Volume 9 / Number 1 / 2012

GLOBAL WAR STUDIES

The Journal for the Study of Warfare and Weapons, 1919-1945

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Volume 9 / Number 1 / 2012

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Subscription rates: All subscriptions are on a volume-year basis only, beginning with the first issue of the year and expiring with the last. For individuals, the annual subscription rate is $75.00 for the print edition and $55.00 for the online edition. For print edition delivery outside the United States, add $10.00 for international postage. For institutions, the annual rate is $395.00 for the print edition and $375.00 for the online edition. Payment must accompany order.

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The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 for Permanence of Paper for Publications and Documents in Libraries and Archives.

Articles and reviews published in this journal are abstracted and indexed in Historical Abstracts and Lancaster Index to Defence and International Security Literature.

Printed in the United States of America
ISSN (print) 1949-8489 • ISSN (online) 1949-8497

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Changing Fortunes and the Tyranny of Logistics: Canadian Naval Support of the Brittany Offensive

JAMES A. WOOD

ABSTRACT
This article examines the strategic links between the land and sea campaigns in Brittany and the Bay of Biscay in August 1944. On land and sea, the U.S. Third Army and Allied destroyers worked to break the German hold over the Biscay ports, forcing a withdrawal of the U-boats from the French Atlantic coast and establishing the logistical footing for an anticipated Allied breakout from Normandy. Prior to D-Day, the capture of these ports and construction of new facilities at Quiberon Bay had figured prominently in Allied logistical planning. By mid-August, however, even as the U.S. Army was approaching its objectives in Brittany, the entire campaign took an unexpected turn when the failure of Hitler's Mortain counteroffensive left two German armies encircled in the Falaise pocket. Amid the changing circumstances of the Normandy campaign, the strategic value of the Biscay harbors was suddenly diminished. While the U.S. Army continued its controversial drive to liberate Brest, it cancelled plans to develop Quiberon Bay. Meanwhile, Operation KINETIC, the Allied naval offensive, broke the German hold over the Bay of Biscay and destroyed twenty-two German ships – a success that was easily overlooked as the focus of the Allied advance shifted farther east.

KEYWORDS
Bay of Biscay; Brest, siege of; Brittany; D-Day; Falaise Pocket; logistics; Normandy, battle of; Operation CHASTITY; Operation KINETIC; Quiberon Bay; World War II

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.01

Introduction

Almost two months after the landings in Normandy, August 1944 began with the whirlwind dash of Lieutenant General George S. Patton's U.S. Third Army through Brittany. It was a high profile campaign, full of speed

and daring as VIII Corps advanced toward the Breton ports. Patton later reflected: "Our basic plan was to go over, under, or through the enemy."[1] Less well known is the naval side of the story: Operation KINETIC, a combined Allied offensive to support the land campaign by blockading those same ports that were the objective of Patton's flamboyant advance. Within Operation KINETIC, Canadian Tribal destroyers HMCS *Iroquois* and HMCS *Haida* operated as part of Force 26 and 27 alongside cruisers and destroyers of the Royal Navy, tasked to destroy enemy shipping off the coast of the Bay of Biscay.

Operation KINETIC was a spectacular success, but relatively unknown to the press and later to historians. During three weeks of August 1944, British and Canadian destroyers sank twenty-two German ships along the Biscay coast, effectively removing control of the area from the *Kriegsmarine* and closing it to German shipping. Planned as naval support for Patton's advance through Brittany toward the ports, KINETIC – as with the eventual outcome of Patton's thrust into Western France – likely would have gained far more attention had it not been for the changing fortunes of the Normandy breakout and subsequent pursuit of German forces toward Northwest Europe. In the original planning for D-Day, the Biscay ports of the French Atlantic coast had been deemed logistically essential to supply Allied forces once the bridgehead had been established. However, as events unfolded in early August, the focus of the Allied thrust veered eastwards – toward the Falaise pocket – leaving both Patton's Brittany campaign and Operation KINETIC to play far different roles from those originally envisaged in earlier planning for the invasion of Normandy.[2]

As part of a larger air and sea campaign that combined the resources of the Royal Navy's Plymouth Command with those of Royal Air Force (RAF) Coastal Command, KINETIC's mission was to conduct a series of offensive patrols into the Bay of Biscay with the intent of closing the area to German coastal shipping and preventing the delivery of supplies to surrounded German garrisons in the French Atlantic ports. By examining the naval role of two Canadian Tribal destroyers in support of Patton's advance through Brittany, the broad international perspective of the Allied campaign may be glimpsed. As Third Army's VIII Corps raced toward Brest and Lorient, those same Biscay ports were under blockade by British cruisers, as well as British, Canadian, and Polish destroyers, and British and Canadian escort

1. Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), p. 181.
2. For further details on phase lines and logistical planning by Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force for the D-Day landings, see Roland G. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, Vol. I, *May 1941–September 1944* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1953), pp. 184-89, 285-307, and 463-505; Lieutenant Colonel Frank A. Osmanski, "The Logistical Planning of Operation Overlord," *Military Review*, Vol. LXXIX, No. 10 (January 1959), pp. 50-62; and Carlo D'Este, "The Master Plan," in *Decision in Normandy* (New York: Konecky & Konecky, 1994), pp. 71-104.

groups. The ports were also being attacked daily by American, British, and Canadian aircraft.

HMCS *Iroquois* took part in all three major actions of KINETIC, gaining accolades for the excellent performance of its newly-installed Type 293 radar.[3] HMCS *Haida* scored impressive results in the first sea battle of 5/6 August, but was put out of action for the next two weeks by damages sustained in that battle. Following KINETIC's success, Vice-Admiral Sir Ralph Leatham, Commander-in-Chief Plymouth Command, complimented the actions of the Canadian Tribal destroyers, noting that Operation KINETIC "may be regarded as a model of its type."[4] He added in his commendation that the Tribals' actions as part of the Tenth Destroyer Flotilla were extremely well-fought, displaying a great fighting spirit coupled with determination and persistence.

Although Operation KINETIC was a tactical victory for Allied naval forces, particularly for HMCS *Iroquois*, the three major battles involved have not been highly publicized. To understand why attention slipped away from Biscay area operations it is important to examine the naval actions of August 1944 within the context of the overall Normandy campaign, from its planning stages to the breakout at St-Lô, to Hitler's failed counterattack at Mortain, and ultimately to the Allied closing of the Falaise pocket. Through the examination of naval Reports of Action and Ultra decrypts of August 1944, the successes of the *Iroquois* and *Haida* within Operation KINETIC are uncovered, reviving memories of Canadian contributions to the naval campaign and the removal of the German Navy from the Biscay area. As the strategic fortunes of the breakout from Normandy changed, so also did attention to British and Canadian tactical successes within KINETIC. In this article, naval operational tactics in the Bay of Biscay will be examined in their broader context through a parallel study of the land operations in Brittany that they were tasked with supporting.

The Biscay ports: OVERLORD logistics

The deep-water ports along the Bay of Biscay held dual significance: for the German Army in providing strategic naval prowess, and for the Allies through their logistical potential following the Normandy landings. After the

3. Type 293 radar was an S-band target indicator capable of detecting aircraft at an altitude of 10,000 feet from a distance of fifteen to eighteen nautical miles. Variants of Type 293 radar installed on the *Iroquois* in 1944 remained in service until the late 1950s. See W.A.B. Douglas, Roger Sarty, and Michael Whitby, *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 Press, 2007), pp. 307-11; Barry Gough, *HMCS Haida: Battle Ensign Flying* (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing, 2001), pp. 53 and 214; and William McAndrew, Donald E. Graves, and Michael Whitby, *Normandy 1944: The Canadian Summer* (Montreal: Art Global, 1994), p. 105.

4. "Three Accounts of Anti-Shipping Strikes in Bay of Biscay Coastal Areas," Directorate of History and Heritage, Department of National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa (DH&H), 8000, HMCS *Iroquois*: General 1944-1945, 14 October 1944.

American forces in the western sector of the bridgehead were able to establish control and break out from their positions, they had as one of their missions the capture of the Breton ports. Operation KINETIC was primarily directed at weakening the German naval hold over the ports, both as supply and U-boat bases. The focus of the U.S. Brittany campaign was to seize these ports by land to make use of their capacity for unloading the thousands of tons of weaponry, food, vehicles, fuel, and especially artillery ammunition that the Allied troops would need to continue their advance toward Germany following the D-Day landings.

Thus, during the planning phases of OVERLORD, the second major objective for Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), after its primary goal of establishing a bridgehead in Normandy, was to gain control of the Breton peninsula in order to seize and develop its port facilities. In London, at the St. Paul's School briefings of 7 April and 15 May, General Bernard Montgomery, commander of land forces for the invasion, presented the strategic plan to SHAEF planners. Using "phase lines" as a forecast of operations, Montgomery identified a projected Allied plan of breakout from the Normandy landings, with an anticipated advance to St-Nazaire and the River Loire by D+35 (11 July). After pushing the German Army out of the difficult *bocage* country, U.S. forces would thrust rapidly through Brittany, seize the deep-water ports, seal off the peninsula, and by D+90 (4 September) wheel around toward Paris and the Seine. From the earliest stages of planning, the success of the Normandy invasion was deemed to hinge upon the delivery of sufficient supplies and reinforcements to keep the Allied armies moving. To meet the estimated requirement of 45,000 tons landed daily by D+90, the Brittany ports would have to be captured and developed by D+60 (5 August).[5] Lieutenant General Omar Bradley, commander of the U.S. Twelfth Army Group, was later to reflect that after the primary goal of the landings in Normandy, "The second objective derived in large measure from the tyranny of logistics that overshadows any tactical movement in war. G-4 had repeatedly stressed the necessity for capturing the Brittany ports before the September gales knocked out our beachhead and left us totally dependent on Cherbourg."[6]

In his official report, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, R.G. Ruppenthal summarized: "The importance of Brittany in the OVERLORD plan can hardly be exaggerated. The very success of OVERLORD seemed predicated on the organization of that area as the principal U.S. base of operations."[7] So long as the German garrisons at Brest and the other Biscay ports held out, however, the Allies would have to depend upon beaches and artificial harbors, or "Mulberries," to supply their armies in Normandy. Indeed, two weeks after the D-Day landings, the Great Storm of 19 to 22 June

5. A. Harding Ganz, "Questionable Objective: The Brittany Ports, 1944," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. LIX, No. 1 (January 1995), p. 80.
6. Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Random House, 1999), p. 317.
7. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, Vol. I, p. 467.

completely destroyed the American Mulberry at St-Laurent and badly damaged the British one at Arromanches. In late June and July, the beaches and the British Mulberry harbor were able to meet the immediate needs of the invasion forces, however, original hopes that the early capture of Cherbourg might provide additional port capacity had been dashed with General Karl-Wilhelm von Schlieben's tenacious defense to the end of June. Allied planners assumed that deep-water ports in Brittany would ultimately take on a progressively larger portion of the logistical burden – once they were captured.

Throughout July, Bradley, along with his logistical staff, continued to look upon the capture of the Biscay ports as a means of supplying the growing number of American divisions in France and relieving the backlog and rationing necessitated both by the Great Storm and by delays in the capture of the port facilities at Cherbourg and St-Malo.[8] As Operation KINETIC got under way at the beginning of August, Allied planners still considered a foothold in Brittany to be a prerequisite to the larger objective of destroying the German forces in the West.[9] At this time, the discharge of essential cargo at existing facilities in Normandy could supply only 75% of daily requirements, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Operation OVERLORD planning vs. actual unloading of matériel
Beach and port capacity supporting the Normandy campaign in long tons per day[10]

	Number of U.S. Divisions	Planned Capacity of Beaches and Ports	Actual Discharge	Percentage of Needs Supplied
D+30 (6 July)	15	27,200	17,880	70%
D+60 (5 Aug.)	18	36,940	27,645	75%
D+90 (4 Sept.)	21	45,950	27,998	61%

While the original planning for OVERLORD had placed a great deal of importance upon securing existing ports in Brittany, even greater attention had been devoted to proposals for the construction of entirely new harbor facilities at Quiberon Bay on the south coast of the Breton peninsula between Lorient and St-Nazaire. According to Operation CHASTITY, the U.S. Army intended to develop Quiberon Bay as the site of a major anchorage with a projected daily discharge rate of 10,000 tons. The scale of this construction becomes apparent when compared with Cherbourg's daily estimated capacity by the end of August of 8,000 tons, with Brest at 5,300 tons, and Lorient at 2,550 tons.[11] A report by General Montgomery's

8. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, p. 175.
9. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, Vol. I, pp. 188 and 466.
10. Table 1 adapted from Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, Vol. I, p. 297 and Osmanski, "The Logistical Planning of Operation Overlord," p. 59. "Planned capacity" of the beaches and ports was calculated according to the approximate daily requirement of an American division, which for the invasion of Normandy stood at 800 tons per day, reserve divisions at 400 tons per day, plus equipment, vehicles, and fuel, Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, Vol. I, p. 307.
11. Ibid., pp. 294, 296-97, 467. For an assessment of Operation CHASTITY, see Charles

Twenty-first Army Group noted that: "The Quiberon Bay project offers great scope for surprise. Once the bay is captured, and provided constructional estimates are fulfilled, our build-up should be assured for some time to come, and our southern flank can then be rested economically on the Loire."[12] Following capture by the Allies, the Biscay ports, along with the newly constructed facilities at Quiberon, would allow the build-up of reinforcements and supplies in preparation for the advance toward Paris and beyond. Together, the four ports were to provide over half the expected shipping requirements of 45,950 long tons per day needed for the advance.

Thus, at the beginning of August 1944, the intentions of the Allied drive into Brittany and the effort to destroy German coastal shipping in the area were both to secure a hold over existing German-occupied ports and prepare the way for constructing new harbor facilities at Quiberon Bay. In later reflections, Lieutenant General Omar Bradley, commander of the U.S. 12th Army Group, wrote:

> There was one overriding reason why I sent Patton and Middleton to Brittany: logistics…. Logistics were the lifeblood of the Allied armies in France. Without ports and facilities we could not supply our armies. We could not move, shoot, eat, land new troops or evacuate the wounded. One division in combat required about 700 tons of supplies a day. The Allies had thirty-seven divisions on the continent.[13]

To the north and south respectively, Brest and Bordeaux were the largest of the French Atlantic ports, while Lorient, St-Nazaire, and La Pallice provided smaller harbors that would also be useful for discharging cargo. OVERLORD planners anticipated that the capture of Brittany would achieve one of the basic requirements for the success of the Allied invasion: a continental port capacity sufficient to support the forces deemed necessary to defeat the Germans.[14] When Operation KINETIC began, the Allies still believed these ports would provide a means of supplying the invasion forces during the breakout from Normandy and the advance toward the Seine River.

The Biscay ports: the *Kriegsmarine* and garrisons

Taking the ports along the Biscay coast would not only meet Allied logistical goals, but neutralize the threat of German surface and submarine raiders as well. Since the fall of France in June 1940, the Germans had

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Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations of North-West Europe 1944-1945* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1960), pp. 83-86 and 273.

12. Twenty-first Army Group, "Appreciation on Possible Development of Operations to Secure a Lodgement Area," 7 May 1944, in Stacey, *The Victory Campaign*, p. 83.

13. Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), p. 285. Bradley's estimate of daily requirements per division is lower than the official planning estimates noted by Ruppenthal at 800 tons per day.

14. Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961), p. 346.

enjoyed the great strategic advantage of occupying French ports along the Bay of Biscay. Grand-Admiral Karl Dönitz, Commander-in-Chief of the *Kriegsmarine*, pointed out from his U-boat command bunker near Lorient that in comparison to their former North Sea route, possession of naval bases along the Bay of Biscay saved the U-boats some 450 miles on their voyage to the Atlantic. This, in turn, allowed each patrol to spend an additional week in the mid-Atlantic, creating more operational time, and raising the total number of U-boats at sea by about 25% per month.[15]

With roofs twenty feet thick, nearly-impenetrable reinforced concrete U-boat pens located in the Biscay ports provided access to vital repair facilities and offered shelter from even the heaviest bombs possessed by the U.S. Eighth Air Force and RAF Bomber Command. The repair dockyard at Lorient, in particular, was noted for being even more efficient than Germany's own overworked shipyards in servicing and repairing the U-boats.[16] By allowing the U-boats to remain at sea for longer periods of time, while also offering a safe haven for rest and refitting, German occupation of the Biscay ports had made a substantial contribution to the losses inflicted upon Allied shipping during the Battle of the Atlantic. In the days leading to Patton's campaign in Brittany, recurring Allied intelligence was predicting the resurgence of German U-boat attacks in the Atlantic.[17] Construction was underway of a reconstituted and retrained fleet to be bolstered by the installation of *schnorchel* to avoid radar and aircraft detection while traveling at periscope depth, improved receivers capable of intercepting centimetric radar, and the unmatchable Type XXI and XXIII submarines. In Hitler's plans, Brest – with its formidable U-boat pens – would become the base for the new fleet. By 7 August, the construction of thirty-one Type XXIs had been detected.[18]

In August 1944, German Naval Group West had some fifty-three U-boats and four destroyers at its disposal in the Biscay area, along with a large number of patrol vessels and minesweepers. The 2nd and 10th Combat Flotillas had their base at Lorient, while the 1st and 9th Combat Flotillas operated out of Brest, the 6th and 7th from St-Nazaire, the 3rd from La Pallice, and the 12th Combat Flotilla from Bordeaux.[19] Operating from

15. V.E. Tarrant, *The Last Year of the Kriegsmarine: May 1944–May 1945* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1994), p. 90.
16. Corelli Barnett, "The Partnership Between Canada and Britain in Winning the Battle of the Atlantic," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Autumn 2004), p. 6; and Correlli Barnett, *Engage the Enemy More Closely: The Royal Navy in the Second World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), pp. 90 and 194.
17. F.H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World* War, Vol. 3, Pt. 2 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1988), pp. 474-75. For example, a "Memorandum to the First Sea Lord" on 20 July 1944 warned that "the Germans are now implementing a plan … to be in a position to resume the U-boat offensive in the autumn with a re-trained and reconstituted U-boat fleet."
18. Ibid., p. 475.
19. Clay Blair, *Hitler's U-Boat War: The Hunted, 1942-1945* (New York: Random

secure bases along the coast, the German Navy in the Bay of Biscay enjoyed the natural protection of rocky shoals and inlets, supplemented by minefields, shore-based radar, coastal artillery, and *Luftwaffe* patrols. By remaining close to shore and within artillery range, the *Kriegsmarine* could operate in relative security, despite its comparative weakness in relation to Allied naval forces at this stage of the war.

Prior to the Allied invasion of Normandy and the disruption of French rail networks, coastal convoys had been of only limited importance to German garrisons along the Bay of Biscay. Beginning in the spring of 1944, however, and continuing throughout the summer, Allied bombing and the activities of the French resistance succeeded in throwing overland communications into chaos. Faced with an ever more difficult situation on land, coastal convoys became increasingly important to the German garrisons of about 100,000 men along the Bay of Biscay.[20] By sailing only at night and, whenever possible, within range of the coastal guns, these convoys were able to move between the ports carrying vital supplies and conduct harassing patrols against Allied navies. German coastal artillery along the Biscay portion of the Atlantic Wall represented a particularly dangerous threat to Allied inshore operations: in addition to a large number of light and medium batteries, German shore batteries included sixty-four heavy guns of 100- to 150-mm caliber and twenty super-heavy guns of 170-mm or greater. In comparison, the Atlantic Wall in the Normandy sector included only two-thirds as many heavy guns and half as many super-heavy guns.[21] By mid-July the urgency of the situation was apparent in Montgomery's directive to his commanders of Twenty-first Army Group that it was now vital to gain possession of the whole Breton peninsula: "We require the Brittany ports so that we can develop the full resources of the Allies in Western Europe, and we must get them soon."[22]

Operation COBRA, the American breakout from Normandy, began on 25 July with massive carpet-bombing of the St-Lô area by 1,500 Flying Fortresses. The elite German Panzer Lehr Division suffered tremendous losses under the bombardment. Nineteen U.S. Army divisions faced nine German divisions, many of them consisting mostly of "remnants" from other units, with the main infantry divisions – the 243rd, 353rd, 91st Airlanding, and 5th Parachute – all seriously under strength. German strongpoints all

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House, 1998), pp. 580 and 611; and Stephen Roskill, *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt. 2 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961), p. 130.

20. *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW) War Diary* (College Park: National Archives at College Park, World War II Military Studies, X, pt. 4, MS B-034), pp. 340 and 351.

21. J.E. Kaufmann and R.M. Jurga, *Fortress Europe: European Fortifications of World War II* (Conshohochen, PA: Combined Publishing, 1999), p. 394.

22. General Bernard Montgomery, Directive 21 July 1944, in Stacey, *The Victory Campaign*, p. 181. See also Montgomery's Directive M515 of 27 July1944, Montgomery letters of 1 and 2 August, BLM 94/7, 94/8 and Eisenhower letter to Marshall, 2 August 1944 emphasizing the need to secure Brittany, in Terry Copp, *Fields of Fire: The Canadians in Normandy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 187-90.

along the St-Lô line of resistance had been wiped out, many of them by the 60,000 Allied bombs that were dropped in preparation for the advance. Furious fighting broke out throughout *bocage* country hedgerows as U.S. troops moved inland; the front collapsed into a wild mêlée of fighting with the only German resistance being offered by isolated bands of exhausted, dispirited, and confused soldiers. They were pursued relentlessly by a surge of American tank and infantry forces, which were constantly being refreshed by the arrival of reinforcements. On 28 July, General Patton arrived in Normandy to take command of the U.S. Third Army and his arrival would undoubtedly have had a significant impact upon German morale, given his reputation for "ruthless driving power" and his ability to get "the utmost out of his soldiers in offensive operations."[23]

On 31 July, Field Marshal Günther von Kluge signaled his doubt to OKW command that the American advance could still be stopped. He gave a brief assessment of the situation: "It's a madhouse here!"[24] U.S. Third Army became operational and began its rapid advance: by midnight of 1 August, Patton's troops had "turned the corner" at Avranches and threatened to isolate the entire Breton peninsula. Lying before them, the interior of Brittany was almost empty of German troops, who had either already left for Normandy or were concentrating on the Atlantic coast for the defense of its ports. While the Germans might have responded to the American advance by abandoning the Biscay ports and withdrawing their forces to the east, Hitler instead opted to hold the coastal fortresses for as long as possible. Brest, Lorient, St-Nazaire, La Pallice, and Bordeaux were still defended by large garrisons, but with the Allies moving into Brittany these garrisons were in danger of being surrounded and trapped. Once the ports fell behind Allied lines, nighttime convoys would offer the only means of maintaining the surrounded garrisons. As tactical support for the American drive into Brittany, Operation KINETIC would intercept those German coastal convoys and forestall any attempt by the Germans to evacuate essential personnel back to the homefront by way of the Channel Islands.[25]

As VIII Corps continued toward its task of capturing the Breton ports, Hitler responded with a special order of 2 August in which he outlined arrangements for the defense of the "coastal fortresses." German troops along the Biscay coast were to be utilized in the defense of fortress positions from Brest to Bordeaux, with specific units assigned to hold each of these remaining ports to the "last man's last round of ammunition." The *Führer's* fortress policy further emphasized that "these forces were not to be regarded as rear guards which were to follow in due time, but were to carry out their

23. Patton's reputation is noted by a letter from Eisenhower to Marshall, 29-30 April 1944, cited in Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 344.
24. Ibid., p. 323.
25. "Brief History of HMCS *Iroquois*," DH&H, 8000, "Tribal" Class Destroyers, HMCS *Iroquois*, History and General, I, 4 August 1959.

defensive mission to the last."[26] These French Atlantic ports – the fortresses – however, were equally important to the Allies. Without them, and particularly those in Brittany, logistics planners believed it would be difficult to sustain Allied forces on the continent.

Île d'Yeu: Operation KINETIC's first success, 5/6 August

Fortresses that were fed by sea could be starved by sea; hence, Operation KINETIC was designed as a series of offensive sweeps to break the German coastal supply links "once and for all."[27] The combined air and naval blockade in which Operation KINETIC played an important part was to act as the anvil when the hammer of the U.S. Third Army swung westward to crush the German defenders of the Biscay ports. Operation KINETIC began on 31 July as Force 26 departed Plymouth for the Bay of Biscay, led by two cruisers of the British 10th Cruiser Squadron, HMS *Diadem* and HMS *Bellona*, along with the escort carrier HMS *Striker*. Four Tribal destroyers, two British and two Canadian, participated as part of the Royal Navy's 10th Destroyer Flotilla: HMS *Tartar* and *Ashanti* and HMCS *Haida* and *Huron*, with the latter being replaced by HMCS *Iroquois* in early August. The force also included two Polish destroyers, the *Poirun* and *Blyskawika*, and an anti-submarine screen of three Canadian River-class destroyers, HMCS *St. Laurent*, *Chaudière*, and *Kootenay*. By day they were to screen anti-submarine groups and by night were to move inshore to search for German coastal convoys.

HMCS *Iroquois*, *Haida*, and *Huron* were three of the four Canadian Tribal-class destroyers operating as the pride of Canada's wartime fleet within the Royal Navy's 10th Destroyer Flotilla (10th DF).[28] As Operation KINETIC began, the *Iroquois* returned to the Biscay area from refit in Halifax as a relative newcomer to the business at hand. Sailing together once again, the *Iroquois* and *Haida* were veterans of the war at sea, the two destroyers having served together on the Arctic convoys to Murmansk in 1943. Tribals were versatile, heavily-gunned warships. Powerful surface and anti-aircraft gunnery made these ships especially well suited to fighting surface engagements yet they also carried limited depth charge armament to counter the threat of enemy submarines, along with four torpedoes in a power-operated pivot mounting with a range of 14,000 yards.[29]

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26. *OKW War Diary*, pp. 330-31.

27. Joseph Schull, *Far Distant Ships: An Official Account of Canadian Naval Operations in World War II* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1987), p. 348.

28. Prior to D-Day, Tribals demonstrated their efficiency during several hard-fought actions in the English Channel. In these engagements, three of the four Canadian Tribals, HMCS *Haida*, *Huron*, and *Athabaskan*, took part in the sinking of German Elbing- and Narvik-class destroyers as well as an enemy submarine. See Michael Whitby, "Instruments of Security: The Royal Canadian Navy's Procurement of the Tribal-Class Destroyers, 1938-1943," *The Northern Mariner*, Vol. II, No.3 (July 1992), p. 10.

29. As primary fighting gunnery, Tribal destroyers carried three twin mountings of 4.7-inch guns, with an effective surface range of 16,900 yards, along with a twin 4-inch anti-

During successful operations in the English Channel prior to D-Day, the *Haida's* Commanding Officer, Captain Harry DeWolf, won the Distinguished Service Order and the Distinguished Service Cross for his exemplary leadership.[30] Commander Jimmy Hibbard of HMCS *Iroquois* was also recognized as an extremely capable leader, having been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his command of an Allied escort group in the Battle of the Atlantic.[31] While the *Iroquois* had missed out on earlier actions in the English Channel, as a trade-off, the destroyer now returned to Plymouth Command equipped with the most modern radar and combat control facilities of any destroyer in the theater, an advantage that would prove decisive in all three KINETIC actions.[32] Close range weaponry had been increased by fitting six twin-20mm Oerlikon mountings in place of the former single mountings, as well as a power mounting for the 2-pounder pom-pom. Type 285P gunnery radar had replaced the earlier Type 285M, while even more significantly, Type 293 surface warning radar replaced the older Type 271Q. Hibbard was a noted innovator in his effective use of the operations room, and he ensured that best use was made of his state-of-the-art Action Information Centre, strategically placed below the bridge in Tribal destroyers.[33] The significance of Operation KINETIC to the Allied forces may be reckoned by their willingness to expose such vital and expensive cruisers and destroyers to the powerful coastal guns of the Atlantic Wall along the Biscay coast.

The first KINETIC patrol encountered no enemy ships and on 3 August returned to Plymouth empty-handed: no sightings, no targets, no action. Another uneventful patrol took place the following day off Belle Isle, again with no enemies sighted. Despite these inauspicious beginnings, however, events on the land front were about to set the German coastal convoys into motion. Responding to Third Army's move into Brittany, German naval traffic in the Bay of Biscay began to increase dramatically as the evacuation

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aircraft mount, a quad pom-pom cluster firing high explosive 2-pounder shells, and six twin power-operated mountings of 20mm Oerlikons. For further specifications on Tribal armament, see DH&H, 8000, "Tribal" Class Destroyers, Signals Volume I, 14 July 1944; Gough, *HMCS Haida*, pp. 18-28 and 205-11.

30. "Recommendations for Honours and Awards," National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 24, Vol. 11525, File 14373-102/266, Enclosure #1, Plymouth Letter, 18 August 1944.

31. Hibbard was awarded the DSC during the almost continuous three-day U-boat attack against convoy SC42 off Greenland. See Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 94-95. In September 1941 SC42 consisted of seventy ships, with only one destroyer and three corvettes as escorts. Low on fuel and following three days of gale-force storms and two days of U-boat attacks before five destroyers arrived to the rescue, SC42 lost fifteen merchant ships.

32. For details on the HMCS *Iroquois* refit, the Action Information Centre, and plotting teams, see Douglas, Sarty, and Whitby, *A Blue Water Navy*, pp. 306-16.

33. Captain W.W. Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings and Engagements with Enemy Forces in the Approaches to La Rochelle on 15 August 1944," DH&H, 8000, Destroyers Tribal Class (A–Z), 3 September 1944.

of personnel and equipment from the fortresses began.[34] On the night of 5/6 August, the *Iroquois* and *Haida* formed part of Force 26 as it conducted its third KINETIC patrol in the waters off St-Nazaire. On this night the cruiser HMS *Bellona* was in the lead, accompanied by the two Canadian destroyers alongside British Tribals *Tartar* and *Ashanti*. While passing St-Nazaire, they detected a southbound enemy convoy moving north of Île d'Yeu.

As it would throughout Operation KINETIC, the new Type 293 surface warning radar aboard the *Iroquois* immediately proved its worth: "First contact was obtained at 20:43 at the fantastic range, for Radar, of 44,000 yards, but it was not until the Force had closed the enemy convoy to about 27,000 yards by midnight, that an accurate appreciation of the enemy's movements could be made."[35] From the cruiser *Bellona*, Captain Charles F.W. Norris, Senior Officer of Force 26, initially gave the order to hold off, waiting for the Germans to pull away from the coast and the protective cover of the shore batteries. At 00:34 he set up the destroyers for action, ordering them to slip between the enemy and the coastline.[36]

Anticipating the usual German tactic of running for shore when attacked, Norris planned to have his cruiser play an indirect role, firing starshell illumination from two miles away while the destroyers engaged the enemy in the shallow inshore waters. The plan worked perfectly. Surprised and confused by the direction of incoming fire, the German convoy began sending up green and red recognition flares. The Germans, it was later found, were under the impression that they were being mistakenly engaged by their own shore batteries and the flares were intended to signal them to stop.[37] Quite the opposite, the flares added to the illumination shells fired from the *Bellona*, allowing the Tribals to continue firing until the convoy was in total disarray.

From a report filed on the role of HMCS *Iroquois* on the night of 5/6 August, the intensity of action can be measured not only by the number of targets destroyed, but by the speed of the engagement:

> The destroyers swept in amongst the enemy on "finishing off" sorties, leaving a large number of burning targets. As soon as one target was stopped and put out of action, fire was shifted to the next. Smoke soon obscured the enemy and blind fire was continued on them. On one run in, *Iroquois* passed between two ships, one stopped and one burning, and engaged them with armament and close range weapons on both sides. *Iroquois* then altered to the eastward to investigate radar contacts and two ships were sighted which appeared to be stopped. While closing and engaging, a further two ships were sighted to the

34. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Vol. III, Pt. 2, p. 464.
35. "The RCN's Part in Destroying Enemy Shipping From the Breton Ports – Early August 1944," DH&H, 8000, "Tribal" Class Destroyers, HMCS *Haida*, 11 August 1944.
36. Captain Charles F.W. Norris, "HMS *Bellona* Report of an Operation by Force 26 on 5th and 6th August 1944," NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11730, File CS 151-1-2, 30 August 1944.
37. Ibid.

