in particularly high esteem and had become something of a revolving door within the *Luftwaffe* bureaucracy (prior to Mölders brief tenure, it was held by five officers in as many years). Since virtually no paperwork from this post survived the end of the war, Mölders' private letters are absolutely key to achieve even a tenuous grip on his thoughts and actions at the time. Whether by circumstance or by design, he appears to have mainly stayed away from his new office and instead called on virtually every front-line unit in order to assess their views of the military challenges at hand. This was capped by a brief return to combat duties when he was given command of a small task force of fighters and close support aircraft spearheading the invasion of the Crimea by 11th *Armee* (November 1941). It was from this position that he was recalled to Berlin and killed in the crash of the Heinkel

60. Braatz, *Mölders*, pp. 166, 179, 202, 226-227, 250-251, 266-272.
61. Ibid., pp. 289-292.

taking him there. A relatively minor bone of contention between Dr. Schmidt on the one hand, and many defenders of Mölders on the other, was the extent to which the newly-appointed *General der Jagdflieger* realized on taking office that Germany was in serious danger of being overwhelmed in the air by sheer numbers in Russia,[62] as well as the number of aircraft and quality of pilots taking to the skies in North Africa and Western Europe, and raised these issues with Göring. According to some authors, he even sounded a clarion call about the prospect of a combined Allied bombing offensive against Germany's cities in 1942/43. His private correspondence certainly confirms that by October 1941 he was massively concerned about the strain put on the fighter wings in Russia and even began to voice private doubts about the *Luftwaffe's* capabilities to persevere in this theatre alone. More far-reaching conclusions can be inferred from this, but as yet remain unproven.

Braatz obviously has striven to give the reader a "warts and all" picture, and, by and large, he succeeds – the final chapter on the squabbling which ensued after Mölders' death over the expected monies from his recently-published memoirs makes for particularly unedifying reading. It is only his accusation of Mölders alleged "moral corruption" by his proximity to Hermann Göring[63] which this author found unconvincing, because it is not supported with any evidence. If anything, he then goes on to provide evidence to the contrary.[64]

In taking stock of the results of Hagena's and Braatz' research, the first conclusion that comes to mind is that the "very careful handling" demanded by *Generalinspekteur* Schneiderhahn in this matter appears to have been conspicuously absent from the process which led to the presentation of the MGFA's expert opinion. As matters stand right now, virtually every accusation levelled at the personality of Werner Mölders

62. On the *Luftwaffe's* part in Operation Barbarossa, the first sources to turn to are still Horst Boog's chapters in volume 4 of *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*. See Boog et al., *Angriff auf die Sowjetunion*, pp. 277-318, 652-712, 821-828. Boog's contribution has been complemented in recent times by Christer Bergström and Andrey Mikhailov, *Black Cross, Red Star: The Air War Over the Eastern Front*, Vol. I, *Operation Barbarossa, 1941* (Pacifica, CA.: Pacifica Military History, 2000) as well as Christer Bergström, *Barbarossa: The Air Battle, July-December 1941* (Surrey: Ian Allan, 2007). The last two volumes incorporate a large number of formerly inaccessible Soviet sources and accounts.

63. Ibid., pp. 241-242.

64. See especially a completely new version of a confrontation with Göring, which according to the memoirs of Adolf Galland, had taken place between him and the *Luftwaffe* C-in-C. It has been immortalized in a scene from the film *Battle of Britain*, Dir. Guy Hamilton, Perfs. Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine, Spitfire Productions, Motion Picture, United Kingdom, 1969, "I respectfully ask the Reichsmarschall to re-equip my unit with Spitfires;" Braatz, *Mölders*, p. 285.

has not just been challenged, but turned against those making them. A question mark still hangs over the issue of the support which Mölders may or may not have given Cardinal Galen and this will most definitely require further research. It has to be admitted in all fairness that the research which the ministry of defense carried out in anticipation of using Mölders' name in the late 1960s was every bit as superficial as the effort put into producing the expert opinion of 2004 and may thus have served as a precedent of sorts. Even so, there is no getting away from the fact that two freelance writers working on their own time have managed to run rings around the MGFA with its formidable reputation and half a century of historiographical excellence. The extent to which Dr. Schmidt was personally responsible for this or was put in a position where his options were limited either through political pressure or inadequate allocation of resources is quite immaterial; the moment the MGFA attached its seal to the expert opinion the failure became systemic.

When set in a wider context, the Mölders affair is but a symptom of a wider malaise afflicting German society. Its armed forces find themselves in a period of transition where the need for a military tradition which is not limited to mere rescue operations is more important than ever. After all, the consensus to defend the integrity of the national territory made necessary by the Cold War has vanished and German soldiers find themselves in a position where the likelihood of encountering a host of different enemies abroad, who, while not constituting an existential threat to the German nation, need to be taken seriously just the same, is increasing. At the same time, the willingness to accept a military tradition which will provide them with the sort of corporate identity that might see them through a Srebrenica-like situation is not in evidence among the country's political class – witness the recent reaction to the swearing-in ceremony in front of the *Reichstag*. Instead, views are gaining credibility which espouse a tradition solely based on the *Bundeswehr's* history and which even call into question the wisdom of using politically "safe" names like those associated with pre-1933 armies or those of *Bundeswehr* generals with a World War II record (no matter how transparent).[65]

In 1982, Hans Apel had encouraged the military to engage in a dialogue with the past. Insofar as the armed forces can be said to have faced their past much more unreservedly than say the police or judiciary in post-1945 Germany, it is probably fair to say he has succeeded. Individual gaffes like naming the Füssen barracks after *Generaloberst* Dietl can be traced back to a number of key players yielding to the temptation of appreciating only certain aspects of an individual's existence, thus effec-

65. For a good example, see de Libero, *Transformation*, pp. 17, 56, 82.

tively separating him from his life and times. In the case of Mölders, much the same – though in reverse – appears to have happened. Unlike the politicians and journalists who took it upon themselves to defenestrate Werner Mölders, both the MGFA and Dr. Schmidt had the tools and the training to avoid this pitfall.

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New Research on the British Empire and the Second World War: Part I

ASHLEY JACKSON, ed.

Abstract
This joint article is the result of a one-day workshop on the British Empire and the Second World War held in Oxford in April 2009. It offers an insight into a distinct and growing field of historical research through the work of nine scholars. Individual sections examine the Caribbean contribution to the war; the history of Caribbean naval forces; the evolution of Anglo-American strategic relations; Anglo-Irish relations in the light of the Dominion's wartime neutrality; the course of the East Africa campaign; the African experience during the war from the perspective of "voices from below;" the war experience of the Indian home front; the training and doctrine of the wartime Indian Army; and the growth and employment of Allied forces in Iran. The history of the British Empire and the Second World War is a subject of increasing interest to scholars of America and the war because of America's rise to world power and its increasing wartime involvement in hitherto little-known parts of the world such as the Caribbean, Africa, and Iran.

Keywords
Anglo-American; Anglo-Soviet; British Empire; Churchill, Winston; Cunningham, Lieutenant General Alan; de Valera, Eamon; East Africa campaign; Home front; India; Indian Army; Iran; Iraq; Ireland; Logistics; Platt, Lieutenant General William; Race; Recruitment; Russia; South Africa; Strategy; Trinidad; Trinidad Naval Volunteer Reserve; Tuker, Major General Francis; U.S. Army; Wavell, General Sir Archibald; West Indies; Wilson, General Sir Henry Maitland

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Introduction

On 3 April 2009, a workshop on the British Empire and the Second World War convened at Mansfield College, Oxford. Held in the year of the seventieth anniversary of the outbreak of the war in Europe, the

event was sponsored by the Defence Studies Department of King's College London and *Global War Studies* (then titled *World War II Quarterly*). Seventy years before, Britain had been about to launch its largest aircraft carrier, HMS *Illustrious* (5 April 1939), and Britain, France, and Poland were about to sign the mutual assistance pact (6 April 1939) that took the western allies to war five months later. The papers given at the workshop are presented here as individual essays for readers of *Global War Studies*.

The joint article resulting from the workshop offers readers an insight into a distinct field of historical research that has witnessed something of a boom in recent years, and to a range of Second World War themes that cover many regions of the world. The article offers readers of *Global War Studies* an opportunity to preview cutting-edge research into the history of the British Empire and the war currently being conducted by a range of British scholars.[1] All of the scholars involved are developing their essays into academic books and book chapters.

The article's individual essays variously examine the Caribbean contribution to the war; the history of Caribbean naval forces; the evolution of Anglo-American strategic relations; Anglo-Irish relations in the light of the Dominion's wartime neutrality; the course of the East Africa campaign; the African experience during the war from the perspective of "voices from below;" the war experience of the Indian home front; the training and doctrine of the wartime Indian Army; and the growth and employment of Allied forces in Iran.

Athough the essays are extremely varied in terms of their focus and geographical spread, some broad themes emerge that allow the article to be divided into four sections. The first section looks at strategic and political relations between Britain and America and between Britain and Ireland. Section Two examines the war effort of the British West Indian colonies. Section Three considers military operations and soldiers' experiences in Africa and the Middle East. Section Four addresses the Indian home front and the training and doctrine of the Indian Army.

Section One: Strategic and Intra-Allied Relations

Anglo-American Strategic Relations

by Greg Kennedy

It is unquestionably the case that the relationship between Great Britain and the United States of America was the most important strategic part-

1. A tenth scholar, Jahan Mahmood, presented original research at the workshop. His paper, "Britain's Pakistani Communities and their Contribution to the Italian Campaign of World War II," was published at <masud.co.uk/ISLAM/bmh/BMH-Britains-Pakistani-communities-and-their-contribution.htm>.

nership of the last century. The 1900s were the Anglo-American century. Militarily, economically, industrially, and geographically dominant, the two nations were the main instigators behind both positive and negative forces dictating the pattern of conflict for the century. Today, that truism is no less apparent, particularly given the nature of the conflicts which have occurred over the past fifteen years. No other pair of nations have collaborated, competed, and conspired to the same extent, on such a wide array of issues, over such an extended period of time.[2] There is indeed something special about that relationship. Special does not mean inevitable, however, nor does it mean right or natural. Today, the debate still rages as to whether Britain is better off with Europe than America, or whether America even appreciates its relationship with the middle power Britain. The closeness of this strategic relationship creates jealousy, animosity, anger, and suspicion, as well as loyalty, tolerance, admiration, and understanding, and that is just within the Labour Party.[3] It

2. Joel H. Wiener and Mark Hampton, eds., *Anglo-American Media Interactions, 1850-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Jonathan Hollowell, ed., *Twentieth Century Anglo-American Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); David Reynolds, Warren Kimball, A.O. Chubarian, *Allies at War: The Soviet, American and British Experience, 1939-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); Alex Danchev, *On Specialness: Essays in Anglo-American Relations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Alan Dobson, *U.S. Wartime Aid to Britain, 1940-1946* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986); William H. McNeill, *America, Britain and Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict, 1941-1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953); Warren F. Kimball, ed., *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, Vol. I, *Alliance Emerging, October 1933 - November 1942* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Mark A. Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front: American Military Planning and Diplomacy in Coalition Warfare, 1941-1943* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1977); idem., *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005); Randall B. Woods, *A Changing of the Guard: Anglo-American Relations, 1941-1946* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Terry H. Anderson, *The United States, Great Britain and the Cold War, 1944-1947* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1981); David B. Woolner, ed., *The Second Quebec Conference Revisited: Waging War, Formulating Peace: Canada, Great Britain and the United States, 1944-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Donald Cameron Watt, "Britain and the Historiography of the Yalta Conference and the Cold War," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 13, Winter 1989, pp. 67-98; Greg Kennedy, *Anglo-American Strategic Relations, 1933-1939: Imperial Crossroads* (London: Frank Cass, 2002); Iestyn Adams, *Brothers Across the Ocean: British Foreign Policy and the Origins of the Anglo-American "Special Relationship" 1900-1905* (New York: Taurus Academic Studies, 2005); William H. Becker and Samuel F. Wells Jr., *Economics and World Power: An Assessment of American Diplomacy Since 1789* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Robert Self, *Britain, America and the War Debt Controversy: The Economic Diplomacy of an Unspecial Relationship, 1917-1941* (London: Routledge, 2006); G.C. Peden, *Arms, Economics and British Strategy: From Dreadnoughts to Hydrogen Bombs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

3. Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 379 (London: The Institute for Strategic Studies, 2006); Bernard Porter, *Empire and Superempire: Britain, America and the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press,

is argued here that there is and was, however, no cousinliness or overarching racial or cultural imperative for this condition. This condition was the result of a number of ever-present principles, the *realpolitik* if you will, of that relationship.

The most important part of that relationship's development is to be found in the formative period, which occurred during the first half of the twentieth century, before the static forces of the Cold War locked many strategic elements into place in a new, and "artificial," international system that limited the usual give and take, ebb and flow, of states and their international relations. The demands of that bipolar relationship not only froze the antagonists into place, arresting the progress of regional relations, but alliance relationships were also subject to the same limited environment. In the period between 1900 and 1945, and in particular the period from 1914 to 1943, the bedrock of the strategic culture that utilized the principles of the Anglo-American strategic relationship was formed.[4] It was that relationship which would be subject to glacial changes over the period from 1945 to 1975. The influences of those principles are still to be found wandering the corridors of Whitehall and the British policy making process even today, as ideas such as wars of humanity, force for good, and concepts of crusades and imperialism still abound in modern journals and books that form the basis of the intellectual environment of Anglo-American strategic policy making. In Washington as well, the hand of history touches contemporary American policy makers, as debates about imperialism, special relations, and coalitions swirl around the corridors of power. More and more the British Empire and its attendant uses of various forms of power is seen as a possible historic lesson, which, if its secrets are unlocked, might hold the key for future American strategic foreign policy making. Questions of whether the United States is the "natural" evolution of the British Empire, or truly a unique and exceptional experiment, are asked not only by Americans, but by other analysts of international affairs around the world.[5] Thus, un-

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2006); Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2003); idem., *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2004); Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

4. Colin S. Gray, *Strategy and History: Essays on Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2006); Richard Lock-Pullan, *U.S. Intervention Policy and Army Innovation: From Vietnam to Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2005); Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (London: Routledge, 2006); Asle Toje, *America, the EU and Strategic Culture: Renegotiating the Transatlantic Bargain* (London: Routledge, 2008); Alan Macmillan, "Strategic Culture and National Ways in Warfare: The British Case," *Royal United Services Institute Journal*, October, 1995, pp. 32-42.

5. Christopher Meyer, *DC Confidential: The Controversial Memoirs of Britain's Ambassador to the United States of 9/11 and the Run-up to the Iraq War* (London: Phoenix, 2005); Gideon Rachman, "Is the Anglo-American Relationship Still Special?," *Washing-*

derstanding how America and Britain evolved in the first half of the twentieth century, and understanding the individuality of their paths at that time, can aid in demonstrating the foreignness of each country's strategic history, a useful tool perhaps in trying to explain that this condition is still true to a world that sees Britain now as America's poodle.

Every good student knows that in order to answer the question, you have to define it. In this analysis, what is meant by "principle" and "strategic" are important concepts for the reader to have clearly set out. Firstly, principles are not laws. They are assessments of a combination of elements that are usually right when used as the basis for prediction and assumption, but they are not absolute. Julian Corbett is the most famous British academic who has used the concept of principles in the discussion of Britain's maritime strategic condition. There are other models to use in attempting to create a set of guides or rules that encompass the majority of attributes found in a certain context. With Anglo-American strategic relations in the forty-five years under review here, principles are seen as key aspects of that relationship. They were sensitive areas of the interaction, which, if treated crudely or tactfully, properly or improperly, could have changed the very nature of that relationship. And, most importantly, the primary objective of the use of these principles was to obtain closer, more open and more reliable strategic relations. The management of these key areas and the operational working of these principles was the purview of official and unofficial networks, working primarily in the areas of foreign, economic, and defense policy. They were areas governed and run by elites, who, while part of a democratic society, had to acknowledge the boundaries of public opinion on their policy making, but did not have to abide by the fickle nature of the populous to oversee the daily running of those policies.[6]

So, what then is meant by strategic? The concept of strategic relations used here is an all-encompassing one. There is only one strategic level, which by its nature means the coordination of all strategic elements. There is no Grand Strategic or Military Strategic level of war. To separate these areas artificially in such a fashion is to violate the very thing that is supposed to, and must, occur at that level of thought and direction, and that is the consideration of all aspects that are of concern to the conflict at hand. More importantly, this model is historically accurate. The British and American strategic policy making processes being dis-

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ton Quarterly, Spring 2001; Robin Niblett, "Choosing Between American and Europe," *International Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 4, 2007, pp. 627-635.

6. Walter Russell Mead, *God and Gold: Britain, America, and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007); Stephen Badsey, "Propaganda and the Defence of Empire, 1856-1956," in Greg Kennedy, ed., *Imperial Defence: The Old World Order, 1856-1956* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 218-233.

cussed herein did not make that sort of artificial divide either. While the British system of decision making was markedly superior to the American throughout this entire period, that is not the point of this essay. The inputs and expectations of the process of strategic policy making held the same expectations: the creation of a global strategy incorporating all aspects of power within the national framework.[7]

Here, due to constraints on space and time, as well as considerations of the most vital aspects, or centers of gravity, the study will concentrate on three main areas of interaction between the two nations: economics, maritime power, and the mental maps and morals of the nations' foreign policy making. The first two are relatively self-explanatory. In this period the maritime component was the key military aspect of the strategic policy making. The economic power of each was a constant source of power as well, a form of power that was equally able to coerce, deter, embrace, bribe, and attack, as the maritime component did. Indeed, the links between each nation's economic and maritime power creation and utilization abilities were absolute, thus forming an important conjunction of commonality between the two systems that allowed close cooperation, perhaps uniquely special cooperation, but also evoked equally protectionist and hostile responses to any attempts by the other to interfere with the other's management of the maritime or economic environment globally. However, it is on the third aspect, the creation of strategic foreign policy, that there is some need for further clarification. Within that process, the concepts of motives, public opinion, and geography are considered key points for consideration, as well as the institutional cultures of the professional bodies charged with implementing the policies.

When historians view the nature of the strategic relationship which existed between these two English-speaking nations, trying to trace the evolution of it through the main stages of development, they must overcome a number of contemporary influences. The first is the belief that there was somehow a "natural" or pre-ordained destiny that was the rise of the United States to the status of "leader of the free world" or hegemon.[8] This first amongst Great Powers determinism has been contributed to in large part by American historians seeking to persuade others that

7. W.R. Rock, *British Appeasement in the 1930s* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977); Gaines Post Jr., *Dilemmas of Appeasement: British Deterence and Defense, 1934-1937* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

8. Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin, 2004); Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment: The Dilemma of British Defence Policy in the Era of Two World Wars* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1972); W. Wark, *The Ultimate Enemy: British Intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-39* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985); B.J.C. McKercher, *Transition of Power: Britain's Loss of Global Pre-eminence to the United States, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

the exceptionalism and Darwinian selectionism that is the American experience is unwaveringly certain to become a reality. Tinged with many triumphant, crusading episodes of conflict, the American pathway throughout the twentieth century is portrayed as an inexorable journey to the position of being the world's most powerful nation. Most importantly, this journey is seen as being an individualist role: savior of Europe twice, overseer of Latin American freedom and stability, and policeman of the Far East. Seldom do studies of the American involvement in non-total war conflicts of the period under investigation portray America's role as either subservient or cooperative, in a coalition or collective security sense.[9]

On the other side of the equation, the British experience of its relationship with America is portrayed often as one of inevitable decline. From the world's greatest power to a junior partner dwarfed by the massive armies and industries of America and the Soviet Union, in 1945, Great Britain's empire was doomed to implode upon itself in a chaotic rubble of imperial overstretch, organizational malaise, class division, technological ineptitude, and competing visions of empire from the core and peripheral. As for the United States, the jury is divided. Some historians bemoan the fact that the young, Anglo-Saxon nation did not rush immediately to the aid of its Atlantic cousin in both world wars. American aid was instead only given grudgingly and sporadically to noble Britain. What is more galling to these Atlantic Bloc sceptics is the fact that aid had conditions attached, conditions that were to the benefit of the American strategic position. In the light of such betrayal, many argue, Great Britain would have been better off to abandon France and the rest of Europe to German design and strike a separate peace. In so doing, goes this illogical thinking, the British Empire would have been protected and valuable British blood and treasury would not have been wasted while America lapped up the unguarded remnants of the Empire. Such crude attempts to argue for the continued "Greatness" of Great Britain and its empire through isolation fail to understand that the British Empire depended on influencing and controlling the international system of this period through the control of key maritime and economic aspects of that system and thus, through that linkage, was unable to stand alone or aloof from attempts to destroy and disrupt the very fabric of this globalized system. And, in the British efforts of the first half of the twentieth

9. John Baylis, *Anglo-American Defence Relations, 1939-1980* (London: Macmillan, 1981); Wayne S. Cole, *Determinism and American Foreign Relations During the Franklin D. Roosevelt Era* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995); J.D. Doenecke and J.E. Witz, *From Isolationism to War, 1931-1941* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1991); Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: US-Japanese Relations Throughout History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

century to maintain that status quo, the United States, as a maritime power, as a democratic, capitalist, industrial state, and as a non-European, English-speaking nation, geographically only reachable through the use of the sea and with similar but not identical values towards how the international system should be run and why, was the key part of British global security needs.

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The Neutral Dominion: Ireland and the British Empire in the Second World War
by Donal Lowry

At first glance, it might seem odd to classify Ireland as a wartime dominion since, for contemporary outside observers, the Irish official policy of neutrality appeared to negate any meaningful manifestation of dominion status. Most memorably, the decision by Irish *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) Eamon de Valera to sign the German legation's book of condolence on the death of Adolf Hitler, enraged public opinion in Britain and many parts of the Empire-Commonwealth. This further encouraged popular rumors that Ireland had provided secret wartime refuges for U-boats and that it had supported a German victory, while newsreels rarely missed an opportunity to refer to the tellingly German-style helmets of the Irish Army. Such perceptions were not moderated by the widespread awareness of the Irish origins of William Joyce, Lord Haw-Haw, and the Nazi propaganda machine directed at Ireland throughout the war.[10] Not surprisingly, perhaps, in his Victory Broadcast of 13 May 1945, Winston Churchill took considerable time to pour scorn on Irish neutrality, which had gravely weakened British capabilities in the Battle of the Atlantic

10. David O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish Voices: The Story of German Radio's Wartime Irish Service* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale, 1998).

and had almost led to British strangulation:

> This was indeed a deadly moment in our life, and if it had not been for the loyalty and friendship of Northern Ireland we should have been forced to come to close quarters or perish for ever from the earth. However, with a restraint and poise to which, I say, history will find few parallels, His Majesty's Government never laid a violent hand upon them though at times it would have been quite easy and quite natural, and we left the Dublin Government to frolic with the Germans and later with the Japanese representatives to their hearts content.[11]

Churchill then went on to contrast neutrality with the "ancient valour" of southern Irishmen who had flocked to the colors, listing some famous Irish VCs of the war, before expressing the hope that "in years which [he would] not see the shame will be forgotten and the glories will endure, and that the peoples of the British Isles as of the British Commonwealth of Nations will walk together in mutual comprehension and forgiveness."[12] The Northern Ireland government, meanwhile, led by Prime Minister Basil Brooke, played up the contrasting image of Ulster Protestant loyalty for all it was worth, highlighting not least the prominence of such "Ulster marshals" as Montgomery, Alexander, Auchinleck, Dill, and, Brooke's own uncle, Alanbrooke, who was Chief of the Imperial General Staff.[13]

The reality of Irish neutrality was considerably different than these acrimonious post-war exchanges might suggest.[14] De Valera's decision to sign the book of condolence for Hitler, against the pleading of the head of his External Affairs department, was born out of a pedantic and small-minded sense of correct diplomatic procedure rather than any sympathy

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11. "Review of the War" broadcast, 13 May 1945. *The End of the Beginning: Winston Churchill's Great Speeches*, vol. 2 (London: BBC Audiobooks, 2008).
12. Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. VI (London: Cassell, 1954), p. 667.
13. James Loughlin, *Ulster and British National Identity Since 1885* (London: Pinter, 1995), pp. 120-138; Richard Doherty, *Ireland's Generals in the Second World War* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004); Philip Ollerenshaw, "Northern Ireland and the British Empire-Commonwealth, 1923-61," *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. XXXVI, no. 142, November 2008, pp. 227-242.
14. For more recent research on Irish neutrality, see Brian Girvin and Geoffrey Roberts, eds., *Ireland and the Second World War* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000); Brian Girvin, *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45* (London: MacMillan, 2006); Clare Wills, *The Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland During the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007); Eunan O'Halpin, *Spying on Ireland: British Intelligence and Irish Neutrality during the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Michael Kennedy, *Guarding Neutral Ireland: The Coast Watching Service and Military Intelligence, 1939-1945* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2008); Timothy J. White and Andrew J. Riley, "Irish neutrality in World War II: A review essay," *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, vol. 19, 2008, pp. 143-150.

for the Axis, even if this point was understandably lost on contemporaries concerned with far greater global matters than Anglo-Irish relations. De Valera's equally forthright broadcasted response to Churchill, upbraiding him for threatening a weaker neighboring state, as the Nazis had done, belied the high degree of close collaboration between the two countries throughout the war. Space does not permit here a full rehearsal of the extent of cooperation, but a summary would be useful. The release of British and Irish government archives throughout the 1980s and 1990s confirmed the extent of cooperation, which, as the German minister in Dublin, Eduard Hempel, frequently complained, far exceeded the bounds of neutrality.[15] Irish newspapers were heavily censored in order to enforce neutral opinion but, as Viscount Cranborne, secretary of state for the dominions, acknowledged in a report towards the end of the war, throughout the conflict intelligence garnered by the Irish from German prisoners and on Axis aliens was passed on to the British, along with all details about sightings of Axis aircraft and submarines, as well as weather reports and wireless directions facilities crucial to the safe passage of Allied air and naval forces. Colonel Dan Bryan, head of the Irish Army's G intelligence unit, was authorized to provide the British with the utmost cooperation.[16] The British were provided, for example, with an air corridor and while German airmen and sailors were interned for the duration, Allied personnel were frequently allowed to return to their units. Emblematic of this attitude had been the replacement in 1940 of the German-style, but British-manufactured, military helmets with standard British Brodie ones, along with British-style battle dress.[17] Most crucially of all, de Valera's government, Cranborne noted, did not hinder the 70,000 or so southern volunteers who enlisted in the British forces, as well as the 200,000 or so labor migrants who contributed considerably to British war industries. These compared favorably with the 50,000 or so volunteers from Northern Ireland, whose government was acutely embarrassed by the fact that Ulster's sole VC winner, midget submariner James Magennis, who disabled a Japanese cruiser in Singapore harbor in 1945, was a Catholic.[18] Ireland continued throughout to supply Britain with much needed foodstuffs. Pro-German IRA activists were rounded up for trial by military tribunal and in some cases executed. The 1944 epic film of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, starring Laurence Olivier, intended as a wartime morale-booster, was filmed in neutral Ireland, with much of

15. John P. Duggan, *Herr Hempel at the German Legation in Dublin, 1937-1945* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002).
16. See the papers of Colonel Dan Bryan, University College Dublin Archives, P71, and memoir, P109.
17. Ronan Fanning, *Independent Ireland* (Dublin: Helicon, 1983), pp. 124-125.
18. George Fleming, *Magennis VC: The Story of Northern Ireland's Only Winner of the Victoria Cross* (Dublin: History Ireland, 1998).

the arrangements being done by John Betjeman, British press attaché.[19] Such ambiguities of Irish neutrality were humorously encapsulated in a British cartoon depicting two Irishmen manning a tail gun in an RAF bombing raid on Germany. "One thing you can say about Dev," one says to the other, "is that he kept us out of this terrible war."[20]

Such satirical views, however, should not obscure the strong feelings of angry wartime impatience with de Valera felt by the British, the dominions, and, later, the Americans. It should be stressed from the outset that Britain did not officially acknowledge that Ireland was no longer a member of the Commonwealth and it denied its moral, if not legal, right to remain neutral, but Irish neutrality was not only a British problem but an imperial one as well, and an understanding of this requires some knowledge of the background to Ireland's tenuous connections with the Commonwealth by the outbreak of war. Contemporaries were aware that Ireland had been a "restless dominion" ever since the establishment of the Irish Free State in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922 with the equivalent constitutional status of Canada following a guerrilla war against the British. Dominion status lay at the heart of the intra-nationalist civil war that followed the British withdrawal, ending in the defeat of the republican anti-Treatyite faction led by Eamon de Valera. The British retained naval bases on the coast of the Free State, on the explicit precedent of Simonstown in the Cape, which it was thought precluded any meaningful policy of neutrality for the new state. Throughout the 1920s, the Irish Free State cooperated closely with South Africa and Canada to maximize and formalize dominion independence within the Commonwealth, culminating in the Statute of Westminster of 1931.[21]

The imperial government long feared a resurgence of support for de Valera who entered the *Dail* in 1927 at the head of his avowedly republican *Fianna Fáil* party. The British hoped that a more sensitive and equal relationship in military matters might assist the Irish government led by Cosgrave in disarming his republican critics. In the 1932 general election, however, in the midst of global economic uncertainty, Britain's worst fears appeared to be realized when de Valera came to power and pledged to undo the Treaty. While refusing to acknowledge the moral legitimacy of the Treaty, he was able to use both the Statute of Westminster and a favorable judgement by the Privy Council to abolish the internal trappings of a dominion, including the oath of allegiance, the right of appeal to the Privy Council, and the governor-generalship. In 1936-37,

19. Kevin Chappell, "Conflicting views on Irish neutrality," *The Irish Times*, 28 September 2000.
20. *The Economist*, 22 March 2007.
21. David Harkness, *The Restless Dominion: The Irish Free State and the British Commonwealth of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

using the constitutional confusion occasioned by the abdication of Edward VIII, he introduced a new constitution under the new national title of Eire, or Ireland, which claimed sovereignty over the whole island. This constitution was republican in form, if not in name, but crucially and almost simultaneously de Valera's government passed an External Relations Act which retained the king as an instrument in the accreditation of diplomats. These measures, which wholly removed the remaining internal manifestations of monarchy, casuistically retained the Crown in foreign relations, thus somewhat disarming the British government, which, under pressure from the other dominions, chose to regard Ireland externally as a continuing member of the Commonwealth. These constitutional alterations were, moreover, pursued against a tense background of a tariff war, occasioned by de Valera's unilateral decision to withhold land annuities from the British government agreed at the time of the Treaty, as well as his explicit ambition to pursue a policy of neutrality.[22] Initially, British policy scarcely altered, believing de Valera to be a temporary "apparition," but as his internal political position strengthened, more astute British ministers and officials acknowledged that negotiation would be the better course. A crucial factor in this approach was the pressure from the dominions and India.[23]

Despite the Statute of Westminster, on de Valera's coming to power British ministers were infuriated by de Valera's erosion of dominion status, but throughout the 1930s they found their freedom of action in dealing with him hampered not only by Canada, which jealously guarded its dominion status, but even by Australia. An attack on the status of one dominion, however troublesome, could be seen as an attack on all. However, it was not the major dominions of the Irish diaspora that most dissuaded the British from robust action, but fear of crises which it might occasion in two of the most strategic of imperial territories: South Africa and India. Throughout the 1930s, South African pressure proved critical in restraining the British. In 1932, General Hertzog, *Afrikaner* nationalist prime minister, had to face down prominent republican hardliners in his party who urgently telegraphed de Valera expressing their strong support for his position.[24]

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22. Despatch from Eamon de Valera to J.H. Thomas (no. 59), 5 April 1932, National Archives of Ireland, DT S2264.

23. For a more detailed discussion of these factors, see Donal Lowry, "The Captive Dominion: Imperial Realities Behind Irish Diplomacy," *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. XXXVI, no. 142, November 2008, pp. 202-226.

24. State Archives Pretoria, Department of External Affairs, BTS 1/31/1, Charles te Water to Hertzog, 18 May 1932; National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs, DFA 5/211, de Valera to Hertzog, 31 May 1935; State Archives Pretoria, Charles te Water Papers, Hertzog to de Valera, 4 June 1935. See also "Mr. de Valera and Gen. Hertzog – Reply to Appeal on the Oath," *Manchester Guardian*, 9 April 1932; "South Africa

It need hardly be stressed how vital South Africa was in British strategic planning for any future conflict, so that the prospect of prominent politicians advocating a policy of neutrality on the Irish model was a source of grave concern. Both pro-British elements in South Africa and British officials were particularly apprehensive about the impact of the Irish dispute in the event of a European war. "If Ireland hives off," Smuts warned the Dominions Office, "South Africa is sure to follow sooner or later."[25] Sir William Clark, British High Commissioner to South Africa, warned the Dominions Office that Dr. D.F. Malan, leader of the Purified National Party opposition, had demanded an assurance from Hertzog that he would ensure that no discussion of Ireland should take place at the 1937 Imperial Conference without the consent of the Irish Government. According to the South African delegation at the conference, the "extrusion of the Irish Free State from the Commonwealth [was] almost unthinkable," and Hertzog argued at the 1937 Imperial Conference that he would favor the continuance of Ireland as a member of the Commonwealth even if it declared a republic.[26] Malcolm MacDonald, Dominions Secretary, asked N.C. Havenga, one of the South African leaders, whether the new Irish Constitution might encourage *Afrikaner* republicanism, but was assured by him that with a moderate British response it would have the opposite effect by demonstrating that South Africa was "perfectly free inside the British Commonwealth."[27] Still another pressure on British policy towards Ireland in the years immediately before the war came from India. The Marquess of Zetland,

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and Free State – General Hertzog's Message," *The Times*, 9 April 1932; "Interest in Capetown – General Hertzog and the Republicans," *The Times*, 9 April 1932; "Die kabelgramme aan de Valera," *Die Burger* (Cape Town), 11 April 1932; "General Smuts and the Irish 'Family Trouble,'" *Cape Argus*, 18 April 1932; "Anglo-Irish Dispute – General Hertzog as Arbitrator," *Pretoria News*, 2 July 1932.

25. Deirdre McMahon, *Republicans and Imperialists: Anglo-Irish Relations in the 1930s* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 74; Smuts to A. and M. Gillett, 13 July 1932 (University of Cambridge, Smuts papers [microfilm]).

26. State Archives, Pretoria, Department of External Affairs, BTS 1/31/1, Vol. 2: Imperial Conference Minutes, 14 June 1937; Nicholas Mansergh, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of External Policy, 1931-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 270-333; McMahon, *Republicans*, pp. 47-49, 142, and Ch. 10; Robert Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-45* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1983), pp. 30-33; Donal Lowry, "'Ireland Shows the Way': Irish-South African Relations and the British Commonwealth, c. 1902-1961," in Donal McCracken, ed., *Ireland and South Africa in Modern Times* (Durban: University of Durban-Westville, 1996), pp. 104-116; John Bowman, *De Valera and the Ulster Question 1917-1973* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989 edn.), p. 111; Robert Holland, *Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance, 1918-39* (London: Macmillan, 1981), Ch. 9; R. Tamchina, "In Search of Common Causes: The Imperial Conference of 1937," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 1, 1972-73, pp. 81-82.

27. McMahon, *Republicans*, pp. 209, 213; memorandum by Malcolm MacDonald, 4 June 1937, National Archives, DO35/891/XI/72.

Secretary of State for India, regularly attended the British cabinet's Irish Situation Committee, of which he was not a member, due to Irish exemplary influence on Indian nationalists. In 1936, in particular, he warned the cabinet not to make any public declaration that Ireland could leave the Commonwealth of her own volition and without fear of British military retaliation, as this would only encourage Indian nationalists, some of whose leaders, including Chandra Bose, had already visited Ireland on missions of ideological solidarity.[28]

Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin continued to be cautious in his dealings with de Valera, carefully deflecting searching parliamentary questions about whether Irish constitutional changes had negated their Commonwealth membership.[29] In 1938, these contrary pressures from the Marquess of Zetland did not dissuade Baldwin's successor, Neville Chamberlain, from seeking a negotiated settlement of the Anglo-Irish dispute which was brought to an end by a one-off Irish payment of £10m. This settled not only the issue of the land annuities, but of the Treaty ports. Chamberlain had been assured by his chiefs of staff that these were in an obsolete condition and that their forcible retention in wartime against nationalist attacks would drain too many resources. Despite Churchill's passionate opposition, as well as the precedent it might set in South Africa over the Simonstown naval base and other facilities, the ports were handed over to de Valera.[30] Nevertheless, Joseph Walshe, head of the Irish Department of External Affairs, warned de Valera not to lose the "powerful moral support of Canada and South Africa and... Australia," which would be vital in maintaining respect for Irish neutrality in a future war.[31] When war came, the British sought a closer liaison with de Valera, appointing Sir John Maffey, former Governor-General of the Sudan, as a tactfully-titled "British Representative in Eire." This enabled de Valera to pursue a more direct relationship with the British, even if John Dulanty, Irish High Commissioner in London, continued to possess a key influence in restraining British anger. Until the outbreak of hostilities, he had attended regular meetings of dominion high commissioners, even if these made him feel "like a whore at a christening."[32] As Churchill noted in 1939, Dulanty "is thoroughly friendly to England... He acts as a general smoother, representing everything Irish in the most

28. Kate O'Malley, *Ireland, India and Empire: Indo-Irish Radical Connections, 1919-64* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 128-129.
29. B.K. Long, "The Empire: Now," in Sir Arthur Willet et. al., *The Empire in the World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 118.
30. Fisk, *In Time of War*, pp. 1-47, 119.
31. Memorandum on passports from Joseph P. Walshe to Eamon de Valera, 12 December 1938, University College Dublin Archives, De Valera papers, P150/2550.
32. Vincent Massey, *What's Past is Prologue: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, C.H.* (London: Macmillan, 1963), p. 298.

favourable light."[33] De Valera, too, was cautious in not testing British forbearance too far by, for example, refraining from instructing George VI to accredit a new Irish minister in Berlin, as legally he was entitled to do, after the outbreak of hostilities, making do throughout the war with representation by a *charge d'affaires ad interim*.[34]

British apprehensions about an Irish-South African connection appeared to be fulfilled in September 1939 when, in a crucial parliamentary debate on neutrality, Hertzog cited the precedent of Irish neutrality. Meanwhile, *Afrikaner* nationalist university students were greatly inflamed by a pro-neutrality lecture on Ireland given by Eric Louw, friend and admirer of de Valera, at the League.[35] During this fraught time, Smuts, who had replaced Hertzog as prime minister and taken South Africa in the war against Germany, privately advised Churchill to seize the Irish ports.[36] In 1939, South African Minister of Justice Colin Steyn warned Robert Briscoe, a Jewish member of de Valera's cabinet who was visiting local Zionists, that the British had forewarned him of his arrival and that he might further inflame *Afrikaner* nationalist opinion against the war effort.[37] Significantly, however, after the outbreak of war de Valera was careful to cultivate continuing Commonwealth connections by playing host in 1939 to Colonel Deneys Reitz, South African deputy-prime minister, and in 1941 to Sir Robert Menzies, Australian prime minister, both of whom were unable to persuade de Valera to enter the war.[38] In South Africa, meanwhile, the Irish issue continued to find a sinister echo. Throughout 1940-41, *Afrikaner* nationalist leader D.F. Malan drew explicitly on the Irish precedent of neutrality, circulating a draft constitution which would separate South Africa completely

33. McMahon, *Republicans*, p. 24.
34. John P. Duggan, *Neutral Ireland and the Third Reich*, rev. ed. (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1989), p. 74.
35. A. van Wyk, *Vyf dae: oorlogskrisis van 1939* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1985); Eric H. Louw, *Ierland toon die weg aan: Konstitusionele Ontwikkeling Sedert 1921* (Beaufort West: Eric H. Louw, 1939); Andrew Stewart, "The British government and the South African neutrality crisis, 1938-39," *English Historical Review*, vol. cxxiii, 2008, pp. 947-972.
36. T. Ryle Dwyer, *De Valera: The Man and the Myths* (Dublin: Poolbeg, 1991), p. 237; Paul Canning, *British Policy Towards Ireland, 1921-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 275; Smuts to High Commissioner, marked "Most Secret," 13 June 1940, State Archives Pretoria, Smuts papers, A1/143/69.
37. Robert Briscoe, *For the Life of Me* (London: Longmans, 1958), p. 278.
38. National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs DFA235/108: J.P. Walshe to Assistant Secretary, 28 November 1939: Visit of Colonel Reitz; Deneys Reitz, *No Outspan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), pp. 256-260; A. Martin, "An Australian Prime Minister in Ireland: R.G. Menzies 1941," in F.B. Smith, ed., *Ireland, England and Australia: Essays in Honour of Oliver MacDonagh* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1990), pp. 195-200; Robert G. Menzies, *Afternoon Light: Some Memories of Men and Events* (London: Cassell, 1967), pp. 36-43.

from the Commonwealth. In March 1941, he reminded *Afrikaner* republicans that even if the Germans were defeated South Africa could still "follow in the footsteps of Ireland." The *Herenigde Nasionale* Party federal council concurred, calling for *Afrikaners* to take the same road "which Ireland took [since] Afrikanerdom is now unanimous on the breaking of the British connection and the establishment of a republic."[39] The Commonwealth dimension became particularly apparent in early 1944 when, in the tense build up to D-Day, the Americans led an Allied diplomatic offensive in demanding that de Valera expel the Axis legations in Dublin, and de Valera looked to the dominions for support. Not without reason, they feared a leakage of intelligence, for it would subsequently appear that the Germans had advance warning of the Arnhem landing through intelligence relayed through their Dublin legation. John Kearney, Canadian High Commissioner in Dublin, was privately frustrated by Anglo-American handling of the issue, while maintaining public solidarity with the Allies; Australia was unsympathetic to de Valera, as was South Africa, now led by Smuts, who engaged in bitter parliamentary exchanges with Malan, leader of the pro-neutralist nationalist opposition, who had sent de Valera a telegram of support. Ironically, only New Zealand, often thought to be the most docile and loyal of the dominions, dissented from a hostile approach to de Valera, but it found itself pressed by the Dominions Office into a display of Allied and Commonwealth unity on the issue.[40]

As in 1939-40, de Valera rode out this storm of Allied demands. His admirers would later attribute his success in pursuing a policy of neutrality to his diplomatic skills. Yet, for all the difficulties an invasion of his state might have occasioned, it is difficult to see how the British, who with such resolution attacked the Vichy French fleet in Oran in 1940 and combined with the Soviets to invade Iran in 1941, would have been deflected by diplomacy alone. De Valera later confessed that he did not know whether the dominions had any influence on British policy.[41] Un-

39. Nicholas Mansergh, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of the Wartime Co-operation and Post-War Change, 1939-1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 155. Mansergh, it should be noted, at this time, was employed by the British representative, Sir John Maffey, as a British representative in Dublin, alongside John Betjeman, where he was in a unique position to gauge the importance of these connections.

40. Emma Cunnningham, "Ireland, Canada and the American Note," in Dermot Keogh and Mervyn O'Driscoll, *Ireland in World War Two* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004), pp. 144-158; Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1975), pp. 145-146, 153-154; J. Carroll, "US-Irish Relations," *Irish Sword*, vol. 19, 1993-95, pp. 99-100; Kent Fedorowich, "Lord Harlech in South Africa, 1941-1944," in Christopher Baxter and Andrew Stewart, eds., *Diplomats at War: British and Commonwealth Diplomacy in Wartime* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2008), pp. 209, 215-216.

41. Nicholas Mansergh, *Nationalism and Independence: Selected Irish Papers* (Cork:

known to him, they exercised a profound influence in deterring British military action. Neutral and possessing an ambiguous constitutional status, Ireland was still a dominion and was therefore decisively not alone.

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Section Two: The West Indies

The West Indian Contribution to Britain during the Second World War: An Overview

by Robert Lalljie

In his book, *Labour in the West Indies*, Arthur Lewis, the West Indian economist and Nobel Laureate, wrote that Professor Macmillan has written two sentences, which in a nutshell describe West Indian conditions:

> A great many people everywhere show independence on a modest competence; but the masses are poor or very poor, with a standard of living reminding one of the native and coloured communities of the Union of South Africa even more than the peasants of West Africa... A social and economic study of the West Indies is therefore necessarily a study of poverty.[42]

Sir Arthur continued in his own words:

> But in every island where official communities have investigated the earnings of labourers it has been found that they are so

Cork University Press, 1997), p. 191.

42. Arthur Lewis, *Labour in the West Indies* (London: New Beacon Books, 1977), p. 17. In 1936, Professor William Macmillan had written the tract *Warning from the West Indies: A Tract for Africa and the Empire*, subsequently published by Penguin in 1938. See Arthur Lewis, *Labour in the West Indies* (London: The Fabian Society, 1938); Clem Seecharan, *Sweetening Bitter Sugar: Jock Campbell, The Booker Reformer in British Guiana 1934-1966* (Kingston: Ian Randall, 2005); R.A.F. Monograph Manning Plans and Policy Marked Secret; Command 6607, *Report of the West India Royal Commission of Inquiry*, led by Lord Moyne (appointed 1939; report published by HMSO, 1945); Oliver Marshall, *A History of No. 139 (Jamaica) Squadron Royal Air Force* (London: 1968); William Stevenson, *A Man Called Intrepid: The Secret War, 1939-1945* (London: Macmillan, 1976); Wayne Coope, ed., *The Passion of Claude McKay, Selected Prose and Poetry 1912-1948* (New York: Schocken Books, 1973).

> low as just to permit subsistence at a deplorably low level. And evidence of this jumps to the eye in the ragged clothing, dilapidated housing, and undernourished conditions of the masses and their children.[43]

To illustrate West Indian poverty further, Lord Campbell, visiting his family's sugar estate in 1938, asked Mr. Bee, manager of Blairmont Sugar estate in British Guiana: "Why do you house your mules better than your workers?" Mr. Bee answered, "Because it costs money to replace our mules."[44]

Professor Macmillan's "study of poverty" came in 1938. The dire situation under which West Indians lived came to official attention after the riots in the late 1930s, which led to the Royal Commission of Inquiry under Lord Moyne, appointed in 1939. Its findings were so horrifying that publication was restricted and it was only after the war in 1945 that it was published. It found that in parts of the West Indies, pay had not increased in one hundred years since the emancipation of Slavery in 1838! On the other hand, in the hundred years since Emancipation, rising costs and much more were passed on to the populace, and companies made huge profits.

Despite this background of poverty and unrest in the 1930s, heavily influenced by the Great Depression, throughout the Caribbean there was public clamor to join Britain in the fight against Nazism when Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, which presented a delicate problem for the British. The problem was that an amendment to the Army Act passed in 1938 by the Army Council restricted entry to "men of pure European descent."[45] The Navy and Air Force had similar policies. Section 95 of the Air Force act said that enlistment was only open to men of pure European descent. Though "aliens" could be accepted, officers had to be both of pure European descent and British subjects. In the Navy, officers were also limited to British subjects of pure European descent.

Many persons in the West Indies were unaware of these machinations, but West Indians and black students from Cambridge, Oxford, and Newcastle universities who tried to enlist or enroll in the Officers Training Corps complained that they had been barred on racial grounds. Dr. Leo March, a Jamaican-born dentist, wrote to the Colonial Office complaining that his application to join the RAF had been turned down because he was not of pure European descent. Dr. Harold Moody's son, Arundel Moody, an ex-public schoolboy with six years experience in his school's

43. Lewis, *Labour in the West Indies*.
44. Seecharan, *Sweetening Bitter Sugar*, p. 52.
45. Laurie Phillpotts, *The Carribean Effort in World War II* (London: West Indian Ex-Servicemen and Women Association, 1995), p. 3.

Officer Training Corps, was also rejected on the same grounds.

The clamor from the non-white West Indians to fight for Britain's cause, together with the effects of cases like the two previously mentioned, forced the government to "officially" change its position on the racial color bar. On 19 October 1939, announcements were made in the House of Commons and the House of Lords that

> during the present emergency, Indians, Anglo-Indians, Burmans, British subjects from the colonies and British protected persons who are in this country, including those who are not of pure European descent, are to be on the same footing as British subjects of pure European descent as regards enlistment in the Armed forces.... This principle will apply in the case of all three services.[46]

Despite this statement, a month later the Foreign Office advised its Consular Offices that "only offers of service from white British subjects should be considered."[47] The Colonial Office sent a telegram marked "secret" to all colonial governors advising that "it is not desirable that non-European British subjects should come here for enlistment."[48]

The fact that Britain was fighting a war against Nazism, which proclaimed racial superiority, placed her in a difficult position which was intensified when the secretary for the Colonies reported to the Cabinet in its discussions on manpower that there was a "wave of intense loyalty in the West Indies, and this may not be maintained unless suitable openings can be found for utilising the numerous offers of service for military and other duties." The official British policy was to encourage the potential volunteers to stay in their own countries, where, it was stated: "They could render better service by continuing, for the time being, to represent Imperial interests in their own countries of residence."[49]

The West Indian offers of assistance to Britain's cause soon found concrete expressions and Britain reaped unexpected benefits. In 1940, an appeal broadcast by Prime Minister Winston Churchill to the Commonwealth and Empire asked:

> Is this not the appointed time for all to make the utmost exertions in their power? If the battle is to be won we must provide our men with ever-increasing quantities of the weapons and ammunitions they need. We must have and have quickly more aeroplanes, more tanks, more shells and more guns.[50]

46. Ibid., p. 4.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Marshall, *A History of No. 139 (Jamaica) Squadron*, p. 1.

A Jamaican planter, Mr. Alec Gordon, was so inspired by the speech that he quickly started the Jamaican Bombing Place Fund. The Jamaican national newspaper, *The Gleaner*, readily gave its support and assistance. Under the management of Mr. Michael deCordova, *The Gleaner* within ten days collected £20,000. Two local firms, Henriques Bros. and Fred L. Myers & Sons, each donated one bomber. Jamaica's contribution was such as to provide an entire squadron of twelve Bristol Blenheim bombers. Churchill was so moved by this generosity that he had 139 Squadron renamed the Jamaican Squadron "so long as there will be a Royal Air Force."[51] In commemoration of the island's magnificent effort, Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production, presented the *Daily Gleaner* newspaper with a plaque with the inscription:

> In the hour of peril the people of Jamaica (through the Jamaican Gleaner) earned the gratitude of the British nations, sustaining the valour of the Royal Air Force and fortifying the cause of freedom by the gift of bomber aircraft. They shall mount up with wings as eagles.[52]

This was just one expression of the amazing generosity of one people, not free, to their colonisers, now imperilled, the like of which has not been seen before. But it was not just Jamaicans – it was the whole West Indies. They had not come across sudden wealth, but being moved by Britain's plight and Churchill's many broadcasts to the Empire and Commonwealth, these already impoverished people displayed astonishing generosity.

The West Indies quickly supplied Britain with food and clothing for British Forces; more than £75,000 for general war purposes; £400,000 for war charities; an interest-free loan of £1,400,000; essential munitions and raw materials such as oil and bauxite; tanks, aircraft, and surgical supplies.

When Britain's plight was intensified by a lack of manpower and non-white persons were allowed to come to Britain, the West Indies supplied troops, more than 10,000 persons for the RAF, engineers for war production work in British factories, and navy personnel for both the Royal and Merchant navies.

Learie Constantine, the famous cricketer, was a Welfare Officer in the armed forces whose job was to find placements for West Indian engineers and toolmakers in British factories. When due to racism factories refused to take black workers, Constantine got the Ministry to demand higher and higher production from such factories so that they were forced to take on the black labor. With the RAF also taking in West Indi-

51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p. 2.

ans, they played a role in all departments, often with distinction. As a gunner, Sergeant Lynch from Jamaica won the rear gunner competition two years running. Flight Officer Ronald Hall flew more than seventy-five missions as a navigator, and Squadron Leader Ulric Cross flew eighty missions as a Pathfinder. Cross was asked whether he was afraid during combat. "You can't be trained not to be afraid but trained to conquer fear. It comes from a belief that what you're doing is right and is worthwhile," he replied.[53]

The West Indian island of Bermuda played a crucial role as a major spy center known as Bletchley-in the-Tropics. Bermuda, a major air stopover between America and Europe, had the capacity to examine 200,000 letters during a single stopover of a westbound clipper, with another 15,000 letters on the same flight being able to be subjected to clinical tests. It was the information obtained in Bermuda, which provided most of the information that was passed from British Security Coordination to the FBI, that exposed German spy operations in America.[54] Bermuda also supplied the crucial information that Reinhard Heydrich, known as the Butcher of Prague, had superseded all his Nazi contemporaries, except Hitler himself. His spy network in America was so well established and so influenced American public opinion that it was decided that he had to be assassinated no matter what the cost. Britain could not afford for him to enjoy another spy success in America, as he did by convincing Stalin that most of his generals were collaborating with the German High Command.

An acute problem was that in 1940 there was a dire need for additional destroyers and Britain was nearly bankrupt with the country's gold and dollar resources practically spent. Just one single type of a special American shell had cost the British Army one third of its entire budget! Speaking on this matter, Churchill said to the President, "if we are cut off, if we lose the war at sea, nothing else will count."[55] The U.S. Naval Attaché in London, Alan Kirk, had reported to the States that the situation was desperate as German troops assembled in the newly-captured ports in Europe. Kirk cabled: "...the urgent need to combat invasion is obvious.... The Royal Navy is down to about one hundred destroyers on all stations."[56]

American public opinion was not the same as that of the West Indies, and ways and means were sought for getting the warships legally to Britain. The West Indies again helped by supplying air and naval bases

53. Sean Douglas, "World War II Airman Ulric Cross Recalls 'The Day I Almost Died,'" *Express Newspaper*, Trinidad and Tobago, 15 November 1999, p. 15.
54. Stevenson, *A Man Called Intrepid*, p. 312.
55. Ibid., p. 237.
56. Ibid., p. 245.

in payment so that Britain quickly got the fifty destroyers.

Martinique was another West Indian island that played a role, providing Britain with an invaluable line of credit. Fifty million ounces of French gold was hidden in an old fort there. By showing the Americans that they had control and could remove it at will, bankrupt Britain was able to use it as a line of credit. Its value was estimated to be one hundred and fifty billion U.S. dollars, which was used for the purchase of war material.[57]

When Britain seemed doomed and was facing invasion, Churchill used the sonnet *If We Must Die* by Jamaican-born writer Claude McKay to rouse the fighting spirit of the British. McKay wrote:

If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock of our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honour us though dead.
As kinsmen we must meet the common foe.
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death blow.
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back.[58]

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Racial Identity in the Trinidad Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
by Daniel Owen Spence

The study of war and its effects on racial identity and ethnic relations is a field of growing historical significance. Within the many colonial armed forces which fought for the British Empire in the Second World War, racial identity was both a challenge to and an integrating factor in

57. Ibid., p. 542.
58. Claude Mackay, "If We Must Die," in Arna Bontemps, ed., *American Negro Poetry* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963).

imperial and service unity. How racial identity manifested itself and was treated had profound implications for military discipline and efficiency, potentially with wider social and political ramifications. An excellent case study for exploring these issues is provided by the Trinidad Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (TRNVR).

Created on 14 December 1939 and placed under the command of the Canadian Commander Donald St. George Lindsay, the TRNVR began life as a force of fifteen officers and 110 ratings. Its early officers were largely drawn from white, rurally-based constables, colonial authority figures, but with little seagoing experience,[59] with its ratings recruited from the island's black and East Indian communities. During the war, the force was responsible for coastal defense, inter-island escort duties, minesweeping, anti-submarine warfare, and salvage and rescue, and from February 1942 to mid-1943 it faced a concerted German U-boat campaign in the Caribbean.[60] By April 1945, the TRNVR had grown to seventy-five officers and 1,215 men.

The concept of a local naval force in Trinidad first emerged at a meeting held at the Colonial Office in May 1939 over security fears for the island's valuable oil supplies. It was the internal threat posed by members of the island's black community, however, which concerned the British more than a potential German threat at this time. During the 1930s, a Trinidadian nationalist movement had emerged on the island, manifesting itself through labor agitation and culminating in the Butler riots of June 1937. In the months leading up to the meeting, two cases of sabotage and six strikes had occurred within the refining industry. Construction of a new isooctane plant necessitated the importation of workers from outside the island, a prospect seen as containing "explosive elements"[61] for more domestic unrest. Worried about rising insurance premiums, Mr Ashley Cooper, Chairman of Trinidad Leaseholds Limited, argued that "the situation would never get out of hand if half a Company of white troops were permanently stationed there,"[62] prompting the Governor of Trinidad, Sir Hubert Young, to agree that "it might be a good plan to have a local unit stationed near the oilfields," as "the danger of internal trouble would be increased if external attack came."[63] When war broke out, it became "essential that the force should come into being

59. "A Short Story of the Trinidad Royal Naval Reserve," p. 1, ADM 1/23215, The National Archives.
60. Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), pp. 80-81.
61. "Defence of Trinidad Oil Refineries, Note of a Meeting held at the Colonial Office on Monday, 8th May," pp. 2-3, ADM 1/10969, The National Archives.
62. Ibid., p. 2.
63. Ibid., p. 4.

without delay."[64]

From 1941, as Trinidadians were drawn to higher-paid work on the American military bases established following the 1940 Destroyers-for-Bases agreement, recruitment for the TRNVR was extended to other West Indian colonies. Amongst the first to join were Cayman Islanders.[65] In a naval variation on marital race theory, the navy saw Caymanians as natural seafarers. The islands' economy was traditionally based around turtle-fishing and boatbuilding. As soon as they could walk, boys would start sailing model boats,[66] and Caymanians were employed aboard merchant vessels of several countries.[67] Out of a population of only 6,500, during the war a staggering 800 Caymanians ended up serving in the British Merchant Navy, with another 150 in the TRNVR.[68] They were set apart from other West Indians in a number of physical and moral respects:

> The average Caymanian is probably of better physique, is healthier, and has a better intelligence than the average American or the inhabitants of any other island in the West Indies and the countries bordering the Caribbean. This is attributable primarily to his energetic life. Other factors are his higher moral standards and the absence on the island of the usual tropical diseases.[69]

The reference to the Caymanian's "energetic life" is particularly illuminating compared to the lethargy usually attributed by the British to those native to tropical climates. Furthermore, Caymanians were considered "hard-working,"[70] and "honest,"[71] echoing Admiralty suggestions for the local force that "special consideration should be given to providing men who can stand a tropical climate, and who can be relied on to work without constant supervision."[72] In addition to possessing "but little feeblemindedness,"[73] it was considered that the "average Caymanian

64. Para. 3, M.08060/39, ADM 1/10969, The National Archives.
65. C-in-C America and West Indies communication no. 191/102/5, to Captain-in-Charge Port of Spain, 4 March 1941, ADM 1/23215, The National Archives.
66. A.J.A. Douglas, "The Cayman Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 95, no. 2, February 1940, pp. 126-131, 128.
67. James H.S. Billmyer, "The Cayman Islands," *Geographical Review*, vol. 36, no. 1, January 1946, pp. 29-43, 35.
68. Ibid., p. 34.
69. Ibid., p. 42.
70. Ibid., p. 40.
71. Ibid., p. 41.
72. Page 7 to Enclosure to "AJAX'S Letter No. 0196 of 19th July 1939," ADM 1/10969, The National Archives.
73. Billmyer, "The Cayman Islands," p. 42.

possesses an unusually good intellect."[74] The comparatively favorable light in which Caymanians were cast was reflective of the higher proportion of whites and mixed races in the island's population to that of blacks.[75] Racial preference was thus masked behind a discourse of service efficiency.

The first batch of forty-six Caymanian recruits arrived in Trinidad on 14 June 1941,[76] and within three months they were sent out to ships.[77] Here they faced ignorance and cultural misunderstanding from their officers. During Christmas 1941, the Paymaster, after great exertions, had obtained turkey for Christmas dinner. On Christmas Day he was intensely horrified to receive a complaint and he hurried to investigate, wondering if pelican had been substituted for turkey. Upon questioning the Caymanian ratings he was told "we don't eat animals with feathers, can we have sardines instead?"[78]

In addition to the Caymanian recruits, the first volunteers from British Guiana arrived in July 1941.[79] Barbados contributed 349 men, the second largest contingent after Trinidad, and further contingents arrived from Grenada, St. Vincent, Antigua, Montserrat, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, and Dominica, making the TRNVR a truly cosmopolitan West Indian force.

Despite the growing nationalist movement on the island, and the travelling British journalist Arthur Calder-Marshall in the late 1930s commenting that "the feeling of loyalty and respect for Great Britain is almost completely absent from the people of Trinidad,"[80] many Trinidadians enlisted in the armed forces during the war. In the TRNVR, this imperial patriotism was reflected in musical form. As sea shanties were synonymous with the life of sailors for centuries, songs also became an integral part of naval life for Trinidadians. These songs carried added cultural currency through their manifestation in calypso, a form indigenous to and deeply engrained in the fabric of Trinidadian society, where calypsonians took on the role of social and political commentators. Sailors in the TRNVR carried this torch, the chorus of one such example being:

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74. Ibid., p. 41.
75. Ibid., pp. 34-35.
76. Trinidad War Diary, 1 April – 30 June 1941, p. 5, ADM 1/11057, The National Archives.
77. "A Short History of the Trinidad Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve" found within items 209-214, ADM 1/23215, The National Archives.
78. Ibid.
79. *The Daily Argosy*, 29 July 1941, in Oliver Marshall, ed., *The Caribbean at War, British West Indians in World War II* (London: Notting Dale Urban Studies Centre, 1992), p. 25.
80. Annette Palmer, "Rum and Coca Cola: The United States in the British Caribbean 1940-1945," *The Americas*, vol. 43, no. 4, April 1987, pp. 441-451, 2.

Commander Lindsay say
Cheer boys cheer
With unity and the TNV
We gonna conquer Germany.[81]

Here, traditional cultural forms are being used not as anti-colonial nationalistic expressions, but to reaffirm Trinidadian identity with the imperial cause. Another naval calypso celebrated the destruction of the German pocket battleship *Admiral Graf Spee*, which had sunk nine merchantmen in the Atlantic, affecting Trinidadian food supplies:

The sinking of the Admiral Graf Spee
Must remain incontestably
A monumental testimony
To Britain's naval supremacy.[82]

These songs tied into calypso's rooted associations with battles and warrior deeds and provide us with a deeper cultural understanding as to why Trinidadians enlisted in the armed forces. The origins of modern calypso can be traced back to nineteenth century calinda chants, which accompanied stickfighter duels,[83] and further back than that it has roots in the *djeli*, West African tribal singers who would praise the heroic exploits of the tribe's warriors and revile its enemies.[84] Calypso was overwhelmingly a male discourse, and this tradition of warriorhood was tied closely to the complex of Trinidadian masculinity. Trinidadians joined the armed forces for financial betterment, post-war employment opportunities, and imperial patriotism, but deeper than that they were also responding to the calypso warrior's call. When the men of the TRNVR sang calypsos, they were framing their own heroic deeds as part of this longer warrior tradition, and in the process reaffirming their own masculinity. This is an important thing to consider in relation to the seismic social changes they faced following the arrival of black American servicemen in Trinidad.

Annette Palmer and Harvey Neptune have both written extensively about the impact that the large influx of black American servicemen had on the island's local black populace. They became engaged in uneven competition for the island's women, who were drawn to Americans with "the attractiveness of their uniform, the possession of more money and time to enjoy it, and the novelty of being foreigners."[85] It also fuelled

81. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
82. Cited in Errol G. Hill, "Calypso and War," *Black American Literature Forum*, vol. 23, no. 1, Spring 1989, pp. 61-88, 74.
83. Ibid., p. 62.
84. Hill, "Calypso and War," p. 61.
85. Annette Palmer, "The Politics of Race and War: Black American Soldiers in the Caribbean Theater During the Second World War," *Military Affairs*, vol. 47, no. 2, April 1983, pp. 59-62.

prostitution. Trinidadian men found themselves emasculated, as their traditional gender roles were usurped. This crisis of identity led them to seek to reassert their masculinity, leading some to acts of crime and violence. Others drew on the tradition of the calypso warrior, defining their masculinity through military service and the pursuit of warrior deeds.

Despite the rhetoric of unity, ratings in the TRNVR encountered racial discrimination at home and overseas. The naval martial race lobby again reared its head when the force was considered for deployment overseas, and it was suggested by the Captain-in-Charge at Port of Spain that the colored and black ratings should be sent to "tropical climates only," and only with "forces already employing such persons."[86] They were largely excluded from leadership roles as officers, for though they possessed "an excellent physique," black recruits were considered "mentally underdeveloped...emotional, and lacking in self-restraint and responsibility," and thus required "strict but paternal discipline."[87] Deemed "useful material if well led," their "lack of imagination" made them "very suitable for monotonous work, such as mine sweeping and local patrols." Their "professional ability" was only considered "sufficient for 'second line' service."[88] During a port call to Durban, violent disturbances broke out when the local bars refused to serve TRNVR ratings. It was emphasized in the local papers the next day that they were West Indians not Africans, and were to have European facilities.[89]

In Trinidad, however, if a colored rating committed an offense he was sent to the Royal Gaol among ordinary criminals, whereas white ratings and officers would be detained at the barracks. This discrimination led to racial disturbances on 14-15 May 1943 at Staubles, the TRNVR headquarters. Two colored ratings, Ordinary seamen Harrington and Thomas, had been arrested for disobeying orders. Following their arrest, a number of escape attempts were made leading to violent exchanges. Several guards refused to apprehend Thomas after he appealed that "they, as coloured men, should be his friend and not arrest him,"[90] after which a white naval guard was ordered to Staubles to arrest him. An anonymous source stated that

> the coloured boys are under-rated to such an extent and mal-

86. Captain-in-Charge Port of Spain's report no. 27/2359/3665, to the C-in-C American and West Indies station, 12 February 1941, pp. 2-3, ADM 1/23215.
87. "Naval Organisation in the West Indies After the War," 16 November 1945, p. 3, ADM 1/23215.
88. "Future of the Trinidad Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve," 17 July 1944, p. 1, ADM 1/23215.
89. Lionel Straker, "A Stoker in the Trinidad Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve," The Building Exploratory, 31 January 2006, <www.brickfields.org.uk>.
90. "The disturbances at TRNVR HQ May 14-15, 1943 and their causes," 9 October 1943, p. 1, CO 968/80/7.

> treated that in every one of their faces you can just see discontent, hatred and even fear...they are being treated like slaves...we are volunteer soldiers of the Admiralty – we ought to have white rights... then you hear some fancified [*sic*] speeches about democracy.[91]

Service disenchantment is epitomized in the line "God bless Hitler, God bless Uncle Sam and fook the TRNVR Navy"[92] found written upon one of the prison cell walls. The board of enquiry later found that the ratings had "ample cause for discontent," which arose from a "complete absence of sympathy for the men shown by the officers."[93]

In the TRNVR, racial identity acted as both a force for unity and division. It was hoped the unit would improve the island's internal security and civil order in the face of growing nationalism. Wartime service helped forge a sense of imperial unity, culturally validated through indigenous musical forms. It provided a bastion to Trinidadian masculinity culturally undermined by black American servicemen. Within the force, men from different West Indian colonies were brought together in an instance of early cooperation several years before the federation movement. British naval chiefs sought to improve service efficiency by recruiting races they saw as inherently "seafaring." Yet this fostered institutional discrimination, with racial stereotypes informing other aspects of naval planning like discipline and deployment. It evinced itself in the aloofness of officers, and created cultural misunderstandings. Ultimately, disaffection with the service's racial inequalities resulted in insubordination, and led men to question the imperial cause for which they were fighting.

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91. "Opinion voiced about the T.R.N.V.R.," Appendix to Board of Inquiry Proceedings, 1943, ADM 178/301, The National Archives.
92. "Copy of Cell Writings," Appendix to Board of Inquiry Proceedings, 1943, ADM 178/301, The National Archives.
93. "Disturbances at Staubles – Interim Report of Board of Enquiry," letter 26 May 1943, ADM 178/301, The National Archives.

Questions and Answers: Jürgen Rohwer

ROBERT VON MAIER
MARK E. STILLE

Jürgen Rohwer is one of Germany's most distinguished naval historians. He is the author of numerous books, including *U-Boote: eine Chronik in Bildern* (Oldenburg: Stalling, 1962); *Die U-Boote-Erfolge der Achsenmächte, 1939-1945* (Munich: J.F. Lehmann, 1968); *Axis Submarine Successes, 1939-1945* (Cambridge: Patrick Stephens, 1983); *Allied Submarine Attacks of World War Two: European Theatre of Operations, 1939-1945* (London: Greenhill Books, 1997); *Chronology of the War at Sea: The Naval History of World War Two*, revised edition (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005); and, with Mikhail S. Monakov, *Stalin's Ocean-Going Fleet: Soviet Naval Strategy and Shipbuilding Programmes 1935-1953* (Abingdon: Frank Cass, 2001). From 1958 to 1986 Dr. Rohwer served as Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Marine-Rundschau* and from 1959 to 1989 he was the Director of the *Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte* (BfZ, or Library of Contemporary History) in Stuttgart. Serving in the *Kriegsmarine* from 1942 to 1945, he was awarded the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class, the Minesweeper Badge, and three Tank Destroyer Badges.

Q: Are there any naval/military history scholars who have been an important influence on you as a naval historian?

A: My interest in naval history was initiated long before the Second World War. My uncle was the director of personnel at the great Hamburg yard Blohm & Voss. He invited me very often to the launching ceremonies of many ships, such as the cruiser *Admiral Hipper*; the battleship *Bismarck*; the *Kraft durch Freude* [KdF, or Strength through Joy] passenger liner *Wilhelm Gustloff*; the sailing training ships *Horst Wessel* and *Albert Leo Schlageter*; and the Romanian *Mircea*, which I visited many years later in 1993 at Istanbul. He also took me to the library of the yard, where I found many interesting works about naval ships. In the sec-

ond half of the 1930s, I often visited the bookshop of Mr. Wede in Hamburg, *Große Bleichen*, where I purchased many naval books, especially *Weyer's Taschenbuch der Kriegsflotten* and *Jane's Fighting Ships*.

At this time I also started producing line-drawings of the naval ships of many nations and participated in courses at the shipbuilders school of Blohm & Voss. So it was clear to me that I would go to the *Kriegsmarine* as an officer candidate. But my collection of books and drawings was lost in the air raids at Hamburg in July 1943.

On 1 June 1942 I started my service at the training camp for recruits at the Dänholm near Stralsund. Then I reported as a *Seekadett* to my first ship, the destroyer *Z 24*, and in 1943 I completed my course at the Naval Academy at Flensburg-Glücksburg, after which I completed a course for U-boat officers, the 36th *U-Boot Wachoffizier Lehrgang*. In early 1944 I was sent as a *Fähnrich zur See* to the *Sperrbrecher 104*, which was used to sweep British air-laid mines in the Pommeranian Bay, and then as a *Leutnant zur See* as Executive Officer to the minesweeper *M 502*. Finally, I went to the 6th Marine Grenadier Regiment and took part in battles in the area of Verden against the British 7th Armoured Division. After internment at Dithmarschen, I was released in July 1945.

After the war, I tried to begin my studies in history, but was initially not accepted and had to go work as a bricklayer apprentice helping in the reconstruction of the many destroyed houses in Hamburg. During this time, I started to collect materials about the German Navy and to get into contact with former naval officers, to once again build my collection of data. I met with many former U-boat captains and also several officers, such as Admirals Schniewind, Ruge, Wagner, and Captains Rösing and Gaul, and others. I also came into contact with Admiral Godt, the former operations chief of the BdU (Commander U-boats), Grand Admiral Dönitz. He sent me to Captain Hessler, son-in-law of Dönitz, who was preparing for the British Admiralty a study of the German U-boat war in the Atlantic. There I got copies of the War Diary of the BdU and the volume *British and Foreign Merchant Vessels Lost or Damaged by Enemy Action during Second World War* [also known as BR.1337], which was printed by the Trade Division of the Admiralty in 1947.[1] With such sources, I worked for him [Captain Hessler] on lists of the U-boat attacks against Allied and neutral shipping, and also with lists of the German U-boat losses and the ultimate fate of the U-boats.

So I was already working in World War II naval history before I came to the University of Hamburg in mid-1948. My teachers there were first Professor Dr. Hermann Aubin, medieval historian, who was teaching us the methods of analyzing archival documents and how to work in histori-

1. *British and Foreign Merchant Vessels Lost or Damaged by Enemy Action during Second World War* (London: HMSO, 1947).

cal research. Then Professor Dr. Fritz Fischer came to Hamburg; he was teaching modern history and we learned a great deal about the political background of the First World War. Finally came Professor Dr. Egmont Zechlin, who had just published the first volume of his work *Maritime Weltgeschichte*.[2] So I selected him as my main teacher and my *Doktorvater*.

Zechlin provided us with detailed information about his work with interviews of *Zeitzeugen* [eyewitnesses], such as German political leaders during the First World War and during the Chinese Civil War of the 1920s and 1930s. This influenced me very much in my later research of the history of World War II. In late 1953 I finished my studies and became a Doctor of Philosophy with a dissertation titled "The Relations between Germany and the United States from 1933 to 1941."

One other theme I was very interested in was the discussion in the United States about the question "Did President Roosevelt have knowledge of the Japanese plan to attack Pearl Harbor?". I received from the Unites States the reports and the documentation about the Congressional investigation on the Pearl Harbor attack. When I studied the documents about the situation estimates of the U.S. commands in Washington, Pearl Harbor, and Manila in the weeks before the attack, I found that there were very accurate lists of the disposition of the Japanese forces, which were preparing for the southern operations against the Philippines, Malaysia, and the Netherlands Indies. But the assumptions about the battleships and carriers were not correct, they were generally believed to be in the Japanese home waters, where they did not use their radio communications because they had links by teleprinter lines to the shore. Also, there were many mistakes regarding the composition of the carrier divisions. So I published in 1954-56 in the *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* an article, "Wußte Roosevelt davon? Zur Vorgeschichte des japanischen Angriffs auf Pearl Harbor;" and in the *Wehrkunde* another article, "Zum 15. Jahrestag von Pearl Harbor: Entstehung und Durchführung des japanischen Operationsplanes;" and in the *Marine-Rundschau* I published "Der Kriegsbeginn im Pazifik 1941. Das Funkbild als Grundlage der amerikanischen Lagebeurteilung." I came to the conclusion that the American leaders estimated that the Japanese were preparing an offensive operation against South East Asia, but they did not discern in the intelligence a clear sign of an operation against Pearl Harbor.

When in April 1954 I became the manager of the newly-founded *Arbeitskreis für Wehrforschung*, where my president was General Georg von Sodenstern, I also became an assistant to the editor of the journals *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* and *Marine Rundschau*. And in 1958

2. Egmont Zechlin, *Maritime Weltgeschichte: Altertum und Mittelalter* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1947).

I took over from Admiral Förste the job of Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Marine Rundschau*, a position I held until 1986. My special interest for the journals was to work with authors from other countries, such as Great Britain, Canada, and the United States, and later also from Russia.

Q: What influence did your own naval service have on your career as a naval historian?

A: As previously mentioned, I started my own collection of materials about the 1939-45 naval war immediately after my return from internment in July 1945. During my work as a bricklaying apprentice and student, I tried to build-up again my own library of naval books and documents, which I got as copies from the Naval Historical Team at Bremerhaven and the group around Captain Günter Hessler, as well as the Leaders of the German Minesweeping Organization at the Navy House at Hamburg. I also tried to get into contact with former leading officers and admirals of the *Kriegsmarine*. So when in 1956 Grand Admiral Dönitz was released from prison at Potsdam, Hessler introduced me to him and we had many meetings, first at Frankfurt, later in Stuttgart, and then at his home in Aumühle near Hamburg until his death.

When I started my studies at the University of Hamburg in 1948, I acquired the first contacts to naval historians and admirals of foreign navies. The chief of the Italian *Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare*, Admiral Fioravanzo, was asked by Captain Hessler to ask me to help to clear up the attacks of the Italian U-boats in the Atlantic. When the former deputy Japanese Naval Attaché in Berlin, Admiral Kojima, now chairman of the German-Japanese association in Tokyo, asked me about the journey of Admiral Nomura Kichisaburo with *U-511*, he arranged contacts with former Japanese officers, such as Captain Hashimoto, Commanding Officer of the submarine *I-58*, which sank the cruiser *Indianapolis*, and who later published a book about his experiences.[3]
Similarly, I checked the attacks of the Japanese submarines in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific with materials I received from Admiral Sakamoto, who collected materials about the Japanese Navy in World War II, and Captain Ohmae, the former Chief of the Operations Department of the Japanese Combined Fleet. I also came into contact with Colonel Hattori, the Operations Chief of the Japanese Army, who sent me copies of his manuscripts about the operations of the Japanese Army, which he had prepared for the Far East Command of the U.S. Army in Tokyo. Also during this time I was visited by members of the South African Union War Histories Section with Mr. Turner and Mr. Betzler, who wanted de-

3. Mochitsura Hashimoto, *Sunk! The Story of the Japanese Submarine Fleet, 1941-1945* (New York: Holt, 1954).

tailed information about U-boat and armed merchant cruiser operations off South Africa for their work *War in the Southern Oceans*.[4] In this connection, I acquired material from the Dutch naval historian K.W.L. Bezemer, author of the book *Zij vochten op de zeven zeeën*,[5] who provided me with information about Dutch naval operations and the "Weekly Naval Notes" of the British Admiralty.

One other important contact was with the author and editor of the official work about the operations of the U.S. Navy, Dr. Samuel Eliot Morison. He came to Kiel in the early 1950s, when he was researching volume 10 of his *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* about the Battle of the Atlantic from 1943 to 1945,[6] to interview Admiral Godt, who invited me to assist. Thus began a longtime friendship with Dr. Morison, and he sent me autographed copies of all the volumes of his work.

Similarly, I came into contact with the British naval historian Captain S.W. Roskill. He had published a book about the capture of the German *U-110* in May 1941, which was translated into German and scheduled to be published by my publisher, Dr. Metzner.[7] This capture was kept secret by the British and we had no knowledge of it. But it seemed clear to Captain Hessler and me that the British were able to read the German naval ciphers or codes and could decrypt the positions of the German supply vessels and tankers sent by radio to the ships at sea, where they were to meet with the German Task Force of the battleship *Bismarck* and the cruiser *Prinz Eugen*. The supply ships were almost all captured or sunk in late May and in June 1941 by British ships, or scuttled when British ships appeared. We wanted to learn how long the British were able to decrypt German signals after the capture of cipher materials from the weather ship *München* and *U-110*, and I asked Roskill in a letter about this. He told me that they were able to decrypt the signals up to June 1941. From this time on, I remained in contact with Roskill.

So I would say that my interest in military and naval history was more greatly influenced by my efforts to meet the naval and military leaders and historians of Germany and other countries than by my professors at the University of Hamburg.

Q: If you were asked to recommend five English-language books that

4. Leonard Charles Frederick Turner, et al., *War in the Southern Oceans, 1939-1945* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1961).
5. K.W.L. Bezemer, *Zij vochten op de zeven zeeën; verrichtingen en avonturen der Koninklijke Marine in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Utrecht: W. de Haan, 1954).
6. Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. 10, *The Atlantic Battle Won, May 1943 – May 1945* (Boston: Little Brown, 1956).
7. Stephen W. Roskill, *The Secret Capture* (London: Collins, 1959); *Das Geheimnis um U 110* (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard & Graefe, 1960).

should be considered essential reading for anyone interested in the naval history of the Second World War, what works would you select and what are the specific reasons for your selections?

A: First, I want to mention the three volumes of Stephen W. Roskill's *The War at Sea* of the official British series, *History of the Second World War*.[8] Roskill, a retired Royal Navy Captain, had complete access to the British and the captured German archival documents, as well as a great deal of Italian and Japanese materials, and the cooperation of the Commonwealth and the other Allied naval history sections, prepared the best record of the war at sea from both sides. Of course, he had to exclude some of the very important problems such as the intelligence background, of which he was aware, but was kept secret until 1974-75, and the Soviet record, because he had no access to Russian archives. He provided an excellent description of the operations from the strategic decisions to the tactical developments without getting into too much detail.

Second, I mention the parallel work of Dr. Samuel Eliot Morison, with his 15-volume *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, published from 1947 to 1962.[9] He was a professor of American history at Harvard University and during the war proposed to President Roosevelt a complete and accurate history of U.S. naval operations in the war, and volunteered for this service. He was commissioned as a Commander in the United States Naval Reserve and took part in many operations in the Atlantic and Pacific, finally reaching the rank of Captain (and during the Korean War, a Rear Admiral). He had access to all necessary documents and could interview anyone he considered important. But his work is not an official history, and he alone was responsible for his analysis. In London, he was able to look into the captured German documents, where, he told me later, the amount of materials was a great problem. So he tried to get the assistance of witnesses in Germany, such as Rear Admiral Eberhard Godt, the operations chief of the German U-boat Command, and also Grand Admiral Dönitz. In Japan, he posted some of his assistants, such as Captain Roger Pineau, who with their knowledge of the Japanese language helped to uncover the details of the Japanese side. This series is indispensable to historians who wish to understand the war at sea in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and the Pacific.

Third, I wish to select another title from the official British series *History of the Second World War*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*.[10] This work consists of four volumes, prepared by Professor F.H.

8. S.W. Roskill, *The War at Sea*, 3 vols. (London: HMSO, 1954-1961).
9. Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 15 vols. (Boston: Little Brown, 1947-1962).
10. F.H. Hinsley, et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 4 vols. (London:

Hinsley of the University of Cambridge, with the help of three assistants, published between 1979 and 1988. There was also an abridged edition of Hinsley's volumes published in 1993,[11] and a separate volume 5 written by Professor Michael Howard of the University of Oxford and published in 1990.[12] When Donald McLachlan published in 1968 his work *Room 39: Naval Intelligence in Action, 1939-1945*, he was not allowed to divulge the secret of the decryption of the German Enigma ciphers, notwithstanding the fact that more than 10,000 people in Great Britain, the United States, and other Allied countries worked in this field during the war.[13] So it was also not surprising that the 1967 work of the Polish military historian Dr. Wladyslaw Kozaczuk did not become well known in the Western world.[14] But when in 1973 General Gustave Bertrand, recently retired from his post as Chief of the French intelligence service, published his book *Enigma: ou la plus grande énigme de la guerre 1939-1945*,[15] the situation began to change, and in Great Britain Squadron Leader F.W. Winterbotham, who during the war was responsible for preserving the secrecy of Bletchley Park, received permission to write from his own recollections – but without access to the official documents – his story, *The Ultra Secret*, which was published in 1974.[16]

Fourth, I have to mention the best global history of the Second World War, the work of my American friend since 1962, Professor Gerhard L. Weinberg of the University of North Carolina. In 1994 he published *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II*, which was translated into many languages, including German.[17] Based on many years of extensive research in the archives, especially in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany, discussions with historians and participants, and his detailed knowledge of the great amount of literature from all the participating countries, he came to the conclusion that instead of describing the many battles in the different theatres, he would detail the global aspects of the war and illustrate how the developments in the various theatres were directed by political and military leaders who had to look at

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HMSO, 1979-1988).

11. F.H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, abridged ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

12. Michael Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 5 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

13. Donald McLachlan, *Room 39: Naval Intelligence in Action, 1939-1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968).

14. Władysław Kozaczuk, *Bitwa o tajemnice: służby wywiadowcze Polski i Rzeszy Niemieckiej, 1922-1939* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1967).

15. Gustave Bertrand, *Enigma: ou la plus grande énigme de la guerre 1939-1945* (Paris: Plon, 1973).

16. F.W. Winterbotham, *The Ultra Secret* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974).

17. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

the incoming intelligence, especially the decrypted signals from the German, Italian, and Japanese. He concentrated his story not so much on the individual battles, which were already described in the international literature, but on the prelude to the strategic decisions. He also showed that the Second World War was a new category of war direction and fighting, starting with Hitler's attack on Poland and ending with the Japanese capitulation, clearly to be separated from the earlier wars, which were fought for territorial changes or for resources in a limited area, while the Second World War was a truly global conflict. So, Weinberg's book is to be considered the best history of World War II, very well written and covering many new international aspects.

Fifth, I select the new official operational history of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War, written in two parts – *No Higher Purpose* and *A Blue Water Navy* – by a team of scholars from the Directorate of History at the Canadian Ministry of Defence, led by my good friend Dr. W.A.B. Douglas, accompanied by Dr. Roger Sarty and Dr. Michael Whitby.[18] They used not only the Canadian archives, but also the British Public Record Office, the U.S. National Archives, and the German Military Archive at Freiburg. They also had contact with many participants and historians from various countries. They describe very well the difficult rise of the Canadian Navy from a small force to the third largest navy at the end of the war. One very important aspect of their research and writing is that the works not only analyze the campaigns and battles, but also the often controversial debates between the Allies regarding the use of the Canadian Navy, and the authors do not avoid critical comments pertaining to their own side. The books examine not only Canadian participation in the Battle of the Atlantic, but the other Allied nations as well. These two volumes are excellent examples of how an operational history should be written.

Q: There are many excellent German-language books available dealing with the history of the *Kriegsmarine* which are unfortunately not available in English. Would you discuss a few of the more important works that have been published in the last twenty years?

A: Although they were published from 1970 to 1975, I think the most important works pertaining to the *Kriegsmarine* in World War II are the three volumes by Professor Dr. Michael Salewski, *Die deutsche*

18. W.A.B. Douglas, Roger Sarty, Michael Whitby, et al., *No Higher Purpose: The Official Operational History of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War, 1939-1943*, vol. II, part 1 (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2002); *A Blue Water Navy: The Official Operational History of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War, 1943-1945*, vol. II, part 2 (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2002).

Seekriegsleitung 1935-1945.[19] Volume I covers the period 1935 to 1941, volume II covers 1942 to 1945, and the third volume contains *Denkschriften und Lagebeurteilungen* 1938-1944. Based on the War Diaries of the *Seekriegsleitung* and many other documents from the German *Militärarchiv* at Freiburg, as well as interviews with many admirals, Salewski details the development of the strategic planning of the *Seekriegsleitung* from the time of the build-up of the Navy in 1935 to the operational planning during the first part of the war, including the utopian plans of mid-1941, the problems between the Atlantic war and the Mediterranean, and the changes that became necessary after the attack on the Soviet Union. The second volume covers the time from the entry of the United States into the war and the difficulties arising from the engagements in the Mediterranean and the Arctic with the battles against the Murmansk convoys, which finally led to the retirement of the Commander-in-Chief, Grand Admiral Raeder. When the Commander U-Boats, Admiral Dönitz, became Raeder's successor, he had first to reorganize the naval command, to develop a new building program, and to try to overcome the turn of the tide in the Battle of the Atlantic. An important part is the discussion about the relationship of Dönitz and Hitler and the Nazi party, and his reaction to the 20 July 1944 plot. Finally, Salewski discusses the reactions to the Allied invasion of Normandy and Southern France and the retreat in the East with the evacuation of the Crimea and, more intensively, the evacuation of the of the Baltic ports. The third volume contains a very good selection of documents.

The most important series pertaining to the operations of the *Kriegsmarine* in World War II is *Kriegstagebuch der Seekriegsleitung 1939-1945*.[20] Edited by Dr. Werner Rahn and Dr. Gerhard Schreiber of the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* (MGFA), the 68-volume work covers operations month-by-month from September 1939 to April/May 1945. The series was published from 1988 to 1997 and reproduces the day-by-day war diaries of the *Seekriegsleitung*, which contain details of all operations in the different theatres of the naval war. A *Beiheft* [appendix] contains the details of abbreviations, cover names, and keywords, as well as the *Marine-Quadratkarten*, which were taken from my publication *Die U-Boote-Erfolge der Achsenmächte, 1939-1945*, which were prepared from my designs by Rolf Schindler of the MGFA.

And there is another important series of eight books, published from 1982 to 1994 by the late Erich Gröner and his successors Dieter Jung

19. Michael Salewski, *Die deutsche Seekriegsleitung 1935-1945*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard & Graefe, 1970-75).
20. Werner Rahn and Gerhard Schreiber, eds., *Kriegstagebuch der Seekriegsleitung 1939-1945* (Herford: Mittler, 1988-97).

and Martin Maass, *Die deutschen Kriegsschiffe 1815-1945*.[21] The series contains all German warships from 1815 to 1945 with complete information about their building dates, technical details, fate, and also, for most of them, 1:1250 scale line drawings and deck plans. The work is also a complete source for all the losses during the war and the fate of the surviving ships and boats.

Q: What was the state of naval records in Germany in the immediate postwar period, and what challenges awaited the naval researcher?

A: During the war there was an agreement between the Western Allies stating that the captured German military and naval archives would be sent to the United States (army and air force materials) and to Great Britain (naval materials). The naval archives were evacuated from Berlin to Tambach Castle near Coburg to avoid being destroyed in the Allied air attacks. At the end of the war, the C-in-C of the *Kriegsmarine*, Grand Admiral Dönitz, ordered the archives to be preserved, and so they were sent to London after being captured by the U.S. Army at Tambach.

At the Admiralty, the curator of the German Naval Archives was Commander Saunders, who had been a member of the staff of Bletchley Park. Initially, the materials were not accessible to German historians, with the exception of former *Kriegsmarine* officers who were selected to write studies for the Admiralty, such as Captain Günter Hessler, who was writing the history of the U-boat war in the Atlantic from the point of view of the U-boat Command at Brunsbüttel. German historians were finally able to access the archives after they were returned to the German *Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv* in the 1960s.

Q: As a pioneer in a major history subject (viz. writing about *Kriegsmarine* operations just years after the war), were you confronted with any particular burdens in presenting the material?

A: When I came into contact with the German admirals who were part of the Naval Historical Team established by the U.S. Navy at Bremerhaven, I was asked to help, and to write a history of the operations in the Polar region and about the Murmansk convoys. For this work I received photocopies of the war diaries of the participating German commands from the copies the U.S. Naval History Division assembled from the German naval archives at the Admiralty in London. In addition, I had the available German, British, and Soviet literature from the Library of Contemporary History at Stuttgart. So, I could prepare a preliminary history of

21. Erich Gröner, et al., *Die deutschen Kriegsschiffe 1815-1945*, 8 vols. (Munich, Bonn: Bernard & Graefe, 1982-1998).

the war in the Polar region.

At the same time, I came into contact with Captain Günter Hessler, who was at Brunsbüttel preparing for the British Admiralty a history of the U-boat operations in the Atlantic. For this work, he received copies of the war diaries of the Commander U-boats and also some additional copies of war diaries of special U-boats. I assisted the Brunsbüttel group with my collected material and subsequently had access to the war diaries. Because we feared we would not have access to these documents again, we copied them by typewriter and carbon copies, one set of which I kept for my own studies. They were published in 1960 in the book *Entscheidungsschlachten des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, which I co-authored with my friend and colleague Dr. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen.[22]

Another possibility to get materials was through contact with former *Kriegsmarine* officers, who had in some instances copied their war diaries and sent them home, although this was forbidden.

Q: What were some of the influencing factors in your decision to research and write *Axis Submarine Successes, 1939-1945*, and which aspects of your research for the book were the most difficult?

A: During my work with Captain Günter Hessler's team at Brunsbüttel in the early 1950s, I was given the task of collecting the data for establishing a list of the actual successes of the U-boats. I had copies of the War Diary of the Commander U-boats and the important *British and Foreign Merchant Vessels Lost or Damaged by Enemy Action during Second World War* [BR.1337], which had been given to Hessler by the Admiralty. I also compiled a card catalog of all reported U-boat attacks and compared this with the data in BR.1337. So, a large number of attacks could be cleared-up, but difficulties arose when many ships were attacked and hit during the convoy battles. These could only be cleared-up when more information became available from copies of U-boat war diaries. Additional sources of information were the maps prepared by one of Hessler's colleagues, Commander Hoschatt, and also from books written by former Allied merchant seamen.

Additional information came when the Director of the Italian *Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare*, Admiral Fioravanzo, asked if we could clear-up the attacks of Italian submarines in the Atlantic, and sent me the details of the reports of the submarines. I received similar information about the Finnish and Vichy-French operations by the Finnish and French naval historians, Matti E. Mäkelä and Captain Claude Huan. Information about the Japanese submarine attacks were provided to me by

22. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen and Jürgen Rohwer, eds., *Entscheidungsschlachten des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard & Graefe, 1960).

Admiral Sakamoto and Commander Hashimoto.

In the early 1960s, I was asked by the J.F. Lehmann publishing house to prepare a book about my findings. I got an IBM electric typewriter to type the chronological lists of the attacks and the results in the different ocean areas and published this in 1968 in German. In the late 1970s, the Naval Institute Press asked me to prepare an English-language edition of my book, which was published in 1983. Subsequently, Mr. John D. Alden asked me if he could use my book as a model for a book about U.S. submarine attacks during World War II, and I agreed. His book was published in 1989.[23]

I then began work on another book, *Allied Submarine Attacks of World War Two*. With the cooperation of Miss J.S. Kay of the British Submarine Museum at Gosport, Admiral Renato Sicurezza of the *Ufficio Storico*, and Colonel I.N. Venkov of the Soviet Military Archive, the book was published in 1997.

In the Library of Contemporary History at Stuttgart we were constantly updating our card catalog with all the information we received from many people around the world. In the mid-1990s, the British publisher Lionel Leventhal of Greenhill Books offered to prepare a new, updated edition of *Axis Submarine Successes*, and with the Naval Institute Press it was published in 1999.[24]

And finally, in 2005 a Russian-language edition of the 1983 American version was published by a Moscow-based publisher.

Q: What were the most critical German decisions pertaining to the Battle of the Atlantic, and what were their most devastating mistakes?

A: When on 29 January 1939 Admiral Raeder presented Hitler with his "Z-Plan" for the building of new ships and U-boats, including six battleships of 52,600 tons, eight new armored ships (*Panzerschiffe*) of 22,145 tons, two aircraft carriers of 23,200 tons, eight light cruisers of 7,800 tons, twelve recce cruisers (*Spähkreuzer*) of 5,810 tons, and 157 long-range U-boats and twenty-seven special U-boats, as well as many ships from destroyers to smaller vessels, all to be completed no sooner than the end of 1945, Hitler assured him that he would not need the ships before 1946. So Raeder started this massive program according to plan. When Hitler attacked Poland on 1 September 1939, he planned to bring the war to a successful conclusion before Great Britain and France had

23. John D. Alden, *U.S. Submarine Attacks during World War II* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989).

24. Jürgen Rohwer, *Axis Submarine Successes of World War Two: German, Italian and Japanese Submarine Successes, 1939-1945* (London: Greenhill Books; Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999).

time to react. However, when these two countries declared war on 3 September, all the big ship plans for an Atlantic war had to be cancelled and those that had already been laid down were broken up and all efforts were to be focused on U-boats, but even they could not be ready in the necessary numbers before 1941. Therefore, I believe Hitler's miscalculation was the great mistake for the planning of the Atlantic war.

Editor's Note: The editor would like to extend a word of thanks to Mr. Karl J. Zingheim for his assistance with several of the questions.

Questions and Answers: Walter J. Boyne

ROBERT VON MAIER
BARRETT TILLMAN

Colonel Walter J. Boyne, USAF (Ret.), is former Director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC. A member of the National Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio, he has appeared on hundreds of television programs and hosted and narrated two television series based on his books, including the highly acclaimed 18-episode *Clash of Wings*. The author of more than forty books, Colonel Boyne is one of the few writers to have had both fiction and non-fiction titles on the *New York Times* Best-Seller lists. His works include *The Messerschmitt Me 262: Arrow to the Future* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980); *Boeing B-52: A Documentary History* (London: Jane's Information Group, 1981); *Clash of Wings: World War II in the Air* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994); *Clash of Titans: World War II at Sea* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995); *Beyond the Wild Blue: A History of the U.S. Air Force, 1947-1997* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); *Aces in Command: Fighter Pilots as Combat Leaders* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2001); *The Influence of Air Power upon History* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 2003); *Operation Iraqi Freedom: What Went Right, What Went Wrong, and Why* (New York: Forge, 2003); and many others.

Q: Are there any military/aviation scholars who have been an important influence on you as an air war historian?

A: Absolutely, and they varied over time. I think becoming fascinated with any subject is much like a baby duck being imprinted with its mother; something happens that leaves its mark upon you forever. In my case, regarding aviation, it happened when I was four and a friend of my brother brought over one of the dime pulp magazines of the time. I don't know which one it was – it was 1933 and probably too early for *Dare-Devil Aces* or *G-8 and His Battle Aces* – but its cover showed a garish

dogfight between biplanes on a bright yellow background. That was it – I knew I had to be a pilot at that moment.

In terms of authors, at a very early age I was further imprinted by people not only not cited, but usually made fun of now-a-days, work-a-day authors such as Donald Kehoe, Arch Whitehouse, and, of course, Joe Archibald. (Martin Caidin might be cited as a latter-day counterpart to Whitehouse in terms of both interest and accuracy.) They were obviously not scholars, but they were accurate enough for a sub-teenager, and they confirmed my interest. Role models are a little more difficult to cite a little later in life – Hap Arnold and Ira Eaker did their bit, as well as Alexander de Seversky, Assen Jordanoff, and a few others. But one has to remember the paucity of publications and their relative expense in those depression days. *Flying Aces* was too expensive to get regularly, so a subscription to something so exotic as the British magazines *Flight* and or *Aeroplane* was out of the question. Even *Popular Aviation* and later *Flying* were things you had to read in the town library – if they subscribed to them.

Things began to look up in the 1950s, when it was feasible to read *Flying*, and with luck *Aviation Week*, the predecessor to the current *Aviation Week and Space Technology*. Then there began the boom in British periodicals – e.g. *Royal Air Force Flying Review*, *Air Pictorial*, and with them, knowledge of people like Jack Bruce, David Dorrell, Bill Green, and so on. (Gordon Swanborough and Bill Gunston, equally fine, came a bit later.) However, there was still not the flood – the tsunami – of books that we have nowadays, not even for the academics who were beginning to take an interest.

However, one could be influenced by the people contributing to the specialist periodicals – the American Aviation Historical Society *AAHS Journal* and the Journal of the Society of World War I Aero Historians' *Cross and Cockade*, where wonderful people such as Peter Grosz, Pete Bowers, Dusty Carter, Bob Cavanaugh, Birch Matthews, Harry Gann, Bill Larkins, Harvey Lippincott, and so many more contributed so much. An interesting aspect of this is that many of the contributors were engineers employed by aerospace companies. (And it has to be noted that many of these – Bowers, Lippincott, Gann – were responsible for preserving company photos and records that the indifferent, unknowing management was intent on destroying.)

I am no doubt unintentionally slighting some of the great contributors, and it says much about me that I am not citing many academics at this point – but they did not come into my orb. By the 1970s, there were many more really good authors available, and the number has grown by leaps and bounds, and includes a strong cadre of academics who have added rigor to the discipline. I admit to being influenced by many of them over time, and I'm still being influenced today. There is no way to

overlook the work of such outstanding contributors such as John Lundstrom, Barrett Tillman, Christopher Shores, Christer Bergström, along with Dick Hallion, C.V. Glines, Dennis Jenkins, Roger Freeman, Bernard Nalty, and so many more. This really distresses me as I could list twenty-five or thirty names here, given the space, and I hope no one feels slighted.

Q: If you were asked to recommend five books that should be considered essential reading for anyone interested in the aviation/air war history of the Second World War (including the inter-war years), what works would you select and what are the specific reasons for your selections?

A: This is a bit of a minefield, as I don't want to offend anyone by leaving them out. And as an author who recognizes the value of waffling, I think you have to make a selection like this from two points of view: the purely academic, and writing intended to be more popular (but no less rigorous) so as to reach a larger audience.

If you'll permit me, I'll bend your criteria just a bit by citing Raleigh and Jones' monumental history of the RFC/RAF in World War I because it presages so much of what follows.[1] For World War II, there were several indispensible histories, including *The Army Air Forces in World War II* by Craven and Cate;[2] *The Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* by Richards and Saunders,[3] and *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* by Morison.[4] The British Air Ministry gives good insight into Luftwaffe history with *The Rise and Fall of the German Air Force, 1933-1945*.[5] Although later research sometimes disputes or amplifies the findings in each of these, they are invaluable for the chronology and the context they provide. They are start points for your outline, and they are there to steady you for the toughest job of all: determining what to leave out. Anybody can write a good 1,000,000 word book. It is far tougher to write a good 100,000 word book on the same subject. John Terraine's *A Time for Courage* is a well written, thoughtful account of the RAF in World War II, with consideration for some of the behind-the-scenes people as well as the warriors.[6] Richard Overy has done similar

1. Walter Raleigh and H.A. Jones, *The War in the Air: Being the Story of the part played in the Great War by the Royal Air Force*, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922-37).
2. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, 7 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948-58).
3. Denis Richards and Hilary St. George Saunders, *The Royal Air Force, 1939-1945*, 3 vols. (London: HMSO, 1953-54).
4. Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 15 vols. (Boston: Little Brown, 1947-62).
5. *The Rise and Fall of the German Air Force, 1933-1945* (London: Air Ministry, 1948).
6. John Terraine, *A Time for Courage: The Royal Air Force in the European War,*

work on the Luftwaffe, but in separate, more specialized books that complement some of Williamson Murray's efforts. And, to exceed your limit a bit, one needs the basic hardware books such as the Putnam series and the books by Ray Wagner, Bill Green, J.R. Smith and Antony Kay, and many others, all of which are notable for their accuracy.

A point I'd like to make is that one really needs to read in related fields – books on the economies and the politics of the time as well as those purely related to aviation. A case in point, *The Wages of Destruction* by Adam Tooze, gives a totally different insight into German production efforts than the usual aviation-oriented recapitulation.[7]

Q: Vis à vis the need for additional scholarship, what do you believe are the most under-examined aspects of 1) the development of air war doctrine during the inter-war years; 2) the history of the USAAF in World War II; and 3) the Allied bombing campaigns (all theaters)?

A: In terms of the air war doctrine, I think the most amazing thing is how all the political and military leaders of all the nations got it wrong almost all the time. Therefore, I think more attention should be paid to the basically wrong assumptions of most of the leaders who clung devoutly to Douhet's and Mitchell's air power theories well into the closing days of World War II and beyond. Their assumptions were wrong on the estimates of how effective bombing would be on production of war materials and on civilian morale. It should have been obvious by 1943 at the latest that bombing could be effective only if conducted on a previously unimagined scale in combination with new techniques (the fighter bomber) and new weapons (incendiary and nuclear). I'm always critical of hind-sight merchants, and that is what I am right now, but as a case in point, the United States Army Air Corps/Air Forces leadership was so imbued with the efficacy of bombing as a war-winning measure that it did not learn from either the German or the British experience, neither of which achieved what had been expected of them and both of which were costly in men and material. And I'm not sure that it would have ever learned, had it not been for the change in the nature of the fire-prone targets of Japan and the introduction of the nuclear weapon. The irony here, of course, is that the new situation made the old theorems correct, despite the fact that the war in Europe disproved them. Now what I say should not be interpreted to mean that the World War II American bombing campaigns were not effective, for they did enormous harm to the enemy. What they did not do was fulfill the prophecies of the air

1939-1945 (New York: Macmillan, 1985).

7. Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London: Penguin, 2006).

power historians and their followers. As a result, far more casualties were incurred on the bomber fleets than were necessary. A revised strategy might well have accomplished the desired results with far less cost, and I believe both enemy commentary after the war and the Strategic Bombing Surveys confirm this. Another area to examine would be the incredible achievements in building overseas bases, communication nets, weather facilities and so on, all of which ensured a successful era of post-World War II aviation.

In terms of the history of the USAAF in World War II, not nearly enough has been done to document the incredible logistics and maintenance efforts that made the huge air forces viable from 1944 on. Nor have the supporting forces – cargo, air-sea rescue, reconnaissance – been given the coverage accorded the fighter and bomber efforts. The people who supervised procurement and production – generals such as F.O. Carroll, K.B. Wolfe, or even poor, disgraced Benny Meyers, have been largely overlooked. There is also a need for further coverage of leaders who made a difference in these supplementary efforts. Lieutenant General William H. Tunner has received some accolades, as has Brigadier General Kenneth N. Walker, but while there have been biographies, there has not been (to my knowledge) a real analysis of their efforts. There are probably many Ph.D. theses on these subjects, but I'm not aware of them. (Perhaps Google could stop following us around and undertake to publish every Ph.D. aviation thesis.) The AWPD-1 crew all deserve additional attention, as does the plan itself.

Finally, and this is probably the most important thing of all, not nearly enough attention has been paid to the enlisted personnel of the USAAF and the Naval and Marine air forces who seemed to rise up like dragon's teeth to do essential jobs in every theater, with almost no recognition. Tips of the hat have been made to the fact that the car-orientation of American youth made them adaptable to World War II aviation technology, but not enough has been made of the extraordinarily long hours they worked, under the worst conditions of heat and cold, nor of their utter devotion to the task. A civil counter-part of course is the aviation workforce that produced more than 300,000 airplanes from an industry that had previously had trouble building 3,000 a year. A good case could be made for the way the nation actually benefited from the Great Depression in terms of the strong, self-actualizing people it produced.

In terms of the Allied bombing campaigns in all theaters, I've covered some of that a little bit earlier. The United States Army Air Forces, thanks to the AWPD-1 (Air War Plans Division Plan 1) and the U.S. Navy and Marine air forces, thanks to President Roosevelt's early backing and some great naval leaders, did have the proper concept of scale in terms of numbers of aircraft that would be required. And they undertook to begin to bring the nation up to speed in terms of factories, shipyards,

pilot training, and so on, so that by December 1941, America was ready for tremendous expansion in production. But these same leaders lacked the experience necessary to know how really large bombs had to be to be effective, how many would be required, how many returns to the target were necessary, and which were the key targets. They did not learn in real time so that the strategy could be adjusted. General Spaatz (of whom it has been written that he never made a mistake – a claim that invites attention) was probably right in his advocacy of taking out the German fuel system as a primary goal. But it came about almost as an accident of America's incredible production of aircraft and pilots that fighter bombers could become the key to impairing German production efforts. Nor was this widely hailed in the post-war era. In the Mediterranean theater, both the USAAF and the RAF learned the ground-attack business the hard way – and then had to relearn it again in Europe. In the Pacific theater, the American bombing offensive was effective in part because of the inability of the Japanese to counter with an effective air and anti-aircraft defense, and because of the utter failure of Japanese logistic and maintenance back-up. Neither the B-17 nor the B-24 combined enough range and bomb-load, so meaningful attacks on the Japanese homeland didn't come about until the advent of the B-29. Then even the employment of the B-29 required a complete change in tactics to become successful. This all sounds like a bit of a downer – I don't mean it to be, for the crews, flight and ground, were brave and skilful. But the USAAF leadership induced the press (as the media was then called) and the public, to expect more than bombing could deliver. Worse, it induced itself to believe it.

Q: There is now reason to doubt that the Battle of Britain saved England from invasion because Hitler lacked the true intent and/or the ability to successfully force a landing. Similarly, it is difficult to support the traditional view that the Battle of Midway prevented Japanese victory in World War II. What are your thoughts regarding these battles, and what other conventional wisdom regarding World War II should we question?

A: I guess the hardest thing for someone of my era to realize is how thoroughly it has been proved that the Nazi leadership was not the monolithic, efficient mechanism that we perceived it at the time, but consisted instead of a bunch of smash-and-grab merchants who were totally provincial in their outlook. They were so embittered by defeat and poverty that they made up a combination paper tiger enemy of Bolshevism and the Jews – and then truly believed in their own fiction while ignoring the war-making power of the rest of the world. They capitalized on the inventive, hard-working patriotic German people, and of course, failed them utterly. The British belief in the importance of "the few" was im-

portant at the time – the free world needed some relief from the victories of the incompetent Nazis over the even more incompetent Allies – and the actual victory of the RAF over the *Luftwaffe* was important in both real and morale terms. I think the doubts that now exist about its importance ought to be examined from a reverse point of view. What might have happened if Dowding had been totally wrong, if the RAF had funked it and surrendered (as has been recounted of the French Air Force in many places in May 1940), and the Germans had won a decisive air victory? Then the culture of "the bomber always gets through" would have thought to have been proven, Churchill might have been dumped, and Great Britain might have negotiated to avoid the invasion Hitler did not really want to bring about. So while Hitler may have been considering other options more important, I doubt if he (the supreme smash and grab artist of the era) would have not taken advantage of the collapse of the RAF in some significant way.

In terms of Midway not being the turning point, the poor, desperately impoverished Japanese people were at the mercy of a group of provincial chauvinist nuts (just as the German and Italian people were). These short-sided military and diplomatic mad-men were too ignorant or too proud to realize that they had no chance of winning the war they chose to begin. They clung instead to a "cherry-blossom theory" that negotiations with a shocked United States would provide a victory for them. Neither Yamamoto's vacillating ruminations nor anything else could have deflected their defeat. At that time, the United States was peopled by individuals who regarded an attack on sovereign territory as an act of war, and reacted with anger and a desire to avenge the wrong. (Permit me an editorial aside: it is too damn bad that we lacked the same characteristics after 9/11; instead, we went into a period of national self-indulgent admiration of our "resilience" and "endurance" and "tolerance" that has served us ill.)

Having vented, the Battle of Midway itself brought out the worst in Japanese planning and execution: failure to concentrate, faulty timing, lapses in security, underestimating the enemy, failure of intelligence, etc. At the same time it brought out the best for the U.S. in terms of the brilliant interpretation of scanty intelligence, wonderful timing, bravery of the highest order, and a good bit of luck. As an aside, while the Japanese were a brave enemy, there was a fatal flaw in the minds of some of its Admirals in which the preservation of capital ships permitted them to funk it at key points in the battle, c.f. Leyte Gulf.

And even if we had lost at Midway – our carriers, Midway itself – it would not have changed the ultimate result, just the time in getting there. Yamamoto was wrong before Pearl Harbor, at Midway, and after Midway; despite the veneration generally accorded him, it probably was a favor to the Japanese that he was assassinated by the USAAF P-38s, for

his decisions had usually been wrong from about 8 December 1941 forward. *Shattered Sword*, by Jonathan Parshall and Anthony Tully, is a very revealing history on Midway.[8]

In terms of questioning other battles or campaigns, the invasion of Italy at the selected points comes across as the most mistaken, in my mind. Just maintaining a threat of invasion and not really invading at all would probably have served the Allied cause better, just as it had done in Norway, and would certainly have reduced casualties. The earlier British decision to let up in Africa and send troops and aircraft to Greece was not a good one. Many have already questioned General MacArthur's slogging campaign, which was distinguished until the Philippine campaign by a relatively low casualty rate. One of the questions that has received some but not sufficient analysis was why some of our weapons were so flawed – the early torpedoes, the Sherman tank, the (lack of an) escort fighter – when the war had been going on for two long years before our entry. Were there unheard geniuses decrying these mistakes? Were they just overlooked? Were they stifled?

Q: What were some of the influencing factors in your decision to research and write *The Influence of Air Power upon History*, and which aspects of your research for the book were the most difficult?

A: This is a question I am especially glad you asked, for I would never have had the effrontery to propose writing the aerial equivalent to Mahan's book myself.[9] But the publisher came to me (through a book packager/agent) with the request. I turned it down initially, but they persisted and eventually made an offer I could not in conscience refuse. Once into the process, I used Mahan's book as a model to the extent that I could, but there were so many differences in his perception of sea power's influence, and the influence of air power as I perceived it, that I had to go my own way. Some have criticized me for not aping his book more faithfully, but I doubt if the critics themselves have actually tried to do so. If they had, they would have found such profound differences in the prospects for 19th century sea power and 20th century air power that they would have seen that a different analysis was required. The most difficult task in the book was deciding what had to be left out; there was enough material for a dozen books, and it was heartbreaking to decide that some events and most particularly, some people, could not be given the treatment to which they were entitled. And I was hoist on my own

8. Jonathan Parshall and Anthony Tully, *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005).
9. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1890).

petard of trying always to write in a way that will appeal to a larger audience, rather than in trying to appeal only to scholars. On this matter, academics have a job to do and they do it well; for us non-academics, our job is to cast a wider net, hoping that we gain more people who will be interested in the subject – and some of whom will become academics as a result. We can certainly learn from the academic writers in terms of citations, footnotes, and so on – it wouldn't hurt us to include more of this, without going to extremes.

Q: Another important addition to the literature is your *Aces in Command: Fighter Pilots as Combat Leaders*. How did you come to write on this particular topic, and would you discuss one or two of the more noteworthy interviews you conducted for the book?

A: This brings up the value of a good editor. My original proposal concerned the same people as were finally discussed in the book (Rickenbacker, Zemke, Olds, and Blesse), but the editor, Doug Grade, mulled over the proposal for weeks. We went back and forth, somewhat to my dismay, but the focus finally came about on how these aces did, not just as fighter pilots, but as commanders, and this made the book immensely more interesting. It had been implicit in my thinking, but not until Doug made it explicit did the book jell.

I did not interview Rickenbacker, nor did I have the benefit of the late David Lewis' fine biography.[10] I did meet him once, at a book signing, with my son, Bill; Rickenbacker stood up, took Bill's hands, and talked to him for a good two minutes, somewhat to the distress of the line behind us. But there was good material available on him, and there were two things that distinguished his commander role that had not been sufficiently emphasized. One was his overcoming his *infra-dig* status with his more privileged, well educated, blue-blooded colleagues, and the other was his genuine concern for his enlisted personnel.

Hub Zemke had passed on before I had a chance to interview him, but I was able to avail myself of extensive interviews that others conducted, and a great deal of correspondence that became available to me. Since the publication of the book, I've become friends with his son, who greatly approved of my treatment of his father. That means a lot to me.

I had the pleasure of meeting Robin Olds on several occasions, including two lengthy interviews in which he was completely himself – a formidable personage. I'd traveled to be with him on a speaking engagement in North Carolina, and I'll never forget how he took the podium at the local college (my synapses have lapsed – I forget the name of the

10. W. David Lewis, *Eddie Rickenbacker: An American Hero in the Twentieth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

school). The audience was not the usual informed, loyal, eager-to-be-charmed Air Force veteran crowd, although there were plenty of them there. It was, for the most part, an academic group, teachers and students. Robin grasped the podium in both hands, and stood glaring at the crowd for a long interval. Then he shouted like a British Sergeant Major dressing down new troops, "I AM A WARRIOR." It was like throwing a gallon of gasoline on a fire – the audience was captured by him at that point. He went on to give a profanity-laden lecture on his experiences, using what is delicately now called the F-bomb frequently, and got, of course, a well deserved standing ovation.

He was very candid in the interviews I taped in his motel room. We drank too much whisky, of course, but I felt, probably correctly, that he didn't let his guard down as intimately as he might have done to a fellow fighter pilot. I was a bomber puke, although he was kind enough not to say so. Nonetheless, he told me in-depth stories about his life, West Point, flying the P-38, and, of course, his tour as commander of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing in Vietnam, with emphasis on Operation BOLO. (The information on BOLO was not always absolutely corroborated by those who worked for him, but it was accurate enough.) One thing that I think he did deliberately to intrigue me was to raise the question as to whether or not he had actually shot down a fifth MiG (to become an ace in both World War II and Vietnam), or not. He didn't say he did, but he would not say he didn't. I should remark that this was not just done in passing – it was orchestrated more than once in the interview process – just part of the Olds devilment.

The most surprising thing that came through (surprising to me – I am sure it would not have surprised any of his colleagues) was the depth of his intellect and his still unbelieving rancor that his good ideas had not been recognized while he was on active duty. It was clear that he was aware that some of his unconventional hi-jinks had worked against him in the peace-time Air Force, but he resented that the Air Force had not risen above them to see their value and to use them. He bitterly resented not having been allowed in combat in Korea, and rightly so. Olds felt that he had vindicated himself in Vietnam, but was terribly disappointed – hurt would not be wrong to say – by the fact that his teachings and methods had not been followed in the years after he came back to the United States.

It has been my pleasure to know and interview Boots Blesse many times over the years, for articles, for this book, and for television interviews on Wingspan.[11] He is the most amazingly candid man you will

11. Wingspan Air & Space Channel is a 24-hour cable/satellite television channel that was co-founded by Colonel Boyne in April 1998. Now owned by Discovery Communications, it was the first television channel devoted exclusively to aerospace topics.

ever meet, saying exactly what he thinks, and more surprising, admitting freely to some human frailties that tripped him up from time to time. A warrior like Olds, he was determined to get into combat and become an ace, even though fate seemed to be working against him much of the time.

Like Olds, he devoted much of his time to developing his people, inculcating his tactics, but unlike Olds, he had the gratification of seeing his ideas incorporated into Air Force training, a source of great satisfaction to him.

Although both Olds and Blesse had been interviewed hundreds of times, they did NOT do "schtick" (as so many people with repeat interviews tend to do). I never had the sense that I was getting a canned presentation, or a tired repetition of what they had said before. Both men were as keenly in love with flying and (despite some ups and downs) with the Air Force as they had ever been, and they expressed it well.

Q: You have had both non-fiction and fiction best-sellers. What are the relative challenges and satisfactions, particularly as they relate to non-fiction writing?

A: There is no question that for me, fiction is more fun than non-fiction. There is a cliché that characters assume a life of their own, and it is true – you start out writing about a bunch of figments of your imagination and in time they become real and haunting. With non-fiction, there is always the latent fear that you have erred; you know that there are thousands of very smart people out there, and that an error, no matter how inadvertent, or how minor, will be seen and identified (often smugly) to you. Having said that, writing non-fiction is very gratifying, particularly when you get the sweet reward of having someone who has been there and done that write you to tell you that you are on the mark. Oddly enough, I've often had people write to me confirming something in my fiction books, and even saying that "they were there at the time." With fiction, you have the challenge of making the characters real and not paper-thin – and I've often been criticized for not having done so well enough. But you have a great deal of leeway, and you can make composites of people you know so that you can include more in one fictional character than can be included in a single real-life character. In non-fiction, I personally believe that insufficient attention is given to the very thing always pointed to in fiction: that of character development. Just as an example, Donald Douglas was a fabulously interesting character, but you would never know it from what has been written about him.

Incidentally, in my trilogy of novels on the history of the jet age – *Roaring Thunder*, *Supersonic Thunder*, and *Hypersonic Thunder* – I used a fictional family of test pilots – the Shannons – to tell about real

people, real events, real airplanes, and real companies.[12] No "Acme Aircraft" stuff. And it had been my lot to get to know many of those I covered personally, so in a way it was like going back and reliving my memories of people such as Russ Schleeh, Adolf Galland, Hans von Ohain, George Schairer, and hundreds more.

Q: Many successful air war/aviation historians (you included) have extensive aviation backgrounds. How important is it for an author to have cockpit experience when writing about flying?

A: I am totally and probably incorrectly biased on this. I think being a pilot gives you a bit of an edge in understanding what you read about history and in how you write about it. That seems a terribly stuffy thing to say, but I'm being candid with you. IT DOES NOT mean that scores of other aviation writers are not as good or better than pilot-writers, but it's the way I sense it. Forgive me!

Q: A number of air war/aviation historians who have made significant contributions to the literature – John Lundstrom, Christopher Shores, Barrett Tillman, Christer Bergström – are self-employed or retired from non-academic careers, do not have Ph.D.s, and have never been full-time professionals in the field. Still others such as Richard R. Muller, Joel Hayward, James S. Corum, and Richard Overy do have Ph.D.s and are full-time academics. How would you compare the contributions made by each of these two groups, and where is the next generation of World War II air war/aviation historians? Additionally, what advice would you offer those who are not full-time historians, but nevertheless wish to contribute to this important field of study?

A: The two groups are of course complementary, and undoubtedly the members of each group admire the members of the other group. I would change the nature of your question just a bit, though, to say that the difference may be in the audiences that the writers of each group wish to address. In general, the members of the academic writers must perforce look to their colleagues for approval, a necessarily smaller audience. The non-academics generally tend to write in a more popular vein to a wider audience. There is great value in both approaches, and both are necessary. Let me add something mildly tangential and that is to emphasize the importance of aviation art books like those of Philip Handleman and Ann Cooper in reaching out to a wider audience. And one has to mention

12. Walter J. Boyne, *Roaring Thunder: A Novel of the Jet Age* (New York: Forge, 2006); *Supersonic Thunder: A Novel of the Jet Age* (New York: Forge, 2007); *Hypersonic Thunder: A Novel of the Jet Age* (New York: Forge, 2009).

the important contribution being made by aviation artists such as Bill Phillips, Robert Taylor, Stan Stokes, and so many more.

To non-professionals intent on entering the field, I can only advise to read-read-read and even more important, write-write-write. Writing history is both a craft and an art, and you need the craftsmanship to allow the art to shine through. Craftsmanship in writing is like craftsmanship in anything else – carpentering, sculpture, surgery – you have to do it over and over until you finally learn to get it as right as you can.

I believe that there are more good young writers today than ever, both in the academic and the non-academic categories. One can scarcely keep up with the new publications, journal articles, etc. Sadly, there seems to be less history at a time when there are more writers, in part due to the attenuation of aircraft life-spans and the diminution of company life-spans. Fortunately (I jest), there are still plenty of wars to write about.

Q: How would you assess General Curtis E. LeMay's performance as a commander?

A: I met General LeMay several times after his retirement, but I know him best through long conversations with his former associates (aides, pilots, commanders). The most important of these were General David C. Jones (twice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and CSAF), General Russ Dougherty (CINC SAC), and Colonel Russ Schleeh. They worked with him closely during his time as CINC SAC and Chief of Staff, and all had the highest praise for his fairness, honesty, and courage. They told me without any hesitation that LeMay was the greatest air commander in history, and I believe he demonstrated this in Europe, in the Pacific, and most especially in SAC.

It happened that I was in SAC in the 93rd Bomb Wing, in both the "pre-LeMay" and "post-LeMay" eras. By this I mean I was at Castle Air Force Base in the 330th Bomb Squadron, flying B-50s before LeMay and his teams had reached Castle in their tour of SAC wings. Life before LeMay was a country club, with lots of cheating on how missions were flown, bombs were dropped, etc. At the time, LeMay's teams were fanning out, going from base to base and establishing LeMay's rigorous new standards. Then there came a day when everything changed at the 93rd – the wing and squadron commanders were fired, new people were in charge, and from then on, everything was done strictly according to the book. It was a wonderful thing to see, and it made everything better. LeMay changed SAC from being a nice, well-paid flying club to the greatest instrument of war in history. He also made sure that the Soviet Union was fully informed about the extent of its capability, if not, of course, the means by which that capability would be exerted. Others might disagree, but I believe that LeMay did more to win the Cold War

than any other individual. SAC was a mighty instrument, ready and able to win a nuclear war on fifteen minutes notice, and the Soviet Union knew this.

I never met LeMay while I was in SAC, thank goodness, but Jones and Dougherty emphasized that he was tough but fair, and that if you did the job with the requisite skill, enthusiasm, and dedication, you had nothing to worry about.

They were also candid that as Chief of Staff he was out of his element, and did not do relatively as well. But I think the most important and revealing thing they told me about LeMay concerned his often criticized run as Vice President on George Wallace's ticket. They said that after a few drinks they once asked him about this and he replied something like this: "I never liked Wallace, nor what he stood for. But I believed that Hubert Humphrey had to be stopped or that he would ruin the military, and that is why I agreed to run, to split the Democratic votes." Now politically, this might not have been a wise – or even a correct – strategy, but that was his stated goal. It is a shame that it happened because it has given every two-bit commentator the erroneous "bomb them to the stone age" characterization of a great man.

Q: Of the many lesser-known World War II-era USAAF commanders, whom do you believe is most deserving of a detailed biography, and why? Also, within the same context, which *Luftwaffe* commander would you select?

A: Let me qualify this first by saying that I might not be aware of some of the existing coverage, and that I don't mean to insult anyone who has written on these subjects that I'm unaware of. In the USAAF, I don't believe General Kenney has been given adequate coverage, in spite of his own very good book. General Frank Andrews must have been covered, but I cannot bring a book to mind. If he has not been, he should be. General Quesada has been overlooked. General Tunner has had some things done, but not adequately. General Norstad has not had adequate treatment. Then again, there are the behind-the-scene types I've mentioned before – F.O. Carroll, K.B. Wolfe, Benjamin Kelsey (his own book doesn't do him justice). Johnny Alison needs to have his story told, as does feisty, cantankerous Hugh Knerr. The USAAF has such a long list that it will take decades to cover it.

Within the *Luftwaffe*, Wolfram von Richthofen would lead my list;[13] General Wever also needs better coverage. I'd like to see an insider's view of Sperrle, not because he was a great general, but because alleged-

13. See James S. Corum, *Wolfram von Richthofen: Master of the German Air War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

ly he was so corrupt. The poor, sad, limited fast-burner, Jeschonnek would probably produce a book as hollow as his leadership. Others might include the Austrian Alexander Lohr. Then there is "Beppo" Schmidt, for both the good and the harm he did the *Luftwaffe*. There is much to do here, and of course, plenty of aces to cover. It is my understanding that things have reached a point in modern Germany that scholars can write objectively about even Nazi leaders in World War II, but most of us will have to wait for the translations.

Q: In ten years, there will be relatively few World War II veterans remaining. What effect will that have on how World War II history is researched, written, and taught?

A: There is nothing like talking to a veteran who is in a good state of mental health, has no axe to grind, and has a good memory. That obviously will be lost at some point. I suspect that the first fall-back position will be the oral history interviews that have been made at Maxwell Air Force Base and elsewhere, and then its off to the archives. (An aside: my personal experiences at the National Archives have all been wonderfully positive, if they treat everyone as well as I have been treated over the years, they are one of government's great boons. The same is true of the people at Maxwell Air Force Base.)

Having said this, I'll rile many up by saying that I think the current trend toward an Ambrosian anecdotal approach to history has gone on far too long and was suspect from the start. I say this because a book peppered with conversations recalled from three or four decades ago is very readable, but MUST not be accurate, given the limits of human memory and the frailty of human ego. Someone whose name I cannot recall used to say "As I get older, I remember with ever greater clarity and detail things which never happened." So while personal accounts are wonderful, I think their excessive use – I see as many as two or three extended excerpts per page in some current books – are not as valuable as they might be. They are, however, what publishers seem to want, so I am confounded by my own argument.

Q: As former Director of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, what do you believe museums can do to better educate the public about the Second World War and to attract new students and historians to the field?

A: Fortunately for "enthusiasts" of World War II history, it remains a "good war" and thus is apt to receive more exposure and fair treatment than subsequent conflicts. (As many know, it is virtually impossible to sell a publisher on the idea of a book – fiction or non-fiction – on the

Korean or Vietnam Wars.) World War II also has attractive hardware and a sizeable body of information already available. And to date, less than one-thousandth of one percent of the interesting stories about World War II in the air have been told by museums. Museums could, if they wished, supplement the traditional style of museum exhibits (artifacts on the floor or suspended, photos and graphics with explanations, audio-visual presentations) with a wide variety of on-line "virtual exhibits." With the advances in computer graphics, these could be far more stimulating to a generation of Xbox kids, and would be far less expensive than traditional methods. Notice that I have emphasized the word "supplement." There is nothing like the real thing for inspiration, but I suspect you could generate enthusiasm for a museum – and for the subject of military aviation history – by use of the internet in the same way that some political campaigners generate enthusiasm for their candidacy.

Q: Are you presently working on any new World War II books, and if so, would you provide us with a few of the details?

A: I am about to embark on a book discussing the effect that the helicopter has had on warfare, which will of course be grounded in World War II experience. And I have some novel proposals floating. But what I would like to do (and what no publisher will probably ever be interested in) is a World War I novel that would feature Göring and his friends.

Winston Churchill as Warlord: The Quintessential Enigma

ANTOINE CAPET

As I pointed out in a review of an earlier monograph on Churchill, the author himself (Richard Holmes) felt compelled to justify adding to the "rafts of books" about Churchill. The reason he gave ("I felt irresistibly impelled to take him on")[1] is not fundamentally different from that offered by Carlo D'Este (who also remarks on "the plethora of books about Churchill the politician and political leader") in yet another massive tome[2] on the great man:[3] "very little has been written about the military Churchill […] there has yet to be an objective, total examination of his crucial role as military leader".[4] Thus, we are given to understand that there was a gap in the historiography, and that Lieutenant Colonel Carlo D'Este, U.S. Army (Ret.), with many fine books on the military history[5] and great commanders[6] of the Second World War to his credit, also in a way felt that he was the man to fill it.

1. Richard Holmes, *In the Footsteps of Churchill* (London: BBC Books, 2005). Review in *Cercles* <http://www.cercles.com/review/r23/holmes.htm>.
2. Carlo D'Este, *Warlord: A Life of Churchill at War, 1874-1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2009). Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xix + 936.
3. For the state of the recent bibliography in terms of "thickness," see my review of Geoffrey Best, *Churchill: A Study in Greatness* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2001), <http://www.cercles.com/review/r8/best.html>.
4. D'Este, *Warlord*, p. xviii.
5. *Decision in Normandy* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1983) [*Decision in Normandy: The Unwritten Story of Montgomery and the Allied Campaign* (London: Collins, 1983); *Decision in Normandy: The Real Story of Montgomery and the Allied Campaign* (60th anniversary edition with a new introduction. London: Penguin, 2004)]; *Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily, July-August 1943* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1988, and London: Fontana/ Collins, 1989); *World War II in the Mediterranean, 1942-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 1990); *Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991, and London: HarperCollins, 1991, and London: Aurum, 2007).
6. *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995) [*A Genius for War: A Life of General George S. Patton* (London: HarperCollins, 1996)]; *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002) [*Eisenhower: Allied Supreme Commander* (London: Cassell Military Paperbacks, 2004)].

One must say that the first part of the assertion ("very little has been written about the military Churchill") is only verified if one understands "very little" in relation to the "hundreds of biographies" to which he alludes in the same sentence. D'Este's own Selected Bibliography is strangely incomplete: the selection does include Geoffrey Best's *Churchill and War*,[7] but it gives the wrong title for Paterson's book, at least in its British edition,[8] and, more seriously, it omits two important works for his subject, Kinvig's on Churchill's "private war" (as it was dubbed by some) against the Bolsheviks after the First World War,[9] and Russell's useful volume, with its fine maps by Sir Martin Gilbert and very detailed appendices.[10] In fact, arguing that "very little" has been written on Churchill at war is grossly unfair to Randolph Churchill and Sir Martin Gilbert, as cumulatively the eight volumes of the Official Biography, especially if one includes the thirteen Companion Volumes (not counting the War Papers), must have more on the subject than in D'Este's 950-odd pages.[11]

The second part ("there has yet to be an objective, total examination of his crucial role as military leader") is more justified – one can argue, for instance, that the Official Biography is more descriptive than judgemental, which some will approve, others denounce – but then how can one provide a "total examination" of the enormously complex action of a man like Churchill? And, of course, no author is ever "objective": he can be biased (and many have been when writing on Churchill, very often simply to attract publicity – they shall remain nameless here to avoid giving them more) or he can be fair, offering the two (or more) sides of the story to the best of his ability, deliberately omitting no evidence, even if contradicting his instinctive interpretation. Others before D'Este, notably Geoffrey Best, have also tried to pierce "the riddle of his genius and his imperfections"[12] with no openly partisan axe to grind. Even

7. London: Hambledon & London, 2005.

8. Michael Paterson, *Winston Churchill: His Military Life, 1895-1945* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 2005 – own copy, before my eyes). With D'Este, the reference becomes *Winston Churchill: Personal Accounts of the Great Leader at War* (London: David and Charles, 2005). I have only been able to trace the variant to F&W Publications, Cincinnati, OH, the U.S. distributors. The book (with either title) is not in the Library of Congress, incidentally.

9. Clifford Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia, 1918-1920* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006).

10. Douglas S. Russell, *Winston Churchill, Soldier: The Military Life of a Gentleman at War* (London: Brassey's, 2005).

11. For the complicated story of the various editions, see the website of the Churchill Centre and Museum: <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/learn/books-about/the-official-churchill-biography>. The entire series is in the process of being reprinted by Hillsdale College Press: <http://www.hillsdale.edu/news/freedomlibrary/churchill.asp>.

12. D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 799.

Charmley's offering, criticised as it has been for its "anti-Churchill" interpretations, gives the bare facts, if not dispassionately, at least accurately – leaving the reader free to form his opinion and follow or not the author's conclusions.[13] Where D'Este is probably right, however, is when he suggests that he is the only one so far to have attempted a "total examination of his crucial role as military leader."

Classically, the book begins with his childhood and his love for toy soldiers,[14] his unhappy years at school, and his inglorious admission to Sandhurst Military College at the third try – for a cavalry career, not the coveted infantry – impelling his father to write him a letter of reprimand with somber predictions for his future: "you will become a mere social wastrel, one of the hundreds of the public school failures, and you will degenerate into a shabby unhappy & futile existence."[15] Of course biographers, adepts or not of the Freudian school, generally do not fail to suggest that Churchill's lifelong quest for success was consciously or subconsciously dictated by his determination to contradict his father's poor (and wrong) judgment of him: curiously – and creditably – however, D'Este abstains from what often appears as cheap psychologizing. Whatever his motivations, Churchill left Sandhurst with flying colors in 1894, ranking eighth out of 150 in the final examinations.

Equally classically, the next chapter is entitled "A Young Man on the Make," describing his life as a subaltern in the 4th Queen's Own Hussars. Here, all biographers must be embarrassed, because much of what is known of Churchill's relatively short passage in the army is in fact derived from his only avowed attempt at systematic autobiography,[16] so all they can do is elaborate on his own description, usually relying on the extensive sources included in the Companion volumes to the Official Biography. What D'Este does – well – is provide background on the importance to the Victorian United Kingdom of the overseas Empire, especially India. The same largely holds good for the next episode (and chapter), on Churchill's baptism of fire on the North-West Frontier (1897), that is the frontier between India and Afghanistan, in the sense that Churchill

13. John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993). In spite of the subtitle, the book largely discusses Churchill's military leadership.
14. In this respect, it is difficult to "best" his personal physician's psychological analysis: "From the time he marched his toy soldiers in the nursery at the lodge in Phoenix Park, he had loved war and excitement. To him war was an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. It fascinated him." Lord Moran (Sir Charles Wilson), quoted in D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 435.
15. Ibid., p. 36.
16. *My Early Life: A Roving Commission* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1930) [With an introduction by Sir Max Hastings. London: Folio Society, 2007].

wrote his own account of the peace-keeping operations in the region in which he participated – his first book, in fact.[17] D'Este does not resist the temptation to quote from the Preface, in which Churchill, speaking of the Muslim Pathan tribesmen who rebelled against British colonial authority, remarked that "the weapons of the nineteenth century are in the hands of the savages of the Stone Age" – and he does not resist the temptation, either, to pursue the analogy with the contemporary period further: "This latest in a long history of uprisings occurred in what today is the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan, that is the home base of the Al Qaeda terrorist network."[18] Some readers will find this interestingly informative, others irritatingly irrelevant. Nobody, however, will have any doubts on the relevance of D'Este's conclusion on the Malakand episode, when he remarks that Churchill showed that he had acquired there a lifelong maxim, "Never despise your enemy."[19]

Churchill's next military engagement (1898) was in the Soudan (as it was then spelled) – and it also provided the theme for his next book,[20] again making the task both easier and more difficult for his future biographers like D'Este, who is reduced to inserting incidental remarks on his determination to participate in this glamorous campaign – as he saw it – like his constant pressure on his mother to "pull strings" for him among the influential men of London whom she could seduce by her charms: "Such intense focus and total disregard for the feelings of others would later become the hallmark of Churchill the war leader";[21] or on his disregard for logistics, the importance of which he "never fully appreciated" as was shown on the eve of the Normandy Landings.[22] Anyone who has read at least some passages of Churchill's magnificent prose will understand that D'Este cannot improve on it for his description of the Battle of Omdurman (1 September 1898), which saw "the last and perhaps most famous charge of the British cavalry"[23] – in which Churchill himself participated, though not with a drawn sword because of an earlier accident, which had incapacitated him, but with a Mauser pistol, which saved his life, as excellently recounted in *The River War*, which D'Este can only quote,[24] like Churchill's conclusion on the whole encounter: "the most

17. *The Story of the Malakand Field Force: An Episode of Frontier War* (London: Longmans, 1898) [Rockville, MD: Arc Manor, 2008].
18. D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 70.
19. Ibid., p. 84.
20. *The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Soudan*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1899) [New York: Carroll and Graf, 2000].
21. D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 90.
22. Ibid., p. 96.
23. Ibid., p. 107.
24. "More than a century after its publication it can still be appreciated as an example of Churchill's finest writing," D'Este notes. (D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 126).

signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians."[25] But then, Churchill had misgivings about the mistreatment of the wounded and, D'Este suggests, he came to realize that war was not only about glory : "his exposure to its darker side certainly resulted in revulsion against the high cost imposed by glory."[26] Equally important, perhaps, he was confirmed in his respect for men who bravely fought for their freedom, and D'Este introduces an interesting parallel between what Churchill wrote retrospectively of these gallant "barbarians" taxed with "mad fanaticism" – in fact, more a desperate defense of their territory against the foreign invader in his eyes – and his own attitude in 1940.[27]

The next stage in Churchill's encounters with war was the Boer War, which erupted in 1899 – a three years' war which, D'Este reminds us, produced "a staggering hundred thousand casualties" among Imperial troops[28] in order to "curb the insolence of the Boers."[29] Once more, D'Este is hard put to provide anything new on "Churchill's African adventure,"[30] recounted in countless books – starting, of course, with Churchill himself.[31] But he continues to explore the strand introduced in earlier chapters – the suggestion that all the lessons learned during the wars which he saw in his youth provided the background for his military thinking in 1940:

> Churchill quickly recognized that the late-Victorian army was dreadfully ill suited to fight a modern war, its senior officers mostly incompetent and its tactics woefully outdated. His impatience with the inept or the timid among his Second World War commanders was directly attributable to his South African experience, as was his disdain for the lazy and the incompetent who needlessly killed their own men.[32]

This is somehow linked to another strand, perhaps suggested by Alanbrooke's description of Churchill as a "superman": for D'Este, what makes Churchill unique is his almost innate faculty for drawing the correct conclusions from the complex political, international, and psychological dimensions informing military problems:

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25. Ibid., p. 109.
26. Ibid., p. 117.
27. Ibid., p. 115.
28. Ibid., p. 125.
29. Churchill's own words, quoted ibid., p. 126.
30. Ibid., pp. 160, 161.
31. *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* (London: Longmans, 1900). *Ian Hamilton's March: Together with Extracts from the Diary of Lieutenant H. Frankland, a Prisoner of War at Pretoria* (London: Longmans, Green, 1900) [The two books in one volume: *The Boer War: London to Ladysmith via Pretoria and Ian Hamilton's March* (London: Pimlico, 2002)].
32. D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 163.

> What is less explicable is how a young man[33] of his limited education and experience, untrained as he was in strategy and high command, could have achieved such a deep understanding of the Boer War. His military education at Sandhurst taught him only the basics of soldiering, and his experiences in India and the Sudan, while informative, were also seen from the perspective of an ordinary soldier on the battlefield.[34]

The third strand followed and developed by D'Este is that of Churchill's constant generosity towards the defeated enemy, Churchill himself giving him the cue in *My Early Life*, where he spoke of "offering the hand of friendship to the vanquished," retrospectively arguing that this policy "never indeed was more apt than in South Africa."[35] Naturally, D'Este does not fail on this occasion to remind the reader of the inscription which Churchill proposed for a French war memorial: "In war, Resolution. In defeat, Defiance. In victory, Magnanimity. In peace, Goodwill," but he curiously does not mention in his text that this was also to grace the fly leaves of his *magnum opus*, *The Second World War* – one has to go to the grossly inconvenient section of unnumbered notes at the end of the narrative to find an (unclear) allusion to this very revealing fact.

From then on, the volume seems to wander from its main topic, including irrelevant remarks on Churchill's "peculiar choice of pale-pink silk underwear,"[36] and discussing the various young women whom he courted – finally, of course, being accepted by Clementine Hozier, the marriage taking place in 1908; but again the remarks on Clementine and their marriage seem to wander off course, since she of course did not influence his decisions in military affairs. The "real meat" is met again with Churchill's appointment as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911 and his "infectious enthusiasm for the Royal Navy,"[37] when "it was as if a marriage of sorts had taken place between Churchill and the Royal Navy"[38] – Churchill himself going further: "The Admiralty is a most exacting mistress. I have given up all others for her – except Clemmie."[39] D'Este's treatment of Churchill's decision to substitute oil for coal on naval vessels is better than in most biographies: we are usually told that it showed his modernizing spirit – full stop, but for once D'Este explains

33. Churchill was 26 in 1900.
34. D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 163.
35. Ibid., p. 169.
36. Ibid., p. 183.
37. Ibid., p. 215.
38. Ibid., p. 223.
39. Churchill quoted ibid., p. 225.

the pros and cons.[40] D'Este, not often critical of Churchill until then, has a scathing denunciation of his ambivalent (his enemies would say hypocritical) notion of military honor when discussing his reluctant adoption of submarines:

> It tested Churchill's Victorian upbringing and his unflagging belief that wars should be fought at a certain level of honour, such as that exhibited between the combatants duing the Boer War. He viewed the notion of submarine warfare as something no civilized nation would dare to engage in, perhaps forgetting that the slaughter of poorly armed Zulus and Dervish[41] warriors hardly qualified as "civilized."[42]

One aspect, however, seems to be omitted from D'Este's discussion: a Briton does not reason like a Continental or American; an islander with an extensive merchant marine crucial for his supplies[43] will immediately perceive what he has to lose in a submarine war – far more than what he can hope to gain against his enemies mostly relying on overland transport. Instinctively, Churchill must have seen that the new weapon would always be a danger rather an aid to the defense of the British Isles, which could at least partially explain his reluctance to adopt the new weapon, contrary to his constant practice – as was soon shown by his enthusiastic support for the aeroplane as early as 1909 and the creation of a Naval Air Service as a parallel (some would say a rival) to the Royal Flying Corps in 1912. The First Lord of the Admiralty took flying lessons – although he was never allowed to fly solo, the safety of a prominent Minister of His Majesty being of course the primary consideration in those pioneering times when there were so many fatal crashes. Perhaps suggesting that this served him well during the Second World War, when he had as it were first-hand knowledge of the topography of the battlefield, D'Este comments: "Churchill routinely flew in the skies over Kent well before the RAF pilots who fought the Battle of Britain had even been born."[44] It is also well known that Churchill is one of the "fathers"[45] of the "tank" – and D'Este does his best to explain how Churchill was able to promote this land weapon when he was at the head of the Navy: the tenuous link is perhaps that the first proposals for such an armored vehi-

40. Ibid., p. 218.
41. At Omdurman.
42. Ibid.
43. D'Este reminds us that in the 1890s and 1900s, Britain "had to import most of its food." (D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 199.)
44. Ibid., p. 230.
45. Or midwife? "If Swinton can claim to have fathered the tank, Churchill can more appropriately be termed its midwife." (D'Este, *Warlord*, pp. 252-253.)

cle suggested arming it "with a naval 12-inch gun,"[46] and that Churchill and his aides spoke of a "land ship."

D'Este naturally dwells on Churchill's more controversial forms of intervention, beginning with the Antwerp episode, which "ranks high on Churchill's list of failures," in October 1914. His rash proposal to exchange his ministry for command of the defense of that city receives full treatment, and D'Este concludes that his critics (including Asquith and Lloyd George) were right: "it was another example of heart over head and common sense at a time of deep crisis"[47] and "he had allowed the craving for adventure and military glory to override his primary responsibility of supervising the Royal Navy in the first desperate months of the gravest war in his nation's history."[48]

There was worse to come: as Violet Bonham Carter (née Asquith) much later put it, "No event in his whole career, with the one exception of Gallipoli, did him greater and more undeserved damage" than the Antwerp adventure.[49] This "exception," the Dardanelles expedition and the attendant Gallipoli disaster (February 1915 – January 1916), is covered in two chapters full of reflections on Churchill's character. D'Este insists on the incredible rashness in letting the Navy go it alone, as Churchill believed it could: "Historians ever since have asked the question no one answered at the time: just how was a naval force expected to capture Gallipoli?"[50] In this, he apportions a part of the blame on Churchill's colleagues, and above all on the Prime Minister, Asquith, who did nothing to save Churchill from the Conservatives' wrath when things turned sour – as they almost immediately did. The reshuffle which took place on the Conservatives' insistence when they joined the Government in May 1915 only left Churchill with the Duchy of Lancaster – a sidetrack for failed politicians. He accepted the humiliation in the hope that he would remain in the center of action, but as this was clearly not the case, he resigned from the Government altogether in November. Yet D'Este has no time for Churchill's special pleading, arguing that he must accept the main burden of responsibility:

> His attempt to place blame for the failure of the operation on others, while ducking his own culpability, must now be viewed as entirely self-serving. In microcosm the Dardanelles fiasco represented everything that was at once brilliant and flawed in Churchill. The idea was audacious, the reward of potential significance and the result execrable. […]

46. 1915 document, quoted ibid., p. 250.
47. Ibid., p. 268.
48. Ibid., p. 270.
49. Quoted ibid., p. 268.
50. Ibid., p. 282.

> The Dardanelles and Gallipoli were examples of the same kind of misjudgments Churchill would repeat in the Second World War: seeing only the positives but never the negatives, and sanctioning operations without a full appreciation of the consequences or the capabilities of the forces available to carry them out. And while culpability for the Dardanelles and Gallipoli may be laid at the door of the entire Asquith government and the means by which it waged the First World War, Churchill was one of its key players and strategists.[51]

This negative aspect of his personality, however, was paradoxically to stand him in good stead in the next war, D'Este continues:

> The Churchill of 1915 was an ego-driven, self-assured man, secure in his beliefs and unmoved by dissent. Although these qualities failed him in the First World War, they would redeem him when a far more mature Winston Churchill held Britain's fate in his hands during its darkest hour.[52]

But for the time being, Churchill's reputation sank lower and lower. Following his resignation, he asked to be given a battalion to command on the Western Front and the Government acceded to his request. Churchill duly served in the trenches of "Plugstreet" in the winter of 1915-1916[53] – only to be incapable of resisting the temptation to rejoin the world of Westminster, where a very ill-advised speech in March 1916 in favor of calling back the old "finished" Admiral, Lord Fisher, as First Sea Lord "was greeted with disbelief and ridicule."[54] Resigning his commission in May, he took his seat back in Parliament for good – on the back benches. The Conservatives' opposition to his return on the front bench was only overcome in March 1917, when the new Prime Minister, Lloyd George, made him Minister of Munitions, furthering the production of the new "tanks." Yet, when he became Secretary of State for War and Air in January 1919, he seemed to lose interest in the potential of this new weapon, trying instead to favor the new Royal Air Force. But here again, D'Este tells us, "his flaws overshadowed his brilliance": he believed in the bomber rather than the fighter, in "the notion that strategic bombing alone is capable of winning a war" – which "would embroil Churchill in some of the most contentious inter-service battles

51. Ibid., pp. 286, 288.
52. Ibid., p. 295.
53. See my account of this episode (English-language version forthcoming). Antoine Capet, "Winston Churchill «poilu»: mythe et réalité," in Henry Daniels and Nathalie Collé-Bak, eds., *1916: La Grande-Bretagne en guerre* (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 2007), pp. 83-94.
54. D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 324.

of the Second World War."[55] Thus, he reduced the proportion of fighters devoted to defense as opposed to bombers intended for attack. Later, as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1925-1929), he was to reduce the spending on all three Services. The result is clear in D'Este's eyes: "Although Churchill would later decry Britain's lack of military preparedness [for the Second World War], having been part of the problem he cannot escape responsibility."[56]

As was pointed out earlier, D'Este almost entirely neglects Churchill's "private war" against the Bolsheviks until 1921. This is a pity, since it obviously contradicts D'Este's very interesting comments on *The World Crisis*, the history of the Great War which Churchill wrote partly[57] or entirely[58] for self-justification, depending on one's point of view, whereby one of the great lessons which Churchill is shown to have learned from the First World War was the importance for the civilian leadership to keep control of overall strategic policy. It is clear that his unstinted support for the Soviet war effort (including much-needed war supplies sent at great human cost by the Arctic Convoys) from the first days after Barbarossa was dictated by considerations of grand strategic policy, which must have been very difficult for him to accept after his anti-Bolshevik hysteria of the late 1910s and early 1920s.[59] But there is worse. As Professor Freeman puts it in his review of Kinvig's book:

> Following the Dardanelles debacle, Churchill famously remarked that he had attempted to do too much from a subordinate position. Incredibly he made the same mistake in Russia. He was labeled a military adventurer and blunderer, a reputation that made it easy for many people to disregard his later warnings about the Nazis.[60]

The idea, of course, is that by further eroding his reputation for reliablity with his anti-Bolshevik campaign, Churchill in fact made things easier for the Fascist and Nazi supporters in Britain. His pronounce-

55. Ibid., p. 345.
56. Ibid., p. 346.
57. "In large part exculpatory." Ibid., p. 339.
58. "The six volumes of his *World Crisis* highlight his version of events in what a naval historian [Geoffrey Penn] has cynically described as 'the Gospel according to Churchill.'" Ibid., p. 295.
59. This hysteria is discussed at length on *Finest Hour Online*, the website of the Churchill Centre and Museum, in Antoine Capet, "'The Creeds of the Devil': Churchill between the Two Totalitarianisms, 1917-1945" (August 2009), <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/support/the-churchill-centre/publications/finest-hour-online/725-the-creeds-of-the-devil-churchill-between-the-two-totalitarianisms-1917-1945>.
60. David Freeman, "Russia 1918: Folly or Opportunity?" [Review of Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade*], *Finest Hour – The Journal of Winston Churchill*, no. 143, Summer 2009, pp. 47-48 (p. 48).

ments against the concessions proposed to India in 1930, which ran contrary to the all-party consensus over conciliation towards Indian Nationalism, estranged him even more deeply from mainstream politics and public opinion. D'Este agrees on the consequences: "Churchill's frequent and cogent warnings of the threat posed by Hitler and Mussolini went largely ignored."[61] The rift culminated after Chamberlain's triumphant return from Munich in October 1938, with crowds delirious all the way from the airport. D'Este fails to remind his readers that Chamberlain was warmly congratulated by both the King of England and the President of the United States (two belated supporters of Churchill), but he does not fail to remind them of Churchill's unpopular scathing comment: "You were given the choice between war and dishonour. You chose dishonour and you will have war."[62]

And war, of course, did come, when on 1 September 1939 German troops invaded Poland. A little-known fact mentioned by D'Este is that Churchill was alerted (by the Polish Ambassador) even before the British Government: the reason was that the Poles trusted him – unlike Chamberlain.[63] The latter could no longer resist the pressure of public opinion, which had been increasingly clamoring for Churchill's inclusion in the Government since the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Curiously (or deviously?), in view of his discomfiture at its head in the previous war, Chamberlain offered him the Admiralty, with a seat in the War Cabinet, which Churchill accepted. Hence the famous signal, "Winston Is Back."

D'Este has interesting pages on the methods of work which Churchill introduced as First Lord of the Admiralty and kept as Prime Minister: the red labels on urgent requests for information, the "Action This Day" memos, the late-night sessions with his staff, the frequent recourse to maps of operations, the afternoon naps ("in the nude, a prerequisite he said"),[64] the tireless visits to naval bases, inspections of the Fleet and voyages on "his" ships – with constant interference with the work of other departments and barely acceptable suggestions to the BBC. He also points out that the "Phoney War" label given to that period is a misleading one as far as naval operations are concerned. The German submarine offensive was a constant worry. The Navy was also in charge of transporting the British Expeditionary Force and its equipment and supplies to France. And there were spectacular sea operations, like the Battle of

61. D'Este, Warlord, p. 351.
62. Ibid., p. 365. Unfortunately, D'Este does not give the source: this is one of the considerable drawbacks of the confusing, unhelpful system of unnumbered notes adopted.
63. Ibid., p. 378.
64. Ibid., p. 392.

the River Plate in December 1939.

But as a member of the War Cabinet, Churchill had a say in all aspects of the conduct of the war, not only at sea – so much so that he soon appeared as the real leader of the war. The concept of an attack on neutral Norway to prevent Swedish iron ore – so vital for Germany – from being exported through the ice-free port of Narvik, could of course be justifiably put forward by the Admiralty as primarily a naval operation. Thus, Churchill took command of the planning of an expedition which was, his future Private Secretary Jock Colville noted in his diary, "dangerously reminiscent of the Gallipoli plan."[65] The rest of the story is well known, and D'Este agrees with all his predecessors that "Norway was an example of everything a military expedition should not be," adding that it was "massively mismanaged by Churchill."[66] Once more, as over Gallipoli, "Churchill exaggerated the culpability of others and seriously underrated his own responsibilty" in his war memoirs, in which he gave a "misleading and self-serving account" of the campaign.[67] D'Este naturally points to the irony of Churchill's final accession to the Premiership, when on 8 May 1940 Chamberlain's position became untenable because of the Norway fiasco – whose primary responsibility was that of the First Lord, not his.