> northeastward…. *Iroquois* gave chase and engaged a small merchant ship which was seen to sink and a trawler which was set on fire. Course was altered to the southward to engage an unknown type and an "M" class minesweeper.[38]

By 02:22 seven enemy vessels were destroyed: two minesweepers, two armed escorts, a large cable layer, and two merchant ships. Two of the ships were sunk by the *Haida*, two by the *Iroquois*, and the other three by the *Tartar* and *Ashanti*. Another German ship escaped to the westward but all ships of Force 26 were busily engaging the enemy and unable to pursue. From captured prisoners, it was later learned that the destroyed convoy had been carrying 800 to 900 special troops who were being evacuated from St-Nazaire under Hitler's order of 2 August. As specialists and technicians, they were desperately needed in Germany for submarine construction and repair. Most of them went down with their ships.[39]

The events of 5/6 August were far from over, both in terms of disasters and successes for Force 26. With several burning ships in sight, Captain Norris issued an order from the *Bellona* for the destroyers to re-form astern.[40] As they fell into line, a cordite charge in the *Haida's* "Y" gun turret exploded just as the breech was closing, killing two gunners and wounding eight others. Able Seaman Michael Kerwin had entered the burning turret to rescue a shipmate, even though he was badly wounded himself. For his bravery that night, Kerwin was later awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal, a decoration second only to the Victoria Cross, presented to naval non-commissioned officers or servicemen who distinguish themselves by acts of pre-eminent bravery in action with the enemy.[41]

Force 26 sailed through the battle area for a further twenty minutes firing on any German vessel that was still capable of moving. Norris then ordered the ships to the northwest to search for additional shipping. The *Haida's* crew had to recover quickly from the "Y" turret disaster: a second convoy was detected shortly afterwards between Belle Isle and Quiberon Bay. Four or five enemy vessels, possibly minesweepers, were engaged at 03:37, but at this time the luck of the *Haida's* crew continued on its downturn. On the first salvo, the *Haida* suffered a second misfire when the "A" gun became jammed and a round exploded prematurely in the barrel. In spite of the serious setbacks, the *Haida's* crew were determined to continue; with less

38. "Three Accounts of Anti-Shipping Strikes in the Bay of Biscay," DH&H.
39. "Brief History of HMCS *Iroquois*," DH&H; "The R.C.N.'s Part in Destroying Enemy Shipping from the Breton Ports," DH&H.
40. Norris, "HMS *Bellona* Report of an Operation 5th and 6th August 1944," NAC.
41. "Recommendation for Awards," NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11525, File 14373-112/266, 22 September 1944; see also Lieutenant Commander William Sclater, "HMCS *Haida* at Sea," Royal Canadian Navy Press Release, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11730, File CS 151-11-7, 17 August 1944. Only two Conspicuous Gallantry Medals were awarded in the RCN in the Second World War; none were awarded to Canadians in the First World War or the Korean War.

than half of his main armament, DeWolf stayed in the action by firing starshell from the "X" mounting. The second German convoy proved much faster than the first, having no merchant coasters to slow it down.

Force 26 scored some hits, but the challenges of nighttime sea battle grew worse as they fought in an area that was very well protected by radar-controlled shore batteries. Inshore navigation off the deeply-indented coast was made even more hazardous by channels strewn with rocks and close to minefields.[42] Given the hazards of these inshore waters, Norris had to be wary of tidal streams and other navigational difficulties, and for that reason ordered the destroyers to remain concentrated during the attack. Adding to these difficulties, bright moonlight had the effect of silhouetting the destroyers in the night action, thus exposing them to nearby coastal artillery batteries as well as negating any advantage that might have been offered by Force 26's illumination shells. As Norris reported: "Starshell failed to illuminate the target effectively, although some dim shape was fired at…. Personally, I could see nothing of the enemy…. It was reported to me that *Bellona* was almost out of starshell [and the Headache operator] suspected presence of 'E' Boats."[43]

From the cruiser, the strong moonlight also prevented Norris from seeing the flashless charges being fired by his destroyers and he was unaware that they were actually engaging the enemy. Acting on the information available to him, Norris ordered a withdrawal. The opening victories of Operation KINETIC might have been even more impressive had Norris been able to determine the battle status more clearly. However, in the "fog of battle," confusion reigned and the four German ships under attack were allowed to escape after being only lightly damaged by the Tribals. In his Report of Action for HMS *Bellona*, Norris attributed his decision to withdraw to "problems in communication that interfered with the passage of orders between the cruiser and…the 10th DF."[44] In the *Haida's* Report of Proceedings, DeWolf graciously stated that "…some damage was inflicted before navigational limitations caused the action to be broken off."[45] Norris, however, accepted entire responsibility for bringing the action to a premature end and failing to match the earlier successes of the night.

With daylight rapidly approaching – signaling further danger from the coastal batteries and the possibility of an air attack – Force 26 received orders from Plymouth Command to return to port. They were told not to risk the Force so close to the enemy's airfields in daylight.[46] In all, the German

42. "The R.C.N.'s Part in Destroying Enemy Shipping from the Breton Ports," DH&H.
43. Norris, "HMS *Bellona* Report of an Operation 5th and 6th August 1944," NAC. "Headache" equipment allowed the monitoring of German radio transmissions while at sea.
44. Ibid.
45. Captain H.G. DeWolf, "HMCS *Haida* Report of Proceedings, August 1944," NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11730, File CS 151-11-7, 5 September 1944.
46. "The R.C.N.'s Part in Destroying Enemy Shipping from the Breton Ports," DH&H.

convoys stood little chance against the well-armed ships of Force 26. Superior radar onboard the *Iroquois* allowed Allied warships to detect the enemy with more than enough time to maneuver for a surprise attack. As well, the gunnery of the Tribals performed to the usual high standard that night: the *Haida* expended over 1,000 rounds of 4.7-inch ammunition from its main armament alone. The *Iroquois*, close behind, fired some 865 shells during the engagement.[47] Such a volume of fire was only possible due to the advanced gunnery radar carried in both Tribals, which enabled them to determine the distance to enemy ships and automatically direct fire with great accuracy.[48]

HMCS *Haida* returned to Plymouth to bury the two men killed in action at the Île de Yeu, with the crew learning that the repairs necessitated by the night's heavy action would prevent them from participating in the continuing successes of Operation KINETIC. HMCS *Iroquois* detached to reinforce the British 2nd and Canadian 11th Escort Groups, two "hunter-killer" formations that were presently engaged in tracking down U-boats in the English Channel, but would soon return to continue with KINETIC. For his effective command and handling of HMCS *Haida* that night, "with steadiness and ability during these complicated night actions," Captain DeWolf was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.[49] The night of 5/6 August produced an impressive beginning: in the first major action of the Biscay blockade seven ships had been destroyed, four of them by the Canadian Tribals *Haida* and *Iroquois*, along with damage to a minesweeper and flak ship.

Table 2: Results of action – Operation KINETIC 5/6 August[50]

Ships	**Location**	**Sunk or Destroyed**
Force 26:	First Action:	Minesweeper (*M486*)
HMS *Bellona* (cruiser)	Île d'Yeu	Minesweeper (*M263*)
HMCS *Haida*	SSW of St-Nazaire	Armed Trawler (*V414*)
HMCS *Iroquois*		Armed Escort (*SG3C*)
HMS *Ashanti*		Cable Layer (*Hoher Weg*)
HMS *Tartar*	Second Action:	Merchant Ship (*Otto*)
	Between Belle Isle and Quiberon Bay	Merchant Ship
		Damaged
		Minesweeper (*M304*)
		Flak Ship (*Richthofen*)

47. Ibid.

48. Type 285P was a secondary-battery gunnery radar capable of directing the main 4.7-inch armament on the *Haida* and Iroquois to within 100 yards on a 15,000 yard scale. See Gough, HMCS *Haida*, pp. 53 and 214.

49. Secretary of the Admiralty, "Recommendations for Awards," Plymouth Letter No. 3503/Ply.122, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11525, File 14373-112/266, FD 472, 22 September 1944.

50. Table 2 adapted from Captain Basil Jones, "Record of Tenth Destroyer Flotilla, April to September, 1944," NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11730, File CS 151-1-2, 15 September 1944; and Norris, "HMS *Bellona* Report of Operation 5th and 6th August 1944," NAC.

Changing fortunes in Brittany

During the initial actions of Operation KINETIC, the situation in the Brittany campaign was changing rapidly. On 2 August Bradley was still thinking along the lines of the original OVERLORD plan, with the very success of the Allied breakout and pursuit predicated on organizing Brittany as the principal logistic base of operations. By 3 August, however, Patton had become convinced that he was attacking in the wrong direction. Bradley now concurred, changing the entire course of the campaign with his announcement that Patton was "to clear Brittany with a minimum of forces,"[51] sending only General Troy Middleton's VIII Corps to make the advance. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill also showed his agreement by writing to Montgomery, "I am inclined to feel that the Brest peninsula will mop up pretty cheaply." Montgomery agreed that only one of the original four corps planned to make the advance through Brittany would be enough.[52] The four corps of Third Army split and went their separate ways, with VIII Corps continuing its drive through Brittany. The 6th Armored Division under Brigadier General Robert Grow was ordered to advance toward Brest, while Major General John S. Wood's 4th Armored Division was to drive through Rennes to Quiberon. The remainder of Third Army, meanwhile, advanced toward Le Mans – keeping up the pressure on the German Seventh Army. The greater Allied focus was now changing to the eastward drive out of Normandy as the German forces retreated.

Although only Middleton's VIII Corps remained in Brittany, Patton remained completely dedicated to the capture of Brest, looking back to its logistic significance in unloading American forces and supplies sent directly from the USA during the First World War. On 4 August, Patton ordered General Grow to "take Brest" by Saturday night – an advance of 200 miles curving through the central portion of the peninsula, to be made in less than five days. Patton had made a £5 bet with Montgomery that the city would fall within the week. Although Grow was delighted to have "received a cavalry mission from a cavalryman,"[53] the Germans were now strongly entrenched in the area with reinforcements having arrived from 266th Division under the command of Lieutenant General Spang. The American forces had been left under strength for this mission by Bradley's decision of 3 August. Patton lost his £5, and it would take another seven weeks to overcome the German garrison at Brest.

The Allied advance toward the ports in early August continued severing the land lines between German fortresses on the Atlantic coast and their

51. Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 431.
52. "Prime Minister to General Montgomery," 3 August 1944 and "General Montgomery to Prime Minister," 4 August 1944, in Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. 6, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), p. 30. XV Corps, XX Corps, and VII Corps of the U.S. Army were redirected easterly toward Laval, Alençon, the Falaise pocket, and the Seine.
53. Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 370.

headquarters in Paris, forcing them to rely on wireless communication. The Allies, in turn, were secretly able to intercept and decode these transmissions, with nearly six thousand encrypters engaged at Bletchley Park near London. The spectacular increase in the volume of wireless traffic from German command posts and headquarters was subsequently decrypted and distributed to key Allied commanders on a daily basis.[54] The flood of Ultra messages detailed the movement of supplies, equipment, and personnel between the Biscay ports, betraying the locations of German transports, armed escorts, and minesweepers. This movement at sea became even more hectic as overland routes were cut off by American forces, resulting in a corresponding increase in signals traffic. Ultra decrypts revealed that considerable numbers of German U-boats were arriving and departing from the Biscay ports on a daily basis, while coastal convoys continued to deliver vital equipment and stores between German naval bases. Urgent messages graphically portrayed deteriorating conditions within the garrisons as a result of the blockade at sea, as demonstrated by the ongoing stream of requests issuing from the fortresses as garrison commanders pleaded for more oil, ammunition, carbide, medical stores, and oxygen for welding.[55]

With Ultra messages revealing that the evacuation of equipment and personnel by sea was accelerating, the Allies were able to predict departure times and intercept the convoys with some degree of accuracy. Operation KINETIC's Force 26 and 27 formed part of Cruiser Squadron 10, sailing under the command of Vice-Admiral F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton in HMS *Diadem*. Appointed by the Home Fleet, Dalrymple-Hamilton was an "indoctrinated" commander, one of the limited number of Allied leaders with access to Ultra decrypts who were tasked with ensuring that maximum use was made of available signals intelligence.[56] In addition to enemy convoy schedules, Ultra revealed Dönitz's orders stressing the importance of installing *schnorchel* onboard the U-boats stationed at Lorient, with work continuing even as American forces approached the outskirts of the city.[57] The airwaves also carried constant updates regarding German losses and casualties, noting in particular the heavy damage to shipping and dockyard equipment resulting from RAF and U.S. Eighth Air Force bombing raids on

54. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Vol. III, Pt. 2, p. 465.
55. Public Records Office, Ministry of Defense (DEFE 3), "War of 1939-1945 Intelligence from Enemy Radio Communications: Signals to Allied Commands Conveying Special Intelligence," Teleprinted Translations of Decrypted German and Italian Naval Radio Messages, DEFE 3/113, XL 4875 of 5 August 1944; DEFE 3/115, XLs 5423, 5427 of 5 August; XL 5485 of 10 August; DEFE 3/116, XL 5612 of 11 August, XL 5740 of 12 August; DEFE 3/117, XL 5810 of 12 August; DEFE 3/118, XLs 6203, 6213, 6214 of 14 August; DEFE 3/119, XL 6404 of 15 August, XL 6462 of 16 August; DEFE 3/120, XL 6611 of 17 August.
56. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Vol. III, Pt. 2, pp. 246 and 464.
57. Ibid., p. 464 and DEFE 3/115, XL 5349 of 9 August.

the Biscay ports.[58]

During June and July, in response to the D-Day landings, all German armored divisions and several infantry divisions in Brittany, including the 1st and 9th Panzers, the 275th and 708th Infantry Divisions, 5th Paratroop, and 165th Reserve Divisions, had been withdrawn to reinforce the Normandy front. By August, only five German divisions of General Wilhelm Fahrmbacher's XXV Corps remained in the peninsula, with the original army field forces of 100,000 in Brittany at the time of the Normandy landings now reduced to just over one-third that number. In Normandy, the situation was even worse: since D-Day, the German Seventh Army had lost 750 of 1,400 tanks, plus 160,000 killed, wounded, or taken prisoner out of the 450,000 troops prior to the invasion.[59] In spite of the odds, Hitler's plans for Operation LÜTTICH were delivered to Army Group B headquarters on 3 August. Von Kluge was ordered to prepare a counteroffensive aimed at breaking through to Avranches, with the objective of isolating the American forces and ensuring their destruction. In this last desperate attempt to stop the Allied breakout, the German Seventh and Fifth Panzer Armies were to strike back at Mortain, divide the U.S. and British forces, and drive them into the sea – or so the theory went. The *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW) Diary reflected Hitler's optimistic frame of mind in its official minutes by recording: "Everything depended on a successful outcome of our own counterattack." Although the War Diary continued: "There was still hope that the development could be stopped," a handwritten remark inserted onto the minutes asking "Where?"[60] reflected the greater reality of the moment.

The German Panzer divisions – the 116th, 2nd, 2nd SS, and 1st SS – were in position; however, the tactical situation had changed. American spearheads were driving towards Le Mans, threatening the envelopment of German forces between the Americans in the south and the British to the north of Caen. Events everywhere were turning against the *Wehrmacht* as the counteroffensive bogged down. In Brittany, U.S. troops were closing in on the ports of Brest, St-Malo, Nantes, Lorient, and St-Nazaire. Near Paris, Allied combat air patrols had established a barrier around the runways of the *Luftwaffe's* Third Air Fleet, preventing any of its 300 promised fighters from

58. The most intense of the bombing raids had wrought destruction against port facilities in Brest on 5 August (DEFE 3/113, XL 4907 of 6 August); Lorient on 8 August (DEFE 3/115, XL 5447 of 10 August); and La Pallice, Brest, and Bordeaux on the 11-12th (DEFE 3/118, XL 6214 of 14 August). See also Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt, *The Bomber Command War Diaries: An Operational Reference Book, 1939-1945* (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985), pp. 562-77.

59. Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 342, *OKW War Diary*, pp. 58 and 101, and Army Group B Weekly Reports of June 27 – July 2, July 10-16, and July 17-23 in James A. Wood, ed., *Army of the West: The Weekly Reports of German Army Group B from Normandy to the West Wall* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2007).