Interestingly, D'Este does not start the long list of problems facing the new Prime Minister with the intractable question of the defense of Great Britain if the French armies did not hold out – instead he suggests that "one of Churchill's greatest challenges upon becoming Britain's leader in May 1940 was to learn to relate to people, something he had never been particularly good at."[68] Drawing on the vast corpus of published memoirs of people who worked with him (high-ranking soldiers and politicians) or for him (secretaries, servants, and bodyguards – not forgetting his private physician) during the war, D'Este very vividly recreates what it was like to be in the Cabinet War Rooms or to follow him on his endless travels[69] during the war. The fact that he was his own Minister of Defence made things both simpler (from the point of view of coordinating action) and more complicated (when potential clashes occurred between

65. Ibid., p. 409.
66. Ibid., p. 418.
67. Ibid., p. 419.
68. Ibid., p. 431.
69. The only typo found in the volume (a remarkable feat of meticulous proof-reading in well over 900 pages) is when D'Este mentions Lavery's recent book in his "notes." The correct reference (see my review in *World War II Quarterly*, vol. 6 (1), 2009, pp. 70-74) is Brian Lavery, *Churchill Goes to War: Winston's Wartime Journeys* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press and London: Conway Maritime, 2007). In D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 869, it becomes *Churchill Goes to War: Winston's Wartime Journal*.

political and military considerations, as when French defenses were on the verge of collapse in mid-June 1940: "Churchill was obliged to make a political decision [sending British reinforcements to France] that was at variance with his responsibility as a political leader").[70]

"Churchill was given to interfering in military matters, large and small," D'Este tells us, even though he "trusted and liked" the military chiefs, and "he found it difficult to let go of the Admiralty, and continued issuing directives as if he were still First Lord."[71] Hence the celebrated storms, which D'Este explains in terms of Churchill's fear of a return to the errors and timidity of the high command in the First World War, even the Boer war: "The root cause of their fiery exchanges was Churchill's fondness for advocating risky ventures, combined with his conviction that the chiefs of staff were too passive unless he pushed them hard."[72]

At the time of the Dunkirk crisis, D'Este argues, "it was precisely his involvement in events such as this that would drive his chiefs of staff to distraction and earn him the none-too-complimentary sobriquet of amateur strategist."[73] His first "gut-wrenching," "heart-rending" decision was "to sacrifice the Calais garrison,"[74] hoping to delay the advance of German reinforcements towards Dunkirk – a decision which, it turned out after the war when the full story of German tactics was known, had been unnecessary. But D'Este points out that Hitler's order to halt the German armored division before Dunkirk was a blunder of incommensurably greater proportions, "one of the war's great turning points and a stroke of extraordinary good fortune for Churchill and for Britain."[75] D'Este also rightly reminds us that "Winston Churchill's role at this point in the Battle of France was primarily one of exhortation"[76] – to his military commanders, but also indirectly to the troops (with his messages of encouragement) and to the civilian population (with his speeches in the House of Commons and on the BBC). It is only after the success of the Dunkirk Evacuation, early in June 1940, that he was able to assume "his new role as galvanizer in chief."[77] Insisting on the essential intervention of the Royal Air Force during the Evacuation, D'Este also observes that "the losses sustained by the RAF in France in seven weeks would turn out to

70. D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 497.
71. Ibid., p. 447.
72. Ibid., p. 451. This is discussed at length in Raymond Callahan, *Churchill and His Generals* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007). See H-Albion review on: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=13798>.
73. D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 476.
74. Ibid., p. 481.
75. Ibid., p. 483.
76. Ibid., p. 484.
77. Ibid., p. 494.

be higher than those incurred during the Battle of Britain,"[78] a fact which remains little known outside specialist circles. D'Este moreover has another observation which probably goes against conventional thinking among the non-specialist general public:

> Dunkirk also changed Churchill's military thinking. His normal combativeness was replaced by the sobering realization that winning the war did not always mean attack, attack – that sometimes defence was necessary. The transition was not easy for a warrior of his ilk. Dunkirk was a far cry from days earlier when he had urged, even demanded, offensive action when none was really possible. […]
>
> Appointing the right people would prove his greatest challenge. The lesson for Churchill – one that he never really grasped – was that filling the role of de facto commander in chief required more than just an aggressive approach to war. His desire to avoid the mistakes of the static warfare of 1914-18 is understandable; however, the itch to play soldier in chief instead of commander in chief was ever present.[79]

We have portraits of the various scientists and inventors who worked in "Winston Churchill's Toyshop" or in various Government Departments. Likewise, the book has a number of vignettes on "Churchill's" generals, and the series begins with Montgomery and Wavell: Churchill was not impressed by Montgomery, this "common" man, when they first met in the summer of 1940, and Wavell was "taciturn to a degree that infuriated Churchill, who judged him aloof and uncommunicative."[80] In charge of the Middle East, Wavell had to counter Italian offensives in Somaliland and Libya – the ultimate objective being the capture of Egypt. All went reasonably well until Italy invaded Greece on 28 October 1940, which "prompted Churchill to make the most serious strategic misjudgment of the war in February 1941, when he ordered reinforcements sent from the Middle East to Greece in fulfilment of a 1939 undertaking to come to its aid."[81] This resulted in another hurried evacuation, with some of the forces going back to Egypt while others stayed in Crete, from which the Germans dislodged them in another disastrous battle in May 1941. "Even before Crete, Churchill had decided to sack Wavell," D'Este tells us; "the only question was when":[82] in fact, the axe fell on 22 June (no connection with Barbarossa). This is because, he ex-

78. Ibid., p. 487.
79. Ibid., p. 498.
80. Ibid., p. 553.
81. Ibid., p. 583.
82. Ibid., p. 610.

plains, "once Churchill soured on a military man there was no turning back, and his exit became only a matter of time."[83]

D'Este – himself a career soldier, as we saw – backs Wavell against Churchill, whose "antagonism towards Wavell never mellowed," pointing out that "he spared no effort to demean Wavell's contributions" and that "his post-war public account of Wavell's relief is equally unsparing."[84] The sad story of his successor, "the introverted Auchinleck," soon falling out of favor with "the extroverted Churchill"[85] allows D'Este to provide a fine in-depth analysis of what he very aptly calls a "conundrum": it is clear on one hand that "there was no separation (and consequently no counterbalance) between Churchill the political leader and Churchill the warlord. The orders of one were the orders of the other" – on the other hand, "it is unlikely the war could have been won unless Churchill also filled the role of warlord."[86] Further in the narrative, D'Este quotes Churchill reminiscing about the gloomy days of early 1942, with a Parliamentary rebellion on his hands: "I was resolved to keep my full power of war-direction. I should not, of course, have remained Prime Minister for an hour if I had been deprived of the office of Minister of Defence."[87]

The next victim, before Auchinleck fell in August 1942, was no less than the highest-ranking member of the military, Dill, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who was removed in November 1941 because Churchill called him a "tired man."[88] His successor was Alan Brooke (later Lord Alanbrooke), "a passionate bird-watcher and a man of considerable humanity who loathed war, as all good soldiers do"[89] who was instrumental in "reining in Churchill's wilder impulses."[90] D'Este approves of both decisions. By August 1942, with Brooke at the top in London and Alexander (whose relationship with Churchill "was one of almost reverential awe and envy on Churchill's part") and Montgomery ("neither a romantic nor a gentleman like Alexander")[91] in the Middle East – where the bulk of British land forces were concentrated – new perspectives for an offensive were at last opened. More impatient for attack than ever, Churchill bombarded the Middle East command in

83. Ibid., p. 624.
84. Ibid., p. 612.
85. Ibid., pp. 614-615.
86. Ibid., p. 616.
87. Ibid., p. 649. Quoted from Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 4, *The Hinge of Fate* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950), p. 91.
88. Ibid., p. 626.
89. Ibid., p. 627.
90. Ibid., p. 628.
91. Ibid., p. 674.

September with directives which Alexander and Montgomery wisely countered: the Eighth Army needed a full moon, Montgomery insisted – and he stood his own ground against his formidable political master until the late-October full moon finally came, not a minute earlier. "Churchill and patience were an oxymoron," D'Este somewhat ungrammatically explains when describing his expostulations to Brooke in the days following 23 October, when Montgomery duly started his night attack, taking advantage of the full moon.[92] The rest of the story is well known and D'Este wisely rests content with an excellent summary of the complex military operations. On the light side, he does not resist quoting Churchill's *bon mot* when learning that Montgomery had invited a captured German general to dine: "I sympathize with General von Thoma. Defeated, humiliated, in captivity, and… dinner with General Montgomery."[93] More seriously, the victory made his political position at last unassailable, and it also reinvigorated him after the depressing series of disasters – the latest being the Dieppe expedition of August, largely his fault according to D'Este.

Now, with the gradual growth of actual (as opposed to potential) American military strength, the major question – all historians agree – was where to deploy the Western Allies' forces to the best effect. All also agree that Churchill was able to persuade Roosevelt to agree to his "soft underbelly" approach, namely undertaking the re-conquest of Europe through its Mediterranean southern flank while the Red Army kept the Germans at bay in the East. The American strategy notably favored by Generals Marshall and Eisenhower was rejected – at least for 1942-43. D'Este naturally does not try to run counter to this conventional account. He reminds us of the incredible truth, bluntly expressed by Churchill to Roosevelt at Casablanca in January 1943, that they were meeting because they had no suitable plan for 1943 besides the completion of TORCH, the joint invasion of French North Africa in November 1942.[94] At Casablanca, Churchill not only obtained confirmation of the overall Europe-first strategy: he got Presidential support for what Marshall called the Mediterranean "blind alley" and a final decision to postpone the Americans' favorite plan – an invasion of North-West Europe – until 1944. As D'Este admiringly concludes, "Churchill had played his hand

92. Ibid., p. 686.
93. Ibid., p. 688. Culled from Kay Halle, ed., *Irrepressible Churchill: A Treasury of Winston Churchill's Wit* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1966) [*Irrepressible Churchill: Stories, Sayings and Impressions of Sir Winston Churchill* (London: Robson, 1985); *The Irrepressible Churchill: Through his own Words and the Eyes of his Contemporaries* (London: Robson, 2000)]. D'Este omits the book in his Select Bibliography, though he mentions it in his "notes."
94. Ibid., p. 700.

masterfully. […] Casablanca, in sum, was a triumph for Churchill."[95]

But D'Este, of course, was ironical all along in his admiration: he suggests a few pages farther down that this was all a Phyrrhic victory for the Allies – the British included – since the "soft underbelly" turned out to be not so soft after all, even after the elimination of the Axis from North Africa:

> The war in the Mediterranean thus assumed its ultimate, sad characteristic: campaigns pursued at the request of the British prime minister, who wanted spectacular performances, but at the cost of British and American lives, limbs and exhaustion, in the dutiful service of a cause that most participants questioned. […]
>
> At Salerno [9 September 1943, "a damned close-run thing" in Churchill's own admission] the Allies opened their campaign in Italy without a clear idea of why they were there. Except for Churchill's fixation on the liberation of Rome, neither Eisenhower nor Alexander had ever defined the Allied mission in Italy. Thus the campaign was already adrift before it even began.[96]

D'Este has no doubt – though the debate goes on among specialist commentators, in addition to the "pro-Churchill" or "pro-Marshall" amateur historians in both countries – that "Churchill's chosen battlefield," the Mediterranean, and more particularly Italy, with later designs on Rhodes, the Aegean, and the Balkans (a reminiscence of Gallipoli?), was one "that simply distracted the Allies from their real task: crossing the English Channel and opening the endlessly delayed second front."[97] He therefore only has scathing words for Churchill's disastrous adventure at Anzio in January 1944, as he continued to pursue the chimera of a quick seizure of Rome and ultimate victory in Italy. "Churchill took credit for its parentage but was unwilling to accept any responsibility for its illegitimacy," D'Este wittily concludes.[98]

The next great Anglo-American clash on policy took place over the role of the Air Force before the Normandy landings. "Bomber" Harris (RAF) and "Tooey" Spaatz (USAAF), who were in charge of the massive bombing raids over Germany, were reluctant to divert their bombers for Eisenhower's "Transportation Plan" – a plan to wreck the French railway system, making it impossible for the Germans to quickly bring reinforce-

95. Ibid., pp. 702-703.
96. Ibid., pp. 707, 717.
97. Ibid., p. 717.
98. Ibid., p. 755.

ments to Normandy. By 1944, Churchill had lost some of his initial enthusiasm for the indiscriminate bombing of Germany – but he opposed the "Transportation Plan" because of the expected high casualties among the French civilian population. Hardly anybody supported Eisenhower in Britain – only Tedder (RAF) – whereas Churchill had the Cabinet behind him, in addition to Harris, Spaatz and Doolittle (Commander of the U.S. Eighth Air Force). Though General de Gaulle and General Koenig of the Free French supported Eisenhower, considering that this was the price to pay for Liberation, Churchill remained obdurate and even appealed to Roosevelt, who "refused to intervene, in what was a tacit rebuke to Churchill."[99] Eisenhower finally carried the day – showing once more (after the disastrous Teheran Conference with Stalin and Roosevelt a few months before, in November-December 1943) where the real decision-making center now lay. The British Prime Minister, who had always objected to the proposed landings in the South of France (Operation ANVIL/DRAGOON), also had to rally behind Eisenhower's continued support for it "after some of the most acrimonious exchanges between Roosevelt and Churchill,"[100] the issue at stake being the perpetuation of Churchill's pet strategy of the "soft underbelly," which the Americans, who never liked it, were now in a position to veto – and his defeat "remained like a festering sore" for Churchill.[101] A minor battle which he lost with Eisenhower was the latter's refusal to allow Churchill to join the invasion fleet and observe D-Day operations from HMS *Belfast* – Churchill only obtained permission to cross the Channel on 12 June, notably with Brooke and Marshall, being met by Montgomery on the Courseulles beach.

His elation was of short duration, however, as he soon turned against Montgomery's perceived immobility. D'Este has very severe words against Churchill after July 1944, even if he finds explanations for his deteriorating persona:

> There is a great deal to observe of Winston Churchill in 1944-45 that is reflective of a leader on a downward spiral, whose powers and influence were nearing rock bottom. Failing health, frustration, bad temper, loss of concentration and bone weariness, combined with a determination to remain relevant, were all very much in evidence. […] The question that must be asked is how he managed for so long to endure the interminable grind that would long since have broken an ordinary man. The gifts of spirit and perseverance that had been bestowed on him were not everlasting, and in the summer of 1944 evidence of

99. Ibid., p. 742.
100. Ibid., p. 771.
101. Ibid., p. 776.

> their departure was manifested by his rapidly diminishing ability to control events and influence the conduct of the war […]
>
> For the remainder of the war Churchill's role as warlord remained largely inconsequential.[102]

Or did it? For D'Este, if "Churchill's role as warlord remained largely inconsequential" in winning the war after the summer of 1944, *a contrario* his formidable presence in the Alliance in fact delayed victory – this is probably the most controversial thesis in what is largely a conventional book:

> What ultimately ensured that there would be no victory in 1944 stems from the very makeup of the Anglo-American coalition. Had the United States allied itself with a smaller and weaker partner, Eisenhower might have felt justified in a single-thrust military operation in the autumn of 1944, but so long as Winston Churchill led Britain, such a decision was unimaginable.[103]

His last defeat was his failure to persuade Eisenhower, Marshall, or Roosevelt to reverse the decision – agreed with the Soviets – to stop at the Elbe, and dash for Berlin, but D'Este does not dwell on its implications for the coming Cold War. With hindsight, in his memoirs, Churchill makes much of this mistake as he saw it. Likewise, he discusses at length the difficulties with the Soviets over Poland, more or less insinuating that the Western-backed Provisional Polish Government was a victim of Roosevelt's and Truman's naivety[104] – but D'Este does not seem to include these matters of high politics and diplomacy in the functions of a "warlord" since he does not even allude to them. In the same way, we have very little on the Anglo-American debate at the highest level on the future of the former European colonies liberated by the Japanese – another area in which Churchill was extremely active. Indeed, we have nothing on the final outcome of what was called the War in the Far East – nothing on Churchill's participation nor in the episode now known as "the decision to drop the Bomb." Clearly, for D'Este, Churchill's role ended for all intents and purposes on 5 June 1944: the rest of the story was a purely American epic, in the West and even more so in the East, with Churchill only a minor disturbance or a major nuisance, depending on the issue – fortunately with the American leaders always finally able to relegate him to a subsidiary function behind their official words of praise and British delusions that he still was a major player.

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102. Ibid., pp. 771, 783.
103. Ibid., pp. 783-784.
104. See Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 6, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954), Book II: "The Iron Curtain," *passim*.

This is a seductive thesis, of course – it cannot be dismissed lightly just because Churchill has remained such a towering figure in twentieth-century British history: indeed World history – and D'Este has very compelling arguments in its favor. We can only repeat here what we said in another recent military biography: no one can write the biography of controversial historical characters like the major war leaders of world history without taking sides in the many controversies that still surround them.[105] D'Este evidently takes what we could call "the American side," from 1942 and especially from mid-1944 – as he is perfectly entitled to do since there is no deliberate distortion or manipulation of the evidence, which has remained open to interpretation since the events took place.

That D'Este has a feeling of empathy with this "born soldier"[106] is of course in no doubt, and he vigorously defends him against the principal accusation which was levelled against him long before Hitler and heinous Nazi propagandists eagerly seized upon it: "was Churchill so in love with war that he merited the label of warmonger?", he rhetorically asks.

> The answer is no. His fascination with war must not be confused with a love of war. His experience of seeing death in many grotesque forms was enough to cure anyone's idealism. However, it was the trappings of war that engaged him, and the notion of being a key player in the making of strategy and, if not its chief strategist, at least the overseer of the war's military direction.[107]

D'Este is also careful to present Churchill as radically different from his opponents in his attitude to the inevitable casualties of war:

> There is no greater burden than to carry the responsibility for thousands of lives that may be saved or lost because of a decision made in a room in Whitehall. For men like Hitler and Stalin, who cared nothing about human life, such losses were almost abstract and carried no burden of conscience. And while Churchill fully understood that loss of life was part and parcel of being both prime minister and defence minister, the responsibility came at a high price in the toll it took upon him both physically and mentally. It was never abstract for Churchill. Each defeat, loss of a vessel or downing of an aircraft was a

105. J.P. Harris, *Douglas Haig and the First World War* (Cambridge Military Histories. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). H-Diplo review: <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/showrev.php?id=23905>.
106. A judgment formulated by Margot Asquith, the Prime Minister's (1908-1916) wife. Quoted in D'Este, *Warlord*, p. 272.
107. Ibid., p. 443.

heavy load he could not share with others, for it was his and his alone.[108]

Perhaps D'Este's most insightful – and most useful – observation is when he reflects on what finally makes Churchill impossible to assess as a war leader: "He was the quintessential enigma – the most impatient man in Britain, who exhibited the patience of Job over what mattered most: winning a war that was like a marathon."[109] It makes it difficult for him, however, to argue that he has fulfilled his initial self-imposed task: to provide "an objective, total examination of his crucial role as military leader." If anything, D'Este's fine monograph shows that it is obviously impossible to offer a total examination, still less an objective examination of such a complex character. Churchill remains an enigma after reading the book. Why not?

So, where does the interest of the book finally lie? Much depends on the reader's previous knowledge of Churchill's military activities. For detailed accounts, historians will continue to rely on specialized articles in scholarly journals or specific chapters in collective books. It is clear, for instance, that D'Este cannot hope to match Reynolds' outstanding analysis of Churchill's "decision to fight on" in May 1940.[110] But he easily improves on Lukacs' hagiographic account of a Churchill presented as literally the agent of Divine Providence.[111] Overall, D'Este's attractive book undoubtedly deserves to find a niche between the micro-studies preferred by the academic community and the fat "general" biographies which by their very nature cannot concentrate too much on Churchill the warlord. It will be interesting to compare the 450-odd pages which D'Este devotes to the Second World War with the newly-published

108. Ibid., p. 650.
109. Ibid., p. 597.
110. David Reynolds, "Churchill and the British 'decision' to fight on in 1940: Right policy, wrong reasons," In Richard T.A. Langhorne, ed., *Diplomacy and Intelligence during the Second World War: Essays in Honour of F.H. Hinsley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 147-167. [Reprinted in David Reynolds, *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 75-98].
111. John Lukacs, *Blood, Toil, Tears & Sweat: Winston Churchill and the Speech that saved Civilization* (London: Basic Books, 2008) [*Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: The Dire Warning* (New York: Basic Books, 2008)], p. 26. In an earlier book, *Five Days in London, May 1940* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 218, Lukacs did not hesitate to write: "It was thus that in 1940 he [Hitler] represented a wave of the future. His greatest reactionary opponent, Churchill, was like King Canute, attempting to withstand and sweep back that wave. And – yes, *mirabile dictu* – this King Canute succeeded: because of his resolution and – allow me to say this – because of God's will, of which, like every human being, he was but an instrument."

(September 2009) 580-page offering by Sir Max Hastings,[112] *Finest Years: Churchill as Warlord, 1940-45*.[113] We can obviously never tire of reading about the great man's Finest Hour.[114]

Highly recommended, of course, to anyone interested in the Second World War, as one may expect *Global War Studies* readers to be.

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112. Well known to *Global War Studies* readers for his long list of fine books on the Second World War: *Bomber Command* (London: Michael Joseph, 1979 [Penguin, 1997]); *Das Reich: Resistance and the March of the 2nd SS Panzer Division through France, June 1944* (London: Michael Joseph, 1981); *Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy 1944* (London: Michael Joseph, 1984); *Victory in Europe: D-Day to VE-Day* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985); *Armageddon: The Battle for Germany, 1944-45* (London: Macmillan, 2004); *The Faces of World War II: The Second World War in Words and Pictures* (London: Cassell, 2008); *Retribution: The Battle for Japan, 1944-45* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).

113. Max Hastings, *Finest Years: Churchill as Warlord, 1940-45* (London: HarperCollins, 2009).

114. Another interesting perspective is the potential comparison with William Manchester's long-awaited third and last volume of *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983-88). This volume, *Defender of the Realm, 1940-1965*, has benefited from advance extracts: William Manchester, "'Another bloody country gone West': Defender of the Realm – The Fall of France," *Finest Hour – Journal of the Churchill Center and Societies*, no. 109, Winter 2000-2001, pp. 17-28 and "Undaunted by odds," *Finest Hour – Journal of the Churchill Center and Societies*, no. 124, Autumn 2004, pp. 19-30 (on the Battle of Britain).

Naval War in the Mediterranean

JAMES J. SADKOVICH

Struggle for the Middle Sea[1] is an ambitious book which its author, Vincent O'Hara, believes to be "a complete history of the five-year naval war in the Mediterranean and Red Sea" that is more "balanced" than "Anglo-centric" or "Italo-centric" interpretations and so strips away the myths and legends surrounding the conflict, and offers valuable "lessons" for today's navies.[2] Mr. O'Hara devotes his first five chapters to events leading to war, France's defeat, Italy's "parallel war," German intervention in the Mediterranean theater, and naval operations in the Red Sea. He then discusses operations in the Mediterranean Sea prior to mid-1941, France's efforts to defend its empire against British attacks, the "convoy war," the "resurgent" Axis, the "resurgent" Allies, the Italian armistice, and "Germany's War." Mr. O'Hara ends his account with nine pages of conclusions in which he assesses the performance of the British, Italian, French, German, and American navies. To complement his text, he includes scores of tables, maps, and charts. His work, therefore, promises a great deal, including a well-documented revision of previous accounts of the war in the Mediterranean.

Mr. O'Hara's work is a useful guide to surface operations in the Mediterranean, and he includes tables, maps, and charts to support his text. However, his study is far from a "complete history" of the naval war in the Middle Sea. Its focus on surface operations precludes analysis of air and submarine operations, as well as detailed discussion of the po-

1. Vincent O'Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean, 1940-1945* (London: Conway, 2009). Illustrations. Maps. Charts. Tables. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 324.

2. Ibid., pp. xiv-xviii, 267 n. 3, offers Bernard Ireland, *The War in the Mediterranean, 1940-1943* (London: Arms and Armour, 1993), and Donald Macintyre, *The Battle for the Mediterranean* (New York: Norton, 1965), as examples of "Anglo-centric" history; James J. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994), and Marc' Antonio Bragadin, *The Italian Navy in World War II* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1957), as examples of "Italo-centric" accounts; and Raymond De Belot, *The Struggle for the Mediterranean, 1939-1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), and Jack Greene and Alessandro Massignani, *The Naval War in the Mediterranean, 1940-1943* (London: Chatham, 1998), as examples of "more balanced" accounts.

litical and diplomatic context in which strategies were formulated and the factors that influenced their operational and tactical applications. He does not compare the industrial bases of the belligerents, nor their ships, weapons, and doctrines; he pays scant attention to the role of intelligence; and he does not consistently link naval battles to military operations in North Africa and Greece. These are notable omissions because the conflict in the Mediterranean was an air-naval war in which most surface operations were linked to convoy operations. It was also a war in which one side had the advantage of reliable intelligence, sonar, and radar while the other often fought blind, a difference that one would have expected Mr. O'Hara to discuss in detail, given that the majority of the surface actions he describes are nighttime raids by British destroyers and cruisers using radar, guided by decrypted Axis communications, and supported by radar-equipped aircraft against Italian and German merchantmen escorted by Italian torpedo boats and destroyers that traveled predictable routes without benefit of radar, consistent air cover, or knowledge of their enemy's intentions.

Mr. O'Hara has little to say regarding Italian and German problems coordinating their war efforts and he ignores Germany's influence on Italy's war effort, with the result that his comments regarding strategy and performance tend to be naïve and contradictory. For example, he speculates that "probably Hitler's real motive" for trying to seize the French fleet in 1942 was that the French reaction "freed the Germans from a diplomatic constraint" after the Anglo-American landings in North Africa, which Mr. O'Hara sees as the "turning point" in North Africa. He notes that in late 1942 the Germans decided that Tunisia was "the decisive key position in the Mediterranean," but he does not discuss earlier Italian efforts to persuade Berlin to press Vichy France to allow Italy to use Tunisia's ports, nor does he comment on the German belief that it would be ". . . a simple task to supply [their] Armoured Army, since [their] supply lines are short," a statement that seems to illustrate a frivolous attitude by German leaders toward the war in the Middle Sea.[3] Mr. O'Hara seems to view Germany's war effort as more important than that of Italy, an impression partly confirmed by his conclusion that despite its "superiority in intelligence, doctrine, technology, and resources," the Royal Navy could not quickly defeat the Italian navy because London‘s "focus on the Mediterranean was a strategic mistake that worked to Germany's benefit until the last day of the European war." Yet, the only alternative to this strategy was a cross-Channel invasion in 1941, which Mr. O'Hara seems to favor, given his comment that while the war in the Mediterranean "lasted fifty-nine months," the Allies ad-

3. O'Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea*, p. 198.

vanced "from Normandy into the heart of Germany in just ten months."[4]

Mr. O'Hara's conclusions are interesting, but they are neither as novel as the jacket blurbs suggest they are nor as tenable as he believes them to be. That Italians were not militarily incompetent and that Germans did not do "all the real fighting" are two "legends" that authors whom O'Hara dismisses as "Italo-centric" have sought to demonstrate in more detail than he manages in this book.[5] The revelation that the British navy needed help from the United States, the British Empire, and the Commonwealth to defeat Italy and Germany will not surprise many readers, although O'Hara's claim that the battle of El Alamein in late 1942 was not a "turning point" in the war will surely leave some bemused.[6] Mr. O'Hara's comment that the French navy "clashed" with the British navy on various occasions suggests that Vichy France was a belligerent, yet the actions he discusses were all unprovoked attacks by British forces against French ships and colonies, and he concludes that while the French navy served an "unworthy cause," it was never "an Axis cobelligerent, despite British provocation and German pressure."[7]

The tables that Mr. O'Hara includes for most surface actions include information on the weather, the condition of the seas, the time of attack, the commanders, the names of ships, and the formations to which they belonged, but he does not discuss the main armament, armor, age, speed, or radar installations of the ships involved in these actions, and the usefulness of his descriptions of the weather and sea conditions depends on his discussion. For example, the table accompanying his description of the encounter between Italian and British ships off Gavdo Island and Cape Matapan on 28-29 March 1941 notes that the night sky was "overcast with light southwesterly wind, no moon, and a slight swell." This information is useful, but only if the author provides a detailed discussion of distances, visibility, and the impact that British possession of radar and decrypts of Italian and German traffic had on the encounter. However, Mr. O'Hara does not do so, possibly because he leans heavily on British sources, which he cites twice as often as Italian sources (twenty-nine and fourteen times, respectively). He cites the British commander,

4. Ibid., pp. 260-62.

5. Among those who have made these arguments are various Italian authors, including Marc' Antonio Bragadin, *Il drama della Marina italiana, 1940-1945* (Milano: Mondadori, 1982), and James J. Sadkovich, *La Marina italiana nella seconda guerra mondiale* (Gorizia: Liberia Editrice Goriziana, 2006) [revised and updated Italian edition of *The Italian Navy in World War II*]; "German Military Incompetence through Italian Eyes," *War in History*, vol. 1 (1), 1994, pp. 39-62; "Of Myths and Men: Rommel and the Italians in North Africa, 1940-1942," *International History Review*, vol. 13 (2), May 1991, pp. 284-313.

6. O'Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea*, pp. xiv-xvi.

7. Ibid., p. 260.

Andrew Cunningham, four times, but the Italian commander, Angelo Iachino, only once. He does not cite Iachino's two books on the battle nor Francesco Mattesini's analysis, which was written twelve years after the Ultra secret was revealed in 1974, unlike the histories by Pack (1972) and Seth (1960), which he cites a total of eleven times. Nor does he discuss the Axis conference at Merano, German pressure on Italy to mount naval raids in the eastern basin, and German assurances that they had torpedoed two British battleships. He notes that the Italians were bound to the range of land-based aircraft and sought to avoid battle at night, since they had no radar, but he makes no comment on the decision by Cunningham, who had both radar and carrier-based aircraft, not to pursue Iachino, save that he "declined to venture so deep into enemy air space" on the following day. Mr. O'Hara's conclusion that the "the battle was not decisive" is not new, but his comment that the "Italian government was finally realizing it [the war] might continue for a long time" will surprise those familiar with De Felice's work, which Mr. O'Hara does not cite.[8]

Mr. O'Hara's failure to consult important published works like Mattesini and De Felice results in an account whose point of view is essentially British. For example, he fails to include a table for his discussion of Operation Pedestal in August 1942, even though it was the biggest British convoy operation of the Mediterranean war to that point, and he devotes only two pages to the running battle that ensued, about the same amount of text he gives individual attacks on Axis convoys by British

8. Ibid., pp. 85-98, and notes 22-66 on pp. 278-79, cites the memoir by the commander of the British force, Andrew Cunningham, four times; George Stitt's 1944 memoir three times; a 1947 supplement to *The London Gazette* five times; S.W.C. Pack's 1972 work five times; Ronald Seth's 1960 study six times; the official British history of intelligence operations twice; Stephen and Grove once; Gill once; Playfair once; and Roskill once. He also cites an article by Aldo Fracarolli in *Storia militare* three times; the Italian official history six times; a document from the Archivio Ufficio Storico Marina Militare once; personal correspondence once; a technical work by Bagnasco and Brescia once; Bragadin's book once; and Iachino once. He also cites Greene and Massignani's *Naval War in the Mediterranean* twice and Sadkovich's *The Italian Navy* once. He cites Angelo Iachino's *Tramonto di una grande marina* (Milano: Mondadori, 1959), but he does not cite the two works that Iachino devoted to this battle, *Gaudo e Matapan. Storia di un'operazaione della guerra navale nel Mediterraneo, 27-28-29 marzo 1941* (Milano: Mondadori, 1946), and *Il punto su Matapan* (Milano: Mondadori, 1969), nor Francesco Mattesini, *Il giallo di Matapan. Revisione di giudizi* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985). Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato. I. L'Italia in guerra, 1940-1943. 1. Dalla guerra 'breve' alla guerra lungs. 2. Crisi e agonia del regime* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1990), dates Mussolini's conviction that the war would be long from the failure of the Italian army to quickly overrun Greece in late 1940, but notes that there was no "economic" dictatorship until two years later, a late appreciation that the war was a "total" war and therefore one of attrition, not one of maneuver, vol. I, tome 1, pp. 10-34, 308-11, 315-17, 347-54, 358-59, 369, 516; vol. I, tome 2, pp. 722-23, 734-48, 1106-10.

raiders.[9] He acknowledges the battle to have been a major "Axis aeronaval victory," but he chalks it up as an Italian failure because "Italy was fighting an enemy that could afford to expend cruisers and carriers and suffer losses of two-thirds of its merchantmen and still describe the results as a 'magnificent crash through of supplies' that would have 'an important influence on the immediate future of the war in the Mediterranean.'" This was certainly true, but Mr. O'Hara makes no comment on the wider questions that his observation raises regarding the performance of either the British or the Italian navy. As with the encounter off Cape Matapan, he does not cite all of the basic literature in Italian, most notably *La battaglie aeronavale di mezzo agosto* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1986) by Francesco Mattesini, who agrees with O'Hara that this was a "strategic victory," but who also notes that Axis aircraft and naval units sank nine of fourteen merchantmen (91,500 tons) before they reached Malta, that the British lost several warships, and that the outcome of the battle adversely affected Allied strategy, coming just two months after another major British convoy operation had been mauled by Axis forces, and helped to persuade the Americans not to attempt a landing in North Africa until that November and then in Morocco and Algeria, which were beyond the reach of Axis air and naval forces.[10]

By devoting extensive space to descriptions of raids on Axis convoys, Mr. O'Hara makes it appear that British successes against the Italian navy were more important than they actually were. However, as he notes, for most of the thirty-nine months that the Italian navy ran convoys to North Africa, it did so with few losses, and it suffered almost no losses on its routes to the Balkans. One might therefore conclude that British surface raiders (and aircraft) were only sporadically successful. What is certain is that Allied surface vessels sank only sixty-one Italian

9. O'Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea*, pp. 183-86, 191-96, 208-09, 210-11, 213-14, e.g., devotes two pages to a duel between an Italian torpedo boat and an Allied destroyer, two more to the sinking of a single merchantman, and another two to an attack by two destroyers supported by aircraft on two merchantmen escorted by a torpedo boat, and six pages to minor, and abortive, operations during Operation Torch.

10. Ibid., p. 186, makes ample use of the British official history, Peter Smith, a British Admiralty account of the Malta convoys in 1942, and Winston Churchill, but he cites "Italian" historians (Bragadin and Sadkovich) only in passing, quotes the memoir by Franco Maugeri on the failure of the Axis success to neutralize Malta, and uses an unpublished manuscript by Fabio Tani to note that Commander Roselli-Lorenzini was "reassigned to a submarine" for having slammed a door in frustration. Francesco Mattesini, *La battaglie aeronavale di mezzo agosto* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1986), pp. 405-444, sets the "Battle of mid-August" in a larger context. Had the Germans not shifted the barycenter of the conflict by transferring air units to the Eastern Front and by giving Rommel his way in North Africa, this operation might have been a "turning point" in the war. As it was, it suggested that with enough targets and adequate air support, Italian submarines, torpedo boats, and MAS could exact a heavy toll on anyone venturing into the central Mediterranean.

merchantmen, roughly five percent of those lost by Italy. Allied submarines sank more (325, or twenty-five percent), as did Allied aircraft (517, or thirty-five percent), and mines (seventy-seven, or six percent). Nor does he note that half of all Italian losses of naval vessels and merchantmen (175 of 378 and 625 of 1,278, respectively) occurred in 1943, the result of a war of attrition in which the British and Americans gradually wore down Italian defenses and built up a massive superiority in air and naval forces that allowed them to savage the Italian navy at anchor.[11]

In general, Mr. O'Hara's text supports his conclusions, but not in every instance. For example, he concludes that Italians never learned to attack with torpedoes at night and that "Italian submarines were less deadly than their German counterparts mostly because of unrealistic training and flawed doctrine." However, he does not discuss either Italian doctrine or training, and his conclusions seem somewhat at odds with the actual performance of Italian submarines and light surface craft, which did well when they had targets. During Operation Pedestal in August 1942, an Italian submarine sank a cruiser and crippled a second cruiser and a tanker, and another torpedoed a third cruiser, while Italian torpedo boats and MAS (MTB) sank four merchantmen and seriously damaged a fifth, as well as the cruiser HMS *Manchester*, which was subsequently scuttled.[12] In the target-rich Atlantic, Italian submarines compiled a kill rate per ship comparable to that of their German counterparts, suggesting caution regarding easy generalizations based on partial statistics.[13]

There is little new in O'Hara's account of naval operations, which is a synthetic study whose most useful contribution is its discussion of the naval war to 1945. However, as noted above, his conclusions are not always supported by his text and many were argued by "Italo-centric" historians long ago. Far from a complete history of the naval war that "steamrolls the chauvinism and 'common knowledge' that have obscured what actually happened in the Mediterranean," as the jacket blurb

11. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 338-39.
12. O'Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea*, pp. 256, 185; Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 288-301.
13. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, p. 337, who cites Lèonce Peillard, *La bataille de l'Atlantique. II. La victoire des "chasseurs," 1942-1945* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1974), pp. 314-24, and Bragadin, *Il drama della Marina italiana*, pp. 297-321. O'Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea*, p. 16, argues that both Italian and British boats performed poorly between 10 and 30 June 1940, the former losing ten boats and sinking "only" the light cruiser HMS *Calypso*, two tankers, and a freighter, while the British lost only three and managed to sink only an Italian submarine. But as he notes, "the British had stopped routine shipping in May, and targets were few." He does not discuss the rate of loss, while Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, p. 55, notes that the Italians deployed five times as many submarines as the British, so their rate of loss was four percent (two of forty-nine deployed), compared to a British rate of thirty percent (three of ten deployed).

claims, this is a partial account that reinforces a number of myths and legends and paves over the contradictions in the historical canon in English.[14] Those truly interested in a synthesis of naval operations in the Middle Sea from 1940 to 1945 can learn something from Mr. O'Hara's history, but to have a complete account they will need to read other histories, including the "Anglo-centric" and "Italo-centric" works that he dismisses as unbalanced.

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14. Jacket blurb by Richard Worth.

Omar Bradley: "The GI's General"

MANNIE LISCUM

Now, sixty-plus years after the end of the Second World War, if the names Eisenhower, Patton, Montgomery, or Rommel are brought up in conversation among individuals even casually interested in history, at least a few minutes of stimulating conversation is likely to result. Yet, the name of Omar Nelson Bradley, a peer and contemporary of the aforementioned men, is likely to elicit little more than blank stares. This is truly unfortunate as General Bradley was not only one of the top American commanders in World War II, but also played a significant role in sculpting the post-war U.S. Army and how it fought the Cold War until the late 1980s. Alan Axelrod's biography of Bradley, simply and unpretentiously titled *Bradley*, has the potential to bring the soldier and man who was known as "the GI's General" to a wider public, not only for his wartime accomplishments, but also for his continuing legacy to today's U.S. Army.[1] As Wesley K. Clark, a general of more recent military limelight, notes in his Foreword to *Bradley*, we can only understand "the character, strengths, and institutional weaknesses of the United States Army" by first understanding Omar Bradley.[2]

So who was Omar Bradley? In simplest terms, he was a man of humble origins, whose childhood in rural Missouri imparted upon him a core set of values that shaped how he conducted himself as a man thereafter to the end of his life. These "common man" traits – so eloquently articulated by Ernie Pyle in his columns when he introduced the General to the American public during the war[3] – influenced not only Bradley's high regard and respect for the common infantryman, but also his command style. One especially influential facet of Bradley's personality was his inherent pragmatism; a characteristic Axelrod draws attention to on a number of occasions. As an example of how Bradley would do the best with what he had in his personal life, Axelrod discusses Bradley's acceptance of an offer from fellow West Point instructor Lehman W. Miller to swap

1. Alan Axelrod, *Bradley* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Illustrations. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. x, 204.
2. Ibid., p. vii.
3. Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1944), pp. 209-214.

intramural coaching assignments instead of actively seeking out the one he would have found preferable.[4] Axelrod's brief account of events leading up to the formation of the "Falaise pocket" and subsequent failure of the Allies to close the "Argentan-Falaise gap" in mid-August 1944 represents an example of how Bradley's pragmatic nature could also impact military outcomes.[5]

The formation of the Falaise pocket resulted from two major engagements, the first being Operation COBRA (24-31 July) and the second being the Battle of Mortain (7-12 August). Operation COBRA, the Allied breakout from the Norman bocage region, was Bradley's brainchild and probably his shinning moment as a battlefield commander.[6] As Axelrod notes, while much of the success of the breakout has been rightfully given to Lieutenant General George S. Patton and his Third U.S. Army, Bradley deserves credit for recognizing which commander and troops could be brought in at the right time to exploit initial successes. Historian/author Mark Bando has gone even farther in pointing out that actions of the 2nd Armored Division of Bradley's First U.S. Army in reality paved the way for the successes of Patton's armor.[7] Independent of who deserves the lion's share of the credit, it is beyond dispute that success of COBRA enticed Hitler into launching *Unternehman Lüttich* (Operation Liege), an armored counter-offensive aimed at splitting the Allied coalition in Normandy, leaving the Americans and French in the south, and British and Canadians in the north (a conceptual prequel to *Unternehmen Wacht am Rhein*/Battle of the Bulge, if you will).

Unternehman Lüttich, spearheaded by *XLVII Panzer Korps* (armored units comprised of SS-Panzer Division 1, *Leibstandarte*; SS-Panzer Division 2, *Das Reich*; Panzer Division 2; Panzer Division 116; and elements of SS-Panzergrenadier Division 17), was aimed at breaking through the line held by First U.S. Army north of the small French town of Mortain.[8] The territorial objective of the German counter-offensive was the port city of Avranches (approximately twelve miles east of Mortain), which had been captured by Major General John S. Wood's U.S. 4th Armored Division at the end of Operation COBRA on 31 July, and

4. Axelrod, *Bradley*, p. 40.
5. Ibid., pp. 138-40.
6. James J. Carafano, *After D-Day: Operation Cobra and the Normandy Breakout* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2008); William Yenne, *Operation Cobra and the Great Offensive: Sixty Days That Changed the Course of World War II* (New York: Pocket Books, 2004).
7. Mark Bando, *Breakout at Normandy: The 2nd Armored Division in the Land of the Dead* (Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International, 1999).
8. Mark J. Reardon, *Victory at Mortain: Stopping Hitler's Panzer Counteroffensive* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), pp. 44-64.

thus re-establish a strong German left (southern) flank.[9] The initial weight of the German armored offensive fell upon the U.S. 30th Infantry Division in the early morning hours of 7 August, and thus began the Battle of Mortain.[10] While secret ULTRA decryptions are often cited for their role in the ability of the Allied 12th Army Group to counter and stop cold the German counter-offensive,[11] ULTRA, in fact, provided U.S. commanders scant few hours notice, enough to affect strategic thinking, but certainly too little to have significant influence on tactical dispositions. In actuality, it was Bradley's prior anticipation of the attack that had already positioned American forces to stymie the German operation.[12]

By the afternoon of 7 August, it was already clear to Bradley that *Unternehman Lüttich* would end in failure, and as Axelrod writes, Bradley "instantly grasped that the collapse of the German attack in Avranches had significantly weakened the enemy position by isolating its attacking force west of the main body of the German army."[13] Hitler had handed the Allies a great gift, and in response, Bradley proposed, in consultation with the overall Allied Ground Forces Commander, Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery, a coordinated double envelopment of the then-forming German pocket by forces of Montgomery's 21st Army Group coming from the north and units of Patton's Third U.S. Army (part of Bradley's 12th Army Group) coming up from the south. In particular, Bradley felt that "if the Canadians could push into Falaise and beyond to Argentan, and if…Haislip [was turned] due north from Le Mans toward Argentan, there was a good chance we could encircle and trap the whole German force in Normandy in a few days."[14] Of Bradely's plans, Alxerod writes: "This was, in fact, such a good idea that Montgomery, Patton, and Eisenhower, in addition to Bradley, all claimed credit for it."[15] On 9 August, Bradley expressed his optimism to a delegation of power-brokers from Washington led by Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morganthau in the following terms:

> This is an opportunity that comes to a commander not once in a

9. Ibid., p. 21.
10. Ibid., pp. 94-95.
11. Ronald Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War: The First Account of World War II's Greatest Secret Based on Official Documents* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), pp. 348-51; Ralph Bennett, *Ultra in the West: The Normandy Campaign 1944-45* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), pp. 104-05.
12. Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr., *Retreat to the Reich: The German Defeat in France, 1944* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000), pp. 116-17.
13. Axelrod, *Bradley*, p. 138.
14. Reardon, *Victory at Mortain*, p. 181; Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 294.
15. Axelrod, *Bradley*, p. 138.

century. We are about to destroy an entire hostile army. If the other fellow will only press his attacks here at Mortain for another 48 hours, he'll give us time to close at Argentan and there completely destroy him. And when he loses his Seventh Army in this bag, he'll have nothing left with which to oppose us. We'll go all the way from here to the German border."[16]

Though the Germans provided Bradley with ample time, his final prognostication failed to materialize. By 12 August, Major General Wade H. Haislip's XV Corps (of Patton's Third U.S. Army) had reached its objective of Argentan, while Lieutenant General Henry D.G. Crerar's First Canadian Army (the lead element of 21st Army Group's southern drive) was still a half-dozen miles short of Falaise, its way being blocked by a tenacious *Pazerarmee 5*. An approximately twenty-mile gap between the spearheads of the Allied pincer, the "Argentan-Falaise gap," now existed.[17] Without consulting either Montgomery or Bradley, the ever-aggressive and impatient Patton then ordered Haislip to press on towards Falaise, and beyond if necessary, to close the gap and trap the mass of German troops in the pocket (*7 Armee* and *Panzerarmee 5*) as originally envisioned by Bradley's plan.[18] At this point, Bradley's inherent pragmatism and recurrent tendency to second guess his own bold decisions dominated the tactical situation and on 13 August he ordered Patton to hold and build-up his forces, preferring "a solid shoulder at Argentan to the possibility of a broken neck at Falaise."[19] Although Bradley's decision to halt XV Corps has been criticized repeatedly over the past six decades, even by Bradley himself,[20] most objective studies conclude that Bradley's decision acted largely to codify a greater dysfunction of Allied leadership, and that the latter ultimately resulted in the failure to close the Argentan-Falaise gap.[21]

Axelrod's discussion of the aforementioned events, while certainly appropriate to emphasize how Bradley's pragmatism could limit the outcome of otherwise bold tactical decisions, is unfortunately weak in its ability to convey this message. First, the passage is largely superficial in nature. Second, Axelrod states that Bradley did not wish to "openly defy

16. Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Henry Holt, 1951), pp. 375-76.
17. Mitcham, *Retreat to the Reich*, p. 134.
18. Axelrod, *Bradley*, p. 139.
19. Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*, pp. 298-99.
20. Ibid., pp. 299-301.
21. Martin Blumenson, "General Bradley's decision at Argentan (13 August 1944)," in Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions*, CMH Pub 70-7, (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, 1960), pp. 401-18; Joseph B. Lowder, *The Falaise-Argentan Gap: Dysfunctional Unity of Effort* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2001); Douglas C. Carpenter, *A Failure of Coalition Leadership: The Falaise-Argentan Gap* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2002).

Montgomery" as he was "at this point [in the war]…still fully committed to remaining loyal to the concept of Anglo-American cooperation," and then postulates that Bradley's decision to stop Haislip was equally influenced by his pragmatism and this latter element of Allied loyality.[22] Yet, aside from Bradley's autobiography, on which Axelrod shows such reliance as a primary source of information, there is little evidence to support a contention that Bradley's devotion to the Allied concept was stronger at this time, or before, than later in the war. Rather, it seems more likely that Bradley's ability to stand toe-to-toe with Montgomery, and thus appear less committed to the alliance, grew in concert with the following: Bradley's theater status – remember that Eisenhower assumed direct operational control in France from Montgomery on 1 September, making Bradley and Montgomery equals by virtue of the "demotion" of the latter;[23] American dominance in the partnership; and, last but not least, Patton's aggressive presence from 1 August onward.[24] Whilst the influences of Patton on Bradley (and vice versa) were certainly not ignored by Axelrod, it is a bit surprising he doesn't make a stronger connection between Patton's rising star and Bradley's strength of position within the command structure, especially since Axelrod also penned a biography titled *Patton* in Palgrave's *Great Generals* series.[25]

Redemption for a lackluster analysis of the Argentan-Falaise gap episode is provided by Axelrod's lucid and thoughtful discourse on the Ardennes Counteroffensive and Bradley's role therein.[26] In fact, this positive trend continues for much of the rest of the book. One particular example that stands out is the discussion of Bradley's dominant role in the development of strategy for the final push through Germany on the western front, what Major General James M. Gavin called the "Bradley Plan.'[27] After the Allied crossing of the Rhine, two major but competing Anglo-American plans were developed to end the war in Europe. The first of these was what might be termed the Montgomery-Brooke plan (brainchild of Montgomery and Chief of the Imperial General Staff Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke), which essentially represented the concluding moves of the single northern thrust Montgomery had envisioned and ar-

22. Axelrod, *Bradley*, p. 139.
23. Forest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1954), pp. 261-65.
24. Mary H. Williams, *Chronology, 1941-1945* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1960), p. 240; Brenton G. Wallace, *Patton and His Third Army* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2000), pp. 30-40.
25. Alan Axelrod, *Patton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
26. Axelrod, *Bradley*, pp. 147-58.
27. James M. Gavin, *On To Berlin: Battles of an Airborne Commander 1943-1946* (New York: The Viking Press, 1978), pp. 275-77.

gued for since mid-August 1944.[28] The second of the plans, the "Bradley Plan," was an extension of the broad front strategy pursued by SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) since the failure of Operation MARKET-GARDEN,[29] with the noted exception that the ultimate target was no longer Berlin, but the destruction of the German army between the Rhine and the Elbe, and link-up with the Soviets coming from the east at the latter waterway.[30]

The SHAEF decision to forego Berlin as an objective has been an easy target for criticism given the Soviet dominance of eastern Europe during the Cold War period; with Berlin being a particularly strong focal point in East-West relations in the years immediately following World War II.[31] Of course, Bradley's proposals were not developed with benefit of historical hindsight, but rather, as Axelrod points out, they were instead influenced by three real-time factors: first, Bradley's pragmatism – he felt that the "butcher's bill" to capture Berlin would be too high, perhaps as many as 100,000 casualties; second, political realities – the Allies had agreed at the Yalta Conference in February 1945 that Berlin, while administered by the four powers, would be deep within the Soviet zone of occupation; and third, what turned out to be, again in hindsight, faulty intelligence – there were serious concerns that the Nazi leadership was planning a "National Redoubt" in the Austrian Alps.[32] Axelrod is justly critical of Bradley on this latter factor since much of the "evidence" in favor of the National Redoubt was based on ULTRA decryptions, intelligence that the General was normally quite skeptical of, but in this particular case, appears to have trusted fully.[33]

The final twenty-one pages of the book are utilized to discuss the General's post-war career and life, as well as how his legacy continued to influence the U.S. Army and its actions well beyond the man's retirement. Brief as it is, this portion of the work feels new and informative, perhaps because nearly all of the information presented here is derived from Bradley's autobiography and thus has simply not been repeated *ad nauseam* in the Second World War literature.

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28. Ibid.; Bernard L. Montgomery, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein* (London: Collins, 1958), pp. 239-47; Bobbie G. Pedigo, *The Narrow Front Versus the Broad Front: An Analysis of the Narrow Front Plan and the Factors Affecting Its Success* (Omaha: University of Nebraska, 1973).
29. Pogue, *Supreme Command*, p. 290; Kevin Scherrer, *World War II: Eisenhower and Clausewitz on the Western Front* (Washington, DC: National War College, 1998); Carlo D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002), pp. 594-609.
30. Gavin, *On To Berlin*, pp. 275-77.
31. John Man, *Berlin Blockade* (New York: Ballantine, 1973); Dennis M. Giangreco and Robert E. Griffin, *Airbridge to Berlin: The Berlin Crisis of 1948, Its Origins and Aftermath* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988).
32. Axelrod, *Bradley*, pp. 165-67.
33. Ibid., p. 166.

In the big picture, Alan Axelrod's *Bradley* is not a complete biography, nor is it really in the same league in terms of depth of research or richness of prose with other biographies of U.S. commanders by historians like Carlo D'Este or Martin Blumenson.[34] However, as an entry in the popular Palgrave *Great Generals* series, that are in fact meant to be mini-biographies, *Bradley* is an enjoyable read that will likely engage its primary non-specialist target audience. Unfortunately for the more-versed students of history, the book will be a quick read that ultimately feels somewhat empty and unsatisfying. In terms of information on which Axelrod draws, far and away the most utilized and substantial source is Bradley's own autobiography.[35] This fact alone is likely to make academics take pause as one should always be cautious about using autobiographical material as the principle source to generate a biography. Nearly all other sources on which Axelrod draws are biographies and autobiographies of Bradley contemporaries. No single unpublished or archival piece of information is cited by Axelrod, implying that there is nothing factually within the text of *Bradley* that has not been reported elsewhere through the research of other authors/historians. Despite this serious criticism, one must admit that Axelrod has a talent for putting the previously-published pieces of the "Bradley puzzle" nicely together into a concise, well-written work that even those more deeply invested in Second World War literature can enjoy reading.

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34. D'Este, *Eisenhower*; Martin Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885-1945* (New York: Morrow, 1985).
35. Bradley and Blair, *A General's Life*.

Moral Micrology vs. Subsumption: A Methodical Perspective on the "Mölders Case"

BERND LEMKE

The case of Werner Mölders is part of the contentious subject concerning German military traditions. The debate over the historical role of Hitler's *Wehrmacht*, older than the modern *Bundeswehr*, is perpetually resurrected within Germany. The *Bundeswehr*, and the nation, were bequeathed the unenviable heritage of an ideological war of annihilation. The official position of the German government, including the *Bundeswehr*, is based upon a clear policy: that only those soldiers actively involved in the resistance against the Hitler regime should be memorialized; in particular the officers of the 20 July 1944 assassination plot. With this background in tow, Dr. Klaus Schmider's article concentrates upon Werner Mölders, a highly decorated *Luftwaffe* officer and fighter ace, killed in a flying accident in 1941.[1] After 1945, Mölders was memorialized by the newly-created *Bundeswehr* in the naming of a *Luftwaffe* fighter wing (JG 74 Mölders) and a *Bundesmarine* destroyer. Later, Mölders came into the spotlight as a former member of the "Condor Legion" during the Spanish Civil War. By a decision of the German parliament in 1998, any and all members of this formation were explicitly listed as unsuitable for consideration as representative of the tradition the modern *Bundeswehr* wished to extoll. On this background, a new fighting round in the case of Werner Mölders has been initiated in the last five years.

In legal terms, the German Ministry of Defence (MOD) was not officially required to make this decision, but took action anyway. An expert report was requested from the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* (MGFA), an MOD subordinate historical research institution, which was

1. Klaus Schmider, "German Military Tradition and the Expert Opinion on Werner Mölders: Opening a Dialogue among Scholars," *Global War Studies*, vol. 7 (1), 2010, pp. 6-29.

completed in 2004 by Lieutenant-Colonel (*Oberstleutnant*) Dr. Wolfgang Schmidt. On the basis of his findings, JG 74 Fighter Wing was required to remove the name "Mölders" from its formation title. Furthermore, the streets on one military base which were named after unsuitable fighter pilots and soldiers were renamed. There was a backlash from many interested parties, especially former officers of the fighter wing.

The main focus of Schmider's article is the MGFA-Schmidt report. To summarize this article, Schmider charges Schmidt, and the MGFA, with misreprepresentation, false or incorrect statements, and the ultimate "sin" of character assassination. Two issues in particular invite serious debate. Firstly is Mölders behavior in Spain. It was alleged by Schmider that Schmidt posthumously accused Mölders of indirectly being the perpetrator of inhumane warfare, breaching international law, and making inflamatory or sensationalist statements to the media.[2] Secondly is the case of Mölders' standing within Hitler's system, especially in the context of Third Reich propaganda. The MGFA report maintained that Mölders actively behaved as a willing propagandist of the Third Reich, thereby legitimizing a racist war and all its horrific consequences.[3]

This article will examine Schmider's arguments; the two books on which he focused (referred to here as Braatz and Hagena); and attempt to place the findings within the perspective of the existing research into the Nazi regime, here especially looking for innovative perspectives for further research.[4] It is not intended to assess the MGFA-Schmidt report in detail, because this would not be appropriate or expedient. However, this rebuttal must present a minimum of background details to support the general assessment of Schmider. It should also be understood that many of the remarks go beyond the limits of Schmider's essay, but remain connected to it. One should also acknowledge from the outset that the MGFA-Schmidt report is open to criticism, especially in regards to the primary evidence. Schmidt presents certain unclear information. On the basis of fairness, however, it should be recognized that Schmidt had no access to the most important sources made available to Braatz.[5] In particular, Mölder's personal papers, still in his widow's possession, which remain inaccessible to the academic community. The widow refuses to release the papers, and one can appreciate her sentiments; but this causes significant methodological difficulties. Braatz has been granted full ac-

2. Hermann Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders. Die Würde des Menschen reicht über den Tod hinaus* (Aachen: Helios Verlag, 2008), pp. 25-49.
3. Ibid., extensively in ch. III.
4. This article is intended to provide a scholarly rebuttal to Dr. Schmider's article. It is meant to be an extension of the dialogue and present an additional perspective to the debate. It represents exclusively the personal opinion of the author.
5. Kurt Braatz, *Werner Mölders. Die Biographie* (Moosburg: NeunundzwanzigSechs Verlag, 2008).

cess, which provides him with a major advantage over Schmidt. This "new" evidence presented by Braatz and Hagena technically supersedes the MGFA-Schmidt report and is, therefore, part of the process of knowledge and discussion.

The strength of Hagena and Schmider's criticism of Schmidt is not wholly justified.[6] They accuse Schmidt of following a path of political condemnation of Mölders by means of outside interests; thereby causing the posthumous quasi-degradation of his dignity. Such claims suggest to this reader that the motivation behind their claims is not dictated by the search for objectivity, but rather the pursuit of an agenda of corporative or even political interest. The dividing line between tradition, objective argument, and politics has, in the Mölders case, become so blurred that it raises serious qualms over the integrity of the research.

The possibility of reclassifying Mölders within the approved parameters of "tradition," according to the official guidelines of the *Bundeswehr* that are valid today, is highly unlikely. The position is quite clear: the Werner Mölders' story does not project a sufficient enough example to be transformed into a lasting tradition.

An attempt by Hermann Hagena to place Mölders among the resistance circles is not convincing.[7] There is no proof that Mölders worked to protect the Bishop of Münster, Cardinal Clemens August Graf von Galen, a highly visible cleric and critic of the Nazi regime. Galen spoke out against the Nazis for conducting euthanasia against handicapped mental patients, especially children. There is no evidence that Mölders distributed the Bishop's sermons to flyers and aircrew of his wing. There is no firm evidence that Mölders ever struggled against his instrumental role in Nazi propaganda. Mölders did try to avoid publicity. He certainly refused offers by the Nazi regime to be the subject of an official biography, and instead began his own book (*Mölders und seine Männer*).[8] In summary, there is little evidence that Mölders was a resistor, while on the contrary, there is a strong suspicion that he was more an experienced strategist adept at political evasion – best described as "burying his head in the sand."

Mölders did intervene to protect an old Jewish schoolfriend and his relatives against repression and deportation, which should be lauded as a major humanitarian decision. But one can also simply ask whether this was, in the context of lives lived in the Third Reich, really outstanding. Inside the extremely complex and stratified Nazi society, such entanglements were possible and common. So much so that during his infamous Posen speech of 1943, Heinrich Himmler accused Germans of willfully

6. Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders*, passim.
7. Ibid., pp. 85-91.
8. Fritz von Forell, *Mölders und seine Männer* (Graz: Steirische Verlagsanstalt, 1941).

protecting Jews. Mölders was not by any means the only exponent among Germany's elite who assisted critics or Jewish fugitives of the regime. Those willing to help Jews escape the Holocaust included members of the Nazi apparatus; ironically, even Hitler protected a Jewish protégé (known as *Schutzjüdin*).[9]

In regards to Mölders participation in the Spanish Civil War, authors like Hagena and Braatz are correct in maintaining that there is no evidence of his deliberate violations of the laws of war. Furthermore, Mölders was not in Spain at the time of the bombing of Guernica. Any allegations on this fact, whether by the politically motivated or the academically driven are simply wrong. From a research standpoint, such allegations must always be looked upon with a critical eye. However, this should not cause wholesale condemnation of the political parties or the political process in general when connected to subjects like the Mölders issue. Accusations like these, however, were undertaken by one of the Mölders apologists, using the catchword "*zeitgeistig*," meaning the spirit or fashion of the time.[10] In other words, arguments over judgements by political commentators (especially the left-leaning) are based upon ideological or less-than-honorable motives and, therefore, are morally debased. By this, in the opinion of Mölders' apologists, historical facts can become distorted and, in extreme cases, the "truth" is undermined or perverted.

Such viewpoints are especially troublesome if laid across historical timeframes and periods. In this political-historical context, Braatz described Mölders as possessing a deep disgust for the political, which he vehementally reserved for so-called "dazzlers and blabbers."[11] In other words, commentators like these often shared the *Wehrmacht* officer's disgust for civilian politicians.

This raises a pertinent question: if Mölders demonstrated a distance from the Nazi regime or to any politics, what does this mean for this debate? Such challenging questions are largely ignored by Schmider et al., but they should be investigated. It might be assumed that political com-

9. The case of "Berni" (Bernhardine) N. from Munich. See Beatrice Heiber and Helmut Heiber, eds., *Die Rückseite des Hakenkreuzes, Absonderliches aus den Akten des Dritten Reiches* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1993), pp. 16, 24, 51, 54. This remark is explicitly not intended to compromise Mölders morally by comparing him to Hitler and it is also not at all intended to label him as "bizarre." It is only to show that even totalitarian dictatorships can not completely monitor a modern society of almost eighty million people. At least some persecuted people managed to slip through the net with a bit of luck and the help of others.

10. Horst Boog discusses this in the *Junge Freiheit*, Nr. 30/08, 18 July 2008. *Zeitgeistig* means opportunistic, following political trends in a "politically correct" manner without a real opinion.

11. See Braatz, *Werner Mölders*, p. 268ff. *Zeitgeistigkeit* as verbal term, albeit more vaguely, p. 351.

mentary, whether originating from interest groups or from a lack of sincerity, represent a bogus morality when set against so-called honorable military values such as soldierly duties or the leadership qualities of a fighter ace. This is not wholly compatible with the modern interpretations of the concept of the citizen in uniform ("*Staatsbürger in Uniform*"). Each and every soldier today should examine his or her conscience; considering *all* important questions and formulating their own opinions. Such opinions are and *must* always inherently be prone to "*zeitgeistige*" and politicized tendencies. Contact between the armed forces and civil society rests entirely upon this ever-changing cerebral landscape. There are no longer (in fact, never were) any "eternal" – always objective – values applicable, regardless of time. Those opinions that internalize "lost-cause" sentimentality or the self-justification for standing "above" politics are more akin to the conditions under which the *Reichswehr* undermined the Weimar Republic than representative of the modern *Bundeswehr*. Such dated ideas are unimaginable, if not unacceptable, in a modern democracy.

Schmidt's critics have failed to discuss properly the "simple" fact that Mölders volunteered for a process that aided and abetted a brutal regime in Spain. Instead, they absorb this issue, taken for granted as the collateral damage of civil war.[12] Spain, they maintain, had a reputation for military coups – thereby implying fault on the part of the Spanish for all their misfortunes. Further, the moral issue of who was guilty is ignored. They argue that the fear of Communism played the critical role; the republicans came to power through inherent peculiarities of the Spanish electoral system; and, finally, Soviet Russia alongside the Germans supplied a vast stockpile of lethal weapons.[13] In other words, the Spanish debacle was an unavoidable catastrophe at a time of widespread ideological confrontation.

Present day research and historiography show quite a different picture. They have concluded that the Condor Legion played an active and significantly effective military and political role for the outcome of the Spanish Civil War. It represented an important step in securing Hitler's course of aggressive expansionism; that the Condor Legion made Franco's coup possible by ferrying 14,000 troops across the straits of Gibraltar by air; and, that both Spanish belligerents were not capable of prosecuting the civil war without significant military and political foreign aid.[14] Hagena's argument, and others, are concerned with the moral di-

12. Cf. Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders*, pp. 21-25.
13. Braatz, *Werner Mölders*, p. 118.
14. See Manuel Tuñón de Lara, et al., *Der Spanische Bürgerkrieg: Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Frankfurt am Main: Surhkamp, 1987), especially Gabriel Cardona, "Die Militäroperationen," pp. 303f., 388f., 401f. For the decisive role of the German and Italian air

mension of the war. The Spanish Civil War, they claim, was a zero-sum game where German intervention was justified because of the "other side." For instance, it is well known that the Soviet regime assisted the Spanish republicans with war materials and erected a terror regime in the hinterland of the republican front.

However, this argument is erroneous and arises from the polarized thinking generated by the disjointed history of the 20th century with Eurocentric ideological confrontation up to 1945, and turning global in the Cold War. Such arguments do not at all justify the Condor Legion's intervention. This formation, with its dominant air force component, helped deliver decisive victory for Franco and ultimately the creation of a brutal regime that cost thousands of lives. Those deep physical and psychological wounds have scarred Spain to this day. In other, more general, words: the issue is not at all balanced if you introduce a second bad boy that is the enemy of the first. You just get two bad boys.

Both sides, not least the German, ignored international laws, intervened in civil society, and were responsible for manifest suffering. The argument that Mölders wasn't engaged in any of the major events or incidents is not particularly convincing. He was an integral part of the Condor Legion, which he freely acknowledged. As Schmider et al. stress, Mölders lay much store on comradeship, *esprit de corps*, and the integrity of the soldier. It would be quite bizarre to argue that by concentrating significant singular (non)events in his life as a fighter pilot we can fairly assume he was absolved of any involvement in Hitler's wars of annihilation. It is also equally bizarre to conclude that if he had been confronted with an "illegal" or dubious order to participate in such actions (e.g. the bombing and strafing of enemy soldiers intermingling with civilians on the ground) that he would have certainly refused. It was not an accident that he received one of Germany's highest awards for his part in Spain.

At this point, an important dividing line emerges between Mölders, the political question, and the Schmider essay. Braatz and Hagena have convincingly shown that Mölders possesed high qualities as a leader and commanding officer. His leadership style with subordinates, based upon the known evidence, indicate a high degree of integrity – albeit with caveats. Again, this alone does not reinstall Mölders as a suitable candidate for memorialization in today's *Bundeswehr*. Apart from the Spanish case, there was his special relationship with Hermann Göring, *Reichsmarschall* and Chief of the *Luftwaffe*. Braatz found firm evidence of their relationship, which was characterized by admiration from Mölders for Göring.[15] Göring, for his part, treated Mölders as a son. Mölders' im-

forces, ibid., pp. 369, 384, 395, 401, u.ö. See also Stanley G. Payne, *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany, and World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 23f.
15. Braatz, *Werner Mölders*, pp. 212, 240ff., 250, 252, 324f.

pressive military performance gave gusto to Göring's charismatic persona because he did not criticize and was popular among the German people.[16] This relationship strongly contrasts with post-war allegations of other *Luftwaffe* aces, like Adolf Galland, who refuted any claims of a special relationship to either Hitler or Göring.[17] On these grounds, it is by no means "*zeitgeistig*" to deny the protegé of one of Hitler's most important henchmen a spiritual home within the modern *Bundeswehr*.

In addition, Braatz confirms that Mölders also failed to reach a solution to the rift between Catholicism and National Socialism in Germany. In response to this dilemma, Mölders elected to leave delicate questions like this unresolved and lose himself deep within the bonds of his military community.[18] There is evidence that Mölders concentrated entirely on military matters during his time in Spain and during those critical first years of the Second World War. He hurled praise on the advantages of this way of life: the freedom especially through flying, a life without obvious unhappiness, constant adventures, drinking beer and wine with comrades, his rapid accumulation of combat victories or kills, his wealth of honors, and his reward of sport or game hunting trips.[19] One should ask whether such behavioral patterns are conducive to building a modern military that has just begun to engage in transnational global missions directed towards constructive nation-building and strengthening civil societies with the least possible bloodshed.

In general, both books discussed by Schmider expose weaknesses especially on methodological grounds. This does not mean they express always and openly tendentious or biased views. Both books present a wealth of details and background facts, freely argued sometimes in a controversial manner. However, Hagena, in particular, tends towards open polemics, firing one verbal broadside after another at the MGFA-Schmidt report and presenting the wrong conclusions. Schmider, for his part, follows this line. This "negativity" is not constructive and does not offer any innovative research.

Braatz, with his moderate tone and style, concentrates almost exclusively on the life of Mölders and less on military tradition, which Schmider correctly observes. His judgments are balanced and objective; his book is, in this respect, very convincing. Unfortunately, it is not oriented toward the existing state of international research. Braatz manages to ignore thirty years of research, especially in socio-psychological and

16. Schmider, "German Military Tradition and the Expert Opinion on Werner Mölders," p. 26, therefore, is not correct if he refuses to acknowledge the moral problem here.
17. National Archives (USA), File Series, RG319 IRR, counter-intelligence case file Adolf Galland. Because of his proximity to the heart of the Nazi leadership, Galland was monitored by U.S. militaty intelligence from his release in 1948 into the mid-1950s.
18. Braatz, *Werner Mölders*, pp. 55ff., 58f.
19. Ibid., pp. 123, 260, 314, v.a. 317.

cultural perspectives and in regards to Nazi propaganda.[20] The Braatz outcome avoided the large-scale research work, but produced a compact account of a German flyer and ace. While this is conceded, there still remains a considerable deficiency concerning his interpretations of evidence. The question remains whether such a contentious subject like military tradition in Germany can be treated adequately via a popular account of a man like Mölders. Its form and style remind one of the common language of the popular press or the "dime-a-dozen" war comics and pamphlets of yesteryear.[21] The passages about Mölders duties as the commander of a fighter wing engaged at the front read like a harmonious family with him being the father figure ("*Vati Mölders*"). With harsh remarks about Adolf Galland, a picture is painted of Mölders – legend or saint. Such commentary makes this reader uncomfortable.

Observed from the standpoint of serious research, this would be an excellent subject for field studies on the social and psychological interactions of large troop formations. This would raise questions over so-called "negative" characteristics that belong to the "*conditio humana*" wherever human beings live and act together: e.g. levels of evading duties, fear, cowardice, opportunism, competitiveness, personal enmity, arrogance, brutality towards subordinates, and treatment of local or indigenous populations from which Mölders' life could be judged objectively.[22] The canvas painted by Braatz is idealistic, even unrealistic. His attempt to write with empathy has taken him way off target.

This overtly positive tendency is more obvious with the uneasy relationship between religion and service in Spain. Mölders obviously had few qualms at shaking hands with Franco or the Pope after his assignment to Spain ended although he was well aware of the rift between the fascist dictatorships and the churches.[23] Only through blind obstinance

20. See, e.g., ibid., pp. 267 and 305. Another example in Braatz, p. 283, where the author misinterprets the "subversion of the Aryan culture work by Jazz" by a bandleader and friend of Mölders. See also Braatz, p. 330, where the regime's hatred of the Catholics is equally compared with its hatred of the Jews (Goebbels). Additionally, p. 39. Here, the selective criteria of the *Reichswehr* for new officers are compared with "modern scientific standards." Generally, Braatz' book does not comply with the requirements of a modern biography.

21. Ibid., pp. 14, 320. Cf. pp. 32ff., 112f., 131, furthermore pp. 40 and 68, where the description of the "scandalous" injustice of the Versailles Treaty and the deeds of the "bad" French against the German population in the Rhineland show no consideration for the historical causes and the lachrymose style is reminiscent of propaganda publications of the Weimar Republic.

22. Ibid., p. 261, hints at Mölders' careerist attitude and his cold, calculating nature. It is, of course, not possible to know if we will ever be in a position to get definitive answers to these questions, particularly because of the lack of primary source materials. Nevertheless, every serious researcher *must* ask these types of questions.

23. Ibid., p. 153.

and steely discipline could he avoid the discrepancies over his service in Spain. He justified it as the defense of fellow Catholics against the evils of Bolshevism; while at the same time Catholics in Germany suffered repression and persecution. There is, after all, considerable doubt over the credibility of Werner Mölders – the practicing christian.[24] There is virtually no evidence that Mölders fought for or "stood-up" for his faith. From this perspective, it is uncertain that he would have supported any such activity or manifest resistance to Hitler if he had lived. It is just as probable that he would have carried on by hiding away in the military. Such points make it clear that with contentious issues like military tradition, it is absolutely necessary to apply strict principles of research. In his essay, Schmider has failed to recognize, or at least acknowledge, these methodological deficiencies; instead he has perpetuated overt criticism of the MGFA-Schmidt report. This is a problem. Criticism should generally be constructive, i.e. raising alternatives or new research direction. The historical person of Werner Mölders can only be fully comprehended within the structural framework of the Nazi period.

Finally, in the opinion of this author, the most important methodical point: it should be pointed out that the perspective of all three authors are too confined and limited. They concentrate more or less on the single episodes of Mölders' life, especially on the events that are morally charged, and try to discern all the details. In most cases, this will not lead to any clear results because historians always have gaps in their information, and they can not travel back in time. On the contrary, there is always the danger that too much detailed research without methodical distance furthers doubt and speculation (cf. what were the forces behind the killing of JFK?). And, even more problematical, this focus on the details, and the sources to prove them, impedes the sober assessment of the general position of persons or groups in the general framework which, more often than not, becomes clear only after some time and distance. In this case, one has to acknowledge that the *Luftwaffe* was by no means a "happy family," but was a highly effective instrument of war and an integral part of the annihilation machinery of the Third Reich. It is totally unimportant if any particular units or persons were directly engaged in war crimes or, even worse, in the Holocaust. It is enough to know that the *Luftwaffe* as a major organization helped to protect this totalitarian system in six long years of war and only a few of its members revolted against Hitler.

At this point, we should look for constructive perspectives for additional research. Both parties, Lieutenant-Colonel Dr. Schmidt as well as Schmider et al., are not able to deliver enough convincing evidence for

24. Ibid., inter alia p. 296.

their case. Perhaps it is time to move on from Mölders and look for other persons. Instead of continuously reexamining the life of Mölders, scholars should concentrate on other pilots and personnel of the Condor Legion. Were there any high-ranking members of the Condor Legion who were later involved in the resistance against Hitler ("*Widerstand*")? Or was the Condor Legion an elite corps of officers who were extremely loyal to the regime? The appropriate instrument to provide the necessary information would be a collective biography.

The discussion pertaining to the "Mölders case" is understandable given the public interest shown for the man. Nevertheless, a wider focus needs to be addressed. Ultimately, the real problem is tradition and the *Wehrmacht*, not just Werner Mölders. The basic question is whether soldiers like Mölders, notwithstanding their courage and leadership qualities, could ever be considered as an example at all. Future wars will most likely avoid the big battles of the Second World War. The massive employment of air power in Afghanistan and Iraq has not yet shown signs of success. It does not bring quick results against well organized and disciplined rebel forces. Moreover, it often causes considerable damage and losses among the civilian population, with disastrous repercussions for the possibility of a "hearts and minds" campaign. Seen from the perspective of a democratic citizen at beginning of the 21st century, what is required are assests dedicated to indigenous cultures and capabilities for firm nation-building, including the preservation of structures and societies. In short, modern western forces need much more "soft skills" than kill rates in the air.

It would be misleading to also assume there are steadfast and "eternal" soldierly virtues that remain constant regardless of the historical epoch. Attributes like courage, bravery, loyalty, leadership, and personal management, in the first instance, are labels with few quantifiable standards. It is also not at all certain that "courage" today retains the same values as it did in 1941. Such problems and debates on military tradition are not confined to persons or groups in combat, but to war in general irrespective of the governing politics or strategy concerned. The Spanish Civil War is an important case and historical example comparable with other modern wars. The "successes" of the *Luftwaffe* in 1936-39 have been reported as an ideal model for limited wars such as the Vietnam War, and especially when compared with bomber offensives with limited success ("Rolling Thunder," "Linebacker" etc.).[25] This historian, however,

25. See James S. Corum, "The Luftwaffe and the Coalition Air War in Spain, 1936–1939," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 1 (1), March 1995, (Special Issue on Airpower, Theory, and Practice), pp. 67-90, especially pp. 68 and 85f. See also James S. Corum, *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War, 1918–1940* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1997), pp. 182-223. As a background for the assessment of Viet-

judges such comparisons as being fraught with problems. Nevertheless, such questions should be raised and comparisons made especially with an eye toward future missions, either in NATO or with other alliances. Schmider, in his article, has inadvertently addressed these issues, but has not elaborated on them.[26] Simply put: America, Britain, and their allies were victorious against the *Wehrmacht*, which was Hitler's willing instrument implementing terror on behalf of a criminal regime. One could get the impression that the authors are of the opinion that as a consequence, the German armed forces always look to the "untarnished" traditions of their western alliance partners with envy or from the standpoint of an inferiority complex. The only answer to opinions like these is that the armed forces of Germany must foster a military culture on their own, albeit, of course, in close contact with their partner armies.

Today, it is no secret that there are differences within NATO regarding the form and intensity of military engagement in global missions. The problem concerning Germans is whether to participate in more combat missions in Afghanistan, and this is very contentious. Germany and her neighbors have steered a "soft" Eurocentric direction that has not always pleased the United States' government. The roots of this policy lie in the experience of the pre-1945 world. Any discussion of the World War period must always be conducted with an eye on the present day. If we do not develop innovative methodologies, there will be a danger of the mutuality of NATO being undermined. The Spanish Civil War, with its protagonists like Werner Mölders, must play an integral part to this global canvas. The Schmider article does not address any of these problems or questions, but repeatedly relates the Braatz-Hagena arguments. Braatz-Hagena's works represent an endless search for the details of technical minutiae and fail to advance fundamental historigraphy. Although their arguments have to be respected, their value for research tends to be negligible. They display too many weaknesses in their methods, perspectives, interpretations, and conclusions.

It is not the intention of this article to address all aspects pertaining to the discussion of German military tradition, and it is certainly not intended to be yet another essay on the historico-political debate ("*Geschichtspolitik*"). On the contrary, this author believes very deeply that historians as professionals should abstain from these political debates as far as possible and concentrate on objectivity (always, of course, keeping in mind that, as Max Weber continually stated, historians are human beings and therefore can never reach absolute "objectivity" or "truth"). Re-

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nam in connection with modern air force missions, see Phillip S. Meilinger, "More Bogus Charges against Airpower," <www.afa.org/magazine> (*Air Force Magazine*, vol. 85 (10), October 2002).

26. Cf. Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders*, p. 9.

search can only deliver facts within their frameworks and give professional interpretations on these. How to assess these results in a practical sense (here: "Can the life of Werner Mölders offer an acceptable pattern for tradition?") is the business of the state, society, and in this particular case, the forces themselves. A constructive dialogue among historians as a professional group is only fruitful if there is more distance from the topic and less politics in the actual work. The arguments of Schmider et al., especially Hagena, are much too political for such an enterprise. There is always the danger of a narrow-minded political struggle.

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Editor's Note: This article/rebuttal represents exclusively the opinion of Dr. Bernd Lemke. (See footnote 4.)

Rebuttal to Bagnasco Q&A

JAMES J. SADKOVICH

1. Erminio Bagnasco's comments

During his interview with *World War II Quarterly* (*Global War Studies*), Lieutenant Commander Erminio Bagnasco said that,

> The work of James J. Sadkovich in the original English-language edition contains significant technical errors. For example, in the statistical section he sums up gross register tons with displacement tons, thus confusing volume with weight! As for the book's general layout, it is good that the author declares his intention to clarify for English-language readers the lesser-known history of the Italian Navy. Sadkovich, however, sets this intent aside and takes on the role of a defense attorney for the *Regia Marina*, even in circumstances where it would be better to take a critical position. Recently, this work has been translated into Italian.[1] Augusto De Toro, who edited the Italian-language edition, corrected the technical errors. But, as I stated in the Foreword I was asked to write, it preserves its other defects. Once readers recognize them, they can enjoy the book's many important attributes, such as Sadkovich's analysis of the logistics of the "War of the Convoys."[2]

I am dismayed by these remarks, but not surprised, since Mr. Bagnasco has made similar comments in his foreword to the Italian edition of my work. I consider them both inaccurate and misleading, so I would like to respond to them, and I am grateful to the Editor of *Global War Studies*, Robert von Maier, for allowing me to do so.

I am not certain to which "statistical section" Mr. Bagnasco is referring, and I regret that he did not specify the book's "other defects," so that I cannot respond in a more focused manner. But he was not much more specific in his criticism of the histories by Marc'Antonio Bragadin

1. James J. Sadkovich, *La Marina italiana nella seconda guerra mondiale* (Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2006).
2. Robert von Maier and Vincent P. O'Hara, "Questions and Answers: Erminio Bagnasco," *World War II Quarterly*, vol. 6 (1), 2009, pp. 41-42.

and by Jack Greene and Alessandro Massignani.[3] He dismissed Bragadin's work because it "lacks the many updates that have emerged in more recent years" and "is particularly *uncritical* of the activities and shortcomings of the Italian Supreme Naval Command [*Supermarina*] in which the author himself served, albeit in a non-decision-making capacity." (Emphasis added.)[4] After praising Greene and Massignani for their bibliography and their inclusion of "new information on the war," he faulted them for failing to support "many" of their notes with "archival documentation" and for "rarely" making "their own judgments" but instead "presenting different interpretations expressed in the literature," leaving the reader to draw his own "interpretations and conclusions."[5]

Why Mr. Bagnasco is so critical of these three works is not obvious, given that the shortcomings he enumerates (age, technical errors, summarizing interpretations by others, and citing sources other than archival documents) can be found in all histories, including those he recommends. If these works share a common denominator, it would seem to be that in Mr. Bagnasco's opinion their authors fail to "take a *critical position*" regarding *Supermarina* and the Fascist regime. This supposition is supported by his praise for Aldo Cocchia as "one of the most clear-minded and brilliant *critics* of Italy's maritime war;" Giorgio Giorgerini as "[n]ot sparing in his *criticism*" of the high command of the *Regia Marina*; and recent works as "when necessary...*critical* of the Italian naval and air chiefs in the Mediterranean." He also notes that the "first eighty pages" of his recent work are "a thoughtful, *critical* synthesis of operations and the general efficiency of the ships." (Emphasis added to all quotes.) My greatest failing would thus seem to be that, like Messers Bragadin, Greene, and Massignani, I was not critical of *Supermarina* when Mr. Bagnasco believes that it was necessary to be so.

I assume that the "other defects" of my work to which Mr. Bagnasco alludes concern my interpretation of key events in the war in the Mediterranean, given that we differ regarding the effect that the invasion of Greece and the attack on Yugoslavia had on Italy's war effort, the wisdom of giving Rommel his lead in 1942 rather than attempting to seize Malta, the usefulness of aircraft carriers, the impact of Germany on Italy's war effort, and the persistence of several legends and myths concerning the war in the Mediterranean theater. A detailed discussion of our differences would require a book, but I would like to discuss them

3. Giuseppe Fioravanzo was the "editorial supervisor" for Marc'Antonio Bragadin, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, trans. Gale Hoffman (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1957); also Jack Greene and Alessandro Massignani, *The Naval War in the Mediterranean, 1940-1943* (London: Chatham, 1998).
4. Maier and O'Hara, "Questions and Answers: Erminio Bagnasco," p. 41.
5. Ibid., p. 42.

briefly to show why I believe that they have influenced Mr. Bagnasco's opinion of my work, and perhaps of the studies by Bragadin, Greene, and Massignani as well.

2. Revision as a normal activity for historians

Contrary to Mr. Bagnasco's assertion, I did not write *The Italian Navy in World War II* to defend the Italian navy. I sought merely to show readers unacquainted with the literature in Italian "the handicaps under which the Italian navy fought and the tremendous advantages enjoyed by the British, whose possession of radar and whose ability to 'read' German and Italian 'Enigma' traffic gave them a crucial edge." I wanted "the reader to appreciate the weakness of Italy," not just of the Italian navy, and "to show that the Italians performed well despite their handicaps, and that they were primarily responsible for tying down the bulk of British power in the Mediterranean basin for thirty-nine long months." I intended "neither a battle history nor a comprehensive history of the RMI during the war," but "rather an interpretive account of naval operations" which I hoped would "provide readers of English with another point of view, urge a reconsideration of the Italian war effort by those interested in the conflict, and perhaps provoke a few well-documented rebuttals from those who do not share my point of view and will not be convinced" by my arguments.[6]

Obviously, Mr. Bagnasco is among those who do not share my point of view and have not been persuaded by my arguments. Even so, his comments suggest that I anticipated some recent scholarship, or echoed older works by Bragadin and others, e.g., by listing sonar and radar among the handicaps that crippled the Italian navy and noting that the inability to build new ships and repair old ones made it all but impossible for the *Regia Marina* to compete with the British navy, which could call on the Commonwealth and the United States for help.[7]

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6. James J. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), pp. xvi-xix. Also J.J. Sadkovich, "Re-evaluating Who Won the Italo-British Naval Conflict, 1940-42," *European History Quarterly*, vol. 18 (4), 1988, pp. 455-471; "Aircraft Carriers and the Mediterranean, 1940-1943: Rethinking the Obvious," *Aerospace Historian*, Dec. 1987, pp. 263-271; "The Development of the Italian Air Force prior to World War II," *Military Affairs*, Oct. 1987, pp. 128-136; "Understanding Defeat: Reappraising Italy's Role in World War II," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 24 (1), 1989, pp. 27-61; "Minerali, armamenti e tipo di guerra: la conflitta italiana nella seconda guerra mondiale" [Minerals, Weapons, and War: The Italian Conflict in the Second World War], *Storia contemporanea*, vol. 18 (6), 1987, pp. 1267-1308.

7. Mr. Bagnasco said that "new research has modified many earlier assessments" and scholars are now "downplaying...the lack of aircraft carriers, fuel shortages, and Malta's role, and increasingly highlighting other problems," which "include the lack of sonar equipment until late 1941, the modest effectiveness of Italian submarines in the Mediterranean in the first two years of the war, and the slow pace of repairs and new construction

Because I was unable to work in the Italian archives, I based my study on as many published sources as I could find, including document collections and microfilm of documents.[8] My work is not, therefore, as one critic has claimed, based exclusively on secondary sources.[9] Nor is it based exclusively on Italian sources. I also consulted the official histories of Great Britain, India, New Zealand, and South Africa, as well as German and French sources. In the first chapter of the English edition, in addition to official histories and microfilm, I cite studies by Nino Arena, Pierre Barjot, Erminio Bagnasco, Giovanni Bernardi, Romeo Bernotti, Valerio Junio Borghese, Marc'Antonio Bragadin, Domenico Cavagnari, Lucio Ceva, Raymond de Belot, Oscar di Giamberardino, Giuseppe Fioravanzo, Aldo Fraccaroli, Giorgio Giorgerini, Angelo Iachino, Philippe Masson, S.W.C. Pack, Alberto Santoni, Luigi Sansonetti, and Carlo Unia. Information for the thirteen tables in this chapter was drawn from studies by Pack, Ceva, Fraccaroli, and Bagnasco, as well as from official histories, *Brassey's Naval Annual* (1940), a UNRRA study (1947), and microfilm (National Archives, Series T-821, Reel 479). Those familiar with naval and aviation history will recognize many of these names, including authors from Mr. Bagnasco's list of favorite books (Bernardi, Borghese, Fioravanzo, Giorgerini, and Santoni), and both Angelo Iachino, whose memoirs Mr. Bagnasco considers important, and Luigi Sansonetti, whom he thinks deserves a biography.

I did not include maps, in part because I was not writing a tactical history, but I did include fifty-four tables to illustrate and support arguments that deal with technical and logistical questions. To the best of my knowledge, the information in them is accurate, unless the sources from which I drew them were in error or I erred in taking notes, both of which are possible. There may have been minor technical errors in my original manuscript, but neither the proofreader nor I found them prior to the printing of the American edition, which some reviewers considered a

in Italian shipyards." For a discussion of these issues, see Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 13, 21-24, 43, 105, 230-231, 241, 268-271, 301, 314-319, 322, 347-348, and passim.

8. For example, I consulted Alberto Santoni's volume, which Mr. Bagnasco recommends, and other sources for Ultra, e.g., F.H. Hinsley, E.E. Thomas, C.F.G. Ransom, and R.C. Knight, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Volumes 1-3. (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1979-83), and Clearwater, Ultra microfilms, Film 1134 (misc.), OL series (reels 74-76, 258-259), MK series (reels 79-88), MKA series (reels 90-99), ZPTI series (reels 144-151).

9. Robert Mallet, "The Fascist Challenge Dissected," *The Historical Journal*, vol. 44 (3), 2001, pp. 860-861, believes my work is "exclusively secondary source based."

solid piece of work,[10] and some did not.[11] The principle reservations of those critical of the study were that I had focused on the performance of the navy as a whole rather than on personalities, which was my intention, and that I offered a "revisionist" reading of Italy's participation in the war in the Middle Sea, which was, more or less, my goal.

I had not intended to write a definitive account of Italian naval operations or a study of the Italian naval command during the war, but rather a corrective to a literature which tended to view Italy through English, American, and German lenses. This is precisely how Claudio Segrè characterized the study in his review – as a "spirited, revisionist 'interpretive account of naval operations'" and "undoubtedly a healthy corrective to the current literature."[12] The year that my study on the Italian navy was published, I also sought to demonstrate how viewing one nationality through the eyes of another tends to distort one's point of view. Instead of describing how Germans viewed Italians, I discussed how Italians viewed Germans. The result was fascinating – Germans, generally viewed as competent by American and British historians, most of whom had consulted German and British sources, appeared to be incompetent when viewed through the eyes of their allies.[13] Like my history of the Italian navy, this essay was an exercise in historiography, intended to raise questions regarding what appeared to me to be a problematic consensus based on a restricted range of sources.[14] Both were certainly revisionist, but this did not seem to me to be a shortcoming because I consider revision a normal stage in the writing of history.[15]

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10. Claudio Segrè, "Review" (Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*), *American Historical Review*, vol. 100 (4), 1995, pp. 1265-1266; William M. McBride, "Review" (Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*), *Journal of Military History*, vol. 58 (4), 1994, pp. 767-768.

11. Mallett, "The Fascist Challenge Dissected," pp. 859-862; R.J.B. Bosworth, "Review" [Robert Mallett, *The Italian Navy and Fascist Expansionsim, 1935–1940* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1998)], *American Historical Review*, vol. 104 (5), 1999, p. 1789.

12. Segrè, "Review," pp. 1265-1266; McBride, "Review," pp. 767-768, wrote that, "Sadkovich draws...upon a broad spectrum of sources..." to deflate "myths" of "German strategic and tactical mastery, Italian incompetence, and British 'moral supremacy'" over the "dago navy," and he "presents a compelling case that much of the historical consensus on the Anglo-Italian naval war has been built upon cultural bias and racism."

13. James J. Sadkovich, "German Military Incompetence through Italian Eyes," *War in History*, vol. 1 (1), 1994, pp. 39-62.

14. For example, I would question the analysis regarding Italy in Alan R. Millett, Williamson Murray, and Kenneth H. Watman, "The Effectiveness of Military Organizations," *International Security*, vol. 11 (1), 1986, pp. 37-71, esp. pp. 48, 51, 66, 70, because their sole source for Italy is MacGregor Knox, whose work has been criticized by both Lucio Ceva and myself.

15. Reinhardt Koselleck discerns three stages in the writing of history – *Anschreiben* (writing down), which privileges new linguistic forms and concrete events over earlier forms and events; *Aufschreiben* (copying), which repeats earlier histories; and *Abschreiben* (revising), which questions and revises previous works. See Reinhardt Kosel-

The Italian edition of my book is identical to the English edition, save for the corrections I gave to the translator, Mauro Pascolat, and a handful of technical corrections made by Admiral Mario Buracchia and Augusto de Toro.[16] This is as it should be. As Renzo De Felice has noted, each book has a history of its own and cannot be revised, save to correct factual errors, without making it a new book.[17] What I wrote fifteen years ago belongs to the historiography on the Italian navy in World War II, as do the volumes by Bragadin, Fioravanzo, Greene, Massignani, Bagnasco, and others who have written on the subject. Each study has its strengths and weaknesses, a function of the limitations of their authors, the sources consulted, and the historical periods in which they were written – not a postmodern observation, but rather an acknowledgment of human limitations and a description of intellectual work.[18]

I am not aware of a study that addresses, much less answers, all the major questions regarding the Italian war effort in the Mediterranean Sea. One may exist, and I confess to not having read everything that has been published on the Italian war effort since 1994. But my suspicion is that only an ideal historian could write such an ideal history and that it would be catalogued in the ideal library imagined by Jorge Luís Borges. My work is certainly dated, like that of Bragadin, but I suspect that much of what I wrote might still be useful to those interested in understanding Italy's war effort, especially since the Italian edition was published with so few "technical" revisions, and Jeremy Black and Nick Smart included several of my articles on the Italian war effort in their volumes on World War II.[19] Had I continued to do research on Italy rather than turn my at-

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leck, "Linguistic Change and the History of Events," *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 61, 1989, pp. 665-666. Also James J. Sadkovich, "Argument, Persuasion, and Anecdote: The Usefulness of History to Understanding Conflict," *Polemos: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research on War and Peace*, vol. 5 (1-2), 2002, pp. 33-50.

16. I have confirmed this with the publisher, and I encourage the interested reader to compare the two editions.

17. Renzo De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo* (Torino: Einaudi, 1993/1961), xxiii-xxiv.

18. James J. Sadkovich, "Postmodernističke teorijom, vođene metodologije, Franjo Tuđman, ratovi u bivšoj Jugoslaviji, i povijest" [Postmodern Theory, Theory-Driven Methodologies, Franjo Tuđman, the Wars of the Yugoslav Succession, and History], *Pilar: Časopis za društvene i humanističke studije*, vol. 6 (2), 2008, pp. 23-43, which echoes Victor Davis Hanson, "The Status of Ancient Military History: Traditional Work, Recent Research, and On-Going Controversies," *Journal of Military History*, vol. 63, 1999, pp. 379-414, esp. pp. 412-414.

19. Sadkovich, "German Military Incompetence through Italian Eyes," has been reprinted in Jeremy Black, ed., *The Second World War*, Vol. VII, *Alliance Politics and Grand Strategy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); "The Italo-Greek War in the Context of Italy's War Effort," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 28 (3), 1993, pp. 439-465, and "Re-evaluating Who Won the Italo-British Naval Conflict, 1940-42," in Jeremy Black, ed., *The Second World War*, Vol. I, *The German War, 1939-1942* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); and "Un-

tention to Yugoslavia, I might well have revised some of my conclusions regarding specific aspects of the war in the Mediterranean, but I doubt that I would have altered them radically because I have not found recent works on the subject particularly persuasive.[20]

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derstanding Defeat: Reappraising Italy's Role in World War II," in both Nick Smart, ed., *The Second World War* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) and Jeremy Black, ed., *The Second World War*, Vol. I, *The German War, 1939-1942* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

20. For example, I find it difficult to agree with Reynolds M. Salerno, "Naval Strategy and the Origins of the Second World War in the Mediterranean, 1938–1940," in William M. McBride, ed., *New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Thirteenth Naval History Symposium* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1998), pp. 170-173, that "professional pessimism" shaped Italian naval strategy, nor his counterfactual argument that the French and British should have launched a preemptive strike against Italy in September 1939, which echoes Williamson Murray, "The Role of Italy in British Strategy, 1938-1939," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies*, 1977, but ignores the reality that the British and French were overextended and that a "preemptive" strike would have violated international law. For my opinion of John Gooch's work, see James J. Sadkovich, "John Gooch, Mussolini and his Generals," *American Historical Review*, vol. 114 (1), 2009, pp. 242-243. I also find problematic the arguments in MacGregor Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed, 1939-1941, Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy's Last War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 8, 21, and passim, e.g., that Hitler understood "the industrial requirements of war" better than Mussolini; that the Italian navy's "problem" was not lack of sonar or radar but rather a "paralysis of the will," "doctrine and frame of mind"; and that Italy might have had ten to fifteen good divisions "if some central authority had imposed an end to administrative confusion, jurisdictional conflict, and dispersal of effort." I criticized Knox's early work in "Anglo-American Bias and the Italo-Greek War," *Journal of Military History*, vol. 58 (4), 1994, pp. 617-642, and I find his recent studies no more persuasive, partly owing to his efforts to equate Italian Fascism with German Nazism and his insistence that Mussolini was essentially a lesser Hitler; see MacGregor Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); *Hitler's Italian Allies: Royal Armed Forces, Fascist Regime, and the War of 1940-1943* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Mallett, "The Fascist Challenge Dissected," pp. 859-862, is distressed that Knox has been criticized by Italian historians, e.g., Lucio Ceva's review in *Storia contemporanea*, 1984, the journal edited by the late Renzo De Felice. R.J.B. Bosworth, "Review," p. 178, praises Mallett's work, and in *The Italian Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism* (London: Arnold, 1998), pp. 94-105, 203-230, he lauds Charles Maier's "guilefully entitled book" as "the most remarkable attempt...to place Fascist Italy comparatively," but dismisses Gilbert Allardyce as "heralding the new conservatism" and Renzo De Felice as a neo-nationalist. He also ridicules George Mosse for having taken "fascist ideas, however obnoxious," seriously; finds Stanley Payne's "theorising" entirely "unconvincing"; and discounts the arguments of A. James Gregor, Emilio Gentile, Rosaria Quartararo, and Roger Griffin. I find his analysis problematic, perhaps because he invites historians to read documents "not only literally but also between the lines" or perhaps because my first graduate seminar was with Payne and Mosse; Payne oversaw my graduate work; De Felice was extremely helpful when I was doing research for my dissertation; I have cited De Felice and Quartararo at length; and I consider the questions raised by Allardyce, Payne, and Mosse regarding the concept of generic fascism to be basic to any discussion of Italian Fascism and German Nazism.

3. Decision-making, military effectiveness, Germany, and the Italian-Greek War

Twenty years ago, Allan Millett, Williamson Murray, and Kenneth Watman argued that the number of variables that affect how a military organization performs makes it impossible to do a "precise calculation of the aggregate military effects of such disparate elements" and the "relationship [which] exists between military effectiveness and victory" is not absolute.[21] So it is not surprising that Mr. Bagnasco and I disagree regarding the performance of the Italian navy and the degree to which the naval command, as opposed to other variables such as lack of fuel oil or British possession of Ultra, were responsible for its failures. I eschewed a study of command decisions, in part because it is a different question from performance, in part because decision making is difficult to evaluate objectively, given the complex influences at play, from insufficient information to "group think."[22]

Joe Hagan has argued that during the past century leaders of the major powers faced "very real uncertainty" when they made decisions, that they were repeatedly forced to make trade-offs, and that they often operated in fragmented and dispersed "decision structures." From the cases he examined, he concluded that "decision-making structures, or 'units,' channel and focus other influences on governments and are themselves variable across international systems and domestic political structures." At the time they are made, decisions are therefore hostage to uncertainty and constraints. However, Hagan found no correlation between "regime structure" and "decision" structures. Decisions by leaders of all states were taken independently "of the otherwise compelling constraints of both international and domestic politics." Not even totalitarian states behaved like "unitary, rational actor[s]." Hagan therefore concluded that it is impossible to infer "decision-making dynamics...directly from international and domestic structures" and suggested that while decision-making structures "matter," they also operate "in complex ways that vary across time and political systems."[23]

Rome and Berlin were distinct "decision-making structures," with several sub-structures (the armed forces, the diplomatic corps, the Fascist Party, industrial leaders, and so on). They influenced one another, but they also operated autonomously of one another. The resulting uncer-

21. Millett, Murray, and Watman, "The Effectiveness of Military Organizations," p. 37, and passim.

22. Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), passim.

23. Joe D. Hagan, "Does Decision Making Matter? Systemic Assumptions vs. Historical Reality in International Relations," *International Studies Review*, vol. 3 (2), 2001, pp. 5-46, esp. pp. 6, 34-35. For Fascist Italy, in addition to Knox, Hagan consulted Bosworth, Chabod, Clark, Duggan, Denis Mack Smith, Hugh Seton-Watson, and Thayer.

tainty was exacerbated because throughout the war German leaders acted unilaterally and generally kept their Italian partners in the dark with regard to their plans and strategy. Naturally, given that both Axis partners pursued their own goals, which were often at odds, there were few opportunities for equitable trade-offs between them. For example, in July and August 1940, Mussolini and Ciano were not sure whether Hitler and Ribbentrop were negotiating with the British or determined to invade and occupy England. What is certain is that the Italians did not appreciate the cavalier treatment they received from the Germans and that conflicting information coming from Berlin, like its unilateral actions, influenced Mussolini's decisions, particularly regarding how to conduct the air-naval war in the Mediterranean and operations in Greece and North Africa.[24]

It would therefore seem to be methodologically hazardous to ignore German actions that affected decisions made by Italy's leaders and influenced the performance of Italy's armed forces. It would also seem problematic to argue that in Italy's case the relationship between "military effectiveness" and victory is absolute, i.e., that Italian military defeats reveal an underlying Italian "military incompetence," to borrow a phrase from John Gooch, particularly since the Italians had their share of successes during the war in the Mediterranean.[25] Yet some historians have interpreted Italian defeats as symptoms of a deeper military incompetence, particularly "Anglo-Saxon" historians, to borrow another phrase from Professor Gooch.[26]

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24. Referring to Hitler, the Italian King noted that the *Führer* was "...also a German and when it comes to Italy like all the others his actions are predicated by a brutal utilitarianism." ["...anch'egli è un Tedesco come tutti gli altri e nei riguardi dell'Italia agisce secondo un brutale utilitarismo."] Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario, 1937–1943* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1946/1990), p. 497, 6 January 1941, and pp. 449-461 for diary entries for 1 July through 31 August 1940, especially p. 455, 4 August 1940, for Ciano's complaint that the Germans were planning an operation "di cui a noi – more solito – niente è stato finora detto," and p. 457, 10 August 1940, that, "It is a fact that the Germans keep us in the dark regarding everything as if we were neutral, even now when we are fighting at their side." ["Sta di fatto che i tedeschi ci tengono all'oscuro di tutto, esattamente adesso che ci battiamo con loro come quando eravamo neutrali."]; pp. 456-457, 8 August 1940, for conflicting information regarding a German invasion of England from Efisio Marras and Dino Alfieri; p. 459, 22 August 1940, for speculation that a recent speech by Lord Halifax might mean that a negotiated end to the war was possible, and p. 460, 27 August 1940, for Mussolini's claim that Keitel also was pressing for the occupation of Cairo.

25. John Gooch, "Italian Military Incompetence," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 5 (2), 1982, p. 264, believes Italy displayed "common patterns of [military] inadequacy which can be discerned in both the liberal and the fascist state." MacGregor Knox notes several defeats which occurred while the Italian military was "as yet uncontaminated by contact with fascism" and argues that Mussolini's "problems...lay in what one might term the Italian general staff tradition." Cited by Millett, Murray, and Watman, "Military Effectiveness," p. 51.