60. *OKW War Diary*, p. 79.

reaching the Mortain area.[61] American medium bombers were engaging pinpoint targets while British Typhoon fighters flew almost 300 sorties against the 2nd Panzer Division. In spite of these difficulties, Hitler ordered Operation LÜTTICH to be prosecuted with reckless abandon: "disregarding completely the enemy who had penetrated into Brittany, attack the American divisions from the western flank, and annihilate them."[62]

As American forces pushed back the German forces at Mortain, Bradley realized the enormity of the German decision. Hitler had delivered the Seventh and the Fifth Panzer Armies into a salient. Should the Allies succeed in closing the gap between the American position at Argentan and the British one near Falaise, von Kluge's two armies could be encircled and destroyed. The German position had become unsustainable, with only a rapid withdrawal and retreat to a defensive line east of the Seine River able to save the *Wehrmacht* from a crushing defeat. Thus, seeing new possibilities in the campaign, Montgomery concurred with Bradley's decision to turn all available strength toward Falaise, stating that "the main business lies to the east."[63]

By 11 August, the predictions of the Allied commanders, and of Hitler's own generals in the field, had become a reality as Operation LÜTTICH ground to a halt. Victory went to the American defenders, who refused to be driven from their main line of resistance, even regaining some of the territory lost in the initial German onslaught. To the east, British and Canadian troops were already astride the Caen-Falaise highway preparing for a new offensive aimed at the encirclement of the two German armies in the Falaise pocket. The German Fifth Panzer and Seventh Armies in Normandy were now in mortal danger of being encircled.

The failure of Hitler's counteroffensive to isolate the U.S. Third Army in Brittany and drive the Allies back into the sea brought an end to German plans of stopping the Allied breakthrough. To the east, U.S. forces took Argentan on 13 August while Canadian and British armies advanced south. Bradley wrote: "In betting his life on the success of von Kluge's counterattack, Hitler had exposed his whole broad flank to attack and encirclement from the south. Within a week this decision brought on the Argentan-Falaise pocket."[64] No one could have predicted the sudden turn of events made possible by Hitler's blind faith in the power of his armies' counterattack. Although the siege of the Biscay ports continued, the focus of the war quickly shifted farther east. Bogged down at Brest, and far from what was now the center of action, a disappointed General Grow of the 6th U.S. Armored Division later recorded that in spite of the unparalleled "speed, determination and skill" of their rush toward Brest, the "Falaise Gap,

61. John Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy* (New York: Penguin, 1994), p. 247.
62. *OKW War Diary*, p. 80.
63. Montgomery telegram to Brooke, 9 August 1944, in Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 432.
64. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, p. 372.

Mortain, and the dash toward Paris held the spotlight."[65] The changing fortunes of war were seeing attention to both the land campaign in Brittany and its naval support become lost in the shuffle.

Under fire at La Rochelle, 14/15 August

Thus, while the forces in Brittany were becoming the "stepchildren" of the Allied attack on land,[66] in the waters of the Bay of Biscay, Operation KINETIC was about to enter its second phase, an exceptionally successful operation that went largely unnoticed as all eyes turned eastward towards the German retreat. As ordered, the troops that remained in Brittany had withdrawn into Hitler's designated fortresses. The Germans hoped their fortress policy would retain the U-boat bases until the new type XXI and XXIII submarines could be made ready for service.[67] Similar to his unrealistic expectation of a resurgence at Mortain, Hitler also placed great faith in the advanced speed and submerged endurance of the new vessels, hoping they might help restore the *Kriegsmarine* to its former glory. However, the strong presence of both naval and land force concentrations in Brittany was keeping the German command off-guard. Ultra decrypts revealed the *Führer's* instructions of 8 August for defending the fortresses to the last man and weapon in order "to prevent the Allies from seizing the harbors and using them for large scale landings" as well as "to gain time for counter measures" – the secret weapons upon which the Germans were beginning to rest their hopes of victory. These messages stressed that "heroic fighters [were] essential."[68] Hitler believed that holding the ports, thereby denying the Allies access to them, was the only means of providing the *Wehrmacht* with the six to ten weeks deemed necessary to establish a new line of defense farther east along the Somme and Marne Rivers.[69]

Any coastal fortress threatened by land was "to take all measures" to rapidly reinforce long-term defense possibilities. "Ruthless execution" of orders was demanded: any unnecessary civilian personnel were to be evacuated in order not to use up essential supplies, and heavily fortified strongpoints were to be built to keep the harbors under fire.[70] Convoy traffic for provisioning, ammunition, and reinforcement was coordinated in a steady stream of wireless messages, used effectively to direct KINETIC operations. German convoys were ordered to stay as close to the coast as possible, for except off the U-boat bases, the threat of minefields was "considered to be less than the danger of Allied naval forces."[71] The threat

65. Brigadier General R.W. Grow, "An Epic of Brittany," *Military Review*, Vol. XXVI, No. 11 (February 1947), p. 9.
66. Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 366.
67. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Vol. III, Pt. 2, p. 477.
68. DEFE 3/114, XL 5206 of 8 August and DEFE 3/115, XL 5272 of 8 August.
69. Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 340.
70. DEFE 3/115, XL 5272 of 8 August.
71. Ibid., XL 5312 of 9 August.

posed by cruisers and destroyers of the Allies' Biscay blockade was so great that Ultra decrypts warned: "According to Gruppe West early ninth [August] coastal batteries were sole weapons capable of keeping Allied naval forces away from coast and of protecting supplies for fortresses."[72] A further decrypt reported that one of the massive concrete U-boat pens at Lorient had been destroyed: "Whole top forced upwards and tilted forward. Ammunition inside probably exploded. Totally out of action."[73]

Force 27, consisting of the cruiser HMS *Mauritius* and the destroyers HMS *Ursa* and HMCS *Iroquois*, departed Plymouth on 13 August to carry out a new patrol along the central section of the Biscay coast. Senior Officer Captain W.W. Davis planned to stand twenty-five miles offshore during daylight in order not to reveal the presence of the Allied force. At night, they would move inshore – under cover of darkness – to sweep the most active shipping lanes.[74] Shortly after 02:00 on 15 August, between Les Sables d'Olonne and the port of La Pallice near La Rochelle, the *Iroquois* picked up a radar contact at 27,000 yards. Force 27 began its pursuit and an hour later spotted an Elbing-class destroyer escorting a convoy of four vessels moving toward Royan. Moments later, the Elbing turned away, but not before firing two torpedoes that passed just off the bow of the *Iroquois*.[75] Following the usual German tactic of firing torpedoes and then running for shore, the Elbing was the *T-24*, a survivor of three previous encounters with Canadian Tribals of the 10th Destroyer Flotilla.[76]

The report of action from the *Iroquois* outlined "many straddles and near-misses," not only from the shore guns, but from crossing over the two torpedo tracks.[77] In retaliation, the *Iroquois* returned fire with all four of her own torpedoes, all of which missed. Firing at a moving target from a poor position, the ship's gunners did manage to land one hit before the Elbing made off at high speed toward La Pallice. The *Ursa* and *Iroquois* pursued the German destroyer for twenty minutes through an Allied minefield, but as Force 27 approached the coast in pursuit, German shore batteries opened up with effective illumination that silhouetted the three Allied ships. Within moments, the 5.9-inch battery at Les Sables d'Olonne opened fire from three and a half miles away, and was soon joined by a previously undetected battery of 240- to 260-mm (11-inch) guns on the Ile de Ré – providing what Captain Davis later reported as "a hot reception for Force 27 at medium and close ranges."[78] He described the illumination provided by the enemy's 5.9-

72. Ibid., XL 5427 of 9 August.
73. Ibid.
74. Captain W.W. Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings, 15 August 1944," DH&H.
75. Commander J. Hibbard, "HMCS *Iroquois* Report of Action, 14th/15th August 1944," NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11731, File CS 151-13-17, 17 August 1944.
76. The three previous escapes came on 25/26 April, 28/29 April – (HMCS *Athabasakan* sunk by T-24), and 8/9 June, 1944.
77. Hibbard, "HMCS *Iroquois* Report of Action, 14th/15th August 1944," NAC.
78. Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings, 15 August 1944," DH&H.

inch starshell as the most impressive he had seen, and estimated the super-heavy gun range at 30,000 yards (seventeen miles). Davis reported having "tasted salt water on the bridge," with Force 27 firing blind as it continued through a minefield, chasing the fleeing enemy inshore through the haze of its own smoke.[79] This first engagement of the night ended when the enemy reached the northern entrance to La Pallice, though not before Force 27 obtained repeated hits on the fleeing vessels. One supply vessel was driven ashore "burning fiercely." The Allied destroyers set a second supply ship on fire, while two German merchant ships escaped at high speed.

With a disregard for the traditions of seniority, Davis routinely turned control of Force 27 over to the captain of his destroyers as circumstances required. Thus upon resuming the patrol, the *Iroquois* was ordered to take the lead so as to take advantage of her superior radar, which quickly demonstrated its worth.[80] A small German tanker was later detected in the same area and at 04:45 driven ashore in a badly damaged condition. Shortly afterwards, the *Iroquois* gained another radar contact, leading to the discovery of an additional convoy consisting of two medium-sized vessels proceeding under an escort of two M-class minesweepers.[81] Davis reported the continuing dangers as the morning light approached:

> A battery south of St. Giles sur Vie and the Les Sables d'Olonne battery joined in and the situation became a little confused. At this time the dawn was showing signs of breaking and considerable difficulties were experienced in dealing with the enemy who were taking full evasive action and making smoke…. Reports of enemy shadowing aircraft had been received and it seemed possible that the night's activities off the enemy's front door might provoke the few remaining Luftwaffe to some retaliatory action after daylight.[82]

Good luck prevailed, and opening fire at 06:20, Force 27 obtained repeated hits driving the four ships ashore, all of them burning fiercely. They had added another seven ships to Operation KINETIC's total: two minesweepers; the flak ship *Richthofen* that had been damaged in the first KINETIC action; three merchant vessels; and one tanker, which ran aground in flames. HMCS *Iroquois* had fired even more rounds on this night than during the furious action of 5/6 August. On the night of 14/15 August, the Canadian Tribal used all four torpedoes, 997 rounds of 4.7-inch shell, 146 rounds of 4-inch starshell, and 350 rounds of pom-pom.[83]

In his Report of Proceedings for HMS *Mauritius*, Davis praised the radar

79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. There were more than 300 M-class minesweepers in the area, each displacing 874 tons. At speeds of 16-18 knots, they were at the mercy of Tribals making 36 knots. M-class minesweepers were supplemented by another 300 motor launches for coastal sweeping, along with several hundred impressed trawlers and small merchantmen.
82. Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings, 15 August 1944," DH&H.
83. Hibbard, "HMCS *Iroquois* Report of Action, 14th/15th August 1944," NAC.

equipment and Action Information Centre onboard HMCS *Iroquois*, stating, "In these engagements, the movements of the force were in large measure ordered from the excellent information provided by *Iroquois*. The situation at times was far less clear to me than the track chart might appear to indicate."[84] As it had in the earlier KINETIC action off St-Nazaire and Quiberon Bay, the *Iroquois* once again made a significant contribution to Allied coastal operations. Hibbard in turn praised his crew, stating: "In this second action in less than a fortnight, the ship's company showed marked steadiness during [a] considerable period of heavy enemy fire."[85] The teamwork engendered by Davis's command had enabled Hibbard and his *Iroquois* crew to achieve the Canadian Tribal's full potential in the Bay of Biscay that night. At Bletchley Park, Ultra decrypts increasingly revealed the impact of the naval campaign with repeated demands from the fortresses for ammunition, fuel, and supplies. Lorient needed 25,000 cubic centimeters of tetanus serum and announced that no further U-boat repairs were possible, the supply of oxygen now depleted. Further, demolition explosives were urgently needed for the destruction of Nantes harbor as it fell to the Allies.[86] By land and sea, the German hold over Brittany and the Biscay ports was dissolving.

Table 3: Results of action – Operation KINETIC 14/15 August[87]

Ships	**Location**	**Sunk or Destroyed**
Force 27:	Off La Rochelle	Minesweeper (*M385*)
HMS *Mauritius* (cruiser)	between Les Sables d'Olonne	Minesweeper
HMCS *Iroquois*	and La Pallice	Flak Ship (*Richthofen*)
HMS *Ursa*		Armed Merchant Ship
		Armed Merchant Ship
		Merchant Ship
		Tanker
		Damaged
		Elbing (*T-24*)

Closing in from all sides: 15-21 August

Hitler later described the next day, 15 August, as the worst day of his life.[88] Around him there was bad news closing in on all fronts. The uprising in Warsaw by the Polish Home Army under General Bor-Komorowski was in its second week and was becoming more bitter and costly. To the east, the Russian steamroller now threatened the Ploesti oil fields of Rumania. In Normandy, German lines at Falaise were on the verge of collapse; I Panzer Corps was exhausted and the 85th Division almost wiped out. The British

84. Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings, 15 August 1944," DH&H.
85. Hibbard, "HMCS *Iroquois* Report of Action, 14th/15th August 1944," NAC.
86. DEFE 3/116, XL 5612 of 11 August and DEFE 3/117, XL 5810 of 12 August.
87. Table 3 adapted from Jones, "Record of Tenth Destroyer Flotilla," NAC; Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings, 15th August 1944," DH&H, 3 September 1944; Hibbard, "HMCS *Iroquois* Report of Action, 14th/15th August 1944," NAC.
88. Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*, p. 255.

and Canadians were attacking LXXXVI Corps as it withdrew across the Dives River. Further, von Kluge had gone missing.[89] After coming under attack by Allied aircraft, his car was forced off the road and his communications truck destroyed. Still suspicious of von Kluge's loyalty after the 20 July assassination attempt at the Wolf's Lair, Hitler feared that he was attempting to negotiate the surrender of the German Army of the West to the British and Americans.[90] Worst of all, as recorded in the OKW War Diary, "the crisis reached its climax on 15 August,"[91] when Hitler learned that Allied forces had landed on the French Mediterranean Coast under Operation ANVIL.

In the days following the D-Day landings, Churchill had tried to convince both Allied Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt to divert the proposed follow-up amphibious attack, then known as Operation ANVIL, to the Biscay area – in particular to St-Nazaire rather than Marseilles – believing the French Atlantic ports to be of greater logistic significance. The argument had gone on for two months. General Bradley summarized the essence of American opposition to Churchill's continued emphasis on the Biscay area, stating: "Eisenhower, however, anticipated that the Brittany ports would probably be blocked by enemy demolitions. For that reason he expected a delay in Brittany tonnage."[92] However, with only days left before the attack, now being called Operation DRAGOON, Churchill persisted:

> I am grieved to find that even splendid victories and widening opportunities do not bring us together on strategy. The brilliant operations of the American Army have not only cut off the Brest peninsula, but in my opinion have to a large extent demoralized the scattered Germans who remain there…. Possession of the [Biscay ports] will open the way for the fullest importation of the great armies of the United States still awaiting their opportunity.[93]

However, changing fortunes in the land campaign as the main action advanced eastward diverted attention away from the Biscay ports and Churchill found himself overruled. Backed by Roosevelt, Eisenhower went ahead with DRAGOON, asserting that the Marseilles port was more advantageous as a secondary supply line to the Saar area.

The success of Operation ANVIL/DRAGOON meant that German forces along the Bay of Biscay area were now hemmed in on two sides. In response, German high command issued a general order on 16 August for the withdrawal of forces from the Biscay coast and areas south of the Loire River. Approximately 100,000 men were involved in this evacuation,

89. *OKW War Diary*, p. 91.
90. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, p. 215.
91. *OKW War Diary*, p. 91.
92. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, pp. 36-38.
93. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, p. 67.

including port service laborers and troops of the German First Army. Only those intended for the defense of the fortresses were to stay behind.[94] OKW Chief of Staff, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, ordered large amounts of defensive matériel moved into the fortresses in preparation for extended siege operations. Echoing Hitler, Keitel insisted that "the fortresses and fortified areas at the western and southern coast of France were to be held to the last man."[95] Submarines were still being assembled at Bordeaux and Keitel went on to order that the city be held until the new boats were completed. In order to guard the entrance to Bordeaux, the garrison withdrew to the ports of Royan and Le Verdon, designated by the Germans as the fortresses of Gironde North and South.

The two recent successes of Operation KINETIC, alongside an intensifying Allied air campaign, were inflicting a serious impact upon German shipping in the Bay of Biscay, as well as hampering the German Navy's ability to escort U-boats to and from the safety of their concrete pens. An urgent flow of Ultra messages continued to show Allied effectiveness in cutting off the flow of supplies between the ports. With the U.S. VIII Corps surrounding the port fortresses, the Germans realized they would have to move their U-boats quickly if they were to escape. The evacuation order of 16 August directed the U-boat fleet to make its way to Norway, taking key personnel, valuable gear, torpedoes, and as much fuel as possible. Only those U-boats whose fuel did not permit the 2,000-mile journey were to stay behind, ordered to make their way to Bordeaux.[96] Two days later, Hitler directed further evacuations from all of southwestern France, excepting, of course, the fortress garrisons. By 18 August, the coastal fortresses were completely on their own in defending Brittany and the Loire region. The Weekly Report of Army Group B paid homage to "the heroic resistance" of the fortress garrisons at Brest, Lorient, and St-Nazaire.[97]

To the east, the race to close the Falaise Gap came to an end on 19 August when Polish, Canadian, and British forces linked up with the U.S. 90th Infantry at Chambois. The line was thinly held and thousands of exhausted Germans continued to pour through. Rainy weather kept Allied aircraft on the ground from 20-21 August, lending assistance to the German retreat. Twelve divisional headquarters moved northeast in convoys under steady artillery bombardment from a closing ring of Allied ground forces and fighter-bombers. Tens of thousands of Germans were lost in the Falaise pocket, killed or wounded while trying to escape, or taken prisoner. Three-thousand wrecked vehicles, abandoned guns, and wagons littered the roads, with the stench of dead soldiers and horses hanging thickly in the air. Upon visiting the Falaise area, Eisenhower wrote:

94. DEFE 3/121, XL 6753 of 17 August.
95. *OKW War Diary*, pp. 110 and 352.
96. DEFE 3/120, XL 6591 of 16 August.
97. "Weekly Report, August 15-21, 1944," Wood, *Army of the West*, p. 192.

> Roads, highways, and fields were so choked up with destroyed equipment and with dead men and animals, that passage through the area was extremely difficult…. [It was] literally possible to walk for hundreds of yards at a time, stepping on nothing but dead and decaying flesh.[98]

For the German Army, the Battle of Normandy was lost and the remainder of France would soon follow, but the remnants of two German armies from the Falaise pocket were now streaming east towards the German border.

In all, with the VIII Corps advance by land, the Biscay blockade by sea, and the hurried German evacuations from the Breton and Loire ports, the entire Biscay front was now heating up. In addition to KINETIC patrols conducted by the Tribals of the 10th DF, four Canadian escort groups operated in the Biscay region. River-class destroyers of Escort Groups 11 and 12 formed powerful anti-submarine hunting groups, while Escort Groups 6 and 9 operated as lighter hunting groups comprised of frigates and sloops. Patrolling alongside the British escort groups of Coastal Command, this latest foray into the Bay of Biscay quickly developed into an Allied drive to destroy what remained of the *Kriegsmarine* in France. On both 18 and 20 August, Escort Group 11 successfully hunted down German U-boats, sinking *U-621* and *U-984*,[99] two of the sixteen U-boats leaving the bases of Brest and Lorient in accordance with the evacuation orders of 16 August. Alongside these successes at sea, Bomber Command flew nearly 1,500 sorties against the Biscay ports, laying mines in harbor entrances, attacking the concrete U-boat pens, and bombing port facilities.[100] By the afternoon of 20 August, Ultra decrypts showed the Germans yielding to Allied pressure when Vice Admiral Theodor Krancke, Commander-in-Chief of U-boats West, reported that no further transport of supplies to the Biscay fortresses would take place. Vessels no longer required for coastal convoys were to be used as floating batteries. Supplying Bordeaux, he reported, was now impossible and the port would have to be evacuated.[101] On 21 August, the last U-boats left Bordeaux, with the garrison left behind receiving orders to abandon the port by the end of the month.[102] As always, conveying optimistic and entirely irrational orders, OKW sent out word that "The Führer also expected lively lunging and attack activities from the fortresses to relieve other fronts, to lift up the morale and to capture some booty."[103]

98. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (London: Heinemann, 1948), p. 306.
99. Marc Milner, *The U-Boat Hunters: The Royal Canadian Navy and the Offensive against Germany's Submarines* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 280.
100. Middlebrook and Everitt, *The Bomber Command War Diaries*, 562-77.
101. DEFE 3/122, XL 7009 of 19 August; DEFE 3/122, XL 7250 of 20 August; and DEFE 3/124, XL 7427 of 22 August.
102. DEFE 3/125, XL 7940 of 26 August.
103. *OKW War Diary*, pp. 356-57.

Hat trick at Audierne Bay, 22/23 August

In Normandy, the Falaise pocket had closed, trapping 70,000 Germans inside. Remnants of surviving German divisions were racing to escape across the Seine in a retreat toward Germany itself. The urgency of the retreat to the Seine was echoed in the Bay of Biscay by the desperate evacuation by sea. In response, on 22 August Vice Admiral Leatham ordered Force 27 to carry out a close inshore patrol in Audierne Bay, southwest of Brest, until daylight.[104] While on patrol, Force 27 ships came under fire by a four-gun 150-mm shore battery that engaged them from a range of about 16,000 yards. Davis reported, "This fire was reasonably creditable, the first salvo straddling *Iroquois* and the second *Mauritius*."[105] The Audierne area provided many challenges to be negotiated: strong tidal streams, shoal waters, narrow channels, and navigational hazards, including the reef off Port Audierne.

In spite of the difficulties, HMCS *Iroquois* and HMS *Ursa* adopted their usual formation on either side of the cruiser's bow, and were soon able to close in undetected to launch a surprise attack on an enemy convoy. As with their previous encounters, effective radar onboard the *Iroquois* played a decisive role, providing Force 27 with prompt and accurate accounts of enemy movements. From the inshore position, the *Iroquois* controlled the movements of Force 27 during the approach. Aboard the Canadian Tribal, Hibbard placed so much confidence in the new Type 293 radar that he decided to direct the opening moves of the battle from the plot room rather than the bridge, at least until giving the order to illuminate with starshell. This may well have been the first time a captain chose to fight his ship from the operations room,[106] an approach that would later become common practice.

The *Iroquois* detected a first contact at a range of about 15,000 yards at 01:17. From HMS *Mauritius*, Senior Officer Davis reported that "The Force held on in the opposite direction for a tantalizing 20 minutes and let the enemy get well into the Bay,… then [was] turned toward the enemy and ordered to lead in at increased speed."[107] Once again in the lead owing to her superior radar capabilities, the *Iroquois* scored the first hit on an armed merchant ship at 02:13, subsequently setting it on fire. A second medium-sized merchant ship was quickly destroyed by gunfire from the *Mauritius*, while two others were set on fire and driven onto the shoals. Only nineteen

104. C-in-C Plymouth to *Mauritius*, *Ursa*, and *Iroquois*, DH&H, 8000, HMCS *Iroquois* General '44 – '45, Naval Messages, 20 August 1944.
105. Captain W.W. Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings and Engagements with Enemy Forces in Audierne Bay on 23 August 1944," NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11730, File CS 151-1-2, 11 September 1944.
106. Commander J. Hibbard, "HMCS *Iroquois* Report of Action 23 August 1944 off the Biscay Coast, with Reference to Good Performance of Action Information Centre," NAC, RG 24, Vol. 11731, File CS 151-13-7, 28 August 1944.
107. Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings 23 August 1944," NAC.

minutes after opening fire, all four German ships had been put out of action, with one sunk and the remaining three aground and burning.[108]

Excerpts from wireless transmissions contained in Davis's Report of Proceedings show the fast pace of action and the confusion that characterized these night battles. Often one ship would begin firing, but another would finish the target off. It was often difficult under these conditions to determine which ship should be credited with the sinking, or indeed whether there actually had been one:

02:40 *Ursa* to *Iroquois*: Right hand one aground. Do you concur?
02:40 *Iroquois* to *Ursa*: Yes, concur.
02:42 *Ursa* to *Iroquois*: What do you think of left hand ship?
02:42 *Iroquois* to *Ursa*: Left hand ship blown up.
02:50 *Ursa* to *Iroquois*: I think yours was ashore too? But he had not sunk?
02:52 *Mauritius* to Force 27: What do you consider ships were?
02:54 *Iroquois* to *Mauritius*: According to my plot both targets ashore for 30 minutes, 1 M-class M/S, 1 Medium Flak ship.[109]

In a second action occurring two hours after the first, the *Iroquois* detected another convoy of four ships departing from the harbor of Brest: an M-class minesweeper, two armed trawlers, and a *Sperrbrecher* mine destructor ship.[110] Using the radar onboard the *Iroquois*, the Allied destroyers stalked the convoy at long range until 04:08, when the enemy ships were illuminated with starshell. Upon opening fire, Force 27 quickly overwhelmed the German ships, sinking two vessels and causing two others to collide with each other in the confusion, both of which burst into flames as they raced for shore with surviving crew members jumping over the side as they went. One of these vessels capsized and sank while the other drove onto the rocks at full speed and exploded.

Hibbard's Report of Action further portrays the utter destruction of the German convoy:

> At 05:34 the situation as determined by plot and personnel on the bridge was that three ships were hard and fast on the shoal, one had disappeared in the collision, one was aground at Port Audierne, one had sunk to the southwest and a seventh was aground in that area. Four of these ships were on fire.[111]

The *Iroquois* and *Ursa* joined the *Mauritius* at 05:45, having fired their 4.7-inch guns so frequently that the barrels had to be cooled down before they could be used again. At 06:10, the *Mauritius* radioed to Force 27, "What is your estimate of the bag?" and received the *Ursa's* reply, "Estimate total of

108. Ibid.
109. Davis, Enclosure – Facsimile of Signals, R/T and W/T Report, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings 23 August 1944," NAC.
110. *"Sperrbrecher"* was the German name given to merchant vessels that had been converted to naval use for the dual purpose of minesweeping and escort duties.
111. Hibbard, "HMCS *Iroquois* Report of Action, 23 August 1944," NAC.

seven but we will have to see when daylight comes."[112]

At dawn, Force 27 continued with another sweep around Audierne Bay in order to confirm the destruction of the enemy. When two more minesweepers came into view, both were pounded with gunfire and driven onto a reef near Port Audierne. The *Iroquois* finished off one of the minesweepers with a torpedo, while HMS *Ursa* sent a boarding party onto the other to grab prisoners. The eleven prisoners taken by the *Ursa* turned out to be the lucky ones – the other 150 survivors who were able to swim to shore were subsequently taken prisoner by the French Resistance,[113] eager to repay the Germans for hardships suffered under the occupation.

Operation KINETIC had scored a third and final success against the fleeing ships of the *Kriegsmarine* on the night of 22/23 August. With 1,197 rounds of 4.7-inch shell fired, along with 231 rounds of starshell, the *Iroquois* expended even more ammunition in this action than during either of the first two KINETIC encounters.[114] The final tally for the night was eight ships destroyed: one minesweeper driven ashore and heavily damaged, a flak ship, five armed trawlers, and the *Sperrbrecher*. For his effective use of radar and excellence of his gunnery and plotting teams, Hibbard was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.[115] In his Report of Proceedings for HMS *Mauritius*, Davis attributed the success of the night's action to two principal causes: "some lucky guesses, and the excellence of *Iroquois'* radar and plotting teams."[116] He could not have known that Ultra intelligence also bore some responsibility for the luck of those guesses.[117]

Table 4: Results of action – Operation KINETIC 22/23 August[118]

Ships	Location	Sunk or Destroyed
Force 27:	Audierne Bay	Armed Trawler (*V717*)
HMS *Mauritius*	North of Belle Isle	Armed Trawler (*V730*)
HMCS *Iroquois*	between Brest	Armed Trawler (*V702*)
HMS *Ursa*	and Lorient	Armed Trawler (*V729*)
		Armed Trawler (*V720*)
		Sperrbrecher
		Minesweeper
		Flak Ship (*Tellus*)

112. Davis, Enclosure – Facsimile of Signals, R/T and W/T Report, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings 23 August 1944," NAC.
113. Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings 23 August 1944," NAC.
114. Hibbard, "HMCS *Iroquois* Report of Action, 23 August 1944," NAC.
115. "Three Accounts of Anti-Shipping Strikes in the Bay of Biscay," DH&H.
116. Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings, 23 August 1944," NAC.
117. Details of the role of Ultra were not released until 1974. See F.W. Winterbotham, *The Ultra Secret* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).
118. Table 4 adapted from Jones, "Record of Tenth Destroyer Flotilla," NAC; Davis, "HMS *Mauritius* Report of Proceedings 23rd August 1944," NAC; Hibbard, "HMCS *Iroquois* Report of Action, 23 August 1944," NAC. The German V-series patrol boats were purpose-built or conscripted armed coastal transports with less than half the speed of the Tribals.

The German defeat in Brittany

Operation KINETIC came to a close with this final success in Audierne Bay. As a result of the combined Allied offensive, Germany lost its capacity to support the French Atlantic garrisons by sea and was denied further use of the U-boat pens along the Biscay shore. On the occasion of the *Haida's* departure for refit in Halifax in September, Vice Admiral Leatham paid special tribute to the efficiency of the plot room of HMCS *Iroquois* in having contributed to those successes. In his address to the Canadian officers and ratings of the 10th DF, Leatham stated:

> You have engaged in many fierce and spirited actions in enemy waters, actions [from] which you have emerged the victors on every occasion. You have bottled up enemy shipping and made the movements of his fighting ships an extremely hazardous operation, even in his own waters. In these encounters you have piled up an enviable score.[119]

Of the thirty-five German ships sunk or destroyed by the 10th DF between April and September 1944, twenty-two (noted as "the lion's share" by Admiral Leatham) went down in August during KINETIC's blockade of the Biscay ports.[120] Within the first three weeks of August 1944, the combined Allied offensive in the Biscay area resulted in tremendous losses for German Naval Group West: twelve U-boats, eleven large ships totaling nearly 60,000 tons, two destroyers, one torpedo boat, and fifty-three smaller vessels, many of them minesweepers.[121] In this successful effort to dominate the waters of the Bay of Biscay, Allied air and naval forces destroyed the remnants of the German surface fleet in the area and forced the evacuation of the Atlantic U-boat fleet to Norway. On 24 August, Beaufighters of Royal Canadian Air Force 404 Squadron and Royal Air Force 236 Squadron caught and sank the destroyers *Z-24* and *T-24* off Gironde South at Le Verdon. Great satisfaction for the Canadians arose from this particular action, as the latter ship, *T-24*, was the same Elbing that had sunk HMCS *Athabaskan* on 29 April and later escaped the action of 15 August against HMCS *Iroquois* near the port of La Pallice.[122] By 26 August, Allied combined operations had forced the *Kriegsmarine* to scuttle all merchant ships, minesweepers, flak ships, and patrol boats remaining in Biscay ports, and caused the destruction or evacuation of over thirty U-boats from the Bay of Biscay. Both U-boats West and Naval Group West were forced to abandon their headquarters at La Rochelle.[123]

German naval activity had virtually ceased in the Bay of Biscay by the

119. William Sclater, *Haida* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 214.
120. Jones, "Record of Tenth Destroyer Flotilla, April to September, 1944," NAC.
121. Roskill, *The War at Sea*, Vol. III, Pt. 2, p. 131; Tarrant, *Last Year of the Kriegsmarine*, p. 109.
122. McAndrew, Graves, and Whitby, *Normandy 1944*, p. 106.
123. Tarrant, *Last Year of the Kriegsmarine*, p. 108.

end of August. By eliminating enemy surface shipping in the area, Operation KINETIC made a valuable contribution to operations on land by preventing the delivery of supplies to surrounded German garrisons in Brittany and along the Bay of Biscay. With U-boats now limited to bases in the homeland and Norway, the Germans had lost the access to the North Atlantic shipping routes that they had controlled for the past four years. In the last week of August, HMCS *Haida* returned from the repairs that resulted from the action of 5/6 August near St-Nazaire and resumed patrolling the area under Operation ASSAULT.[124] In company with HMS *Bellona*, the *Haida* patrolled along the Biscay coast from Belle Isle near Lorient to Arcachon Point, south-west of Bordeaux. Continuing similar sweeps through the remainder of the month, the *Iroquois* patrolled off the coast and sent landing parties ashore on the French mainland and outlying islands. In his Report of Proceedings for the month, Hibbard described August 1944 as the best to date for the *Iroquois*, the ship's company having spent twenty-eight days at sea, with most nights closed up at Action Stations.[125]

On the morning of 25 August, American forces entered Paris, led by a Free French contingent under General J.P. Leclerc. The German garrison offered some light resistance, but by 14:30 General Dietrich von Choltitz surrendered the city, disregarding the *Führer's* order to leave Paris in ruins. German troops were now retreating in disarray. Along the Seine, their forces were not strong enough to offer serious resistance, while at the same time, the German Nineteenth Army was in flight up the Rhone Valley as the south of France was evacuated in the face of the Allied ANVIL invasion. By the end of August, the Battle of Normandy was over. At the close of the campaign, three German divisions were trapped in Brittany as they held out at St-Nazaire, Lorient, and Brest. The loss of France was a serious blow to OKW: under German occupation, the country had supplied a major portion of the food, iron ore, bauxite, coal, and labor that was essential to the Nazi war effort. Following Operation KINETIC and the combined Allied offensive in the Bay of Biscay, the Germans also lost access to the Atlantic and the use of the ports along the Bay of Biscay, thus further restricting U-boat capabilities.