26. John Gooch, *Mussolini and his Generals: The Armed Forces and Fascist Foreign*

As I have argued elsewhere, the Italian-Greek war is a good example of the tendency to overstate Italian failures and understate the consequences of events on the Italian war effort. Greek successes and Italian failures in 1940 are noted, stressed, and exaggerated, but the subsequent war of attrition which exhausted the Greek army is ignored in favor of focusing on the loss of British naval units and the diversion of British troops to Greece from North Africa. By doing so it is easy to conclude that the war in Greece had a negligible impact on Italian operations in North Africa, but a major one on British operations there.[27]

Mr. Bagnasco echoes these interpretations in his comment that "the Italian attack on Greece in October 1940 and the difficult campaign that followed had little influence on Italian operations in North Africa." He argues that the Italian navy's "commitment on this new front was modest, and hardly affected sea traffic with Libya," and that the British succeeded in defeating the Italians in Egypt and Libya "not because Marshal [Rodolfo] Graziani had too few troops," but because "the Italian Army lacked sufficient mobility with too few trucks and armored vehicles" and because its "military doctrine and organization" were deficient.[28] Mr. Bagnasco acknowledges that the *Regia Aeronautica's* "great effort in the skies over Greece and Albania...weakened the [Italian] bombing capacity on the African Front," and so may have had "negative, though not decisive, effects on operations in Libya." However, he believes that in "its first phase, the brief Yugoslavian campaign in April 1941 required only a few Italian troops, who were already near the country's northern and southern borders," and he argues that "the campaign did not require large commitments from either the navy or air force and did not adversely affect operations in other sectors." However, he thinks that "the occupation of the Balkan Peninsula, especially Greece, did affect British operations in the Mediterranean."[29]

Unlike Mr. Bagnasco, I see both campaigns as having diverted troops, equipment, materiel, and the attention of Italian leaders away from Africa and toward the Balkans, not only during the Italian-Greek war, but through September 1943.[30] Between October 1940 and April 1941, the Italians used ninety-four cargo vessels, about a quarter of their avail-

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Policy, 1922–1940 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-2.

27. Sadkovich, "Anglo-American Bias and the Italo-Greek War," passim.

28. Maier and O'Hara, "Questions and Answers: Erminio Bagnasco," p. 44.

29. Ibid.

30. SME, *Diario storico*, vol. 3 (2) (hereafter, *Diario storico*, vol. 3 (2)), pp. 310-311, doc. 27, Allegato 1 to allegato 857 of 18 January 1941 notes that the decision to send ten divisions to Albania required the shipment of 80,000 men, 24,000 quadrupeds, 3,600 vehicles, and 50,000 tons of materiel, which would require several months to complete and delay the transport of the German divisions. ["...prima del 15 marzo non potrebbe quindi avere inizio il trasporto delle divisioni germaniche."]

able merchant shipping, to ferry twenty divisions and 588,430 tons of materiel to Albania, disrupting shipping schedules for North Africa. Two destroyers, fifteen torpedo boats, four armed merchantmen, various MAS (motor torpedo boats), and the 7th and 8th Cruiser Divisions were assigned to protect the cargo ships, and among the naval encounters linked to the war in Greece was the action off Cape Matapan. Some 25,000 workers who might have helped to improve the capacity of Libya's ports and infrastructure were instead sent to improve the capacity of Albania's ports and roads, and 600,000 soldiers, including two armored divisions (*Littorio* and *Centauro*), as well as thousands of vehicles and hundreds of artillery pieces that would have been useful in North Africa, were deployed for the attacks on Greece and Yugoslavia.[31] In February 1941, Italian forces in North Africa had 3,986 heavy vehicles operational (with 1,284 in repair), and 1,290 *motomezzi* operational (plus 424 in repair) – a total of 8,084 vehicles – as well as 4,658 pack animals and 2,806 camels to move and supply 123,075 men and 209 AFVs. It seems to me reasonable to assume that some of the 13,857 vehicles deployed on the Greek front might have been of use in Libya, especially since, as Mr. Bagnasco notes, the British had difficulty interdicting Italian traffic in late 1940.[32]

Table 1: Men and Materiel Shipped to the Balkans, Aegean, and North Africa, 1940-1942

Year	Destination	Personnel (lost/percent)	Materiel (lost/percent)
1940-41	Balkans & Aegean	766,000 (1,020/0.1%)	1,282,000 tons (1,000/0.01%)
	Libya	173,000 (14,700/8.5%)	1,151,000 tons (169,000/14.7%)
1942	Balkans & Aegean	152,000 (600/3.9%)	459,000 tons (4,000/0.9%)
	Libya & Tunisia	50,000 (5,400/10.8%)	875,000 tons (169,000/19.3%)

Source: Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, p. 343.

In 1940 and 1941, the Italians shipped more men and materiel to Albania and the Aegean area than to North Africa (see Table 1). They also

31. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 103, 109; Italy, Foreign Ministry, *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Series 9, Volume 6 (hereafter, DDI 9/6), doc. 467, Pricolo to Mussolini, 17 January 1941, for a summary of the war effort in Greece and Albania, where Italian forces had grown from eight divisions with 80,000 men in October 1940 to twenty-one divisions with 300,000 men by January 1941. Lucio Ceva, *Storia delle forze armate italiane* (Turin: Utet, 1981), pp. 288, 302; Italy, Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, Ufficio Storico (hereafter, SME/US), *La campagna di Grecia* (Rome, 1977), Volume I, pp. 454-456, for the 25,000 Italian workers who supplemented local labor on roads and in ports; Mario Cervi, *The Hollow Legions: Mussolini's Blunder in Greece, 1940-41* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), pp. 104-105, for the build-up of Italian and Greek forces in 1940.

32. SME/US, *La campagna di Grecia*, Volume II, docs. 159 and 330; Filippo Stefani, *La storia della dottrina e degli ordinamenti dell'esercito italiano* (Rome: SME/US, 1985), pp. 306-307; Mario Roatta, *Otto milioni di baionette, l'Esercito italiano in guerra dal 1940 al 1944* (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1946), pp. 133-134, 199; and Cervi, *The Hollow Legions*, p. 295.

suffered more casualties in Greece, Albania, and Yugoslavia than in Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia. Of 198,501 Italian military dead or missing from 1940 through 1945, twice as many perished or vanished in the Balkans as in North Africa, 49,459 (24.9 percent) and 22,341 (11.3 percent), respectively. Russia claimed 82,079 (41.3 percent) dead or missing, but casualties on the Greek front were greater than in Russia, 154,172 to 133,120.[33] The diversion of Italian forces and shipping capacity aided the British, who did not contribute forces to Greece comparable to those deployed there by Italy, or by Germany for that matter.[34] The coup in Yugoslavia helped the British by diverting Axis forces, and Weichold and Baum argued that even the defeat of British forces in Greece and on Crete strengthened the British in Egypt because they were compelled to concentrate their forces there.[35] But this was not the case for Italy, most of whose ground forces were deployed in Greece and along the Yugoslav border, and which was unable to replace losses in North Africa, owing to its commitments in the Balkans[36] (see Table 2).

Table 2: Italian and Greek Divisions and Battalions deployed in 1940-1941

Divisions (Probable number of Battalions)	**28 October 1940**	**14 November 1940**	**15 December 1940**	**15 January 1941**
Italian	6 (36-42)	15 (90-105)	17 (102-119)	25 (150-175)
Greek	4 (36-48)	11 (99-132)	13 (117-156)	13 (117-156)
Divisions	**10 June 1940**	**September 1940**	**24 January 1941**	**4 March 1941**
Italians	8 (Tripolitania)	5 (Tripolitania)	4 (Tripolitania)	6 (Tripolitania)
	6 (Cyrenaica)	9 (Cyrenaica)		

*Italian divisions had six battalions, reinforced with an Albanian battalion or a Black Shirt legion. Greek divisions had nine battalions, often reinforced with a brigade of three battalions. In 1940, of the nine divisions deployed in Cyrenaica two were Libyan and two were Black Shirt.

Source: Sadkovich, "The Italo-Greek War in the Context of Italy's War Effort," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 28 (3), July 1993, pp. 439-465; Italy, Stato Maggiore Esercito, *In Africa Settentrionale. La preparazione al conflitto. L'avanzata su Sidi el Barrani (ottobre 1935 - settembre 1940)* (Rome, 1955), and *La prima offensiva Britannica in Africa Settentrionale (ottobre 1940 - febbraio 1941)* (Rome, n.d.), pp. 86-88, 123, and *Prima controffensiva italo-tedesca in Africa settentrionale (15 febbraio - 18 novembre 1941)* (Rome, 1974), pp. 8, 26, 39-40.

33. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, p. 343; Italy, Istituto Centrale di Statistica, *Morti e dispersi per cause belliche negli anni 1940-1945* (Rome, 1957), Tables 1.1, 1.5, and 2.3. Cervi, *The Hollow Legions*, p. 308, and SME/US, *Grecia*, Volume I, p. 943, list 13,755 killed, 50,874 wounded, 25,067 MIA, 52,108 ill, and 12,368 cases of frostbite – 154,172 total casualties; and SME/US, *Le operazioni delle unità italiane al fronte russo (1941-1943)* (Rome, 1977), pp. 487-488.

34. Sadkovich, "The Italo-Greek War in the Context of Italy's War Effort," pp. 439-465, and "Italian Morale during the Italo-Greek War," *War and Society*, vol. 2 (1), 1994, pp. 92-123. For why I believe that the Italian effort has not received the attention it should have, see "Anglo-American Bias and the Italo-Greek War," pp. 617-642.

35. *Diario Storico*, 3/2, doc. 125, for SIM's 4 April 1941 assessment that England benefitted from the coup in Yugoslavia, which had affected German preparations to attack Greece; Eberhard Weichold and Walter Baum, *Der Krieg der Achsenmächte im Mittelmeer-Raum* (Frankfurt: Musterschmidt Göttingen, 1973), p. 162.

36. *Diario Storico*, 3/2, doc. 108, for Italian forces deployed in Albania as of 15 March 1941.

The Italians had earmarked twenty-five divisions for an attack on Yugoslavia in 1940, and in 1941 they held back troops in Albania because they worried that Belgrade would attack Albania rather than defend "non-Serb" areas.[37] Although relations between Rome and Belgrade had been tense, Mussolini did not initiate the attack on Yugoslavia; Hitler did so to secure his flank for an attack on the USSR, a project which he had not discussed with his ally. The German leader decided to attack following a coup by Serbian military officers in March. The coup was ostensibly a reaction to Yugoslavia's adherence to the Tripartite Pact, but the new government immediately sought to placate the Axis, thereby raising questions about whether the German attack was necessary or merely an ill-considered overreaction to an unexpected event.[38]

The German attack on the USSR was clearly not necessary, and if Mussolini's decision to attack Greece had adversely affected the Italian war effort in North Africa, Hitler's decision to attack the USSR adversely affected the Axis war effort as a whole. The initial German attack radically shifted the barycenter of the Axis war effort, starving the Mediterranean theater of men and materiel just as the occupation of Yugoslavia and Greece began to weigh heavily on the Italian war effort. While the Germans sought to dominate Greece and the successor states to Yugoslavia economically and politically, the Italians were primarily responsible for suppressing local uprisings and feeding the Greeks, a task that in May 1941 required eight merchantmen and a motor ship to carry 11,346 tons of grain, pasta, and rice to Greece.[39] Italy continued to keep significant forces in the Balkans through 1943, both to suppress resistance movements and to contest German control of a putatively Italian sphere of influence.[40]

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37. Salvatore Loi, *Le operazioni delle unità italiane in Jugoslavia (1941-1943)* (Rome: SME/US, 1978), pp. 32-33, 50-56; *Diario Storico* 3/2, docs. 107, SIM, 15 March 1941, and 110, SIM, 18 March 1941, for estimates that Yugoslavia could deploy more than forty-three triangular and binary divisions; 121, Cavallero, 31 March 1941, for the observation that creating a new front also would create new problems; 122, Mussolini, 1 April 1941, for the assumption that Yugoslavia would concentrate its forces on Albania; 124, SIM, 31 March 1941, for information that the Yugoslav army was abandoning non-Serb areas to concentrate its forces in Macedonia and against Bulgaria.

38. Ivo Tasovac, *American Foreign Policy and Yugoslavia, 1939–1941* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), pp. 99-100, 128-144.

39. Italy, Foreign Ministry, *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Series 9, Vol. 7 (hereafter, DDI 9/7), docs. 622, Ghigi, 5 October 1941; 708, Host Venturi, 3 November 1941; 782, Host Venturi, 25 November 1941.

40. The navy helped fuel anti-Italian feelings by demanding most of Dalmatia's coastline and islands, e.g., DDI 9/7, doc. 32, De Ferraris, 30 April 1941, for Admiral Riccardi's demands, and doc. 72, Ciano, 8 May 1941, who noted the navy's role; also doc. 10, Arduini, 26 April 1941, for an early report that Croats were hostile to the Italians ("gran parte della populazione a noi irremediabilmente ostile") and inclined toward the Germans, and docs. 66 and 73, Arduini, 7 and 8 May 1941, for opposition from both Ustaša and Peas-

4. A disjointed alliance wages parallel wars

Among the other questions on which Mr. Bagnasco and I differ are the nature of Germany's influence on the Italian war effort; the importance of seizing Malta and braking Rommel in mid-1942; Italy's need for an aircraft carrier; and the obligation to address legends, myths, and "clever propaganda" embedded in the literature on the Mediterranean theater. Mr. Bagnasco does not think that in regard to both "general strategy and especially naval strategy. . . . German demands adversely affected Italian planning." He argues that the Germans "often prodded the *Regia Marina* to conduct its naval warfare more dynamically," adducing as an example the German request that the Italian navy undertake an "'action in force' against enemy shipping in the mid-eastern Mediterranean in March 1941." Even though the request "led to the tragic nighttime clash at Cape Matapan," he argues that "the German strategy had been fundamentally correct" and that "what happened [the loss of a cruiser division] was not the German's fault," but rather the fault of the Italian navy's leaders who "decided to carry out this operation using a battleship, rather than relying on fast cruisers as would have been more logical."[41]

The example Mr. Bagnasco offers to support his point is somewhat problematic because the Italians had used two "fast cruisers" to raid enemy shipping in the Aegean a year earlier. On 19 July 1940, during an encounter off Cape Spada with two British destroyers and the cruiser HMAS *Sydney*, the Italians lost the "fast" cruiser *Colleoni*. The loss had depressed Mussolini, so it seems unlikely that he would have approved another similar action.[42] It would also seem unlikely that in March 1941 "fast" cruisers operating without radar or knowledge of the enemy's plans – both British, not Italian, advantages – could have done better against Admiral Cunningham's three battleships, four cruisers, thirteen destroyers, and aircraft carrier than Admiral Iachino's battleship, eight cruisers, and thirteen destroyers. Even in a daytime encounter, Iachino's force would have been at a disadvantage because it was outnumbered in capital ships and had no consistent air support, in part because Iachino was operating far from Italian bases in Italy and had no aircraft carrier,

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ant Party members to Italy's annexation of much of Dalmatia, and docs. 131, Menichella, 17 May 1941 and docs. 148, Casertano, 21 May 1941, 193, Casertano, 31 May 1941, doc. 227 Casertano, 8 June 1941, doc. 238, Casertano, 10 June 1941, and doc. 247, Alfieri, 12 June 1941, and *passim*, for competition with Germany both economically and politically; see Nada Kisić Kolanović, *NDH i Italija. Političke veze i diplomatski odnosi* (Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak/HIP, 2001), *passim*, and Srdjan Trifkovic, "Rivalry between Germany and Italy in Croatia, 1942–1943," *The Historical Journal*, vol. 36 (4), 1993, pp. 879-904.

41. Maier and O'Hara, "Questions and Answers: Erminio Bagnasco," p. 46.

42. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 63-66; Ciano, *Diario*, p. 453, 22 July 1940.

but primarily because the air support which the Germans had promised was undependable and there were too few Italian aircraft based on the Dodecanese Islands to offer continuous air cover. Unlike Iachino, Cunningham could call on both a carrier and British airbases on Crete, yet another consequence of the Italian-Greek War. Certainly, without radar, the only advantage fast cruisers might have had at night was their speed, assuming that they could have spotted the British in time to escape without benefit of radar.[43] It is also worth noting that Iachino's mission was premised on faulty intelligence from the Germans and that a lucky British hit in a desperate air attack at dusk set the stage for the massacre of the Italian cruiser division during the night. Even then, without radar, the British might not have found the Italians.[44] It therefore seems to me that the Germans bore some of the blame for the loss of Italian ships off Cape Matapan and that radar and Ultra should get most of the credit for Cunningham's victory there.

Germany's attack on the USSR in 1941 not only shifted the barycenter of the Axis war effort to the East, it deprived Italy of a valuable source of much-needed raw materials. Worse, over the next two years the war in the East consumed ten Italian divisions, hundreds of guns, thousands of vehicles, and scores of aircraft which Lucio Ceva believes would have been better used in North Africa, and certainly would have been useful to have in Italy during the summer of 1943.[45] That the German attack was ill-advised was obvious as early as 30 July 1941, when Dino Alfieri, Italy's ambassador to Germany, wired Galeazzo Ciano that the Germans would be fully occupied in the USSR through the winter.[46] The British, of course, used the summer and fall of 1941 to prepare Operation Crusader in North Africa. The Germans also were responsible for failing to bring Spain into the war in 1940, for failing to appropriate the French fleet, and for blocking Italian access to Tunisia's ports through the spring

43. Weichold and Baum, *Der Krieg der Achsenmächte im Mittelmeer-Raum*, pp. 53-54, 61-62, criticized the Italians for having sent the *Colleoni* and *Bande Nero* to the eastern Mediterranean because their superiority in speed was not enough to make up for too little armor and unreliable air support. The first Italian night action, against the HMS *Ajax* on 11 October 1940, failed because the Italian destroyers and torpedo boats did not have radar, which the British cruiser had.

44. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 125-133.

45. DDI 9/7, docs. 152, Rosso, Moscow, 21 May 1941; 170, Ciano, 28 May 1941; 188, Rosso, 30 May 1941; 225, Rosso, 8 June 1941; 252, Rosso, 12 June 1941; 302, 310, for Italy's decision to go to war in late June 1941; 472, Alfieri, 11 August 1941, and 444, 445, 452, for increased consumption of materiel, especial fuel, in the USSR. Lucio Ceva, *La condotta italiana della guerra. Cavallero e il Comando supremo 1941-1942* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1975), esp. pp. 63, 83-110; "La campagna di Russia nel quadro strategico della guerra fascista," *Politico*, 1979; and "La strategia militare di Hitler, il Mediterraneo e il pensiero ipotetico," *Storia contemporanea*, 1987.

46. DDI 9/7, 438, Alfieri to Ciano, 30 July 1941.

of 1942.[47]

Even on the basis of these examples, I would argue that Germany's "general" strategy had seriously, and adversely, affected Italy's war effort. The Germans rarely considered the impact their actions would have on their ally, and there was no coordination by the general staffs of the two countries. Both fought their own wars, with their own objectives and strategies. Hitler and the German high command pressed their Italian ally to undertake actions to profit the German war effort, regardless of the cost to the Italian. As Italy became more dependent on Germany, Mussolini and Cavallero found it more difficult to resist German blandishments. The costs to Italy of German errors and misjudgments were already obvious to Efisio Marras by January 1941. The Italian military attaché underscored a German tendency to ignore their ally, a point Mussolini had also made in his comment that he would repay Hitler in his own coin by attacking Greece without consulting him, and one that Ciano regularly noted in his diary. According to Marras, Germany's concessions to the USSR and its numerous failures – to invade England, to occupy French colonies, to mount an effective submarine war, to grasp the importance of defeating Britain in the Mediterranean – had not only adversely affected the Axis war effort; they had also adversely affected the attitude of both neutral states like Spain and defeated states like France. He also noted that the Germans had not offered to help in the Mediterranean theater until after they had cancelled the invasion of England, but that they were planning to intervene in the Balkans well before the Italians had invaded Greece.[48]

Vittorio Ambrosio, who succeeded Ugo Cavallero as Italian Chief of Staff in 1943, compiled a similar list two years later. He believed that Germany's first error had been to attack Poland, thereby triggering a European war in 1939 rather than in 1942, when Italian and German rearmament would have been further advanced. The Germans compounded their initial error by failing to invade Britain in 1940, which allowed the British to shift their forces to the Middle Sea. Germany had also alienated Spain, which precluded the seizure of Gibraltar. The Germans then attacked the USSR, an action that shifted the barycenter of the Axis war effort far to the East and allowed the British to survive and face an Italy which had only weak and sporadic support from its German ally. The Germans had also refused to help Italy secure the use of Tunisia's ports

47. For Spain, see Stanley G. Payne, *Franco y Hitler. España, Alemania, la segunda guerra mundial y el Holocausto* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2008), pp. 114-182, 307-322, 409-424. For Tunisia, DDI 9/7, doc. 575, Liberati, 17 September 1941, and Vacca Maggiolini, 16 September 1941.

48. DDI, 9/6, doc. 469, Cosmelli, 18 January 1941 and attached report by Marras, 15 January 1941.

in 1941, and Hitler had refused to support the invasion of Malta in the summer of 1942. Ambrosio also noted that the Germans had mistaken the timing, significance, and place of the Allied invasion of North Africa that November, and that, like Rommel, they had viewed the Mediterranean theater with a complete lack of seriousness ("*con la faciloneria di Rommel*") throughout the conflict.[49]

5. Strategic choices and the importance of Malta

Mr. Bagnasco and I also disagree on the question of whether occupying Malta in the summer of 1942 would have been better than using the landing craft, escorts, aircraft, and troops slated for the invasion of the island (Operation C/3) to support Rommel's drive on Egypt. The British understood the island's importance to their war effort in the Mediterranean, and they expended men and machines to maintain Malta because without it they could not effectively cut Axis supply lines to Libya and Tunisia.[50] Secure supply lines are preferable to vulnerable ones, and like the British, the Italians considered the island important, but Hitler and Hermann Göring did not, perhaps because they had a "continental mentality,"[51] perhaps because their attention was focused on their war against the Soviet Union. Not all Germans agreed with Hitler, e.g., Admiral Eberhard Weichold, Berlin's naval liaison with Rome, believed that by refusing to support an Italian amphibious attack on the island, Hitler lost the war in the Mediterranean. But Hitler determined policy, and like his boss, the German admiral tended to view the Mediterranean theater from a German perspective and, like his boss, he had scant regard for the

49. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato* (Turin: Einaudi, 1990), Vol. II, p. 1126; Sadkovich, "German Military Incompetence," passim, for German errors, failures, and miscalculations. For a review in English of De Felice's work, see James J. Sadkovich, "Fascist Italy at War," *International History Review*, 14 (3), August 1992, pp. 526-533.

50. Mariano Gabriele, *Operazione C/3: Malta* (Rome: Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, 1965), pp. 287-288, considered Malta a "constant danger" ("pericolo costante") that forced the Italians to use major warships to escort convoys, with significantly greater expenditure of fuel oil and aviation fuel. Friedrich Ruge, *Sea Warfare, 1939-1945* (London: Cassell, 1957), p. 194, concluded that naval and air units based on Malta had accounted for two-thirds of Axis losses at sea between June 1940 and September 1943. Ruge was Weichold's replacement as liaison with the Italian high command and also viewed the Mediterranean through German eyes, but those of the German navy, not the German army or air force.

51. Weichold and Baum, *Der Krieg der Achsenmächte im Mittelmeer-Raum*, pp. 11-12, 164, 113-114, 199-200, argue that the Germans drew the wrong lessons from World War I, particularly Hitler, who had a "continental mentality" (he was "kontinental eingestellt," found the sea "unheimlich," and "in Kontinentalem Denken blieben"), and that both Hitler and the German high command underestimated ("unterschätzen") the importance of naval warfare and its importance to operations in North Africa, with disastrous results for the Axis, unlike the British and Americans, who agreed to give the Mediterranean priority in 1941 and 1942.

wastage of Italian warships. For example, in 1941 he urged Italy to use submarines to run ammunition to North Africa, even though they could carry only a fifth of the cargo a small cargo ship could transport, but were equally vulnerable to attack by British naval and air forces, and on occasion by German aircraft as well.[52]

Unlike Mr. Bagnasco, I consider the decision to give Rommel his lead in June 1942 a serious error that prevented the seizure of Malta and undermined the Axis war effort in the Middle Sea. Like several German and Italian officers – including Weichold, Halder, Rintelen, Kesselring, Jodl, Keitel, Cavallero, Bastico, Gariboldi, and Gambara – I consider Rommel's impact on the Axis war effort in the Mediterranean to have been problematic.[53] His drive on Egypt in 1942 certainly made the loss of North Africa inevitable by overloading Italian logistical systems and frittering away the forces assembled for Operation C/3.[54] The wastage of Axis units on the Eastern front also played a part; a half million Italian, Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovak troops were lost at Stalingrad, depriving Germany of the support of its "minor" allies on the Eastern front. Both the war in the East and the failure to take Malta, of course, can be laid at Germany's door, as can the failure to secure use of Tunisia's ports, a failure that made the occupation of Malta all but mandatory if the Axis were to secure their seaborne supply routes to North Africa.

The importance of occupying Malta and the folly of advancing on Egypt with exhausted troops whose air cover and logistical support dwindled the farther they advanced were apparent to the Italians, but not to the Germans. By late June, Rommel's six Italian divisions – *Ariete*, *Littorio*, *Brescia*, *Pavia*, *Trento*, and *Sabratha* – had only 8,100 men, thirty-four tanks, and 240 guns; his German units a few thousand infantry and ninety tanks.[55] On 20 June, Mussolini and Ugo Cavallero urged Hitler to support the seizure of Malta rather than approve another

52. Weichold and Baum, *Der Krieg der Achsenmächte im Mittelmeer-Raum*, pp. 213-214, 219; Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, 188-189, and passim for Weichold's efforts to take over convoy operations in the Mediterranean and the suspect nature of his reports.

53. James J. Sadkovich, "Of Myths and Men: Rommel and the Italians in North Africa, 1940-1942," *International History Review*, 13 (2), May 1991, pp. 286-287. Weichold and Baum, *Der Krieg der Achsenmächte im Mittelmeer-Raum*, pp. 132-133 considered Rommel an "impulsive Front-General" who understood neither strategy nor logistics. For Rintelen and Halder, see Enno Rintelen, *Mussolini als Bundesgenosse. Erinnerungen des deutschen Militärattaches in Rom, 1936-1943* (Stuttgart: Wunderlich, 1951), pp. 133, 165-178; and Donald S. Detweiler, Charles Burdick, and Jürgen Rohwer, eds., *World War II German Military Studies* (New York: Garland, 1979), Volume IX, MS C-065a, 5 and 12 November 1942.

54. Gabriele, *Operazione C/3*, pp. 279-283, for the wastage of forces during the drive into Egypt.

55. Sadkovich, "Of Myths and Men," pp. 304-305.

offensive in Cyrenaica. They argued that the time was right to do so because earlier that month Italian and German air and naval forces had interdicted a convoy bound for the island and had sunk a cruiser, five destroyers, a minesweeper, and six merchantmen, and damaged a number of other British vessels. Rommel's offensive had already delayed the landings, and Mussolini and Cavallero were worried that if the island was not taken in August, the Italian navy would be unable to oppose future British convoys, owing to a lack of fuel oil.[56]

In July 1942, the Italian high command had assembled a formidable force for Operation C/3, the amphibious landing on Malta – 100,000 men, including an airborne division (*Folgore*); 180 landing craft and 900 aircraft; 482 vehicles and 153 tractors; and 440 artillery pieces and 270 mortars. They asked the Germans for relatively little, particularly given Italy's contribution to the war effort in the East – an airborne division, some aircraft, fuel oil, and the suspension of operations in Libya. Hitler's decision to support Rommel's request to continue the North African offensive delayed Operation C/3 indefinitely, and the Italian high command then used the "disparate group of troops, ineffective ships, and marines" assembled to land on Malta to occupy Tunisia and support Rommel.[57] Unlike Mr. Bagnasco, Mariano Gabriele, who wrote the official history of Operation C/3, concluded that the Axis had a good chance of success because they would have had 3 or 4 to 1 odds in manpower with excellent naval and air support.[58]

It therefore seems to me that the air-naval victories of June and August, like the "disparate group of troops, ineffective ships, and marines" assembled and trained over a two-year period, were squandered to support an increasingly feeble drive toward a culminating point that proved to be a vanishing point for the Axis war effort. In August, when Axis forces should have been landing on Malta, air and naval units based on the island sank 65,280 tons of Axis shipping at sea and in port. The island grew stronger during the winter of 1942–43, as Italian battleships and cruisers lay immobile for lack of fuel oil and Axis forces in North Africa struggled to contain advancing British and American forces, whose supply lines were secure.[59]

Mr. Bagnasco suggests that the Italians should have seized Malta in

56. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 256-265, 271-272.
57. Ibid., pp. 272-284. A lack of major ports between Benghazi and El Alamein forced the Italians to supply advancing Axis forces by unloading at small ports and on beaches, using landing craft and escorts reserved for Operation C/3. Italy's airborne division, *Folgore*, which was to have landed on Malta, ended up slugging it out with the British at El Alamein, and the aircraft which would have provided air cover for an invasion were gradually used up flying support for convoys threatened by a rejuvenated Malta.
58. Gabriele, *Operazione C/3*, pp. 261-263.
59. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 296-329.

1940 because it was undefended. But the island was not a major threat to Italian shipping in June 1940 and no threat at all to the Italian mainland. The French navy was also intact, and the combined British and French fleets would have made it impossible for the Italian navy to protect the landings in June. Mussolini had also hoped for a negotiated end to the conflict through early 1940.[60] Following the fall of France in June, he and his military commanders assumed the war would be over within months, so there was no need to risk an amphibious operation to seize Malta, especially given the illusion that air power would be sufficient to "neutralize" the island.[61]

I would agree with Mr. Bagnasco that the Italians needed German support to increase their chances of success in July 1942, but Rommel also needed massive Italian support for his drive on Suez, and the Germans needed Italian divisions to cover their flank during their drive on Stalingrad. As King Victor Emanuel III told Ciano in January 1941, the Germans acted toward Italy in a "brutally utilitarian" manner (see note 24); they tended less to support their Italian ally than to exploit them, as Mr. Bagnasco indirectly acknowledges when he notes that the Germans "prodded" their ally to take "risky" actions, regardless of the cost to the Italian navy and the impact on the Italian war effort. Hitler's pocket veto of Operation C/3 is yet another instance of Germany's adverse effect on its ally's war effort, and I would add the failure to support Operation C/3 to the list of blunders committed by Hitler and his general staff.

6. The problematic usefulness to Italy's war effort of a single, vulnerable aircraft carrier

Mr. Bagnasco and I also disagree on the usefulness of aircraft carriers in an enclosed sea. He argues "that one or more aircraft carriers would have been useful to the *Regia Marina* in 1940," and that "[t]he wide and successful use of them by Great Britain's Royal Navy throughout the war dramatically contradicts the idea that carriers were not necessary for op-

60. The most detailed analyses of Mussolini's thinking and policies in 1939-1940 have not been translated into English – Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato* (Turin: Einaudi, 1990), Vol. I; and Rosaria Quartararo, *Roma tra Londra e Berlino. La politica estera fascista dal 1930 al 1940* (Rome: Bonacci, 1980).

61. Weichold and Baum, *Der Krieg der Achsenmächte im Mittelmeer-Raum*, pp. 60-61, for Weichold's recommendation in September 1940 to occupy Crete and eliminate Malta using aircraft. Gabriele, *Operazione C/3*, p. 60, notes that in 1940, "In reality, the basic reasons for the failure to understand that the seizure of Malta was essential to guarantee the security of Italian traffic bound for North Africa was the 'conviction of the political leaders that the war would be of short duration'." ("In realtà, le ragioni di fondo della rinuncia a ritenere indispensabile la presa di Malta per garantire la sicurezza del traffico italiano per l'A.S. dipendevano dalla 'convinzione del potere politico che la guerra sarebbe stata di breve durata'.")

erations in the restricted waters of the Mediterranean."[62] Certainly, there were instances when an aircraft carrier would have been useful. However, Italy could have afforded only one carrier, and only had the government diverted funds from other projects. Moreover, advocates of air power split on the question of whether carriers were necessary in enclosed seas, and the question was not whether carriers were necessary for British operations, but whether Italy would have done better to build a single carrier than to use the funds to build other types of ships.[63] I have argued elsewhere that Italy did not need to do so because its air bases in North Africa and on the Italian peninsula, Sicily, Sardinia, and the Dodecanese islands enabled it to cover most of the Mediterranean Sea. In 1927, Romeo Bernotti proposed developing both naval air power and building battleships, the "backbone" of the navy, and in 1936, Giuseppe Fioravanzo argued that Italy's limited funds would be better spent on battleships.[64] These seem to me to have been reasonable arguments at the time, especially given that the French navy—Italy's most probable opponent prior to 1936—was building battleships and that after 1940 Italian battleships and land-based aircraft served as a brake on the British fleet. As I noted in *The Italian Navy in World War II*, the question was a complex one, but it was "a lack of aircraft, not carriers, that was crucial."[65]

There are also strategic and tactical questions regarding how an Italian carrier would have been used, how vulnerable it would have been, and how British carriers actually were used. Given the British possession of Malta and Ultra, it seems safe to assume that an Italian carrier would have been as vulnerable as Italian battleships and that the British would have done their best to sink it, either at sea or at anchor, as they did Italy's battleships. Because the British controlled Gibraltar and Suez, an

62. Maier and O'Hara, "Questions and Answers: Erminio Bagnasco," p. 47.

63. In 1942, Alexander Seversky argued that air forces had replaced navies and now enforced strategic offensive and blockades. He believed that precision bombing could destroy enemy morale, that carriers were useless in inland seas such as the Mediterranean, and that, "Land-based aviation is always superior to ship-borne aviation." He also thought that Italy had succeeded in building an air force superior to that of the French, even though the Italians had refused to build his pursuit planes. See Alexander P. de Seversky, *Victory through Air Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1942), pp. 128-136, 145-147, 202-203, and Chapters VII ("The Twilight of Sea Power") and VIII ("Europe's Aviation Mistakes and Ours").

64. Sadkovich, "Rethinking the Obvious," passim, discusses Giuseppe Fioravanzo, *Basi navali nel mondo* (Milan: Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale, 1936), passim. After 1945, Giuseppe Fioravanzo, "Il potere aereo nel pensiero di De Seversky," pp. 236-239, disagreed with Seversky's postwar assertion that aircraft carriers were superfluous and grouped the American with Giulio Douhet as a proponent of an autonomous air arm. The point, of course, is that there was no consensus regarding the usefulness of aircraft carriers.

65. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 13, and 3-13.

Italian carrier could not have exited the Mediterranean, unlike British ships, which could slip into the Atlantic or the Red Sea when they were damaged, an anchorage became insecure, or they were needed elsewhere. Even with these advantages, the British lost two aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean between 1940 and 1943, and they had three seriously damaged. Without radar, an Italian carrier would have been blind at night, and without sonar, vulnerable both day and night. It thus seems safe to assume that the Italian carrier would have been lost or crippled as early as November 1940, and certainly in March 1941 during the action off Cape Matapan, making its impact on the war effort minimal.

British carriers were used to ferry aircraft to Malta and to mount an attack on Taranto in November 1940, an attack which was not repeated and which did not cripple the Italian navy as much as the attack on Alexandria in December 1941 by a handful of members of Italy's X MAS did the British fleet.[66] Carriers played a supporting role, not a pivotal one, and they were not always needed. British battleships shelled Genoa, as Mr. Bagnasco notes, and British battleships, cruisers, and destroyers supported land operations against Italian positions along the North African coast. A British carrier played a role at Cape Matapan, but so did land-based aircraft. Carriers were absent during the battles of Sirte Gulf in 1941 and 1942, and they were unable to save British merchantmen and their escorts during the 1942 air-naval actions in June and August, even with the support of Malta's land-based aircraft. Most Italian convoys were attacked by aircraft flying from Malta or North African bases, not from carriers. Given that Italy fought a convoy war, it is not clear what role an Italian carrier might have played; had they been used, like other Italian warships, to protect convoys, they would also have been easy targets for Force K, submarines, and aircraft directed by Ultra and radar, especially at night.

What seems likely, as Mr. Bagnasco acknowledges, is "that if the Italians had put a carrier into service after 1940 they could have lost it in many ways, and they had no possibility of replacing it quickly." However, he adds that "even with the ship's loss, the Italians would not have lost the vast experience of air and naval cooperation that an operational aircraft carrier necessarily brings with it," and he suggests that lack of "[s]uch experience proved to be a truly grave handicap to the *Regia Marina* and the *Regia Aeronautica* in the Second World War."[67] At best, this is a problematic argument which ignores Italy's inability to replace major ships and which confuses the lack of an aircraft carrier with the

66. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 90-95, and Lieutenant Colonel Caravaggio, "The Attack on Taranto: Tactical Success, Operational Failure," *Naval War College Review*, 59 (3), Summer 2006, pp. 103-127.
67. Maier and O'Hara, Questions and Answers: Erminio Bagnasco, pp. 47-48.

failure to build a naval air arm, which Italy failed to do owing in part to inter-service rivalries, something that exists in all armed forces, and in part to the country's limited financial and industrial resources.[68]

7. Legends, myths, and clever propaganda

Mr. Bagnasco brushed aside the question regarding legends and myths surrounding the war in the Mediterranean by dismissing them as "clever propaganda...spread at the time by the British" and therefore "not worth talking about...again, except to say that the Anglo-Saxon world still remembers this misinformation more than sixty years after the war." He then observed that "every wartime operation" has been "reconstructed and evaluated," leaving only "gray areas" of "minimal importance" open to discussion.[69]

I am more hesitant than Mr. Bagnasco to dismiss propaganda, particularly if it is clever and embedded in the literature. I wrote *The Italian Navy in World War II* largely because "the Anglo-Saxon world still remembers" the "misinformation" contained in "the clever propaganda" spread by the British regarding actions such as the shelling of Genoa. I am also far from certain that "every wartime operation" has been "reconstructed and evaluated," particularly given that recent studies have repeated some of the "misinformation" and "clever propaganda" to which Mr. Bagnasco refers, e.g. the myth of Italian military incompetence, a necessary corollary to the myth of German and British competence. Indeed, there is an interplay between the two, with the clever propaganda tending to skew interpretation by determining what aspects of an action one stresses, so that even the most meticulously reconstructed event remains open to more than one interpretation.

For example, what should one stress regarding the British shelling of Genoa in February 1941 – the boldness of the action and the competence of the British? The civilian casualties (144 dead, 272 wounded)? The choice of Genoa rather than Naples as a target? Or the relatively small amount of damage to the Italian war effort? From his suggestion that the Italian navy should have followed the example of the British and shelled Malta, Mr. Bagnasco appears to accept what I would consider to be clever propaganda regarding the attack on Genoa by Force H, which after its attack immediately made for Gibraltar at full steam rather than seek to engage Italian naval units or continue down the coast to shell Naples, the primary port supplying North Africa. My conclusion, which I am sure some readers found harsh, was, given its limited effect on Italy's war effort and the failure of Admiral Somerville either to engage

68. See Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 3-13, and "Rethinking the Obvious," passim.

69. Maier and O'Hara, Questions and Answers: Erminio Bagnasco, pp. 44-45.

the Italian fleet, which had put to sea, or to seek out other targets farther to the South, that Force H was avoiding Italian air and naval units, which were concentrated on and around Sicily, and that "the British chose to attack the Italian port because they were incapable of anything more meaningful, contenting themselves with a propaganda coup in lieu of a real naval victory."[70] My suspicion is that if the Italians had emulated Force H and shelled La Valletta, they would have been accused of attacking a port with no major fleet units, causing unnecessary civilian casualties, and then running away instead of attacking Alexandria in order to force the British fleet to engage.

I questioned the "clever propaganda" regarding the performance of the British navy in *The Italian Navy in World War II* by applying the same yardstick to both Italian and British naval actions and by noting the roles played by Ultra and Britain's technical advantages. I also questioned one of the most persistent legends of the war in the Mediterranean, that Erwin Rommel was a genial general struggling to overcome the incompetence of his Italian allies by applying the same standards to Rommel's actions as "Anglo-Saxon" writers have applied to those of Graziani and other Italian commanders and by noting, rather than ignoring, the role that the Italians played in Axis victories in North Africa between March 1941 and May 1943. Mr. Bagnasco appears to share the legendary view of Rommel, and he seems to think that Rommel was wiser than Cavallero, given his response that the German general was correct to drive on Suez rather than suspend operations and allow the Italian general to attempt to occupy Malta. My view is that Rommel repeatedly squandered resources provided him at great cost to the Italian navy and that his understanding of the war was largely tactical and innocent of any understanding of logistics or the Mediterranean theater as a whole. His effect on the Axis war effort would have been much less damaging had he not had Hitler's support, but he did, forcing the Italians to follow him even when they considered it foolhardy to do so.

The legend of Rommel is, of course, an integral part of the legend of German military competence, and Mr. Bagnasco echoes this legend in his remarks about the role of the German navy and his suggestion that the Germans understood the Mediterranean theater better than their Italian ally. I have discussed the role of Germany at some length above and the legends of Rommel and German military competence elsewhere, so there is no need to do so again here, but it is worth underscoring the tenacity of the legends and myths and clever propaganda regarding the war in the Mediterranean, a question I have also discussed elsewhere.[71]

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70. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II*, pp. 119, and 116-119.

71. Sadkovich, "Of Myths and Men," passim. For the persistence of legends, myths, and clever propaganda, see James J. Sadkovich, "Italian Service Histories and Fascist Italy's

By now it should be apparent why I suspect that Mr. Bagnasco is less bothered by whatever "technical" inaccuracies may exist in my work than by its other unspecified "defects," including my failure to be sufficiently "critical" of the Italian command. Mr. Bagnasco and I hold radically different views regarding the performance of the Italian navy, the influence of Germany on the Italian war effort, and the meaning of key events (or non-events). That also is as it should be – the past is complicated and too far away for us to see it as clearly as we would like. So I am happy to concede Mr. Bagnasco his reading of history, so long as it is based on the available historical evidence, and I ask only that he do the same for me. I would, in any case, urge readers to consult his work, as well as both those he praises and those he criticizes because it seems to me that to understand naval operations in the Mediterranean theater it is not only necessary to know something of diplomacy and military operations, but also to consult a wide range of sources before deciding which interpretations best fit the historical evidence.

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War Effort," in Robin Higham, ed., *The Writing of Official Military History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), and "North Africa and the Mediterranean Theater, 1939-1945," in L.E. Lee, ed., *World War II in Europe, Africa, and the Americas* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), pp. 139-156.

Book Reviews

Normandy: The Landings to the Liberation of Paris. By *Olivier Wieviorka*. Translated by M.B. DeBevoise. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 446.

British and American historians have covered the Normandy invasion extensively, and one therefore wonders if there is any need for another treatment of the campaign. In *Normandy: The Landings to the Liberation of Paris*, Olivier Wieviorka demonstrates that there is indeed room for new interpretations of this much-covered subject. Wieviorka, a professor of history at the *École Normale Supérieure de Cachan*, covers every aspect of the Normandy invasion: politics and grand strategy, economic production, the formation and training of military forces, air and naval power, intelligence, logistics, deception, tactical operations, the French resistance, the impact of the war on soldiers and civilians, and other topics all come under his penetrating analysis. Well-researched from both primary and secondary sources and exceptionally well-written (and translated, one might add), Normandy belongs on the bookshelves of all serious historians of World War II.

The author's main purpose is to debunk the myths that have grown up around the Normandy invasion, primarily that it was a crusade against evil that was resolutely supported by politicians, generals, soldiers, and civilians alike. In this regard, Wieviorka injects a needed dose of reality to the history of the relationship between the United States and Great Britain during World War II. Rather than the harmonious alliance of legend, the author paints a vivid picture of discord and disagreement over strategy and operations, differences that are resolved in the end only through the supreme efforts of General Dwight Eisenhower to keep the alliance intact and moving toward a common goal of annihilating the German armed forces. Wieviorka examines Allied soldiers with a fresh eye as well, in order to break the myth of "brave men who unhesitatingly sacrificed their lives to liberate France and crush Nazism." (p. 270) Indeed, Wieviorka reveals that a hefty percentage of American soldiers were unsure of the need to destroy Germany, and showed little hatred toward the enemy. (pp. 54-55) One superb chapter covers the very human cost of the brutal fighting in Normandy – the psychological toll on the troops that manifested itself in thousands of cases of combat exhaustion, self-inflicted wounds, desertions, and what is known today as post-trau-

matic stress disorder (PTSD).

Wieviorka examines the diplomatic intrigues along with the political and military arguments over the launching of a second front in northwest Europe, to include the deft and not so deft maneuverings to satisfy Soviet desires for a second front, British fears of a World War I-style bloodbath, and American interservice rivalries that threatened a shifting of the main effort to the war against Japan in the Pacific. In this regard, the author displays one of his rare weaknesses, the lack of a thorough understanding of American military history. He states, for instance, that the American army, navy, and air force were jealous of their independence from each other, when in fact the Army Air Forces were still a part of the army until 1947. (p. 31) But the author's assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the British and American strategic approaches to defeating Germany is sound. "Whereas the proposed landing in Normandy urged by the Americans elegantly resolved the terms of a complex equation," Wieviorka concludes, "Churchill's strategy complicated matters to no apparent purpose." (p. 37)

In discussing the mobilization of U.S., British, and Canadian forces for war and their readiness to embark on the "Great Crusade," Wieviorka does a superb job of analyzing the motivations of the soldiers to fight Nazi Germany, but he also attributes too much importance to them. Without a doubt the soldiers in Normandy would rather have been home with their loved ones than fighting the *Wehrmacht* in the hedgerows, but this feeling had far less impact on their readiness for battle than the insufficient tactical training and preparation they received in England prior to the invasion. Moreover, a number of U.S. and British units had experienced combat in North Africa and Sicily prior to D-Day, but the author does not discuss the lessons learned in these earlier campaigns or the improved readiness of these more experienced divisions to engage the German army in France in the summer of 1944. [See Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), p. 146.]

Wieviorka is at his best when examining the nuts and bolts of the preparation for the Normandy invasion. The bombing campaign to immobilize the French rail network prior to D-Day, known as the "Transportation Plan," helped to slow German reinforcements to Normandy, but at a cost to the French civilian population that cannot be ignored. Allied political and military leaders faced difficult trade-offs in providing the necessary materiel for the invasion. The Mulberry harbors, for instance, consumed 30,000 tons of steel and 300,000 cubic meters of concrete for what turned out to be a marginal gain in logistical throughput in Normandy. (p. 107) The deception plans, BODYGUARD and FORTITUDE, on the other hand, immobilized large numbers of German forces for minimal expenditure of effort. Allied rehearsals for the invasion were

inadequate to prepare the troops for the confusion on the beaches, or for their rendezvous with the hedgerow country beyond, for that matter.

The story of the invasion itself is adequately told, if not new. Ironically, this chapter is probably the weakest in the book. Wieviorka makes a few errors of fact and judgment regarding the landings, showing some of his weaknesses as a military historian. In detailing the fire support plan for the landing, the author details the number of ships committed to the effort (thirty-six battleships and cruisers supporting five assault divisions), but not the significance. In fact, the fire support planners for Normandy failed to heed the lessons of the Pacific War regarding the need for extensive fire support preparation of the beaches. In comparison to the naval effort on D-Day, the U.S. invasion of Saipan in the same month involved the use of fifteen battleships and eleven cruisers firing a two-day preparation to support landings by only two Marine divisions (and even these forces proved insufficient to destroy Japanese defenses). [See Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), p. 303.] Wieviorka chalks this neglect up to the fundamental differences in the physical and strategic situations between the Pacific and Europe. (p. 94) The fact is, however, that American commanders in Europe considered the experience in the Pacific "bush league stuff," and so neglected to consider the relevant lessons in planning for D-Day. [Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2000), p. 419.] Wieviorka's analysis of the airborne landings as "too widely scattered to be very effective" is likewise incorrect. (p. 188) Indeed, historians now conclude that the widely scattered airborne drop caused a tremendous amount of indecision among German commanders, who were flooded with reports of paratroopers across Normandy. (See Murray and Millett, *A War to Be Won*, p. 421.) The commander of the 1st Infantry Division, Clarence Huebner, was a major general and not a lieutenant general, and his forces in the first wave consisted of both experienced regiments from the Big Red One and untested regiments from the 29th Infantry Division, which were under his tactical control on D-Day. (p. 192) After the failure of air bombardment and naval gunfire to destroy the German defenses on Omaha Beach, these infantrymen succeeded in breaching the Atlantic Wall by scaling the bluffs between enemy strongpoints to destroy German fortifications in the draws from behind, a fact that Wieviorka neglects to mention.

Wieviorka does an excellent job in recounting the experience of the French civilians in the path of the war in Normandy, along with the efforts of French resistance fighters to interdict German forces moving to the front. There is an outstanding discussion at the end of the book of the politics surrounding the administration of liberated territory and the maneuverings of General Charles De Gaulle to ensure that he was recog-

nized by the allies as the leader of a sovereign France. One interesting revelation is that Allied commanders agreed that the French 2nd Armored Division was the best choice of all available French forces to liberate Paris, mainly because it was largely composed of white troops rather than colonials. (pp. 314-15) These considerations are welcome additions to the standard treatments of the Normandy invasion and the campaign for France in 1944. They add depth and complexity to a rich, well considered work that will become one of the definitive treatments of the Normandy campaign and a valuable addition to the growing literature on World War II.

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More than Courage: The Combat History of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment in World War II. By *Phil Nordyke*. Osceola, WI: Zenith Press, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 432.

As the author, Phil Nordyke, notes in his opening paragraph, the subject matter of his latest volume is worthy of special consideration not least because "No American parachute regiment fought as many days or under as many differing circumstances during World War II." (p. 1) A short and pithy introduction confirms from the outset the admiration that Nordyke rightly holds for "some of the toughest, best, most aggressive soldiers that America or any country has ever fielded." (p. 2) Having previously delivered his magisterial history of the 82nd Airborne Division – *All American All the Way: The Combat History of the 82nd Airborne Division in World War II* – which was published in May 2005 (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press), followed by an equally exhaustive photographic history of the same subject [*The All Americans in World War II: A Photographic History of the 82nd Airborne Division at War* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2006)], he turned his attention to unit level studies. The widely-acclaimed *Four Stars of Valor: The Combat History of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment in World War II* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2006) provided a comprehensive account of the wartime role played by the 505th. Now Nordyke has turned his focus to its sister unit, the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), the legendary "devils in baggy pants."

The account begins even before February 1942 and the reactivation of the 82nd Infantry Division, the forerunner of the celebrated "All-American" Division, with descriptions of the young men who had answered the

call for volunteers to fight for their country and the reasons for wanting to become paratroopers. For some, it was seen as being the best way to get into the fight more quickly, others admired the swagger of the airborne troops, the uniform – specifically the shiny boots – drew a good number and, of course, there was also the extra money. Whatever the reason, four weeks of training followed next led by instructors who were "legendary for weeding out those without courage and an iron will to succeed." (p. 10) This all culminated with five qualifying jumps and the successful students graduating as "shiny new wings were pinned to their chest." (p. 12)

Training exercises ceased on 1 April 1943 and the long journey to war began initially by train from Fort Bragg to Camp Edwards. There followed what one of those involved described as "thirteen days of hell" being transported by ship across the Atlantic before the troops reached Casablanca, arriving in the same week as Axis forces in North Africa finally surrendered. Only a few days later, the men of the 82nd Airborne Division began their final leg moving on to Oujda in Algeria where intensive training for a proposed night parachute operation quickly commenced. The initial Allied plan called for both the 504th and 505th Regiments to jump into Sicily on the night before the main amphibious landings took place. Some early coalition differences with their British partners and a more practical issue of a shortage of appropriate aircraft forced changes, as a result of which the 505th Regiment, reinforced by the 3rd Battalion, 504th, secured the accolade of making the first mass combat jump in U.S. military history. (p. 32)

With the conclusion of the account of the Sicily campaign, what follows in the next 337 pages is an absorbing tale best summarized by the author: (p. 407)

> The combat record of the 504th Regimental Combat Team was incredible. It had jumped into Sicily, spearheading the invasion. It had been the first to jump at Salerno, and had stabilized and saved the beachhead there. Company H was awarded the first of four Presidential Unit Citations the regiment would be awarded for its defense of the Chiunzi Pass area as part of the Ranger Force. The 504th RCT went on to fight in the Italian mountains, then came ashore at Anzio, where the 3rd Battalion stopped the breakthrough by the Hermann Göring Panzer Division and was awarded another Presidential Unit Citation. It had jumped in Holland and captured the Grave bridge and the bridge over the Maas-Waal canal. Three days later it made the assault crossing of the Waal River to capture the north ends of the two huge bridges at Nijmegen, in one of the greatest feats of arms of the war. It had fought side-by-side with the 505th in

> Belgium, stopping the three best-equipped and most powerful SS Panzer divisions in the entire German Army. Together with the 325th, it had cracked the Siegfried Line, then defended the western side of the Rhine River, and pushed east of the Elbe River to save Denmark from Russian domination.