On 7 September, three days after the capture of Antwerp, Eisenhower

124. References to both Operations KINETIC and ASSAULT are sometimes used interchangeably in Reports of Action and the corresponding literature. Captain Harry DeWolf's "HMCS *Haida* Report of Proceedings, August, 1944," NAC, refers to KINETIC earlier in the month and to ASSAULT from 22 August to 25 August. The Canadian Naval Mission Overseas refers to all three actions of 5/6 August, 14/15 August, and 22/23 August as Operation ASSAULT in "Three Accounts of Anti-Shipping Strikes in Bay of Biscay Coastal Areas," DH&H, while its "The R.C.N.'s Part in Destroying Enemy Shipping From the Breton Ports – Early August, 1944," DH&H, refers to Operation KINETIC. Joseph Schull's *Far Distant Ships*, pp. 348-52 and Commander Jimmy Hibbard's "A Brief History of HMCS *Iroquois* 1940-1959," DH&H, refer to all three actions as Operation KINETIC.

125. "Brief History of HMCS *Iroquois*," DH&H.

cancelled the plan to develop port facilities at Quiberon Bay. Naval requirements dictated that American convoys would not be able to use Quiberon without the prerequisite capture of Brest; in addition, the war was moving into Northwest Europe at a rapid pace. Operations at sea in the Biscay blockade had achieved their tactical goals, but as the land campaign in Brittany wore on, supply problems, communication difficulties, and a lack of sufficient forces hindered success. According to Ruppenthal, "Port discharge was to become one of the most limiting factors of the continental operation and was to persist as a major logistic problem for fully six months after the landings."[126] Brest, anticipated in Operation OVERLORD planning to be captured by D+50, did not fall until D+105 and was never able to offer any port capacity due to German demolitions before capture. Lorient, with planned capture by D+50, held out to the end of the war, while the Operation CHASTITY intentions for Quiberon were totally abandoned.[127] Those ports surrendered by the Germans were utterly demolished first, while St-Nazaire, like Lorient, remained occupied by German garrisons until the end of the war. Even though they were trapped inside the fortresses, the garrisons successfully tied down the Allied forces sent to contain them. On 9 September, the Supreme Commander informed Bradley that it was no longer necessary to capture the ports of Lorient, St-Nazaire, or La Pallice. With the realization that Quiberon would never be developed, nor the Biscay ports captured in a useable state, the original logistical plans for the region disappeared along with much of the importance that had once been placed on the naval blockade. As with the land campaign in Normandy, the focus had shifted eastward.

Although abandoning the effort to capture the ports lying farther south, the Americans continued their attack on Brest. A bitter 40-day siege continued until 19 September when Lieutenant General Hermann Ramcke finally surrendered the fortress. In the original OVERLORD planning, high hopes had been placed upon Brest as a port of supply, but prior to surrendering, German demolition parties made certain to dash any such hopes. Upon entering the city, the Americans found that sunken blockships and oyster pressure mines had closed the port so effectively that no attempt was made to clear the harbor until 1945.[128] In hindsight, the U.S. Third Army's drive for the ports of Brittany was a questionable objective, and it became even more so as the main battlefront moved farther east. Looking back on the Brittany campaign, Bradley reflected:

> Patton blazed through Brittany with armored divisions and motorized infantry. He conquered a lot of real estate and made big headlines, but the Brittany campaign failed to achieve its primary objectives. The Germans withdrew to the major seaports, organized strong defenses

126. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, Vol. I, p. 470.
127. Osmanski, "The Logistical Planning of Operation Overlord," p. 57.
128. Barnett, *Engage the Enemy More Closely*, p. 846.

> and prepared to carry out Hitler's orders to fight to the death. As it developed, none of these ports could be captured without an expensive siege. By the time we wrested them from the Germans – Brest at great cost in U.S. casualties – the war had moved on and we had little use for them.[129]

To critics who claimed that the siege of Brest was a fruitless campaign at the cost of almost 10,000 casualties, executed primarily because of blind obedience to the original logistics plan, Bradley wrote: "The decision to take Brest was not dictated by any outdated OVERLORD plan of maneuver. I went ahead with the costly siege … because Ramcke left us no other solution."[130] Ramcke's crack 2nd Parachute and 343rd Infantry Divisions had to be contained at Brest to prevent Germans marauding against supply lines.

Thus, in response to the rapidly changing focus of the land campaign, which moved in turn from the Falaise Gap to the pursuit of the German army across the Seine River and later to the Channel ports and Antwerp, the logistical objectives for Brittany from the original OVERLORD plans were never achieved. Although the Breton ports were not used to deliver supplies and the new harbor facilities at Quiberon Bay never went beyond the planning stage, there were, however, successes. A garrison of 29,000 had been forced to surrender in Brest, with 25,000 at Lorient and 12,000 at St-Nazaire being pinned down to the end of the war.[131] The Brittany campaign, according to U.S. official historian Martin Blumenson, "was a spectacular achievement that went virtually unnoticed because of action elsewhere on a much larger scale."[132] Likewise, at sea, the tactical objectives of the supporting naval offensive, which included Operation KINETIC, had been met, but were overshadowed by the changing fortunes at Mortain and Falaise.

The isolated German fortress garrisons had been able to deny the Allies the use of the ports, but Naval Group West had not been able to challenge Allied naval superiority. Heavily armed Allied destroyers had been able to devastate the much lighter German coastal convoys. By patrolling the inshore waters and destroying enemy shipping in Operation KINETIC, Canadian Tribals played their part in the defeat of German naval forces in the Bay of Biscay. By the time it ended, the combined Allied naval and air

129. Bradley, *A General's Life*, p. 285.

130. Ibid., p. 367. In *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, Weigley is critical of Bradley's decision to advance into Brittany: "[T]he unwisdom of the turn into Brittany [is] at least an issue to be pondered…. Bradley was inflexible about Brittany. The OVERLORD plan called for the thrust into Brittany, and amid the bewildering rush of events at the end of July and the beginning of August, Bradley evidently found an anchor of security in the plan…." p. 186.

131. *OKW War Diary*, p. 148. Bradley lists the full-strength numbers of the Brest garrison at 38,000 in *A General's Life*, p. 306 and Blumenson at 35,000 in *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 387.

132. Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 388.

offensive resulted in the collapse of Naval Group West, which ceased to exist as an organized formation of the German Navy. For the Allied naval forces involved, this was a significant victory, but one that garnered little attention as the front advanced eastward, progressing farther and farther away from Brittany.

Tasked with supporting the American drive into Brittany, KINETIC resonated with the original focus on opening the ports for the support of the Allied invasion of Europe. The part played by HMCS *Iroquois* and HMCS *Haida* in the naval blockade had helped the Royal Navy's campaign to achieve impressive results. Following the failure of Hitler's counteroffensive and the withdrawal of the Fifth Panzer and Seventh Armies from Normandy, however, Brittany and the Biscay ports were quickly eliminated as a potential base of logistical supply. Operation KINETIC had been a naval tactical success in support of a land campaign whose changing fortunes led to an unexpected refocusing of strategic goals.

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Some Considerations Regarding Italian Armored Doctrine Prior to June 1940

JAMES J. SADKOVICH

ABSTRACT
This article complements John Sweet's *Iron Arm: The Mechanization of Mussolini's Army, 1920-1940* (1980). It summarizes and comments on contemporary reports by Italian officers concerning three conflicts: the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the German-Polish war (1939), and the German-French war (1940). It also discusses reports by Italian military intelligence and analysis of field exercises by commanders of Italy's armored corps. These reports and analyses demonstrate that Italian officers who provided information regarding the use of armor and other modern weaponry were careful and critical observers who sought to learn not only from their own experiences, but from those of others, and their observations and conclusions suggest that Italian armored doctrine was influenced both by Italian experience and the developments and assumptions of the era. The text does not discuss the extent to which such reports influenced the formulation of doctrine nor how effective Italian doctrine was on the battlefield, but it does show that those Italian officers most directly concerned with the development and implementation of armored doctrine understood the importance of modern weaponry and it suggests that factors other than a flawed doctrine contributed to Italy's inability to field large, well-equipped armored formations during World War II.

KEYWORDS
armored doctrine; armored warfare; *Blitzkrieg*; *Corpo d'Armata Celere*; *Corpo d'Armata Corazzato*; *Corpo Truppe Volontarie*; Fascist Italy; German campaign in France (1940); German-Polish war; *guerra di rapido corso*; Italian Army; tanks; Spanish Civil War

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.02

Introduction

Three decades ago, John Sweet wrote a study of Italian armor that remains basic to any discussion of the subject. This article is intended to complement Sweet's work by offering English-language readers information that was not

available to him when he wrote his study.[1] It also discusses the lessons regarding tanks and armored doctrine that Italian officers drew from Italian intervention in Spain and from German operations in Poland and France.

While they are important, I put aside for now a number of ancillary questions, from the influence of Fascism on the development of armored doctrine, the attitudes of the Italian general staff, and the manner in which Italian military leaders reached decisions regarding doctrine, to Italy's industrial capacity, its efforts to attain economic autarky, and the larger question of the interplay between foreign policy and military doctrine. I also leave for the future both an evaluation of the effectiveness of Italy's efforts to formulate an armored doctrine and a comparison of Italian doctrine and equipment with those of other states with armored forces. My discussion of the views of Italian officers necessarily contains remarks, both theirs and mine, regarding armored programs outside Italy, and I offer some tentative observations regarding the relationship of armored doctrine to industrial potential and developments outside Italy based on their opinions and secondary works by Sweet and others who have written on these subjects. However, these topics deserve more attention than I can devote to them in this article, so for now I reluctantly put them aside for future essays.

Spain

There has been a tendency to ignore Italy's military performance in Spain and instead examine the political and diplomatic nature of its intervention, stressing the ideological aspects and the wastage of Italian men and equipment rather than the lessons learned by the Italian military. Brian Sullivan cites John Gooch's article on Italian military incompetence to support his belief that "the innate defects revealed at Guadalajara [in the Spanish Civil War] had characterized the Italian Army in World War I and would again in World War II." While common, such a judgment not only seems to argue that Fascism had little influence on the Italian armed forces (which Sullivan would surely not accept), it also seems excessive because, as Alberto Rovighi and Filippo Stefani note in their history of Italian intervention, Guadalajara was the only setback suffered by the Italians in three years of combat.[2]

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1. John J.T. Sweet, *Iron Arm: The Mechanization of Mussolini's Army, 1920-1940* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1980).

2. Brian R. Sullivan, "Fascist Italy's Involvement in the Spanish Civil War," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (October 1995), pp. 697-727, prefers MacGregor Knox's interpretation of Italian policy as "increasingly pro-German" as early as August 1936 and of Mussolini's intervention in Spain as ideological; so he argues that intervention could not have been a defensive reaction to German intervention and rejects the analysis by the Italian military historians Alberto Rovighi and Filippo Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile spagnola*, Vol. I (Rome: SME/US, 1993), pp. 247-317 (hereafter, Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile spagnola*, Vol. I or II, if their text is cited, or *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile spagnola. Documenti e allegati*, Vol. I or II, if documents or attachments

From a military point of view, Guadalajara was a profitable setback because the Italians learned a number of lessons which improved their performance in Spain and affected the development of their armored doctrine. Even so, Lucio Ceva argues that the overall impact of Italy's conquest of Ethiopia and its intervention in Spain was negative, delaying development of a medium tank and undermining Federico Baistrocchi's efforts to create a mechanized force of fifteen divisions in 1936. The lessons learned in Ethiopia and Spain certainly tended to favor motorization, not mechanization, reinforcing Angelo's Pugnani's claim that the latter was merely an element of the former.[3] Italian experience in Spain also confirmed the Ministry of War's decision to transform the triangular division into a "binary" formation, a decision made following the war in Ethiopia. With two brigades instead of three, the new division was essentially a reinforced brigade, and the decision has been generally criticized, beginning with a well-argued contrary opinion by Ettore Bastico based on his experience in Spain.[4] It would thus seem that the Italians learned the wrong lessons in Spain.

However, as James Corum has noted, in retrospect it is obvious that nobody learned all the right lessons in Spain.[5] But at the time, the lessons

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supporting their text are cited).

3. Lucio Ceva, *Le forze armate* (Turin: UTET, 1981), pp. 236-42; Lucio Ceva and Andrea Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano dalle origini al 1943*, Vol. I (Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito/Ufficio Storico, 1994), pp. 194-209; Angelo Pugnani, *Storia della motorizzazione militare italiana* (Turin: Roggero & Tortia, 1951), *passim*, for motorization; Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 177-92, and Vol. II, pp. 145-55, for the performance of tanks in Ethiopia. Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 109-25, also believed the wars in Ethiopia and Spain retarded both technical and doctrinal innovation.

4. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile spagnola*. *Documenti e allegati*, Vol. II, doc. 113, Ettore Bastico, "Promemoria relativo alla sostituzione della divisione ternaria." Massimo Mazzetti, *La politica militare italiana fra le due guerre mondiali (1918-1940)* (Salerno: Beta, 1974), pp. 236-39. Both Pietro Badoglio and Alberto Pariani favored the conversion of the triangular division to a binary one, with two infantry regiments, three artillery groups, and 135 vehicles. Critics argue that Mussolini was "deceived" into believing the binary division was really a triangular one and that it was weak. Dorello Ferrari, "Per uno studio della politica militare del general Alberto Pariani," *Studi storico militari 1988* (Rome: Ufficio Storico dell'Esercito, 1990), *passim*, sees Fascism to blame for Pariani's failure to understand modern warfare, but Ferruccio Botti and Virgilio Ilari, *Il pensiero militare italiano dal primo al secondo dopoguerra (1919-1949)* (Rome: Ufficio Storico dell'Esercito, 1985), pp. 223-27, note that Pariani understood that the binary division was merely a reinforced brigade.

5. James S. Corum, "The Spanish Civil War: Lessons Learned and Not Learned by the Great Powers," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 1998), pp. 313-34, thinks the Italians learned the right lessons, but lacked the monies to implement them; George F. Hofmann, "The Tactical and Strategic Use of Attaché Intelligence: The Spanish Civil War and the U.S. Army's Misguided Quest for a Modern Tank Doctrine," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (January 1998), pp. 101-33, for General Malin Craig's conclusion that Spain showed that "mounted cavalry and horse-drawn artillery" would dominate the future of warfare.

learned seemed useful. Indeed, in 1939 Livio Negro, commander of the *Ariete's* 132nd Armored Brigade, believed that the lessons his colleagues learned from these conflicts had been valuable in helping the Italian command to formulate armored doctrine and design armored formations.[6] In Ethiopia, the Italians had dominated a much weaker enemy and made effective use of aircraft and motorized vehicles to move their troops.[7] In Spain, motorized Italian troops with an armored component had overwhelmed Republican forces during the battle for Málaga and after being checked at Guadalajara, rebounded to win a decisive victory at Santander and provide the armored spearhead for Nationalist victories in Catalonia. While Italian performance in Ethiopia can be discounted because its opponent was weak, there is no question that during the Spanish Civil War the Italian CTV (*Corpo delle Truppe Volontarie*), which brought together Fascist militia and regular army personnel, learned its lessons well enough to employ motorized troops and tanks successfully again Republican forces that also employed tanks, aircraft, and modern artillery.[8] The broader question, of course, is whether the Italian army translated these lessons into useful doctrine and sound practice by the outbreak of war in 1939. But in some ways, it is a moot question because the Spanish Civil War ended just as World War II began, and there was no time to implement all of the changes suggested by Italian experience in Spain.

For most historians, such questions have not even arisen because the success of the CTV has been obscured by a tendency to focus on the battle of Guadalajara, which Brian Sullivan singled out and John Coverdale, whose work on Italian intervention in Spain remains a standard, considered a "stinging defeat."[9] The CTV's check at Guadalajara was certainly important; it diminished the prestige of the Fascist regime, undermined Italian diplomacy, encouraged anti-Fascists, and pleased Spanish Nationalists, who were happy to see the Italians brought down a notch after stealing the show at Málaga. The publicity given the Italian "defeat" also rankled Mussolini and led him first to dispatch more troops to Spain to avenge this "defeat," and then to author an anonymous article lauding the action as a victory.[10]

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6. For Negro's thinking, see below and National Archives Microfilm (NAM), series T-821, reel 384, frames 295-97, 486-95, Colonel Livio Negro, "Esame comparativo della costituzione organica delle G.U. Corazzate presso i principali eserciti europei e dei criteri fondamentali del loro impiego," and "Note, Osservazioni e proposte di varianti, alle norme 'sull'impiego delle unità carriste' bozze di stampa 1938."

7. Mazzetti, *La politica militare italiana*, p. 181. In addition to 235 tanks and fifty-two armored cars, Italian forces in Ethiopia employed 16,186 vehicles, one for every twenty-five men, a higher ratio than in North Africa in 1940.

8. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile spagnola*, Vol. I, pp. 185-317 for the battles of Málaga, pp. 247-317, Guadalajara, and pp. 416-70, Santander, and Vol. II, pp. 101-309, the Ebro River.

9. John Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 217-18, 229-48, and *passim*.

10. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il duce*, Vol. I, *Gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936*, and

But if important, the action at Guadalajara, which the Italians undertook reluctantly, did not accurately reflect the CTV's performance during the conflict nor Italian experiences in Spain.[11] Mario Roatta, who commanded the CTV, would have preferred to attack through Teruel toward Valencia in order to isolate Catalonia and force a quick conclusion to the conflict. But Francisco Franco insisted that the Madrid front was fragile and pressed the CTV to attack there. Overly confident after the CTV's success at Málaga, Roatta agreed, and he then went ahead with the action despite wretched weather that grounded Italian aircraft. With 30,000 men, a tank battalion, eight armored cars, and a motorcycle company, the Italians had three to one odds, but Roatta attacked without air support and with less than half his forces, planning to leapfrog the remainder over his lead units, thus reducing his initial advantage to less than two to one and effectively using half his force as a reserve. The lead units of the CTV failed to reach their objectives on the first day, and although they had advanced thirty-five kilometers on a 20-kilometer front by the third day of the operation, they had also suffered 1,290 casualties and were exhausted.[12]

A lack of unit cohesion, an abundance of mud, sub-zero temperatures, poor visibility, and a limited off-road capability on the part of Italian vehicles combined to slow the advance. Because the Nationalists did not press Republican forces on the Jarama front, the Republican command was able to redeploy the XII International Brigade and mount a counterattack five days later, just as Roatta was replacing his lead units. Although the CTV's lead units held, General Rossi ordered the 1st MVSN (*Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale*) Division to withdraw, thereby compromising the Littorio Division, which had mounted its own counterattack and broken through the positions of the XI International Brigade and the 2nd Republican Brigade. Littorio, too, was therefore forced to fall back. With forty-two battalions in the sector, the Republicans now outnumbered the Italians, and what had begun as an armored thrust ended as a slugging match. Nonetheless, the Italians had inflicted about twice as many casualties as they had taken and they managed to hold on to twenty

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Vol. II, *Lo stato totalitario, 1936-1940* (Turin: Einaudi, 1981), Vol. II, pp. 391-99, 404, 407-10; Mazzetti, *La politica militare italiana*, p. 213; Sandro Attanasio, *Gli italiani e la guerra di Spagna* (Milan: Mursia, 1974), pp. 39-41; Dino Grande, *Il mio paese: ricordi autobiografici* (Renzo De Felice, ed.) (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), p. 422, believed exaggerations of the "defeat" transformed Italian intervention into a question of "honor."

11. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra spagnola. Documenti e allegati*, Vol. I, docs. 49a, 49b, 50, for Emilio Faldella's dismissal of Nationalist attacks on the Madrid front as "disjointed and absurd" actions to capture "a few yards of trench" (*qualche tratto di trincea*), his argument that an attack through Catalonia was preferable because it would be decisive, and his belief that Franco had pressed the CTV to attack at Guadalajara because he needed help and wanted to prevent it from gaining the glory of taking Valencia.

12. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra spagnola*, Vol. I, pp. 219-29, 255-58, 311-13, and *Documenti e allegati*, Vol. II, docs. 53 and 54 for planning.

kilometers of their initial 35-kilometer advance.[13]

While not a victory, neither was Guadalajara a rout, and Rovighi and Stefani do not consider the Italian performance either "shameful or dishonorable," whether one judges it "on a moral plane" or on "a technical-military" one. On the "historical" plane, they conclude that the CTV had mounted an "unsuccessful offensive" but had held the Republican counterattack and "Nothing more." (*Niente di più*.)[14] On a practical plane, the Italians learned from the battle and thoroughly reorganized the CTV, which, as noted, subsequently made a significant contribution to the Nationalist war effort.[15] It is therefore not surprising that Livio Negro viewed Italy's "armored legionnaires" as having written a "glorious" chapter (*pagine di gloria*) in the history of the Italian military in Spain.[16]

The noise generated by the CTV's "check" at Guadalajara has masked the reality that the Italian commanders of the group were regular military officers anxious to learn from their experiences in Spain, as was the Italian Ministry of War. In his analysis of the battle, Emilio Faldella noted that expectations had been high following Màlaga, but that morale had fallen after it had become clear that the enemy would offer a determined resistance and that Republican aircraft, largely unopposed by Italian aircraft which were grounded by the weather, would take advantage of the easy targets offered by Italian units backed up along the main road. Among the lessons learned during the battle were that units needed to operate off-road and that tanks could sow panic among Italian as well as Republican troops. The effect that Republican tanks had on the CTV led its command to stress the need for a defense in depth and a "lucid mind and steady nerves by everyone, especially commanding officers" (*testa lucida e nervi a posto da parte di tutti, e soprattutto dei capi*). The Italian commander was aware that a confrontation between tanks and infantry might resemble one between Goliath and David, but he assured his officers and his men that "David will always win" (*Davide vincerà sempre*). To assure that David did so, he advised using anti-tank guns in mass, calling in support from divisional artillery, and attacking tanks with flamethrowers, grenades, and artillery at

13. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile spagnola*, Vol. I, pp. 276-306, 314-17, put the number of Italian casualties at 3,254 and Republican at 6,000; Coverdale, *Italian Intervention*, pp. 229-48, lists 2,700 Italian casualties.

14. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile spagnola*, Vol. I, pp. 247-317, and Vol. II, pp. 512-13, note that the CTV had a single check in three years of combat. Mazzetti, *La politca militare italiana*, pp. 209-14, for Ettore Bastico, who assumed command of a reinforced CTV (*Corpo truppe Volontarie*) after the battle, and attributed the check to poor training, bad weather, uncertain leadership, a lack of discipline, and poor organization.

15. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana*, Vol. II, pp. 496-515; Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 197-212, think Spain had little impact on mechanization.

16. NAM, Negro, Frames 329-31, 490-95; also F. Biondi-Morra (Francesco Belfore), "Il contributo italiano alla guerra di Spagna," *Nuova antologia* (1939).

close range to destroy their treads and suspensions. If these measures failed, it was best simply to avoid enemy tanks and let them pass through the front line, then attack them from the rear or allow the artillery to deal with them.[17]

Such advice suggested that the CTV's command was serious about learning from its experience and not given to empty rhetoric. The Italian Ministry of War was also anxious to learn from the CTV's experience in Spain, and in mid 1937 the Army created a "Technical Section" to evaluate the equipment, tactics, and organizations of all belligerents, including the performance of tanks and mechanized units in combat.[18] Among the lessons that the Italian army learned were that arms accompanying infantry, including artillery, should be armored to be effective, that massed artillery could stop tank attacks, and that the army needed three types of tanks – one for breakthrough (*di rottura*), one to accompany infantry, and one for exploitation and pursuit. Following the battle of Santander in August 1937, an Italian analysis recommended that the tank battalion be comprised of two rather than four companies, because battalions tended to operate as two distinct units in combat.[19]

However, evaluation was often not straightforward, as reports regarding the CTV's three-ton "fast tank," or CV (*carro veloce*) showed. The Italians had already learned in Ethiopia that the CV 33 could not be employed successfully without the protection of infantry and anti-tank guns, but in Spain the question of whether it should be employed at all arose, owing to the presence of heavier Soviet tanks (but not to competition from German tanks, which, like the CV were thin skinned and carried only two machine guns). Derived from the British Carden Loyd carrier, the CV was designed as an "assault" tank to be used for scouting and rear-guard actions with *celere* divisions, not for breakthrough attacks with infantry. It appeared in several models, including the CV 33, CV 35 and L3/35. None were completely successful, but 2,500 were produced.[20] Gervasio Bitossi,

17. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile Spagnola*. *Documenti e allegati*, Vol. I, docs. 71, 72, 73, 77, 78. This became standard Italian practice, see Vincenzo Sampieri, "Carri, controcarri, artiglierie nelle battaglie del deserto," *Rivista militare* (1971), pp. 1127-29, 1137-40.

18. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile Spagnola*. *Documenti e allegati*, Vol. II, docs. 121a, 121b, 122, and 123, for Colonel Carlo Rivolta's conclusions that infantry commanders needed to apply the regulations regarding tanks properly and that tanks needed more firepower and more armor.

19. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile Spagnola*. *Documenti e allegati*, Vol. II, docs. 124, 128, 130. A "binary" battalion would have had two companies and a 47/32 anti-tank section, supported by a "motor-mechanical group" of 155 men, with five tanks and six armored cars.

20. Filippo Stefani, *La storia della dottrina e degli ordinamenti dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. II (Rome: SME/US, 1985), pp. 543-45. For the CV, see Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 88-100; Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 135-53; and NAM, series T-586, reel 487, frames 047479-490, Gervasio Bitossi, "Frammenti di una esperienza decennale di guerra motorizzata, 1933–1943," [April 1943], and Report, 8 June 1935.

commander of the *Littorio* Division, the armored core of the CTV, considered the CV problematic from the time he took over as commander of the tank training center in 1933. In Spain, he was forced to assign two "*arditi*" to operate with each L3/35 during the battle of Catalonia in 1938 because of the tank's poor visibility. Because his troops were well trained and better equipped than their Republican enemy, they fought well even when isolated. But training and high morale, Bitossi noted, were not enough, because even the best soldier became discouraged when facing an enemy who possessed superior weaponry.[21]

It therefore appeared that the L3/35 was, at best, obsolete. But if the L3/35 was not as thickly armored as its Soviet rivals and carried two machine guns rather than a cannon, in his report on the actions at Rudilla and Tortosa in March and April 1938, Colonel Valentino Babini, who commanded the *Raggruppamento Celere*, which included the CTV's two tank battalions, praised the diminutive tank as reliable and able to survive in combat, thanks to its speed, low profile, and mobility. He also praised the CTV, which had used the L3/35 in "mass," unlike their Soviet and German counterparts, whose tanks had wandered piecemeal onto the battlefield and failed to have a decisive effect on the course of battle (*partecipano pigramente alla battaglia, non hanno mai dato un apporto decisivo e travolgente*). Nonetheless, like Bitossi, Babini was aware of the L3/35's shortcomings, and he suggested several improvements – providing it with a radio, lengthening its range, giving it more visibility, protecting its crews from shrapnel and bullets which entered through open ports, installing an internal starter so its crew would not have to leave the tank during combat, and providing an emergency exit in case the tank capsized. A year earlier, Captain Oreste Fontana had suggested many of the same improvements, including mounting a 20mm machine cannon on tanks. Of these, the last was tried, but crews found the gun cumbersome to operate.[22]

Babini was not impressed with the German Mark I and ambivalent regarding the Soviet T26 and T28 tanks. He noted that the Soviet tanks, while they carried more armor and a gun, were less reliable than the L3/35. The T26's air-cooled engine tended to overheat, and neither tank was maneuverable off-road, so they tended to stay on the roads, making them easy targets for anti-tank guns, thanks to their relatively high profiles. They

21. NAM, series T-586, reel 487, frames 047479-490, 047501-91, 047622-659, 047667-675, Gervasio Bitossi, "Frammenti di una esperienza decennale di guerra motorizzata, 1933-1943," [April 1943]; "Reggimento Cavalleggeri Guide, Centro Addestramento CV, Addestramento dei Carri Veloci," 1 July 1934; Report, 8 June 1935; "Note sulla Divisione Littorio," August 1940; and "Divisione Assalto Littorio, 1938," for his division's performance during the forty-four day battle for Catalonia.

22. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile Spagnola. Documenti e allegati*, Vol. II, doc. 125; Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 200 ff. Babini's *celere* group had two tank battalions, an armored car company, a company of flamethrowers, a motorized machine gun battalion, and a trucked *bersaglieri* battalion.

were, he concluded, not so much tanks as self-propelled artillery because each carried a 45mm gun, which did impress him. Despite their shortcomings, the Soviet tanks did have thicker armor than their Italian rival and they carried their main armament in a turret, and Babini understood that his units needed medium tanks to compete with the Soviet machines. Although he considered the Italian 47/32mm gun an excellent weapon and better than its 37mm German counterpart, the Soviet gun outranged the Italian by 1,000 meters and it was mounted in tanks, making it mobile and impervious to small arms fire. Because the Italians pushed their anti-tank guns forward with their tanks, the 47/32 had to be towed by tanks or maneuvered into position by its crew, a laborious process, and because the gun had no shield, its crew were exposed to enemy fire. Babini therefore recommended that the 47/32 be towed and given a shield. He also urged that armored units be provided with the proper equipment for a "tactical division of labor," specifically a "breakthrough" tank mounting both a gun and machine guns, a medium tank to exploit breakthroughs, and an upgraded version of the L3/35 (a light assault tank) to accompany *celere* units in pursuit, as well as armored cars to do a variety of tasks behind the lines and in combat.[23]

In February 1939, Lieutenant Colonel Augusto D'Amico, who held various posts in the CTV from 1937 through early 1939, submitted a fifteen-page report, which described both the strengths and weakness of the CTV and suggested that even had Italian units had better armor and air-ground coordination, a number of other problems would have remained to hamper a *guerra di rapido corso*. Noting that the Spanish conflict was unique in combining the features of a colonial war with those of a clash between conventional armies, he suggested that the relatively low number of casualties suffered by the CTV was a function of the "offensive" war it had fought. Although the conflict had been marked by a discontinuous front and a slow, deliberate Nationalist advance which had been delayed to give Franco time "to purge and reorganize internally," D'Amico believed that it had provided a testing ground for a new "war of movement"; served as "an excellent school for cadre, commanders, and general staffs"; and instilled a sense of "daring" among those who had served in the CTV.[24]

The CTV was well supplied with automatic weapons, and D'Amico praised the Breda *fucile mitragliatore* as "excellent and dependable" (*ottimo*

23. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile Spagnola. Documenti e allegati*, Vol. II, docs. 124, 125; Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 206-12, Vol. II, pp. 156-63, also reproduce and discuss Babini's report.