As a result of the battering it had taken at Anzio, a notable omission from this long list was Operation OVERLORD, the June 1944 invasion of northern France. General James Gavin, the commander of the 505th, wanted the combat-hardened 504th to jump alongside his men, but he was overruled by the divisional commander, General Matthew Ridgway. (p. 169) A select group of two officers and twenty-four enlisted men drawn from within the regiment's ranks did ultimately jump into Normandy attached to the 507th and 508th PIR pathfinder teams. In addition, Gavin was allowed to select an additional four officers from his sister regiment – picked for their combat experience and reputation for toughness and courage – who accompanied him as part of his staff.

Nearly one hundred pages, or approximately a quarter of the book, are spent recounting the regiment's celebrated role in Operation MARKET GARDEN, the controversial and subsequently much-discussed Allied plan to use airborne forces to end the war in Europe by the end of 1944. The 82nd Airborne Division's focus was the Dutch city of Nijmegen and the immediate surrounding area. The initial inability to capture one of the two key bridges crossing the River Waal continues to be passionately debated and Nordyke offers a fascinating insight into why this happened. (p. 182) He also provides considerable detail about what were perhaps the two key military exploits carried out by the 504th PIR during this operation: the successful *coup de main* strike at the Grave bridge and the assault crossing of the River Waal conducted primarily by the 3rd Battalion commanded by Major Julian Cook (supported by Company C, 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion). Both are discussed with an admirable level of detail and a compelling narrative that engages the reader at every turn. Indeed, the forty-eight-page account of the widely celebrated river crossing almost alone justifies the purchase cost of the book, and not just if you have stood on the north banks of the river looking across its grey, fast-flowing waters and wondered how men could ever be so brave.

One of the great joys of reading this author's work, whether it be the historian whose task is to better educate students in the classroom, the enthusiast preparing to wander the battlefields that provide the storyboard, or the generally interested reader, is the importance he attaches to the testimony of those who were most intimately involved. Whether this be drawn from the many interviews he has conducted himself, the previously privately held papers to which he has gained access, or benefitting from the unparalleled archive that was drawn together by Cornelius

Ryan whilst conducting the research for his many outstanding volumes of wartime study, here is a truly living history. The warning from King Henry V, one of William Shakespeare's greatest warriors, was that "old men forget," but Nordyke has once again presented a veritable *tour de force* based around a framework of testimony – more than 120 accounts in total – whose richness and detail will help ensure that these wartime efforts will remain long remembered.

Having produced two such authoritative and compelling unit histories, in addition to the definitive divisional story, this reader hopes that there is still more to come.

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Crossing the Rhine: Breaking into Nazi Germany, 1944 and 1945 – The Greatest Airborne Battles in History. By *Lloyd Clark*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Cloth. Pp. 415.

The focus of this book is the two Allied airborne operations launched in 1944 and 1945 with the purpose of crossing the Rhine River. The Rhine at this time was not only a formidable natural barrier facing the Allies, it was also a very real psychological barrier and its crossing would drive home to the Germans that the end of the war was rapidly approaching. For this reason, any crossing of this mighty river was bound to be fiercely contested. The two operations examined in *Crossing the Rhine* are the well-known and hotly-debated Operation MARKET GARDEN in Holland in September 1944 and the lesser-known Operation PLUNDER VARSITY, the dropping of two airborne divisions across the Rhine into Germany in late March 1945.

Lloyd Clark, a senior lecturer in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, is rapidly establishing a reputation as one of the United Kingdom's leading military historians. His recent book on Anzio and the battle for Rome was described by Alex Kershaw, no mean military historian himself, as "Lucid … Elegantly written. … Absolutely first class." While this book is certainly a well-written, absorbing narrative of these two airborne operations, it does not reach the standard of Clark's earlier work.

There is much to admire in this book. It is a riveting read from start to finish with the narrative flowing effortlessly from the views and actions

of a Field Marshal and several generals to private paratroopers and everyone in between. The development of the Allies airborne capability is outlined clearly as are their critical strengths and vulnerabilities. The role of the airborne divisions, including those troops borne by glider, in crossing the Rhine is thoroughly examined, although the disaster of MARKET GARDEN is given considerably more prominence than the success of PLUNDER VARSITY. Lloyd Clark is clearly in awe of the Allied paratroopers who jumped in both of these operations. He concludes: (pp. 336-337)

> They were a remarkable group of men carrying out a difficult and dangerous job in trying conditions. Such soldiers were trained to fight for their lives as soon as they reached the ground and recognized that being surrounded by an enemy that outnumbered and outgunned them was a normal state of affairs. Their courage, resourcefulness and professionalism was not diminished, whatever the outcome of their operation.

After reading this book, who could argue with this assessment?

Less satisfying, however, is the lack of balance in *Crossing the Rhine*. In a book whose subtitle states that it is about "the greatest airborne battles in history" it is hard to understand why the parachute drops that launched Operation OVERLORD, the Normandy invasion, are dismissed in two pages. The VARSITY airborne operation to cross the Rhine is described somewhat uncomfortably in the book as "an outrageous success" and as "the most successful airborne operation of the war." VARSITY was actually the smallest of the three airborne operations made in Europe in terms of size and distance travelled and despite coming up against a demoralized, outnumbered, and outgunned enemy, the Allies still suffered heavy losses. Clark is equally dismissive of the fact that the American armies in the south were already well across the Rhine. Indeed, two weeks before the start of PLUNDER VARSITY, the U.S. First Army had captured a major bridge crossing at Remagen and General Patton's Third Army had managed to slip four divisions across the Rhine, even without a bridge.

Then there is the lack of balance in addressing the performances of both Montgomery and Eisenhower. Despite many of those at the sharp end believing that Operation MARKET GARDEN was inspired by Montgomery's ego rather than any strategic necessity – "Field Marshal Montgomery's fiasco," as one British paratrooper referred to it – Clark just cannot bring himself to criticize Montgomery's military performance. Operation MARKET GARDEN, we are informed, "was a risk worth taking," while PLUNDER VARSITY was "justifiably cautious." And despite this caution, "Making an opposed crossing of the River Rhine was a great military examination, and Montgomery passed it."

Such fatuous judgments add little this book. On the other hand, Eisenhower, the reader is repeatedly informed, lacked operational experience and therefore the cautious broad front advance advocated by him, in direct opposition to Montgomery, was obviously flawed. No credit is given to Eisenhower's skills in holding together a vast military coalition made up of very difficult personalities, which was an outstanding achievement. Similarly, the fact that the broad front approach was much less risky than the single thrust advocated by Montgomery and was ultimately successful is ignored.

Despite these faults, Lloyd Clark's book is definitely worth reading. It is a gripping narrative of the airborne role in crossing the Rhine in 1944-45. It also contains many first-hand accounts of what it was like to be a paratrooper or glider-borne infantry dropped miles behind enemy lines where they were expected to have the fight of their lives. Anyone with an interest in airborne operations or the Second World War should read this work.

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Defeat and Triumph: The Story of a Controversial Allied Invasion and French Rebirth. By *Stephen Sussna*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Paper. Pp. 717.

Stephen Sussna offers the reader one of the most comprehensive accounts of events surrounding Operation ANVIL/DRAGOON that perhaps has ever been written. He approaches the subject from three dimensions: the individual, tactical/operational, and strategic perspectives. The lengthy tome covers in detail the Allied landings in southern France on 15 August 1944, a subject often neglected by those wanting to add yet another book to the stacks covering the more well-known Allied D-Day landings in Normandy, France.

From the individual perspective, Sussna recounts the narrative not only as a dispassionate author and researcher, but as an eyewitness as well. Sussna was a sailor on USS *LST-1012* (Landing Ship, Tank) that participated in the operation bringing the invasion force from the Mediterranean to the beaches of the French Riviera near Saint Raphael, France. The LSTs, their commanders, and crew play a central role in his narrative and emerge from the story as the unsung heroes of this historical account.

Sussna has woven the LSTs, along with their development and evolution during World War II, into tactical descriptions of the landing and the difficulties operating these troop ships in a combat zone. Zooming out a bit farther, Sussna describes the operational context of combined naval operations supporting an amphibious assault from the well-established Italian theater to the fast-developing French theater, recently established since the Allied landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944. This former sailor does not stop at the water's edge; he continues to describe the operational events and ground maneuver of the Allied armor and infantry units, as well as their German adversaries deep into the Rhone valley. Sussna manages to convey to the reader the dynamics and details of this operation with great precision and clarity.

This would have been enough for any book on the subject, but Sussna also brings in the strategic context of ANVIL/DRAGOON by offering the reader a look at the fall and rise of France after its ignominious defeat in June 1940. He describes the uncomfortable relations between Charles de Gaulle, Churchill, and Roosevelt as well as the equally uneasy cooperation between the newly-won Vichy allies of North Africa after Operation TORCH and the already-established Free French Forces. Sussna brings out the strategic significance of ANVIL/DRAGOON as the first major operation using a majority of French units and troops and its significance in restoring French morale and pride as liberators of their own homeland. This operation played a significant role in the reestablishment of France, not just as an exiled Allied force, but as an Allied nation that would now take the fight with America and Britain into Germany itself.

As an added bonus, Sussna offers background and biographies of famous minor players like Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of *Le Petit Prince* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1943), and Audie Murphy, who would become a Hollywood actor, and less well known major players like Major General Lucian Truscott Jr., VI Corps commander, and Colonel Robert T. Frederick, commander of the First Special Service Force. The most interesting personal story is of Rear Admiral Don P. Moon, designated as the commander of the forces that would land at Camel Beach, the primary landing area for the whole operation. Rear Admiral Moon, in a story worthy of Greek tragedy, took his own life in what Sussna describes as anguished self-sacrifice exacerbated by a serious head injury, only two weeks prior to Operation ANVIL/DRAGOON.

Perhaps the biggest criticism of the book is that Sussna tries to take on too much. He is able to maneuver surely and steadily to his destination like his beloved LSTs when describing the individual and tactical/operational narratives, full of marvelous details that only a veteran and practitioner would know. However, his weakness is shown as he navigates the deeper waters of the strategic realm. The sections of the book dealing

with France and its national struggle are riddled with factual errors. In just one example, when he discusses France's post war struggle with its collaborationist past, he cites the trial in the 1990s of an M. Papillon. The actual name, easily confirmed, is Maurice Papon. In other sections, he redundantly repeats quotes and passages that had been clearly stated previously, obviously an editing oversight. As it stands, it might have been better if Sussna would have changed the title and introduced France's strategic challenges only in a contextual manner and not as a primary thrust of his book. One can hope that a subsequent edition can clean up these problems so they do not detract from his admirable work.

The only other disappointment I have with Sussna's writing is that he has chosen to hide many of his personal insights and anecdotes in end notes in the back of the book. These eyewitness accounts and stories would only add to the book and bring out more of the individual narrative. Perhaps Sussna's sense of humility causes him to bury these accounts, but at least he has recorded them for posterity and we must be grateful for that.

Sussna does do a fine job in re-energizing the strategic debate on whether the decision of choosing a southern France operation over a Balkans one was a good one. In weighing both sides of the issue, he makes a good case for conducting Operation ANVIL/DRAGOON using the geographical, logistical, political, and military factors at the time. It may not close the debate, but it appears to score a point for the France strategy in its detailed assessment.

The first time I stood on Cap Drammont looking out on the sparkling Mediterranean and the Ile d'Or rising out of the sea as a young university student in the south of France, I only had the most general knowledge of that location and its significance to the monumental events of World War II. In his book, Stephen Sussna offers an in-depth look at extreme heroism and consummate skill of Allied navy, army, air force, special purpose forces, and civilian contributors locked in a common struggle against a desperate and determined foe that led to a successful operation of the European Theater during World War II. We owe him a debt of gratitude for compiling such a comprehensive volume on this subject that includes many eyewitness accounts, not the least of which comes from Sussna himself. Very few World War II veterans are still producing these valuable accounts today. It is with great respect that I recommend this book for those wanting to learn about Operation ANVIL/DRAGOON and the fight for southern France.

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Victory was Beyond Their Grasp: With the 272nd Volks-Grenadier Division from the Hürtgen Forest to the Heart of the Reich. By *Douglas E. Nash*. Bedford, PA: Aberjona Press, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Appendices. Index. Paper. Pp. xv + 373.

Douglas Nash has presented a fascinating small unit study of a German infantry company in action during the last nine months of the Second World War in Europe based on the company's orderly room files that were rediscovered in 1993. The book studies in microcosm the combat history of the 272nd Fusilier Company of the 272nd *Volksgrenadier* ("Peoples' Grenadier") Division from the Hürtgen Forest Campaign of November 1944 to the division's capitulation in the Ruhr and Harz Mountains in April 1945. This unit's orderly company files represent an important archival find and Nash's recreation of the history of the company is of substantial value as it provides a microcosmic view of German infantry in action during the latter stages of the war. The book provides rare insight into the Peoples' Grenadier divisions and their combat performance. The author's central conclusion is that *Volksgrenadier* divisions "never lived up to their expectations." (p. 5)

Nash nicely integrates scholarship with fluid, engaging prose, allowing the author to convey considerable detail in a readable format that illuminates the human dimension of typical German infantry in the latter stages of the war. This makes the work accessible not only to scholars, but to a much broader audience. The study begins with an overview of the rationales and expectations behind the formation of Peoples' Grenadier divisions beginning in late summer 1944. It then explores their activation, equipping, and training. Thereafter, the focus narrows to examine the 272nd Fusilier Company, examining in microcosm how a *Volksgrenadier* division was committed to combat and how it performed. The story presented is a compelling one of a cohesive unit comprised of soldiers committed to defend the Fatherland and each other, but lacking the resources and firepower to do so. It also eloquently illustrates how ceaseless attrition eroded the division's cohesion and combat effectiveness until it completely disintegrated during April 1945.

Undoubtedly, the author's knowledge of the combat history of the 272nd Fusilier Company is unsurpassed. Besides the company records, Nash also interviewed divisional veterans. Moreover, given the numerous memoirs and formation histories of the war on the Eastern Front, Nash presents a valuable and welcome corrective that focuses on German experiences at the small unit level on the Western Front in the last year of the war. It is also refreshing to see an "ordinary" German infantry division examined to balance the general focus on, and interest in, elite German formations. The book is also well supported by good quality maps, photographs of the key personalities involved, as well as useful

notes, and appendices.

The limits of the book lie outside the author's outstanding reconstruction of the history of the 272nd Fusilier Company, amid his efforts to contextualize that history by characterizing the nature, functions, and purpose of the *Volksgrenadier* divisions. This larger discussion of the Peoples' Grenadier divisions and their evolution is less compelling. The author exaggerates the degree of innovation as well as the scope and scale of the organizational changes associated with *Volksgrenadier* divisions. In particular, Nash conflates and condenses changes that were actually part of much longer evolutionary trends of substituting firepower for manpower that occurred over several years. The Peoples' Grenadier division concept thus represented a logical evolution of organizational developments going back to at least 1942, rather than the sudden, sharp innovative break the author suggests.

It is with these larger organizational characterizations where the author is on shakier ground. The author erroneously claims that Peoples' Artillery Corps and Peoples' Rocket Launcher Brigades were formed at the same time as the Peoples' Grenadier divisions (p. 7), whereas in reality these designations did not emerge until later and represented honorific changes in title only rather than modified organizations. Nash's claim that the preceding 1944 pattern infantry divisions retained their structure "until the end of the war" is wrong (p. 7): it is well known that 1945 pattern organizations were introduced during spring 1945 and that many formations either fully or partially restructured during the chaotic last months of the war. *Volksgrenadier* divisions were not the first German infantry divisions to receive National Socialist Leadership Officers as Nash asserts (pp. 10-11): these began to be assigned to divisions in late spring 1944. Nor was the "*freie Gliederung*" (literally "free organization") concept first introduced with the Peoples' Grenadier divisions as the author claims (p. 13), but had existed since 1943 and been officially formalized in early 1944.

Despite these limitations, the core of the work – the reconstruction of the combat history of the 272nd Fusilier Company on the Western Front in 1944-1945 – is a remarkable, fascinating, and highly informative accomplishment. It provides a useful corrective to the fascination with the war in the east and on elite German combat formations. For these reasons, *Victory was Beyond Their Grasp* should be on the shelf of anyone interested in the Western Front, the German Army in the latter stages of the war, combat at the small unit level, or World War II unit histories in general.

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The Minsk Ghetto 1941-1943: Jewish Resistance and Soviet Internationalism. By *Barbara Epstein*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xiv + 352.

Resistance movements face a two-fold task. They must fight against an occupying force clandestinely while being bereft of clear political authority, making any historian's task to explain and analyze them all the more difficult. One must try to ascertain motivations, understand the context, describe with clarity the individuals who comprised and led the movements, and relate how they moved from inchoate ideas to victory. Sources are often scattered or non-existent and witnesses often confuse their memory of events with what occurred. Therefore, those who research and write on resistance movements are up for a supreme challenge. The author provides a well-researched work on the origins, development, internal context, modest successes, and ultimate betrayal by Soviet authorities of the Jewish resistance in Byelorussia during World War II. With an excellent use of the remaining sources, thorough analysis, and a revealing comparison to other ghetto resistance movements, Professor Epstein successfully explains how the Jewish resistance groups in Minsk formed and the role they played.

Highlighting the operational and ideological relationship among the Jewish community and the Communist resistance, Epstein explains that both groups enjoyed an internationalist political framework before the war and fought for its return under German occupation. She convincingly establishes that Byelorussia lacked a coherent nationalist ideology. Such conditions allowed a thriving Jewish community as well as a place for communist doctrine. Therefore, cooperation between Jews in the ghetto and non-Jewish resistance groups found some footing over time when German forces blazed through Minsk and the surrounding region. Such cooperation directly or indirectly enabled the flight of "approximately 10,000 Jews" (p. 260) from the Minsk ghetto, the rise of partisan groups in the region's forests, and a commensurate saving of lives from the Holocaust. Epstein's emphasis on this alliance is not only helpful in understanding the context of the region's resistance during the war, but why Jews are often drawn to communist ideology. As an ethnic identity absent their own state, communism's desire to diminish or destroy nationalist ideologies has an immediate appeal. She includes a comparative final chapter so readers can see how such an environment led to meaningful differences with the other Jewish ghettos in occupied eastern Europe. With this comparative chapter, *The Minsk Ghetto* fills a gap not previously discussed by describing the nature of how that particular ghetto and its inhabitants escaped and resisted instead of remaining in the ghetto and conducting an uprising such as occurred in Warsaw. The reason, Epstein makes clear, was due to the greater sense of community

among Jews and Byelorussians before the war that remained during the fighting, occupation, and Holocaust.

The best of Epstein's sources are former inhabitants of the Minsk ghetto and the region's resistance movements. She lists sixty-three interviews she conducted in Eastern Europe, Israel, and elsewhere. Their personal stories give her work the same personal nuances and strengths for Byelorussia as H.R. Kedward's *In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942-1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) did for France. However, it shares the same weaknesses. Almost no effort is made to validate the claims on what occurred or to provide greater context or certainty. For instance, the approximate number of 10,000 quoted above is from estimates by resistance leaders. Furthermore, there is no description of German and Soviet Army operations that could provide a more comprehensive work on Byelorussia's war. Nevertheless, Epstein reveals an important aspect of World War II in eastern Europe, on the Holocaust, and sheds a great deal of light on the often misunderstood relationship between secular Jews and communist ideology. Scholars of the Second World War, Jewish history, and of the Holocaust will find this work insightful. What her work demonstrates about the nature of human relationships that make resistance a reality is meaningful and revealing.

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To the Gates of Stalingrad: Soviet-German Combat Operations, April-August 1942, The Stalingrad Trilogy, Volume 1. By *David M. Glantz with Jonathan M. House*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Appendix. Index. Cloth. Pp. 678.

To the Gates of Stalingrad is the first volume of *The Stalingrad Trilogy*. The second volume, *Armageddon in Stalingrad: September-November 1942* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009) is also now available, and the third volume (the Red Army counteroffensive in mid-November 1942, its capture of Stalingrad in February 1943, and the temporary restoration of German front lines in late winter 1943) should be released some time in 2010. The fact that this military history was written by Colonel David Glantz, U.S. Army (Ret.), immediately signals to any reader familiar with his numerous other books and articles on the Soviet Armed Forces, and especially the Soviet-German front during the

Second World War (or, as the Russians call it, the Great Patriotic War), that the volume at hand is the result of painstaking research that has been meticulously put together into a work that will be a thorough study of the subject and will challenge current perceptions and opinions on the particular subject matter.

David Glantz is recognized as one of the (if not THE) world's foremost scholar-historians on the subject of the 1941-1945 war between Germany and the Soviet Union, not only by his fellow Western historians, but by Russian and Eastern European historians, scholars, and critics as well. He has earned the respect of all by his objective treatment of historical materials, including primary German and Soviet/Russian sources. With the opening of the military and historical archives, first somewhat during the period of *glasnost'* under Gorbachev, and then even more so following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Glantz has been able to take advantage of the availability of previously classified material, including the General Staff studies of various operations. These materials were never meant for public consumption and so, unlike most of the Soviet assessments of military performance during the Great Patriotic War, which were written as much for their propaganda value (and, during the immediate postwar years, their propagation of the iconography of Stalin as supreme military leader, strategist, and tactician) as for their historical appraisal, they are much more honest in their evaluation of the performance of units and subunits during specific battles and operations. These newly available materials, with their uncompromising look at events from the Soviet viewpoint, provide a counterbalance to German first-hand analyses that, in many cases, were the only eyewitness accounts available before the opening of the Russian archives, and allow for a reinterpretation of events.

Even before opening *To the Gates of Stalingrad* to the preface, the reader should take a look at the bibliography, endnotes, and table of contents to get an idea of the quality of the volume before him/her. The selected bibliography lists forty-three primary (Russian- and German-language) sources, including both German and Soviet combat journals. Several of the Russian primary sources are from the above-mentioned declassified materials, including the Collection of Military-Historical Materials from the Great Patriotic War [*Sbornik voenno-istoricheskikh materialov Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny*], the Soviet General Staff studies. There are ninety pages of endnotes, many of them explanatory, including short biographical sketches of both Soviet and German unit commanders. From the table of contents the reader can see that there are twenty-three tables that in an easy-to-read format provide the reader with, among other things, the compositions of both sides' forces and their correlations, as well as force dispositions, at various stages of various battles leading up to Stalingrad.

Finally, there are the carefully reproduced maps, which deserve special mention. There are eighty-seven situational maps, which, taking into account that there are 486 pages of text, averages to one map for approximately every 5-6 pages. This is noteworthy in and of itself; however, if one takes into account that there are thirty-four pages of photographs throughout the book, twenty-one pages of conclusions at the end of most of the chapters (that do not require additional maps for reference), and the last 13-page chapter, an assessment of German strategic misconceptions, that also does not require additional maps for reference, then the reader will find that there is actually one map for approximately every 4-5 pages of text. I have chosen to focus on this particular aspect because there is nothing more frustrating than reading about troop movements through and battles in and around towns and villages without being able to visualize the spatial context unless the reader is intimately familiar with the specific geographic region of the activity. Glantz's numerous detailed maps allow the reader to literally follow along with his descriptions of the action without having to retrace steps through previously read material in order to hopefully find a map that is appropriate to the situation being described.

Turning to the content of the volume itself, the reader will note that in the preface, Glantz and House anticipate that, "[G]iven the millions of words written on this subject in dozens of languages, a reader's first question might well be…whether there is anything new to say about the matter." The authors respond that, because much about this battle has been ignored or misunderstood, there are a number of reasons why a new study is justified, including the following:

1. There is a need to examine the campaign as a whole (May 1942-March 1943) to understand the battle for Stalingrad in its proper context: the city itself was not the original objective of the campaign, but rather it was the oil fields in the Caucasus region, "a goal that consumed so many troops and supplies that the German attackers lacked the combat power to take and hold the city."

2. The fighting in Stalingrad cannot be considered in a vacuum as an isolated activity; it is imperative that one examine the fighting that took place on the road to Stalingrad. The "peripheral" fighting, in fact, "sapped the German forces' energy and resources," practically exhausting German Sixth Army before it even reached the city.

3. Newly-available Soviet materials, both declassified archival materials and fresh, detailed, candid accounts of the fighting by a new generation of Russian historians, "unfettered from the restraints and shibboleths of former Soviet times," describe the campaign in detail that was previously unknown in Soviet historiography. The declassified daily Soviet records of the battle are now compared with their German counterparts, shedding new light on the course of the battle that, in fact, turns

out to be quite different from what has been written in most previous military histories.

With regard to the first two points, the significance of what led up to the battle for Stalingrad is underscored by the fact that the entire first volume of this trilogy takes the reader only "to the gates of Stalingrad." Indeed, while focusing on the operational and tactical levels of the campaign, Glantz frequently reminds us of the importance of the entire strategic context as well. For example, in addition to extended German logistics lines, in some cases beyond the breaking point, and the irreversible attrition of German forces fighting their way to Stalingrad, Hitler was also forced to focus on the anticipated opening of a second Allied front in the West. Forces (especially air forces) that could have been sent to the Eastern Front in support of the units already there were instead diverted to the West. The reader is also never allowed to forget that what seemed to be remarkably swift advances on the part of the German forces were accomplished at a cost of lives and materiel that were not easily replaced. How often did a successful German tank advance have to be halted because all fuel had been exhausted? On the Soviet side, the poor command, control, and communications that often plagued units, sometimes leading to heavy personnel losses and the decimation of entire armies, was offset by the seemingly endless reserve of replacements: it seemed that for every Soviet army destroyed, another one was immediately created to take its place. Regardless of how poorly trained the soldiers and how poorly organized the units, they fought fiercely, exacting a heavy toll on the German forces.

Glantz's detailed day-by-day description of the events is gleaned from the daily combat reports and assessments from both sides, as well as recollections written years later by Soviet and German commanders who participated in these events, always keeping in mind, however, that such memoirs can be clouded by the effects of time and self-servicing aims. Reading these descriptions and following them on the maps that have been provided brings life to these events; one can envisage the daily, and sometimes even hourly, movement of Soviet and German units over the terrain, the clashes and battles, the advances and retreats.

Glantz also objectively examines the detailed command practices of both Stalin and Hitler. Stalin virtually stifled any initiative on the part of all of his commanders (memories of the recent purges of military leaders were still fresh, and often political representatives of the General Staff [*Stavka*] were sent to the units to see that Stalin's orders were carried out to the letter); nevertheless, at times he did come up with acceptable and suitable decisions. However, because he often was not aware of the immediate situation due to poor (or complete lack of) communications, the orders issued by the *Stavka* sometimes had simply been overtaken by events before they reached the appropriate commanders. Similarly,

Hitler sometimes lost the strategic overview (see especially Chapter 10, "German Strategic Misconceptions") and disregarded the recommendations of his commanders in the field and even his closest advisors. Equating the rapid advance of German forces toward Stalingrad with the early German victories at the onset of the 1941 invasion, Hitler seemed to forget the costly Soviet counteroffensives that followed in winter 1941-1942. He lost track of the main objective, the oil fields of the Caucasus, in favor of the propaganda value of the capture of "Stalin's city."

There is one minor comment regarding the structure of the first volume's one appendix, "The Experiences of the Commanders of Tank Armies and Tanks Corps Assigned to Briansk, Southwestern, Southern, and Crimean Fronts and the *Stavka* Reserve from 1 May to 1 July 1942 and Stalingrad Front on 1 August 1942." The generals are listed by front and then subordinate tank army or tank corps. It might have been easier for the reader to reference these individuals if the commanders were simply listed in alphabetical order (with reference to their specific front and army or corps), especially since a biographical sketch of most of these commanders appears in the notes that reference the context of the specific tank armies and tank corps during their operations.

To the Gates of Stalingrad is a remarkable introduction to the events leading up to the battle for Stalingrad. One cannot imagine finding a work where these events are examined in greater detail or more objectively. The quality of the scholarship manifest in this first volume of *The Stalingrad Trilogy* allows this reviewer to state without any reservations that this trilogy not only will be a seminal work on the Battle of Stalingrad, but it is also poised to become the definitive study on this subject.

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Operation Jedburgh: D-Day and America's First Shadow War. By *Colin Beavan*. New York: Penguin, 2007. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Paper. Pp. xxviii + 401.

The Jedburghs were teams of three paramilitaries, usually French, American, and British, who were inserted into German-occupied France during and after D-Day. Their task was to liaise with the local resistance organizations, coordinate operations, provide a wireless link to England, and harass the enemy until the Allies liberated the area.

The Jeds, as they were known, fought in uniform, but could expect no mercy if captured, and are generally recognized as having made a significant contribution to the secret war, with the same tactics adopted later

in Norway and the Far East. Trained at Milton Hall, in Leicestershire, organized by Special Operations Executive (SOE), and directed by Special Forces Headquarters, the Jed concept was entirely novel and proved very successful, as Colin Beavan has now described in *Operation Jedburgh*. His is a comprehensive account of the Jeds from their inception in March 1943 through to the very last operations in France, but stops short of covering the later air-drops in south-east Asia.

Beavan's research of his chosen subject is fine, but the moment he strays from the topic he finds himself in trouble, as becomes clear in his preface when two of his assertions need to be challenged. His first concerns his statement that David Schorr, a CBS television journalist, in 1975 had alleged that the CIA "might have been involved in the assassination of foreign leaders," and then, after the Pike and Church committee investigations, had "confirmed Schorr's allegations" had been proved correct. In reality, the Congressional inquiries concluded that the CIA had not assassinated a single foreign leader. Equally puzzling is the author's extraordinary remark that during the Cold War "Soviet tanks never even rumbled outside their Eastern bloc territory." This will come as a surprise to his readers with a knowledge of Hungarian, Polish, Afghan, or Czech history.

Another flaw in Beavan's narrative is his understanding of SOE and its origins, observing that the organization had been created by Winston Churchill in May 1940 in an act of "sheer desperation" when the "British government secretly panicked." Indeed, the author claims that the War Cabinet asked: "should we admit defeat and sue for peace?" Could any of this be true? Actually, SOE was created in July 1940 on the recommendation of Neville Chamberlain, and it was never intended to engage in intelligence collection, so it is surely inappropriate to keep referring to "the spymasters of SOE." If there is a Cabinet minute in existence suggesting Churchill's administration was ever in a state of panic, it ought to be produced, but absent any supporting documentation, Beavan's characterization is simply his opinion, clumsily worded to suggest fact, and totally unsupportable.

To illustrate and explain SOE's mission, the author has chosen to retell the story of Odette Sansom, one of the best-known women agents sent to France who was arrested, imprisoned, but survived the war to receive an award for her undoubted gallantry. However, Odette remains a controversial figure both in terms of the circumstances of her capture by the Germans, and her subsequent treatment at their hands. She was not caught as she "slept in her bed" in St. Jorioz, and did not lose "all ten of her toenails," but Beavan has opted not to delve into these issues, and instead has simply repeated uncritically one version of her story. This is relevant to the remainder of the book only because it is a manifestation of the author's fundamental lack of understanding about SOE which, he

mentions, made three major contributions to the successful prosecution of the war. The three successes he cites are often quoted, but upon close scrutiny, all appear either worthless or counter-productive. The three are the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the sabotage of the Gorgopotamus bridge, and the destruction of the Norsk Hydro. Actually, the death of the *Reich Protektor* in Prague unleashed predictably furious retribution from the Nazis, including the razing of Lidice, while the attack on the Greek railway viaduct happened so late as to have no impact on Rommel's campaign in North Africa, and the proposition that the interruption of the supply of Norwegian heavy water effectively ended the German "atomic bomb program' is a nothing more than a popular misconception.

Accordingly, one is left with the impression that Beavan has produced a very worthwhile study of the Jeds, but the moment he ventures into other fields, including SOE and its relationship with OSS, he has stepped too far.

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Preserving the Flame. By *Colin Burbidge*. London: YouWriteOn.com, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Paper. Pp. 91.

In November 1944, one of the many Nazi atrocities of World War II was committed at Gaggenau in the Vosges with the murder of an entire Jedburgh team. The "Jeds," as they were known, were paramilitaries dropped into France in uniform during and after D-Day to arm and organize local resistants. The three-man Jed led by Captain Eric Gough landed on 13-14 August 1944 and quickly linked up with the *maquis*, but within three days, the Germans were in pursuit, and eventually he would be taken prisoner a couple of months later.

The circumstances of Gough's capture, sometime in late October, and his ultimate fate, was one of dozens of investigations conducted by a war crimes unit, which attempted to discover what had happened to the more than thirty Special Forces personnel who had fallen into the enemy's hands, never to be seen again. The suspicion was that the Nazis had not only taken ruthless reprisals on the local civilian population, but had murdered all the Special Air Service troopers and officers that had been captured during Operation LOYTON, the regiment's most disastrous venture behind enemy lines.

The truth, which would only emerge after a lengthy and determined investigation conducted by two SAS officers, Colonel Brian Franks and

Major Eric Barkworth, after the regiment officially had been disbanded, was that the Nazis had killed their prisoners, including some evading U.S. airmen, in accordance with Hitler's notorious order in October 1942 that all enemy parachutists and Commandos should be executed without the trial that international law required even for spies. The men responsible for the deaths were convicted in 1946, and several were sentenced to death after proper courts had heard the most harrowing and detailed evidence, much of it gathered by Franks and Barkworth. Colin Burbidge relies heavily on this testimony and on trial transcripts, without elaboration, and their impact is chilling.

Incredibly, through a bureaucratic muddle, some of those convicted of murder, including an officer found responsible for seventy-eight deaths, had their sentences commuted to terms of imprisonment. So many different War Crimes commissions were keen to try the prisoners that some of those who had been living under a death sentence for more than two years escaped the hangman.

This grisly story is brought together by Victor Gough's nephew, Colin Burbidge, who has researched his all too slim book with great care and created a compelling account of military failure, wretched cruelty, and bungled prosecutions. His book makes for uncomfortable reading, as he documents the hideous nature of the crimes committed, the apparent lack of enthusiasm on the part of the French to trace the criminals, the inhumanity of the treatment received by the prisoners briefly accommodated at the Natzweiler concentration camp before their murder, and the curious experience of Gough's wireless operator, Sergeant Kenneth Seymour, who survived the horrors of captivity and a death march only to be accused of having assisted his captors. He died without providing any useful information to his interrogators, and Burbidge is rightly skeptical of his version of events, contradicted by the testimony of those who questioned him, but no action was taken against him.

This is an unedifying incident, but so are the others: the deliberately burned semi-naked bodies thrown into bomb craters to make identification more difficult; the betrayal of Allied soldiers by a Catholic priest; the summary executions; the privations endured by the inmates of Natzweiler and its equally horrific satellite camps. Perhaps above all, the lack of remorse of the contemptuous perpetrators of these offenses.

Preserving the Flame contains enough clues for a dozen other books, and it seems that one of the trails left to others concerns the claims of another author, Peter Mason, who later alleged that he had wandered across Germany after the war with a brief from the SAS to issue summary justice to those implicated in the LOYTON fiasco. Is Mason to be believed? Alas, Burbidge does not tell us, but there is plenty of room for a sequel.

The scale of the tragedy that befell the men who parachuted into the

Vosges in 1944 is appalling, as is the classic defense deployed by the enemy soldiers who so maltreated them. Curiously, one of them himself would find himself in German captivity, accused of abandoning weapons, and he befriended Gough who entrusted him with his silk escape map. Thus, in the midst of a very dirty, savage war, some common decency manifested itself between foes.

Burbidge's account is entirely free of sentimentality (and an index), although it is clear that his quest must have been at times painful. Not everyone was complimentary about his uncle's performance, and the fact that the author has offered a "warts and all" picture demonstrates his commitment to presenting the entire, unvarnished episode, however disagreeable. Few emerge with much credit apart from the tenacious SIS officers who were relentless in their search for as much of the truth as they could extract from witnesses in the chaos of postwar Europe. This is a story of the realities of para-military operations conducted with an ill-disciplined, often unreliable French resistance, devoid of the romanticism often associated with the personal memoirs of SOE gallantry, and as an authentic, well-researched document, it is highly recommended.

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Bader's War: 'Have a Go at Everything'. By *S.P. MacKenzie*. Stroud: Spellmount, 2008. Illustrations. Map. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 192.

S.P. MacKenzie is undoubtedly an excellent scholar. His previous books, particularly *The Battle of Britain on Screen: 'The Few' in British Film and Television Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); *British War Films, 1939-1945* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2001); and *The Colditz Myth: British and Commonwealth Prisoners of War in Nazi Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) masterfully analyzed the cultural mythology embedded within media representations of key Allied actions of the Second World War. I therefore had a sense of excited anticipation that his biography of Royal Air Force ace Douglas Bader would say something new and illuminating about the man whose legend remains powerfully evocative, beyond all others, at the Royal Air Force College, from which Bader graduated in 1930 and of which I currently have the honor of being Dean.

Unfortunately, MacKenzie's biography left me a little unsatisfied. No-one can fault his industrious and thorough research, which exploits a rich cache of previously unknown or ignored archival sources and plucks shining gems from memoirs and contemporary newspapers. This is un-

doubtedly the best researched Bader biography yet written. My disappointment stems from the very traditional approach to biography adopted by the author, which chronicles Bader's life from cradle to grave. Whereas many of the best biographies nowadays adopt a thematic approach, this one sticks with chronology as its framework. It is not even a "life and times" biography, which constantly places the subject in wider cultural, social, and political contexts. It is the straight-forward "life of" an aviator who is most famous for refusing to let his severe disability – the loss of his legs in a flying accident – prevent him from enjoying a successful and high-profile career.

Especially given that scholarly opinion has swung in favor of Sir Hugh Dowding and Sir Keith Park and their handling of the Battle of Britain, I would have enjoyed reading more analysis of Bader's role in Trafford Leigh-Mallory's unfortunate advocacy of "Big Wing" tactics. MacKenzie narrates Bader's activities in support of Leigh-Mallory, but inadequately explains them. Actually, although he describes most key actions and decisions interestingly and accurately, he explains few of them fully and meaningfully. This leaves me knowing little more about Bader's motivations, aspirations, fears, and anxieties, and even about his ideas on air power, than I did before reading this handsome and well-illustrated book.

MacKenzie would have strengthened his treatment of Bader's wartime activities if he had strayed occasionally from his narrative to engage more directly with the ever-blossoming debates over strategy and operations in which air power scholars have engaged in recent decades. MacKenzie is not alone in sticking rigidly to the narrative while telling the story of a famous Royal Air Force icon. Vincent Orange has adopted a similar straight-forward approach to Tedder, Dowding, Park, Coningham, and others. They are also fine books, as far as they go. MacKenzie's book is as well researched and written as Orange's and will surely garner a similar-sized readership. I simply do not think that many professional military educators – at officer cadet colleges and staff colleges, for example – will feature in that readership.

I am not suggesting that MacKenzie's treatment is hagiographic. He makes it clear that, whilst undeniably a hero in the minds of many wartime Britons, Bader was not a particularly likeable fellow. He was always arrogant, frequently boorish, and sometimes unfairly aggressive. Yet, were his traits and behavior essential in an air hero? Were they shared by other British aces? Were they like or unlike the aces of the opposition? MacKenzie does not tell us.

Despite my observations, I am sure that many people will enjoy this book. They probably will not be scholars, but rather the many enthusiastic "buffs" who, thank goodness, help to keep alive the memories of our valiant forebears whose sacrifices won us the freedoms we now enjoy.

With the hundredth anniversary of Bader's birth approaching, this book will doubtless provide readers with an accurate and interesting introductory sketch of his life.

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Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: The Dire Warning. By *John Lukacs*. New York: Basic Books, 2008. Cloth. Pp. 147.

The public's fascination with Winston Churchill shows no signs of abating, and no period of his long career has attracted more attention than the spring and summer of 1940. John Lukacs, the author of two previous books focusing on the early months of Churchill's wartime premiership, turns his attention in this new volume to Churchill's speech of 13 May 1940, best remembered for the phrase "blood, toil, tears and sweat."

Churchill delivered this speech, his first as prime minister, in the British House of Commons only days after Germany began its assault on France and the Low Countries. The popular view of this period is that Churchill's orations immediately galvanized the British people. But Lukacs reminds us that this speech had little immediate impact, either in Parliament or on the country at large. At the time, Churchill was still regarded with mistrust by many members of his own party; their most enthusiastic response in the House of Commons that day was reserved for the recently-ousted Neville Chamberlain. Few Britons even heard Churchill deliver his now-famous address: its text was read that evening on the radio by a BBC announcer. Mass Observation polls did not detect any upsurge in the nation's spirits. Morale was not yet even a problem, as the British people remained optimistic about events in France at this early stage of the campaign. Lukacs is nevertheless impressed with this speech. He applauds Churchill for acknowledging the dangers Britain faced, and for his confidence that the public would not be disheartened by bad news and calls for sacrifice. No other politician, in his opinion, would have spoken so openly or so effectively.

Lukacs concedes that Churchill's next major speeches – particularly the "finest hour" speech of 18 June, which was delivered both in Parliament and over the BBC – made a stronger impression on the British public at the time of their delivery. But he maintains that their real impact is best viewed as cumulative, not instant. It was not till the autumn of 1940, he notes, that Churchill's words had been circulated widely and began to reverberate in print throughout the English-speaking world.

This book makes a useful contribution to the growing literature on the myths surrounding Churchill's wartime leadership, but readers should not expect too much from this slender volume. The author has clearly exhausted the "blood, toil, tears and sweat" speech by the book's midpoint, and the remaining pages lack a clear sense of direction. Lukacs outlines Churchill's accomplishments during 1940, paying particular attention to his refusal to negotiate with Nazi Germany following the Fall of France, but even though this material is written in the author's usual lively style and will probably appeal to the casual reader, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that most of it is simply "filler."

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America's Pursuit of Precision Bombing, 1910-1945. By *Stephen L. McFarland*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2008. Illustrations. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Paper. Pp. xviii + 312.

When designing heavy bombers, aeronautical engineers face two major challenges. The first is the need to ensure penetration – the ability to fly through defended enemy airspace, reach the target and return with "acceptable losses." To effectively meet this challenge, design engineers must solve problems of range, combat ceiling, defensive armament, passive defensive systems such as armor and self-sealing fuel tanks, as well as navigational equipment requirements for variable weather conditions in both day or night operations. The second great challenge is the need to destroy the target once the bomber has reached it. This challenge demands that designers account for bomb-load and accuracy. Accuracy can be further subdivided into requirements of the bombing platform – the bomber itself – as well as delivery methods such as level or dive bombing. The final accuracy requirement is the aiming mechanism, most notably the bombsight as enhanced by autopilot, radar, or other technologies.

Stephen L. McFarland's superb work, *America's Pursuit of Precision Bombing, 1910-1945* (first published in 1995 by the Smithsonian Institution Press), focuses, as its title suggests, on the accuracy challenge faced by aeronautical engineers from earliest flight to the end of World War II. In so doing, McFarland has written what many believe to be the foundational work on this topic – an issue of great interest for both historians of the development of aviation as well as the air war of World War II. In eleven short chapters comprising some 206 pages, McFarland deftly

walks the reader through the technical challenges and engineering solutions germane to precision aerial bombardment. Yet, he tackles this highly technical subject matter in a way that makes it accessible to the layman without diluting the immense difficulties faced by design engineers, most especially during the critical interwar years.

McFarland's work is greatly enhanced by the fact that he approaches the concept of precision bombardment holistically – examining the challenge of precision aerial bombardment not merely from the technical perspective, but also in the context of the development of the Army Air Force's doctrine as that combat arm sought to become an independent service. Moreover, he also includes in his analysis the influences of enemy countermeasures on the pursuit of precision as Germany and Japan adapted to the threat of strategic aerial bombardment during World War II. As a consequence of this approach, McFarland is able to establish how interwar theory was modified by wartime praxis, providing the reader with the most important historical lesson of all – that in combat the enemy always gets a vote.

In Chapter One, McFarland uses the experiences of the U.S. Air Service in World War I to introduce the reader to the theoretical challenges the bombardier must account for to place his bomb on the target. To compute the proper release point of the bomb, the bombardier must know the time of fall of the bomb. This requires him to know not only his altitude and groundspeed – factors over which the pilot has control – but also the direction and speeds of the winds and density of the air through which the bomb(s) will fall at various altitudes until it reaches the ground. The higher the release point, the longer time of fall and, hence, the more time for wind or increasingly dense air to deflect the bomb from the bombardier's intended trajectory. Moreover, the bombardier had to compute for a release point on the assumption that the bomber would be perfectly level at the moment of release. Any shift in any of the three axes upon which an aircraft may move – pitch, roll, and yaw – and the bomb may miss the target by a wide margin. Indeed, as McFarland notes, a roll of only two degrees at 10,000 feet would cause the bomb to miss left or right by 350 feet.

Given all of these variables, it would seem a miracle that the bombardier could hit anything smaller than a city from high altitude. Indeed, one of the two great lessons of WWI bombing, according to McFarland, is greater bombing accuracy was largely dependent upon better stabilization of the bomber, especially as enemy anti-aircraft artillery developments during the war compelled ever higher bombing altitudes. The second great lesson is that bombing would never achieve its full potential without a coherent plan or doctrine for airpower.

Chapters Two and Three examine the evolution of airpower doctrine as it emerged from the Air Corps Tactical School, which, in turn, provid-

ed technical requirements for bombing aircraft and, of course, bombsights. It is here we learn of the competition between two great engineering minds – Elmer Sperry and Carl Norden – as they sought to resolve the problems of aerial bombardment. Both gentlemen were well aware of the fact that the principle issues being faced were the need for a stabilized bombing platform and an accurate bombsight. Regarding the first issue, Sperry initially took the lead with his design of an autopilot system capable of keeping the aircraft in level flight better and longer than could most human pilots – especially when being shot at by ground artillery or aerial interceptors. Norden, however, understood that the issue of stabilizing the bomber in level flight and on the correct course over the ground was also a factor of coordination and communication between the pilot and the bombardier. To resolve this, Norden integrated the autopilot with his now famous Norden bombsight permitting the bombardier to actually "fly" the bomber – making small, necessary corrections for drift – while on the bomb run. In so doing, the Norden bombsight was actually more accurate at 10,000 feet altitude than the Sperry C-4 bombsight at 5,000 feet.

But if the technology was beginning to make it possible to dramatically improve accuracy, the question now became was it accurate enough for the way airpower would be used in the coming war? It is this question that McFarland examines in Chapters Four and Five. Interestingly, McFarland concludes that the accuracy was simply insufficient to support U.S. Air Corps strategic bombing doctrine. He comes to this conclusion by examining accuracies achieved in peacetime bombing training using the Norden bombsight at altitudes of 10,000 and 15,000 feet – more than two miles lower than the 25,000 to 30,000 feet altitudes required over the heavily-defended skies of Germany – coupled with the lethal radius and bomb-damage craters caused by bombs up to 2,000-pounds. What is clearly seen is less-than-promising for the doctrine of precision, daylight aerial bombardment.

While accuracy improved from an average radial error of 410 feet in 1935 to 235 feet in 1938 when dropping on a well-marked training target in clear weather from 15,000 feet, the maximum crater of a 2,000-pound bomb was fifty feet in diameter and maximum lethal radius was 125 feet. Moreover, the vast majority of the bombs dropped by the 8th Air Force over Germany in World War II were 250- and 500-pound bombs, the latter having a maximum crater of twenty feet and a lethal radius of ninety feet. In combat conditions wherein the precise atmospheric conditions were not known and visibility often less than ideal, hitting within twenty feet of a "vital target" from 30,000 feet was nearly impossible.

The Air Corps, of course, understood these issues very well in the late 1930s, but their enthusiasm for a doctrine that would justify an independent air force coupled with an abiding faith in the continued improve-

ment of technology permitted these bomber proponents to continue to forge ahead, despite the known inability to achieve the "pickle barrel" accuracies often discussed on the Air Staff and in bombardier schools. This blind faith and wishful thinking affected prewar planning estimates for bomb tonnages required to destroy specific "vital targets." McFarland notes, for instance, that prewar planning expected that it would take only nine 300-pound bombs to destroy a target the size of the Sault Ste. Marie locks between Michigan and Ontario. The fallacy of these planning factors would be painfully learned at the cost of heavy bomber and aircrew losses in 1943 and 1944 over Germany. Indeed, a similar sized target to the Sault Ste. Marie locks – the Leuna synthetic oil works – would require 85,074 bombs over multiple missions to effectively destroy it.

In Chapter Six, McFarland discusses the alternative to high altitude, level bombing that had been heavily endorsed by the U.S. Navy – namely, dive bombing. Indeed, the Navy had clearly established that dive bombing was by far more accurate against small, moving targets than level bombing. The Air Corps, already suspicious of the technique, rejected dive bombing after the disastrous showing of German JU-87 *Stuka* dive bombers against modern, land-based air defenses during the Battle of Britain. Besides, strategic targets – factories, assembly plants, oil facilities etc. – are large and do not move. By 1940, the Air Corps was convinced that strategic bombing could only be done from high altitude and in level flight.

In Chapters Seven and Eight, McFarland discusses the immense difficulties of force development and procurement for war. It is here we learn that the Norden bombsight does not easily lend itself to mass production. Firstly, the Norden bombsight was, until the Manhattan Project that produced the atomic bomb, one of the most important and secret military projects under development as the war began. These security concerns made assembly-line mass production problematic. Moreover, this bombsight was actually an analog computer system involving the marriage of twenty-three specialized and intricate components that required very highly-trained technicians to assemble correctly. Finally, and ironically, the Norden bombsight was designed for the U.S. Navy and inter-service rivalries resulted in the Navy getting first "dibs" on all production. This often left the Army Air Force with less than fifty percent of its needed bombsights while the Navy – relying primarily on dive bombing – placed Norden bombsights in storage far from active combat theaters. A second ironic twist of fate is that by the time these production and inter-service rivalry issues were resolved in mid-1943, combat experience dramatically reduced the Army Air Forces' need for these bombsights (see below).

If production was a bottleneck, so too was the training of bom-

bardiers. In Chapter Nine McFarland adds the human component to the issue of precision bombardment. Second only to the pilot, the bombardier required the most training of any crew member. Not only did he have to learn the intricacies of bomb aiming and the care and feeding of the various bombsights he may have to use, he was, in nearly every bomber he would serve in, the nose gunner as well. Hence, the bombardier also had to be trained as an aerial gunner. Finally, they were also the security officer for the Norden bombsight. Every mission in which they were used required a long walk under armed escort as they checked out their Norden bombsight from the security vaults where they were stored and maintained. Every bombardier was required to know precisely where to fire three .45-caliber rounds to effectively destroy the mechanism to prevent its capture and use by the enemy.

It is in Chapters Ten and Eleven that we see the Norden bombsight in combat over Germany and Japan respectively. The ultimate irony is, as mentioned above, that by the time Norden bombsight production was sufficient to meet requirements, the demand for them rapidly faded away. The reasons why are relatively simple – as previously noted, the enemy always gets a vote. By mid-1943, bomber losses were so heavy that the 36-bomber formations that were expected to be sufficiently powerful they could fend off intercepting fighters were increased to 63-bomber combat boxes. These large formations made it dangerous and unnecessary for every bombardier to aim his own bomb load. It was dangerous since theoretically every bombardier was seeking the same release point – which would undoubtedly result in bomber collisions or bombers flying through the falling bombs of those in formation above them. It was unnecessary because, by mid-1943, it was admitted that from 30,000 feet what was needed was not the Norden "rifle," but a shotgun to hit the target.

As a result of this, the Army Air Forces adopted "area bombing" by late 1943. In area bombing, the entire formation dropped on the lead bombardier, covering the target with a "carpet" of bombs – some of which would undoubtedly fall on the designated target. Since only the lead bombardier, and perhaps one or two back-ups, required the Norden bombsight, by late 1943 the vast majority of all B-17s and B-24s flying over Germany carried no bombsight at all. This situation is repeated when LeMay reaches the Pacific in March 1945. Frustrated by the poor showing of high-altitude bombardment over Japan, LeMay switches to low altitude – 8,000 feet – fire bombing raids, wherein accuracy is simply not an issue. The advent of the atomic bomb further reduced the need for precision bombardment against "soft" targets such as cities, industrial facilities, and so on.

Still, the seeds of the precision seen over the skies of Iraq during Desert Storm were sown in the 1920s and 1930s and the Norden bomb-

sight offered perhaps the best opportunity to realize the airpower proponents' dream of decisively winning a war from the air. McFarland briefly explores this in his Epilogue, wherein he notes the Norden was used in Vietnam – well into the nuclear era.

If there is any drawback to this outstanding work, it is McFarland's failure to address the development of guided bombs during World War II. Every B-17 coming off the assembly line by February 1943 was designed as a cruise missile bomber – capable of dropping glide bombs or, ultimately, jet bombs. Moreover, most were also capable of carrying vertical bombs, such as the VB-1 AZON, which saw such success over Burma in the waning days of the war.

These concerns aside, however, McFarland's *America's Pursuit of Precision Bombing, 1910-1945* is an essential read for anyone having an interest in the war in the air during World War II. It is an exhaustively researched work relying very heavily on archival sources and materials. Moreover, the five appendices are an outstanding source of material not easily found in other works on the subject. No airpower enthusiast's or military historian's bookshelf is complete without this exceptional work – a book that sets the standards for the subject of precision bombardment and will undoubtedly become a classic.

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Ki-43 Oscar Aces of World War 2. By *Hiroshi Ichimura*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Paper. Pp. 96.

Compared to its more famous stable mate, the Imperial Japanese Navy's A6M "Zero" fighter, the Ki-43 fighter of the Imperial Japanese Army Air Force (IJAAF) has received relatively little coverage in the literature. The Ki-43, codenamed "Oscar" by the Allies, and called "*Hayabusa*" (Peregrine Falcon) by the Japanese, was the IJAAF's standard fighter during the early and mid-parts of the war. As the author points out, the Ki-43 was the more famous fighter during the war to the Japanese public and was responsible for 50% of all claims made by Japanese pilots during World War II. This title in Osprey's *Aircraft of the Aces* series begins to address the imbalance of coverage between the Zero and the Oscar.

The Ki-43 was the replacement for the Ki-27, a much-loved fighter renowned for its maneuverability. Japanese pilots were not keen on exchanging their Ki-27s for the much larger Ki-43, especially after wing

failure problems were encountered with the first series production aircraft of the new fighter. Nevertheless, the IJAAF pressed ahead with this high-priority conversion with the first Ki-43s entering service in November 1941. By the start of the war, two *sentai* (regiments) had been converted. These two *sentai*, the 59th and 64th, were quickly committed to action over Malaya against Royal Air Force Buffalo and Hurricane aircraft. For the cost of seventy-three aircraft lost, the two *sentai* performed well and played a key role in the early successes of the IJAAF over Malaya, Sumatra, and Java.

The author does a good job reconciling Japanese claims with Allied records during his coverage of the Malayan and Dutch East Indies campaigns. The problems of the early Ki-43s are well-detailed, including frail construction leading to wing failure and an overall weak armament exacerbated by gun jamming and premature exploding 12.7mm rounds. What the author does not do, and what is seldom addressed in the Osprey *Aircraft of the Aces* series, is discuss the technical strengths and weaknesses of the aircraft and the tactics employed to emphasize the aircraft's strengths or hide its weaknesses. These are hinted at throughout the book, but never treated in a concerted manner.

The Ki-43 is best known – if it is known at all by many Western readers – for its central role in the air combat over Burma from early 1942 into 1945. Initially, the Ki-43 faced the RAF and the P-40s of the American Volunteer Group (AVG). The 64th *Sentai* was the first to take the Ki-43 into combat over Burma. Generally, the Ki-43 acquitted itself well in this theater, though the level of combat and of losses on both sides was relatively low. For example, according to the author, from March to June 1942, eleven Ki-43s were lost (ten to the AVG), and in return, ten Allied aircraft were lost. Later in 1942, the 64th *Sentai* was equipped with the new Ki-43-II model, which had two 12.7mm cannon (still woefully under-armed by Western standards). The Ki-43-II also introduced rubber-coated fuel tanks and pilot armor, self-protection features unknown to the Zero fighters of the day. The latest version of the Oscar also addressed the wing failure problem.

For the start of the 1943 campaign in Burma, the 64th *Sentai* was joined by the 50th. In March and April, the Japanese shot down nineteen RAF fighters for the loss of no Japanese fighters. However, the Ki-43 now had to contend with another, tougher adversary. The U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) was now present in strength and began to employ the B-24 bomber on strategic missions in the theater, principally targeting Rangoon. The large, well-armed bombers were able to operate with near impunity against the weakly-armed Ki-43s. Only in November 1943 did losses to the B-24s make the Americans stop unescorted raids. But, in that same month, the P-51 made its first appearance giving the Ki-43 with its relatively slow top speed an even bigger problem. To again illus-

trate the relative success of the Ki-43 and the small scale of losses, from September 1942 to May 1943, the author points out that the two Ki-43 *sentai* lost a combined thirty-five aircraft, while Allied records confirm the loss of thirty-six RAF Hurricanes and twenty-four other Allied aircraft.

In late 1943, the tide began to turn against the IJAAF in Burma. The Ki-43 was increasingly hard-pressed to contend with the faster and better-armed P-38s, P-51s, and now the Spitfire. On 14 January 1944, the 64th *Sentai* lost five pilots in a single day, its biggest defeat to date. The Second Arakan Campaign in early 1944, the first defeat of the Japanese Army in Burma, confirmed the growing power of the Allied air forces in the theater. The Imperial Army's launch of the Imphal attack in March 1944 was covered by three, later four, *sentai* of Ki-43s. However, Allied air forces soon gained air superiority and inflicted heavy losses on the Ki-43-equipped units. By May, the Imphal operation had failed, and the growing impotence of the IJAAF and the Ki-43 was clearly revealed. The introduction in August of the Ki-43-III with an additional 30mph greater top speed did not reverse the situation, as the Ki-43 was still slower than its Allied counterparts. Increasingly, the Ki-43 was relegated to ground attack missions as more modern IJAAF fighters finally entered service.

After spending almost half of the book on the Burma campaign, the author turns his attention to the exploits of the Ki-43 against the Americans in the Pacific. Two Ki-43 *sentai* were ordered to the South Pacific in December 1942, and the first arrived at Rabaul on 18 December. Many Pacific War historians, and enthusiasts, are probably unaware that the Ki-43 participated in the Guadalcanal campaign when on 27 January 1942, thirty Ki-43s escorted a bomber raid to Guadalcanal to help cover the Japanese Army's withdrawal from the island. In this battle against twenty-four defending American fighters, six Ki-43s were lost, including four from the vaunted 1st *Sentai*.

This was a portent of things to come. After the withdrawal from Guadalcanal, the IJAAF turned its attention to New Guinea, continuing to feed Ki-43 units into the battle. Losses were much greater than in the Burma theater, and in addition, the Japanese faced a massive problem of tropical disease, which drained the strength and morale of their aircrew. Against more modern American fighters, and unable to defend their bases from American attack, the Ki-43 was ineffective. In April 1944, with the capture of Hollandia, five Ki-43 *sentai* were disbanded.

When the American advance threatened the Philippines, the IJAAF employed an eventual total of six *sentai* to defend the islands. Now, the Japanese fighters faced not only the modern fighters of the USAAF, but the Hellcats of the U.S. Navy. Again, Ki-43 losses were extremely heavy with units being burned-out after only a few days. The Ki-43 was again

employed in the role of fighter-bomber, but continued to be ineffective. By the time the Americans invaded Luzon in 1945, only two *sentai* remained and these were capable of only sporadic missions.

Overall, within the space available, the author does an admirable job of making information on a largely overlooked IJAAF fighter accessible to Western readers. The coverage on Burma is outstanding, but treatment of the battles in New Guinea and the Philippines is treated as almost an afterthought. This is especially disappointing since the Malaya and Burma air campaigns have already received balanced and detailed treatments, but nothing similar exists on the large-scale and sustained air combat over New Guinea and the Philippines. [See Christopher Shores and Brian Cull with Yasuho Izawa, *Bloody Shambles*, Volume One, *The Drift to War to the Fall of Singapore* (London: Grub Street, 1992); *Bloody Shambles*, Volume Two, *The Defence of Sumatra to the Fall of Burma* (London: Grub Street, 1993); and Christopher Shores, *Air War for Burma: The Allied Air Forces Fight Back in South-East Asia 1942-1945* (London: Grub Street, 2005).] Frustratingly, the author includes nothing on the Ki-43's operations at Okinawa or over the Home Islands. Nevertheless, despite these shortcomings, the book is recommended for any reader with an interest in the IJAAF or Pacific War air combat.

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Operation Plum: The Ill-Fated 27th Bombardment Group and the Fight for the Western Pacific. By *Adrian R. Martin and Larry W. Stephenson*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Appendices. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xv + 364.

What do airmen do when in war they have no airplanes? They fight, or at least that is what members of the 27th Bombardment Group did in the early months of World War II. Twelve-hundred-men-strong, the group reached Manila, Philippines, on Thanksgiving Day, 1941, about three weeks ahead of their aircraft, but only two weeks before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Their planes never arrived, and by early 1942 these airmen had dug into Bataan Peninsula trenches as infantrymen. There, they fought, starved, and died alongside their Army brethren amid the disarray of the war's opening months and during long internments as prisoners of war. *Operation Plum* is their harrowing account, told mostly through the first-hand accounts of a couple of dozen veterans gleaned from diaries, letters, memoirs, and personal interviews.

Like so many other American military units, the 27th had formed hurriedly as the nation strived for a war footing in 1940. The group trained with four different types of aircraft before shipping to Manila in November 1941 with Douglas A-24 dive bombers in tow. After the Japanese struck their airstrips near Manila on the war's first day, the group scattered to a succession of airfields in the forlorn hope their aircraft would appear, offering a chance to fight as they had trained. Instead, on Christmas Day, most of the group reassembled in a disheveled rush to Bataan and the ground war. There, some toiled diligently to maintain the makeshift Bataan Airfield for the few shuttle missions other groups based in the Southern Philippines would manage to fly, and most became infantry soldiers, issued old rifles and rushed through a hap-hazard training regimen before manning rapidly-depleting ranks in the front lines.

The pilots, mechanics, technicians, and communications men of the 27th knew, in the words of one of them, as much of infantry war as "a goat knows about riding a bicycle." (p. 108) Yet, for three and one-half months they filled the trenches as well as far more seasoned soldiers did, sharing with the ground grunt the stark terror of night combat, the creepy quiet of daytime, and the constant and often acute search for food and comfort. They grew beards, discarded flight suits, and adopted the lingo meant for a fight they had believed just weeks earlier they would only glimpse from distant skies. When the time came to surrender, they shared that burden as well: the Bataan Death March, the horror of Camp O'Donnell, and the longest internment of any American Prisoners of War of World War II.

The book's protagonist, Glen Stephenson, and a few others made their way to Australia, where they joined the Third Bombardment Group and participated in the air war across the Bismarck Barrier. But the book's primary contribution lies with its tale of those left behind, on Bataan. There are other books of air war told through the lens of a single group or unit, some quite well; yet there are very few that relate how some airmen became soldiers in World War II's chaotic early days. In this the authors do an admirable job, although they are not professional historians: Adrian Martin is a retired school teacher who authored the fine *Brothers from Bataan: POWs, 1942-1945* (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1992), and Larry Stephenson is a nephew of Glen Stephenson.

The book does not contextualize the broader contours of the 27th story uniformly well. *Operation Plum* devotes a single, poorly-sourced paragraph to the pathetic story of Manila's exposed airfields and parked aircraft on the war's first day, a tragic fact that bore directly on the airmen's subsequent experiences. Moreover, the book frames the 27th's agonizing Death March experiences against a simplistic backdrop, a disappointment given Martin's earlier writing about Bataan. Furthermore, the authors miss a signal chance to contrast the 27th's preparation for the

war with its eventual reality in the person of Colonel Harold George, who for a time on Bataan had charge of the 27th and who, in the placid inter-war years, played a major role in the development of bombardment theory and practice. And, in a trait typical with a narrow focus on a single unit in war, the authors sometimes develop myopic vision. For instance, they vainly strive to compare a small series of American air strikes into the central Philippines in April 1942 with Jimmy Doolittle's famous Tokyo raid the same month.

Still, *Operation Plum* succeeds in recounting a discordant and largely forgotten part of the fight in the Western Pacific. It will appeal to current airmen, who live in a world of expanding obligations beyond the aerial fight. It will also be worthwhile to generalists of World War II history looking for an idiosyncratic and often dramatic story, and it will prove valuable to specialists of aviation history looking for a different angle of attack into the past. The book will remind everyone who reads it of the fragility of war plans once the actual fighting starts, and of the improvisational ethic that so often carries the day in both combat and war.

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The Battle of Bataan: A Complete History (Second Edition). By *Donald J. Young*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Paper. Pp. 290.

Bataan Peninsula on Luzon Island in the Philippines is a jungled, mountainous piece of land – twenty miles wide at its base and twenty-five miles long – extending south into the entrance to Manila Bay. With the island fortress of Corregidor, it blocks access to Manila's fine harbor. It was the scene of the United States Army's first battle of World War II and was unique in that American forces consisted primarily of poorly-trained and poorly-equipped Filipino soldiers. For three months in early 1942, the Fil-American so-called Luzon Force defended the rugged peninsula against attacks by the Japanese Fourteenth Army. On 9 April, finally, it succumbed to a furious onslaught by the heavily reinforced enemy. Its defeat was as much a product of the extremely poor physical state of the defenders as it was to the overwhelming Japanese assault. Three months of drastically reduced rations in the malaria-infested southern half of the peninsula had left the sick, starving, and exhausted Fil-Americans in no condition to resist.

The prolonged defense of Bataan, the sole holdout against the

Japanese sweep through the Pacific and Southeast Asia, was a source of pride in the United States and of grudging admiration by the rest of the Allied world. It also produced one unfortunate myth: that the enemy failure to swiftly overrun Bataan held up the entire Japanese timetable for conquest of its strategic target areas. In fact, once the Fil-American forces had retreated into Bataan – like "a cat entering a sack," in the words of one Japanese general [Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1953), p. 218.] – major units of the Fourteenth Army were withdrawn and sent to seize the Netherlands Indies a full month ahead of schedule. When that conquest was achieved, Japanese forces returned in strength to complete the occupation of Bataan. Other than being temporarily denied their use of Manila harbor, the Japanese were in no way delayed in seizing their main objectives. Nevertheless, the Fil-American three-month defense of Bataan was a remarkable achievement, fully deserving of praise and admiration.

Surprisingly, however, only a few full-length campaign studies have addressed the battle. The first was Morton's excellent *The Fall of the Philippines* in the official U.S. Army World War II historical series. Based on official and unofficial documents, survivors' memoirs, interviews, and available Japanese sources, it remained unchallenged for nearly four decades until the publication of John W. Whitman's *Bataan, Our Last Ditch: The Bataan Campaign, 1942* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1990). This was a superb study and analysis by a knowledgeable and experienced infantry officer. Exhaustively researched, it was far more comprehensive than Morton's work, especially in its trenchant criticism of both the American and Japanese conduct of the battle.

Donald J. Young is the author of several earlier books on the first days of World War II in the Pacific. His present work is actually an "enhanced version" (p. 1) of one of them, *The Battle of Bataan: A History of the 90 Day Siege and Eventual Surrender of 75,000 Filipino and United States Troops to the Japanese in World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992). It is shorter and far less analytical than Morton's and Whitman's books, but does draw on material, including revealing Filipino sources, not available to either previous author. A good account of the battle, with excellent maps and some rarely-seen photographs, its primary contribution is the inclusion of extensive personal testimony from memoirs, diaries, and interviews. These individual accounts lend color and immediacy to an already dramatic narrative. Young also includes, either as prefatory notes or appendices, detailed information about key military units and organizations, roads and topography, weather, supply, communications, transportation, and other useful items. Particularly welcome are his descriptions of medical problems and his examples of MacArthur's dishonest communiqués. His discussion of Japanese strategy, moreover, does not repeat the tired myth of a delayed timetable and

points out, indeed, how that timetable was advanced to seize the Netherlands Indies.

One major drawback, however, is his unsatisfactory method of documentation. Sources are cited in abbreviated form, without including page references, and are sometimes not listed in the bibliography. Nor is the file location of documentary material provided. Furthermore, while Young mentions his heavy reliance on Morton's *Fall of the Philippines* and states that "most undocumented details" are drawn from that work (p. 277), there is much unsourced material in his text that could not have come from Morton. Nevertheless, while *The Battle of Bataan: A Complete History* does not replace Morton or Whitman, it complements them very well and is thus a useful contribution.

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Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable?. By *James B. Wood*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Paper. Pp. x + 141.

This is a stimulating and provocative work, even if I disagree with some of its basic assumptions. James Wood has undertaken an important revisionist task in challenging the received wisdom concerning the causes of Japan's defeat in World War II. In seeking to answer the question as to whether Japan could have won the war, or at least have avoided shattering defeat, he has raised an issue touched upon by few other historians. Historiographical orthodoxy has long held that Japan's effort to confront the United States militarily was inevitably doomed to defeat because of the superior industrial capacity, enormous reserves of raw material to feed that industrial machinery, fighting ability, and the quality of leadership of America and its allies. Wood accepts the fact of those assets, but contends that it was Japan's mistaken strategic planning that was the fundamental cause of its defeat. Using a counter-factual analysis, he attempts to show that different plans might well have altered the outcome of the Pacific War. Wood believes that if the Japanese military had held to Japan's original strategic plan, which envisioned seizing the strategic resources of Southeast Asia and creating a defensive barrier to defend the territorial conquests involved in that seizure, Japan could have negotiated an end to the war, largely on its own terms. Much of his interesting monograph is devoted to illuminating specific strategic scenarios, which he believes buttress his argument.

At the outset, I should make plain my fundamental skepticism con-

cerning Wood's use of counterfactual analysis as the central methodological approach to his subject. Counterfactual, or "what if....?" history, is an enticing game, not without didactic merit, as Wood, sometimes brilliantly, demonstrates. But the flaw in a counterfactual argument is that it is selective in the historical elements it chooses to retain and those which it alters. But if one substitutes one historical assumption/cause for another, why not fifty such changes? And if one changes fifty such elements in an event, why not all of them? The reason is obvious and, I think, devastating to such a methodology.

But let me meet Wood on his ground, counterfactual though it may be. To begin with, it would be foolish to deny that Japan made fundamental strategic errors that were critical to its defeat. I concur that Japan's decision to go to war with the Anglo-American powers was not a wild or irrational decision. I believe that it was based on both a fundamentally mistaken assessment of Allied power and a basic failure to think of strategic alternatives. I further agree that certain strategic decisions were critical to Japan's defeat, beginning with the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, an initiative which roused a passive and complacent American public into a united and vengeful people. He is correct in pointing out that Japan's notorious "victory disease," to which it succumbed within the first six months of the Pacific War, blinded it to the strategic realities of the conflict. But in arguing that Japan's basic subsequent strategic mistake in those months was abandoning the military's original plan to secure the vital resource area – Southeast Asia – and failing to consolidate its conquests by establishing a viable defensible perimeter around that area, Wood makes the same error as the Japanese leadership at the time: the failure to appreciate the vast distances involved, distances far beyond the range or strength of Japanese airpower, which was to be the key defensive element of the perimeter. In his reference to "interlocking in-depth defenses behind the outer perimeter combat zone," Wood does not understand that it was impossible for Japan to consolidate its conquests, because its defensive "strong points" were thousands of miles apart over a vast ocean. On page 25, Wood begins to deal with the question of distance and limited Japanese capacity to deal with the consequent logistical problems, but does not connect it to his basic argument that Japan's defeat was the result of bad planning.

In placing such emphasis on military strategy as the cause of Japan's defeat in the war, Wood pays scant attention to significant weaknesses in Japan's ability to conduct a modern war: serious doctrinal deficiencies within each of the armed services; their distorted force structures (particularly in the navy), which limited their ability to deal with unanticipated operational difficulties; neglect of logistics in both services, which became a nightmare by the later stages of the war; the failure to coordinate civilian research with military objectives; the corrosive inter-service hos-

tilities which hobbled Japan's abilities to develop a coherent strategy; the neglect of strategic intelligence by both services; and the obsession with decisive battle (again, particularly in the navy) in an age when industrial and economic power, not battle, were the critical elements in waging modern war. That mistaken strategic decisions were a major failing by Japan is undoubted, but they hardly account by themselves to the outcome of the conflict.

I think, too, that while Wood uses a number of first-rate English-language studies in his monograph, the work suffers from an inadequate grasp of the Japanese situation because its Japanese sources are so slender. (His unfamiliarity with the Japanese language also leads him into an occasional howler, as exemplified by his reference, on p. 37, to the "super battleship 'Yamamoto.'") One can nick him, also, for certain errors in his understanding of the course of the war. He declares, on p. 80, that "the United States found it very difficult, if not impossible to mount more than one operation at a time on the scale of Leyte, Luzon, or Okinawa." He seems unaware that the large amphibious assault on Saipan was simultaneous with American landings in Normandy, the largest amphibious operation in the history of warfare up to that time.

Yet, if Wood makes some glaring errors in his discussion of Japan's conduct of the war, he also makes some telling points. He notes correctly, on p. 78, that the Japanese navy failed to strike with its fully concentrated force and that its leaders too often appeared to lack the will to relentlessly pursue a temporarily vulnerable enemy. On the following page, he rightly critiques the navy for its neglect of both a submarine commerce-raiding campaign against Allied shipping and of an effective ASW capability to defend Japanese shipping against American submarines.

If James Wood has failed to provide a comprehensive explanation for Japan's defeat in World War II, he has dared to raise some major questions about its conduct of the war. His concluding chapter, "The Road Not Taken," is a thought-provoking summary of his ideas. If his argument is not sufficient to explain the outcome of the Pacific War, for the foreseeable future, his book will be both necessary and richly rewarding in discussions about it.

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If Mahan Ran the Great Pacific War: An Analysis of World War II Naval Strategy. By *John A. Adams*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 472.

Perhaps no U.S. naval conflict has been described by historians as thoroughly as that conducted in the Pacific between Japan and the United States during World War II. Notable historical works range from the magisterial multi-volume work by Samuel Eliot Morison [*History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 15 vols., (Boston: Little, Brown, 1946-1962)], to brilliant descriptions of individual campaigns and battles. One thinks immediately of H.P. Willmott's series of books and Richard Frank's *Guadalcanal*. [H.P. Willmott, *The Barrier and the Javelin: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies, February to June 1942* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983), *The Battle of Leyte Gulf: The Last Fleet Action* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), *The Last Century of Sea Power*, Volume 1, *From Port Arthur to Chanak, 1894-1922* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), among others; Richard B. Frank, *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle* (New York: Random House, 1990).] These authors not only understand the sweep of strategic campaigns, but also describe in admirable prose the operational art and tactics of the events they describe. Morison, in particular, provides a sympathetic, yet accurate, analysis of the leaders on both sides of the conflict at sea.

Hence, John A. Adams' work, *If Mahan Ran the Pacific War*, was picked up with pleasurable anticipation, given the author's claim to present a fresh analysis of that theater – the greatest arena of the greatest war in mankind's history – an analysis based on application of the theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan, the best-known of all maritime strategists.

The author does provide useful tables comparing the strength of the U.S. and Japanese fleets during the war, but this does not salvage an ambitious effort that fails to reach its stated objective: to provide "an analysis of World War II Naval Strategy" based on the theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan. Unfortunately, Adams appears to not really understand Mahan's theories, treating them far too simplistically. In fact, one could well argue that Mahanian thought, at least in its particulars, had already been overtaken by events when his major work, *The Influence of Seapower Upon History, 1660-1783*, was published in 1890 – just as the spread of railroads throughout Europe was making navies even less relevant to the conduct of continental wars as described by the American captain. Furthermore, the only aspects of Mahanian theory that the author apparently understands are those dealing with climactic naval battle and maritime leadership; he would have been well-served to have read with more understanding the acutely analytical writings of Jon Sumida [See, especially, Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *Inventing Grand Strategy and*

Teaching Command: The Classic Works of Alfred Thayer Mahan Reconsidered (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997).], who presents Mahan in the strategic light of the 20th and 21st centuries. Adams' apparent objective in this book also might have been better served had he applied the strategic theory of Julian Corbett, rather than that of Mahan – which would have clarified for him the strength of the dual U.S. strategic approach that was so effective against Japan, rather than the weaknesses he attributed to the American approach.

Adams generally writes well, although he too often strikes this reviewer as excessively cloying, almost cute in his syntax. Witness, for example, his description of a fictional Mahan "smiling broadly," or being "dazzled" or "astounded," or that he "would have frowned at the commander of the Pacific Fleet." (pp. 57, 60, 102, and 181, respectively) There are also a few factual errors – Admiral Chester Nimitz's middle initial was "W," not "A," and the U.S. river gunboat USS *Tutuila* (PG-44/PR-4) was not a "civilian oil tanker." (p. 46) More significant is his erroneous description of Hong Kong as symbolizing Great Britain's influence in China: the city was of relatively little significance in pre-1949 Asia, when Shanghai was the headquarters of the Western presence in China. (p. 84)

The author, too, often repeats a Mahanian mantra about not dividing the fleet, but this inappropriately applies an 18th and 19th century naval environment to the mid-20th century, a misapplication that fails to account for the advent of submarines, aircraft, modern amphibious equipment, and fleet communications, as well as a war fought literally around the globe.

His argument on page 62 demonstrates how he has missed the point of Japanese strategy: the U.S. fleet was never Tokyo's primary strategic military objective; ensuring access to Southeast Asian resources was, and renders the author's argument, interesting within his pseudo-Mahanian framework, all but irrelevant to the planning and conduct of the war by both sides.

Another example of the entertaining, but not especially useful, application of his framework is demonstrated on page 78: "the ultimate Mahanian rule is pounded home: Concentrate everything on the destruction of the enemy fleet." Such an operational theory was not decisive in the European wars studied by Mahan (Napoleon fought on for a decade after the classic Royal Navy victory at Trafalgar, after all), nor would it have served Japan as a decisive instrument in the Pacific. As Adams himself notes on more than one occasion, the United States was capable of building as much new navy as it needed to win.

The author's lack of knowledge about naval operations – especially the logistics capabilities required for their support – is demonstrated. See, for instance, his claim on page 81 that Japan could/should have pur-

sued an "outer-islands strategy" that would have "isolated" and "neutralized" Hawaii, presumably leading to Japanese victory in the Pacific. That Adams later describes this theory as possibly "fanciful" does not negate its vacuity.

Another curious blind spot in the author's strategic view is that of domestic politics in both Japan and the United States: witness his criticism of both navies' efforts in the South Pacific as misguided, when they should instead have focused on the pre-war critical route through the Central Pacific. This criticism fails to recognize that plans are just that, and not inflexible dicta – more descriptive of maritime war is Nimitz's guidance to Vice Admiral Raymond Spruance before the Battle of Midway: "you will be guided by the principle of calculated risk," a modern rendition of Admiral Horatio Nelson's "nothing is sure in a sea fight."

Adams also seems to miss the point of American strategy in the Pacific Theater, which was not to destroy the Japanese fleet – which he mistakenly seems to interpret as the core of what Mahan had to teach – but to force Tokyo to surrender. The author's evaluation is also problematic at the level of operational art, as demonstrated in his description of the cause of the American victories during 1942-43 as "a miracle," rather than the superb intelligence, command decisions, training, and brilliant individual performances that contributed to these victories. Even stranger is the author's crediting of Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa as having "clearly 'out-admiraled' Spruance" in the Marianas – a series of battles in which Ozawa clearly was bested by Spruance. (p. 286)

Unfortunately, this work is little more than a secondary description based on secondary sources. It is a disappointing book that does not contribute significantly to our knowledge of the Pacific War's battles, operational practices, command relationships, strategic formulations, or policy-making processes in Tokyo and Washington, or to a deeper understanding of Mahan's strategic idea. Furthermore, Adams is of the "what if" school of historiography: sometimes entertaining, but seldom useful.

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Pearl Harbor Countdown: Admiral James O. Richardson. By *Skipper Steely*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 2008. Illustrations. Map. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 543.

Forty-five years ago, Admiral James O. Richardson, Commander of the United States Pacific Fleet between January 1940 and January 1941, at

last finished his memoirs, and then demanded that the manuscript be shelved during the remainder of his lifetime. *On The Treadmill to Pearl Harbor* appeared nine years later. [James O. Richardson, *On the Treadmill to Pearl Harbor: The Memoirs of Admiral James O. Richardson, USN (Retired), as told to Vice Admiral George C. Dyer, USN (Retired)* (Washington, DC: Naval History Division, 1973).] Now, Thomas B. (Skipper) Steely has written a flawed, even exasperating, biography of his fellow townsman that nonetheless provides further fascinating background information on that disaster in Hawaii nearly seventy years ago.

The book is poorly edited and the grammar in places is atrocious. With all due respect to the author, I do not think "drug" is a verb, as in "Initially, the days drug on with common drills." (p. 153) In 1903, Richardson became so ill that he was confined to hospital in Japan, but Steely does not tell us the nature of that illness, or even state that it was unclear or unknown. (p. 39) Sometimes, the language is both simplistic and misleading: "The 1922 Treaty of Washington called for the nations of the world to hold down construction of most new war machines. Funds were low anyway." (p. 62) The Washington Treaty was between nine nations, not the entire world; it dealt exclusively with sea power, not tanks or aircraft or other kinds of "war machines" as the prose suggests. And, low funds or not, it created a great deal of anguish in nearly all the signatory countries. "In the middle of June, the Germans were only thirty-four miles from Paris, and on June 10, Italy finally did declare war against the Allies. Four days later the Nazis entered France." (p. 184) Regrettably, one could go on and on.

The intention of this reviewer is not to be captious. Such repeated sloppiness on important matters calls into question the integrity of the book. The author and the publisher should consider a second printing following a detailed review of the text. This should be done because the work has some real value and important information, though not necessarily on the question as to whether Franklin Roosevelt used advance information on the Pearl Harbor attack to maneuver the U.S. into war. The compelling issue that Steely resurrects and properly emphasizes is the real or ostensible unreadiness of the U.S. Pacific Fleet for war.

Steely, like Richardson, makes a powerful case that the fleet was not prepared for combat; that Richardson knew this and told President Roosevelt firmly and strongly about it, and insisted that it was folly to place an unready fleet in Hawaii much too close to obvious Pacific battlefronts and too far from training and repair facilities on the West Coast. For this he was sacked by his president just a year into what was then considered at least a two-year posting. Roosevelt apparently complained to at least one confidante that Richardson had lost his nerve and his guts, though as both Richardson himself and Steely make clear, he had not.

Steely compels at least this historian to look past the immediate Pearl

Harbor attack at larger issues, some of which Steely himself suggests. At a moment when the American presidency is confronting an almost unprecedented range of stunning problems foreign and domestic, we must extend Franklin Roosevelt a similar degree of understanding, sympathy, and consideration. In 1940-41, the world was at war on every sea and nearly every continent; a conflict whose daily sweep and intensity is unimaginable more than sixty years later. FDR confronted an increasingly tense situation in the Atlantic that was shading rapidly into an undeclared naval war between U.S. destroyers and German submarines. He faced a very divided and hostile domestic opinion, as well as a suspicious Congress. Prior to the German invasion of Russia in late June 1941, his frequent exchanges with "the former Naval person" in London made it clear to him, if not the country, that England might well yet fall, leaving the United States facing a totally Nazified Europe and British Isles. His task was to build up the nation's defenses, either for war or isolation, as quickly as possible, and he was doing that. But considering the sweep of Axis aggression in both Europe and Asia, he dared not acknowledge and thus confirm even for a moment the continued American military weakness that both Berlin and Tokyo assumed and counted upon. An American army that numbered only 165,000 regular troops as late as 1939 was slowly expanding through implementation of an unpopular draft. The Navy was larger, but much of it was obsolete. A modern two-ocean fleet was on the building stocks. But FDR had to get through at least 1942 and well into 1943 before the country could field a modern and mighty military and naval force.

Sending the fleet to Hawaii as a check on Japanese expansion into Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific was a gamble; one that turned out to be tragically flawed. But the president had very few cards to play against the Axis in early 1940. As the world's only major non-belligerent, yet moral, ally of both Britain and China, he had to do something. Anyone who has spent considerable time in Washington (as have I) comes to realize that many policy options offer impossible choices. But the worst policy choice of all is to do nothing.

Roosevelt may not have fully realized how much of a gamble he had taken. Richardson courageously set him straight. But once having committed the act, Roosevelt could not undo it without giving the appearance of American timidity or weakness. Had the headlines in late 1940 read: "U.S. Withdraws Fleet From Hawaiian Waters: Ships to Return to West Coast," it would have given aid and comfort to the Axis and emboldened those forces of isolationism that FDR believed and history has confirmed were tragically wrong.

The heart of Steely's story, then, is the tragic relationship between two men of great integrity, both consumate professionals in their respective jobs, who should have worked together, yet were driven apart by dis-

tance and circumstance. Following a meeting with the president in 1940, Richardson wrote privately that FDR was an "extremely dangerous man fully determined to put us into war if G.B. [Great Britain] can hold out until he is re-elected." (p. 197)

Did Richardson overstate his case? Was the Pacific Fleet as unready for war as he maintained? In some ways, the answer is clearly yes. The lack of patrol aircraft at Pearl Harbor was criminal. The battle fleet with its dozen twenty-one-knot (perhaps) mastodons at its core would doubtless have been butchered by its equally powerful yet far more nimble adversary had it traveled west for that great Jutland-like battle with the Imperial Japanese Navy that was widely expected. The carrier-cruiser force, on the other hand, was obviously reasonably well-trained and quite competent as the first six months of the Pacific War amply demonstrated. American carriers cruised almost as widely as their Japanese opposites, and clearly surprised and dismayed the enemy at the Coral Sea as well as Midway.

The breakdown in communications not only between Richardson-Kimmel and FDR in particular, but between Hawaii and Washington in general, in the eighteen months before Pearl Harbor was tragic, but neither surprising nor sinister. The complexity and ever-accelerating pace of world events kept Washington distracted. Within this context, Roosevelt, Chief of Naval Operations Harold ("Betty") Stark, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, and the other members of the national security team assumed that they were keeping the Hawaiian (and Philippine) base commanders sufficiently appraised of developments as well as the rudimentary, relatively slow communications capabilities of the time permitted. If the Hawaiian commanders felt otherwise, they did not sufficiently communicate their anxieties and the record indicates that even on the morning of 7 December, with clear evidence that something was afoot, Kimmel failed to act swiftly and decisively.

Neither this review nor a subsequent flood of books over coming decades will ever quell the Pearl Harbor argument. George Dyer, who helped Richardson prepare his account, concluded that responsibility for the disaster rested forty-percent with Kimmel, forty-percent with Stark, and twenty-percent with FDR. I would revise the ratio drastically, but Roosevelt and Stark cannot be wholly exempt since their gamble of sending the fleet to Hawaii backfired dramatically.

Despite its shortcomings, Steely's book deserves to be on the Pearl Harbor shelf; its information and perspective have to be taken into account by future readers. But the mistakes and grammatical errors need to be addressed. They are, one might say, a drug on the market.

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A Dawn Like Thunder: The True Story of Torpedo Squadron Eight. By *Robert J. Mrazek*. New York: Little, Brown, 2008. Illustrations. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Cloth. Pp. xiii + 526.

Few people have been better positioned to preserve history than Robert J. Mrazek. As a United States Congressman, he sponsored legislation to prevent the Manassas battlefield from being destroyed. Not surprisingly, his previous books have been U.S. Civil War novels, but *A Dawn Like Thunder* addresses one of the enduring legends of the Second World War: Torpedo Squadron Eight aboard the USS *Hornet* (CV-8) in the Battle of Midway.

Mrazek takes the VT-8 story from May 1942 through year end, when the squadron was disestablished. Unlike some accounts, Mrazek covers the entire story of VT-8, including the six-plane Grumman Avenger detachment based on Midway. Far from being "the sole survivor" of VT-8, as George Gay always claimed, two TBF airmen also survived the battle. [At the 50th anniversay observance in Washington, DC, TBF pilot Bert Earnest introduced his radioman, Harry Ferrier, who grinned and said, "I'm the third sole survivor of Torpedo Eight."] Mrazek also provides a detailed account of the squadron's brief time aboard the USS *Saratoga* (CV-3) and the tortuous experience at Guadalcanal.

Unfortunately, some of the text and publisher's marketing relies upon decades-old hype. The TBD is described as "a suicide coffin" when in fact no Devastator fell to enemy action before Midway. Unaccountably, the jacket material describes VT-8 as an "all but forgotten torpedo squadron," yet most readers would be hard-pressed to name any other TorpRon. [See Barrett Tillman, *TBD Devastator Units of the US Navy* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2000).]

The intrinsic problem with VT-8 at Midway is extremely limited source material. Nearly everything about the mission after launch from the *Hornet* comes from Ensign George Gay. Despite his "eyewitness" account of the SBD attack forty-five minutes after his shootdown, a simple time-distance calculation shows that the Japanese carriers were struck at least eight miles below the horizon from his position floating in the water, as *Kido Butai* was steaming steadily away at twenty-five knots.

In 2007, a detailed assessment came from historian Jonathan Parshall, co-author of *Shattered Sword*. [Jonathan Parshall and Anthony Tully, *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005).] Parshall concluded that Gay's account is "very confusing and internally inconsistent, even for a fairly knowledgeable historian...I personally don't think Gay saw everything he says he saw… And I think that some of his details could have been garnered from post-battle accounts. In other words, his account is a decidedly mixed bag, and not the sort of thing a historian should accept at face value...."

[Jonathan Parshall, "What Did George Gay See?," <http://home.comcast.net/~r2russ/midway//georgegay.html>.]

The question remains as to why Mr. Mrazek accepted Gay's unreliable statements when the author has seen detailed discussions of the subject on The Battle of Midway Roundtable. [See <http://midway42.org>.]

The text would have benefited from a co-author familiar with naval aviation. Throughout the book, peculiar phrases are used such as "air squadron" and "air garrison" in describing any aviation unit. Numerous technical errors even include reference to a three-seat Dauntless dive-bomber. Additionally, the author alludes to units and individual aircraft being "decommissioned," when in fact naval squadrons are "disestablished" and airplanes are "stricken."

In summarizing VT-8's record, the author cites official Navy figures crediting VT-8 with sinking two carriers, a battleship, nine cruisers, and two other ships. However, identifiable warships that VT-8 shared in sinking were the carrier *Ryujo* and battleship *Hiei*, plus damaging a seaplane tender and two destroyers. (Apparently, the tender *Nisshin* damaged on 3 October was credited as a sunken carrier.) [For a relatively detailed accounting of ship attacks, see <http://ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/USN-Chron/USN-Chron-1942.html>.]

The claim is made that Torpedo Eight was the most highly-decorated naval squadron of the war. That may be true, though as Mrazek acknowledges, no unit-by-unit comparison is available. However, through most of 1942, the Navy Cross stood third in precedence, so contrast with later units would be invalid. Oddly, there is no mention of the unique award of two Navy Crosses to Ensign Earnest for his TBF mission at Midway. Nor does the author address Captain Marc Mitscher's recommendation for the Medal of Honor to every VT-8 TBD pilot, an absurd notion that Rear Admiral Raymond Spruance properly dismissed.

The book's most interesting characters provide a study in contrasts: commanding officers John Waldron and Harold H. Larsen. Waldron realized that VT-8 faced long odds, but remained an inspirational leader up to the moment of his death. Nobody would claim as much for "Swede" Larsen. Courageous and competent, bigoted and spiteful, he led VT-8 through most of the Guadalcanal campaign, successful in almost every endeavor except "winning" the Medal of Honor. (As recipients insist, "You don't win the Medal; it's not a contest.")

Among the unsung heroes of the "Cactus Air Force" were VT-8's incredibly dedicated maintenance men. Mrazek gives them full honor for resurrecting two flyable Avengers from the hulks of others, mostly without proper tools or heavy equipment.

The book is crammed with details including forty pages of source material. The extensive notes provide a treasure trove of references for dedicated Pacific War students, and from a historiographical view, the book

offers an interesting study. Mrazek acknowledges his debt to previous Midway historians, including access to original research by Walter Lord and John Lundstrom.

Whatever its faults or shortcomings, *A Dawn Like Thunder* succeeds where it matters most: describing the effects of war upon not only combatants, but families and friends. Torpedo Eight thus provides a microcosm of human beings swept up in events beyond their control, when survival was based upon an unknowable mixture of ability, luck, and circumstance.

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The Depths of Courage: American Submariners at War with Japan, 1941-1945. By *Flint Whitlock and Ron Smith*. New York: Penguin, 2007. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Cloth. Pp. xvii + 428.

Retired Vice Admiral Albert Konetzni, who commanded the U.S. Navy's Pacific submarines from 1998 to 2001, offers an impassioned warning in the Forward of *The Depths of Courage* on the perils of ignoring history. The contributions of the U.S. Navy's submariners to victory in the Pacific in World War II, the admiral argues, are a lasting testament to the necessity to maintain an active and strong submarine force today. History, Konetzni cautions, argues against what he views as American indifference to the submarine community. While force levels fall and construction slows, he points out that America's only potential competitor in the western Pacific has learned the lessons of history, and is building up its submarine force.

The Depths of Courage offers what Konetzni believes is the link between the past and present that will renew America's appreciation for the essential role that the navy's submarine force plays in national security. As such, authors Flint Whitlock and Ron Smith have put together an interesting and informative narrative of U.S. Navy submarine operations in the Pacific during World War II. Both authors have a background in popular history. Whitlock has published several works ranging from the CSA operations in Mexico during the U.S. Civil War to the invasion of Anzio in World War II. Ron Smith, who in 1942 enlisted in the submarine force at age seventeen, offers his own personal memoir and experiences on submarine combat. Together, they draw from an extensive list of personal memoirs and secondary sources to publish what they believe will portray the contributions of the "silent service" to the victory in the Pacific.

Despite the authors' purpose, the general narrative does not stray very far from the copious scholarly examinations of the submarine campaign against the Japanese. The attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent loss of the Asiatic Fleet at the battle of Java Sea left only a handful of U.S. submarines in the western Pacific to fight the Japanese. Though submariners eagerly accepted their roles as the nations' first and last line of defense, Whitlock and Smith point out that the early patrols were frustrated by logistic constraints and the well-documented problems with the magnetic exploder mechanisms on their torpedoes. By early 1943 though, the submariners' prospects began to brighten. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest King replaced Admiral Robert English, who was tragically killed in an aircraft crash in January, with Vice Admiral Charles Lockwood. The affectation "Uncle Charlie" proved to be well-earned. The new commander of Pacific fleet submarines proved a capable opponent in the bureaucratic infighting with the navy's Bureau of Ordnance to resolve the torpedo detonator problem. Lockwood demonstrated a personal concern for his crews that has become a fixture in the submarine service. Working torpedoes were matched with more and newer submarines pouring out of American shipyards, and commanded by aggressive officers such as Dudley W. "Mush" Morton and Dick O'Kane. These commanders waged an unrestricted submarine campaign against commerce that choked off Japan's ability to wage war. Their exploits became legendary throughout the Pacific fleet, and their aggressive spirit carried down to their crews who fought in arguably the most demanding of combat conditions.

In what would otherwise be described as an informative but subdued narrative, what brings color to *The Depths of Courage* is the personal story of co-author Ron Smith. Amidst the greater picture of Pacific operations, Whitlock and Smith skillfully weave in the smaller war of individual combat in which U.S. submarine crews existed. Smith's story is no doubt representative of the tens of thousands of American youths who ran for the recruiting stations after Pearl Harbor. As a seventeen-year-old high school student in Hammond, Indiana when the war broke out, Smith enlisted in the Navy with dreams of flying. But as fate would have it, Smith eventually wound up in submarines. In April 1943, young Ron Smith would get his first taste of combat as a torpedoman in the USS *Seal* (SS-183). He would experience both the exhilaration of launching a torpedo that hit a Japanese merchant, followed by the sheer terror of being attacked.

The strength of *The Depths of Courage* is that it dramatically draws out the individual experience from the greater fabric of the war in the Pacific. The methodology will be very appealing to general audiences who are unacquainted with U.S. submarine operations in World War II. The book offers an exceptionally vivid description of war at sea, and an

equally interesting examination of why men fight. But the book shares the weakness of many popular histories. Readers interested in larger historical issues and explanations may be frustrated by the narrative. Whitlock and Smith gloss over the major strategic and doctrinal dimensions of the Pacific War. The methodology succeeds in bringing the efforts of submariners to light, but too often that light appears to outshine a larger war fought in three dimensions. A more accurate interpretation would have recognized the collective and synergistic effect of carrier aviation, surface forces, army and marine amphibious operations, strategic bombardment, and submarine operations to Japan's eventual demise.

Whether *The Depths of Courage* will meet Admiral Konetzni's expectations remains to be seen. The book offers a riveting account of American submarine crews in the Pacific. The courage demonstrated by the submarine service, and the individual heroism of its crews, should certainly remain in the American memory. But history does not always offer clear lessons. In 1941, the U.S. Navy developed a coherent strategy to defeat a clear enemy. The submarine was ideally suited as a commerce destroyer. But in the globalized world of 2010, where Chinese producers are subsidiaries of American corporations and their products are carried in Liberian ships, the lines between friend and foe are extremely blurred.

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Battle of Surigao Strait. By *Anthony P. Tully*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Appendices. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xvii + 329.

This is a fast-paced and well-researched battle narrative for one of the climactic actions that made up the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Tully adroitly weaves together survivor testimony, Japanese records, and action reports from both sides to draw new and insightful conclusions about the conduct of the action, particularly on the Japanese side. The result will please historians familiar with the details of the action as well as average readers interested in learning more about the last battle line action.

The specifics of the battle are thoroughly investigated, from the opening attacks of the Seventh Fleet's PT Boats, to the devastating and concentrated fire of Admiral Oldendorf's battleships and cruisers. As the narrative follows the advance of Admiral Nishimura's Third Section and Admiral Shima's Second Striking Force up the strait, it delivers a strong

sense of the confusion and intensity the advancing forces must have faced. The way Tully integrates all stages of the fighting into a cohesive whole is impressive and satisfying. Chapter divisions provide logical stopping points without disrupting the flow of the narrative.

Tully's research provides new details on several aspects of the action; the most valuable of these is the sinking of the battleship *Fuso*. A convincing alternative explanation for her final moments is provided in the body of the text, and more details are contained in a dedicated appendix. The conclusions better fit the facts than the traditional view that she split in two, and readers will appreciate the details provided. Tully provides similar insights for movements of the cruiser *Mogami*, the advance of the destroyer *Shigure*, and the operations of Shima's forces. It is in these details that the work provides its greatest value and will present the most interest to historians. This is where the work shines.

The treatment of the battle's preliminaries is less satisfying. Although the details of the Japanese preparations are discussed in some detail, the author's failure to consult the original plans and orders of the U.S. Third and Seventh Fleets leads to inaccurate conclusions regarding their expectations and reactions to the approach of the Japanese forces. Given the level of attention devoted to the Japanese side, this oversight is disappointing. The secondary sources Tully relies upon, the Naval War College Analysis and Milan N. Vego's *The Battle for Leyte, 1944: Allied and Japanese Plans, Preparations, and Execution* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), are more effective at dealing with the details of the campaign and setting the battle in its proper context.

Also unsatisfying is Tully's treatment of Nishimura. This enigmatic admiral has been judged harshly for sailing his ships into the teeth of an Allied ambush. Tully attempts to defend Nishimura, but struggles to make a convincing argument. The author presents the hypothesis that Nishimura's mission, like that of Admiral Ozawa to the north, was fundamentally suicidal and designed to draw the American battleships south. If true, this does much to explain Nishimura's conduct and decision to proceed even as Japanese plans for Leyte Gulf began to unravel. However, Tully also seeks to excuse Nishimura's lack of preparation by claiming that he did not expect to encounter effective resistance while still in the strait. This runs counter to the idea of a suicidal mission, designed to crash headlong into heavy opposition, and the reader is left unsure how to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory interpretations.

Although Tully addresses the important question of why Nishimura and Shima did not more effectively cooperate, curiously, he does not pursue the most compelling reason suggested by his narrative: if Nishimura was on a suicide mission, he and his ships were not expected to return. Shima, on the other hand, was needed to escort future reinforcement missions to Leyte. If these conclusions are true, then the logic

of keeping them separate, in two different task forces, naturally follows.

These are minor flaws and they do not detract from the overall value of *Battle of Surigao Strait* as a detailed battle narrative. Tully's research, rich narrative, and impressive grasp of the available Japanese material has produced a valuable addition to the historical record. It is recommended for all interested in this important aspect of the final decisive naval battle of World War II.

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Conferences, Lectures, and Events

Hitler's Scandinavian Legacy: The Wartime and Post-War Consequences of the German Invasion of 9 April 1940
8-10 April 2010 • Institute of Historical Research
University of London (London, England)
http://www.history.ac.uk/events/conferences/1194

The Waffen-SS – What's Left? The Present State of Research: Challenges, Sources and Approaches
A Seminar by Dr. Niels Bo Poulsen
27 April 2010 • Institute of Historical Research
University of London (London, England)
http://www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/135

France in the Second World War: Vichy in Concepts
7-8 May 2010 • Maison Française d'Oxford
Centre for Second World War Studies
University of Birmingham (Birmingham, England)
http://www.secondworldwar.bham.ac.uk/vichy.htm

Death of the Wehrmacht: The German Campaigns of 1942
A Lecture by Dr. Robert Citino
16 June 2010 • U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center
Carlisle, Pennsylvania
http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec/

2010 International Congress on Military History
"Irregular Warfare from 1800 to the Present"
29 August - 3 September 2010 • Amsterdam Events Centre
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
http://www.cihm2010.nl/

Going to War, 1939-1945: Film and History in Wartime Britain
22-23 October 2010 • Institute of Historical Research
University of London (London, England)
http://www.history.ac.uk/events/conferences/1132

27th International Churchill Conference
"Churchill's Relevance to Achieving a Secure 21st Century Society"
28-30 October 2010 • Four Seasons Hotel
Washington, DC
http://www.winstonchurchill.org/