24. NAM, series T-821, reel 231, frames 570-72. At Guadalajara, the CTV casualties were ten percent of its effectives, compared to forty percent lost by a battalion on Monte Sabotino in October 1915 and seven percent by *XXIII Marzo* in March 1938. Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 204-06, also discuss D'Amico's report.

e sicuro) and judged both the Model 1891 rifle and Fiat machine gun as "good." Hand grenades had proven "excellent and dependable," the 20mm machine-cannon had been effective against enemy armor, flamethrowers had helped to overcome prepared positions, and the 65/17mm gun, if old, had been "simply invaluable" (*semplicemente prezioso*). But units regularly ran short of ammunition, owing to a lack of tracked ammunition carriers, and D'Amico considered the new "assault" mortars to be too visible, too vulnerable, and too little used. Like Babini, he was ambivalent regarding the L3/35, which if vulnerable to 8mm rounds was also "tough, simple, maneuverable, [and] fast" (*resistenti, rustici, agili, veloci*). Effective against an enemy who was not in prepared positions and well armed, the L3/35 had been deployed with *celere* columns and motorized machine-gun units (*motomitragliatrici*) for reconnaissance, deep thrusts, pursuit, and occupation of terrain, as well as with armored cars for close support of infantry. D'Amico concluded that experience showed that coordination of tanks with infantry multiplied the offensive capacity of both and resulted in a material and moral superiority over the enemy.[25]

According to D'Amico, because the German 37mm anti-tank gun was ineffective beyond 500 meters and only the Italian 65/17 had been able to stop the "heavy" Soviet tank (T28), anti-tank guns had been pushed forward with tanks and infantry during attacks, a practice that the Italians later used effectively in North Africa, but which, as noted above, tended to wear out its crews and expose them to enemy fire. The Italians also employed the 100/17mm gun as an anti-tank weapon, and D'Amico praised it for its "effective hitting power" (*efficacia di colpo*). Interestingly, he proposed that at least half of a unit's guns be "packed" (*someggiati*), because these had arrived in a timely fashion while both "horse-drawn" (*ippotrainata*) and guns towed by motor vehicles tended to lag behind during advances. He also advised putting artillery under brigade command to avoid the "pyrotechnic displays" that had proven ineffective and occasionally hindered their own infantry in Spain. Although artillery had not been used in a counter-battery role in Spain, D'Amico saw doing so as important in a war of movement, and he recommended that the divisional artillery park contain long-range guns. He also noted that the Italian 20mm gun had been "excellent" against low-flying aircraft, and that both the German 88mm and the Italian 75/46 had been effective against aircraft flying higher than 4,000 meters.[26]

In addition to good small arms, powerful tanks, and modern artillery, D'Amico stressed the need for efficient engineering units, reliable radio communications and telephone lines, and tactical air support. He was not overly impressed with high-altitude bombing and he was skeptical of the use of aircraft for tactical reconnaissance, artillery observation, and unit liaison in mountainous terrain. However, he considered strafing to be "deadly" and

25. Ibid., frames 572-75. The CTV had been chronically under strength.
26. Ibid., frames 575-76.

to have had a great moral effect on troops, so he advised providing tracers for the 20mm guns with anti-aircraft sections, arguing that seeing anti-aircraft fire coming at them was the only way to deter enemy pilots. Wheeled vehicles were easy prey for low-flying aircraft because they operated on roads, so D'Amico stressed the need for units to be able to move themselves off-road, using mules and horses, as well as motor vehicles. To maintain the well-being and efficiency of troops, he advised moving support services as close to the front as possible.[27]

To successfully wage a war of movement, D'Amico believed that divisional and corps commanders, or their seconds-in-command, "must see, decide, and command on the spot" (*deve vedere, decidere e comandare sul posto*), and that they be both healthy and robust in order to avoid a physical "collapse" that would trigger mental lapses that might give the enemy an unearned victory. He advised keeping operational concepts "as simple as possible, linear, an arrow on a map," because "even the best ideas become twisted and overly complex if given too much thought" (*a pensarci su troppo, le migliori idee iniziali si appestiscono e storcono*). Officers needed to assure that orders were carried out, but they also needed to encourage the tired, persuade the hesitant, raise depressed spirits, and once the enemy had broken, to push their troops beyond their limits. A member of the regular army, D'Amico had high praise for MVSN members of all ranks and grades, noting that if their role in combat had been limited, owing to a lack of professional training and combat experience, their performance had been comparable to that of regular officers.[28]

Italian experience in Spain was therefore anything but straightforward, and the lessons learned could not be reduced to a few simple observations regarding armored vehicles. The Italians had fought alongside Spanish Nationalist forces whose goals were political as well as military and against an enemy which was on occasion as well or better equipped than the Italians themselves. The CTV had also fought on a variety of terrains, from the coastal plains around Málaga to the broken country outside Madrid. Italian observers like D'Amico were not concerned only with the performance of tanks, but with overall performance, and they submitted reports which sought to evaluate the effectiveness of armored vehicles in the context of operations by mixed units over various topographic and climatic conditions.

27. Ibid., frames 577-82. Also Ferruccio Botti, *La logistica dell'Esercito Italiano (1831-1981)*, Vol. III (Rome: SME/US, 1994), pp. 649-764, who concludes that Spain made no "positive contribution in the field of doctrine" or the deployment and use of materials, but did retard the modernization and undermine the readiness of the Italian armed forces in 1940.

28. NAM, series T-821, reel 231, frames 582-84. D'Amico commanded a mixed division, two-thirds of whom were MVSN, one-third regular army, with most of the latter in machine gun, artillery, and engineering sections. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile spagnola*, Vol. I, pp. 296-312, suggest that General Rossi, who had destabilized the CTV's defenses, had suffered such a "collapse" (*"Rossi, in verità, si lasciò sopraffare da un pessimismo esagerato"*).

While it was clear that armored vehicles were useful, it was also clear that the Italians needed to upgrade their armored vehicles and their doctrine in order to compete against Soviet tanks. It is worth noting that the much maligned L3 "tankette" received mixed reviews and that Italian observers noted both its negative and its positive characteristics. It is also worth noting that the L3 was one of Italy's more successful exports[29] and that the Italians were not particularly impressed with German tanks (the Mark I), although they learned to respect Soviet armor.

Livio Negro's assessment

In March 1939, Colonel Livio Negro, commander of the 132nd (*Ariete*) armored brigade, summarized the state of armored development and noted two possible transformations of Europe's armies. One, motorization, involved the simple process of replacing horses with vehicles. The other, mechanization, was "more revolutionary and daring" (*più ardita e più rivoluzionaria*) because it entailed the creation of new combat units utilizing armored vehicles and self-propelled artillery, which Negro saw as the first step toward creating an army of the future similar to those envisioned by H.G. Wells and Jules Verne.[30] Both motorization and mechanization had begun during World War I – motorization to move artillery, bridging material, and combat units; mechanization to overcome entrenched positions at Cambrai, Soissons, and Amiens. By the late 1930s, Negro believed that armies were motorizing to the extent that the industrial development and financial resources of their countries allowed. But mechanization remained the object of "lively debate" (*vivaci polemiche*), in part because tanks were vulnerable to both anti-tank guns and passive obstructions, just as warships were to coastal batteries and mines.[31] In effect, a classic debate was underway between those favoring the offense (tanks) and those supporting the defense (anti-tank measures).

Negro saw various factors influencing doctrine, including geopolitical considerations, and he noted that armies based how they developed

29. Benedetto Pafi, Cesare Falessi, Goffredo Fiore, *Corazzati italiani, 1939-45* (Rome: D'Anna Editore, 1968), pp. 50-55.

30. National Archives Microfilm (NAM), series T-821, reel 384, frames 295-97, 486-95, Colonel Livio Negro, "Esame comparativo della costituzione organica delle G.U. corazzate presso i principali eserciti europei e dei criteri fondamentali del loro impiego," and "Note, osservazioni e proposte di varianti, alle norme 'sull'impiego delle unità carriste' bozze di stampa 1938." Negro may have been thinking of H.G. Wells, *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933; screenplay, 1936), which predicted that air power and armor would dominate future war, and Jules Verne's *Master of the World* (1904) – or simply making the point that armored formations were futuristic. Negro later wrote two articles on armored warfare, "Note sull'impiego delle unità carriste," *Rassegna di cultura militare e rivista di fanteria*, Vol. 4 (1942), pp. 423-29, and "I reparti carristi in combattimento," Ibid., Vols. 7/8 (1942), pp. 903-19, both cited by Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 454, 506.

31. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 298-99, 486-89.

motorization and mechanization on different sets of assumptions. Consequently, the armored doctrine of any given country had its peculiar strengths and weaknesses. Impressed by the development of British armor, Negro nonetheless considered it useless against organized defenses and inadequate to play a defensive role – conclusions in part confirmed in 1941 at Bir el Gobi, where *Ariete* Division and Italian infantry destroyed at least a third of XXII Brigade's 158 Crusader tanks.[32] Rather than a force built to confront other European powers, Negro judged British armored formations to be essentially "colonial" formations, owing to their reliance on light tanks and their lack of air support, chemical units, armored cars, motorcycles, and all-terrain vehicles (*Dovunque*). Although his observation was something of an exaggeration, during the initial battles in North Africa, a "colonial" theater, it was a combination of Italian immobility and British infantry and local command of the air and the sea that guaranteed British victories. Their most effective weapon was the Matilda, an infantry tank deployed with Royal Tank Regiments.[33]

Nor was Negro impressed with France's DLM (*Division Légère Méchanique*). Not only did he consider it unwieldy, he did not believe its 160 tanks could generate sufficient "shock" (*urto*) to overcome prepared positions. Negro considered the DLM capable of offensive, defensive, and counter-offensive operations because it possessed its own aviation and armored cars, but he still saw it as a motorized more than a mechanized formation.[34]

Negro was impressed with German and Soviet armored formations, which had developed late and learned from the experience of others. He considered German formations "a very powerful weapon" (*un potentissimo ariete*) capable of a wide variety of tasks, even if they were "a bit too big and

32. James J. Sadkovich, "Of Myths and Men: Rommel and the Italians in North Africa, 1940-1942," *International History Review*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (May 1991), pp. 284-313; Dino Campini, *Nei giardini del diavolo. La storia inedita dei carristi della Centauro, dell'Ariete e della Littorio* (Milan: Longanesi, 1969), pp. 138-43; Sampieri, "Carri, controcarri," pp. 1128-29, 1134-36. The XXII Brigade attacked without the support of the 1st South African Division and found itself facing 138 tanks of *Ariete* Division and fifty-five Italian guns, including 75/27, 105/28, and 102/35 models, all able to pierce the Crusader tank's 40mm of armor plate. The British admitted to losing fifty-seven tanks; the Italians counted more than eighty destroyed. According to Basil Liddell Hart, *The Tanks: The History of the Royal Tank Regiment and its Predecessors, Heavy Branch, Machine-Gun Corps, Tank Corps, and Royal Tank Corps, 1914-1945*, Vol. II (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 106, "In a series of gallant charges, it [XXII Armoured Brigade] drove back the Italian tanks, but suffered heavily from the enemy's dug-in guns, losing more than forty of its 160 Crusaders. It had, however, knocked out thirty-four of the Italian M.13 tanks."

33. Sadkovich, "Of Myths and Men," *passim*; Liddell Hart, *The Tanks*, Vol. II, pp. 37-63. In 1940, most of 7th Armoured Division's 204 tanks were light, so initial successes against Italian forces were due to 7th RTR's forty-five Matildas and elements of the motorized 4th Indian Division. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 308-09.

34. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 309-14.

unwieldy" (*un po'massicio*). What little he knew of Soviet mechanized units led Negro to conclude that they were "decidedly futuristic" (*spiccamente avvenirista*) and unique in operating with both air support and airborne units. Nonetheless, his conversations with veterans of the Spanish Civil War had convinced him that Soviet tank crews lacked "enthusiasm" (*slancio*) and were not adept at maneuver, because while the Soviet BT-26, a "medium" tank, was decidedly superior to the Italian CV 35 (L3/35), Italian armored units had acquitted themselves well. Even so, by 1939 Negro considered medium tanks necessary for successful attacks and counterattacks, and he relegated light tanks like the CV 35 to reconnaissance, flank security, and exploitation.[35]

Negro was convinced that his colleagues had learned crucial lessons from the conflicts in Spain and China, among them the need for better anti-tank guns and for fast new tanks less vulnerable to enemy fire, both essential to overcome static defenses. He considered it essential for tanks to collaborate closely with artillery, which was to destroy enemy anti-tank guns, minefields, and passive obstacles. But he also believed they should be used with "heavy" infantry armed with mobile artillery (in particular, the new 47/32 gun), machine guns, and mortars, and that they should be capable of neutralizing enemy anti-tank guns that survived artillery fire. Rather than an "all-armored" force, Negro was describing armored formations similar to the mechanized divisions that dominated the battlefields in Europe for most of World War II. But while he believed that tanks must cooperate closely with other arms in the initial phases of the attack, he argued that they should be free to exploit breakthroughs on their own. He therefore envisioned a need for two distinct types of tanks – powerful, well-armored vehicles operating in autonomous battalions or regiments for infantry support, and fast, long-range tanks organized in armored regiments and incorporated into armored divisions for deep penetration and wide flanking maneuvers. Of the two, he saw the latter as the more interesting because it promised maximum freedom to maneuver and was best suited to "that war of rapid decision toward which we are definitely moving" (*quella guerra di rapido corso a cui ci andiamo decisamente orientando*).[36]

As the last "born" and the smallest in Europe, Negro considered Italian armored formations in an "experimental phase [and] therefore susceptible to modifications" (*fase sperimentale, suscettible quindi di modificazioni*).[37] An

35. Ibid., frames 319-24, 487-88. Federico Baistrocchi also considered tanks useful for exploitation and pursuit and saw the need for three types of tank, a "fast" tank (*carro veloce*) for reconnaissance and pursuit, and "breakthrough" (*di rottura*) and "assault" (*d'assalto*) tanks for overpowering prepared positions and supporting infantry and *celere* units. See Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 151-54.

36. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 299-303.

37. Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 125-32. The 1st Armored Brigade (*Brigata Corazzata*) was formed on 15 July 1937 from the 31st tank regiment and the 5th *bersaglieri* regiment, supported by a company of 47/32 guns, a battery of 20mm guns, and an engineering

Italian armored division's tank regiment would eventually consist of four battalions of M (medium) and one of P (*pesante*, or heavy) tanks, each of three companies. In addition to being employed in small units for reconnaissance and flank security, the armored regiment was to be used as a compact mass of 250 tanks to generate "shock" (*urto*), penetrate enemy positions, and exploit and pursue the enemy after his defenses were breached. Italian armored divisions also had a *bersaglieri* motorcycle regiment, which included a company of sixteen armored cars, two battalions of *bersaglieri* on motorcycles, and a company of 47/32 guns in four sections. These units had a wide variety of tasks, from reconnaissance, flank security, infiltration, the occupation of key points, and envelopment (*aggiramenti*) to exploitation and pursuit. The armored and *bersaglieri* regiments were supported by an artillery regiment consisting of two groups of 75/18 or 75/34 guns in two batteries and 20mm guns grouped in one or two batteries. The artillery was to provide direct support, batter enemy artillery, engage enemy tanks, and fend off hostile aircraft. Services and a company of engineers completed the division, which lacked only a chemical arm and its own air support.[38]

However, all of this was theoretical because Italy had difficulty manufacturing enough medium tanks to supply its existing armored formations, and its P tank did not go into production until 1943.[39] Even with its full complement of 250 tanks, the Italian armored division was small by 1939 standards, but Negro believed that it compensated for its smaller size by its "great agility" (*grande snellezza*) and its "increased potential for maneuver" (*elevate possibilità manovriere*). If the Italian armored division could not cave in prepared positions on its own and needed air support to be effective, its tank regiment still conferred "penetrative force" (*forza penetrativa*), and, like its *bersaglieri* units, could react quickly to changes during the course of battle.[40] When employed with troops in trucked (*autotrasportabile*) and motorized (*celeri*) units, the armored division could

company, with the task of breaching the enemy lines. Mechanization became official policy in 1938. Mecozzi, *La politica militare italiana*, pp. 81, 134-35, notes that in 1927, Italy had three tank units, Britain eight, and France forty; Germany and the USSR had none.

38. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 324-25, 487-90. Negro did not discuss the P tank because it was still on the drawing board. Orders were placed for two medium tanks, the M11/39 and the M13/40 in 1939, so Negro was familiar with their basic characteristics, even though they had not yet been delivered to armored units. Mecozzi, *La politica militare italiana*, p. 235. For how smaller formations operated, Leonida Fazi, *Bersaglieri e panzerjäger in a.s.* (Rome: Giovanni Volpe Editore, 1968), *passim*.

39. Littorio was still mounted on L3-35 tanks in 1940, much to the dismay of Bitossi, who resumed command of the division only after being promised medium tanks. NAM, series T-586, reel 487, frames 047665–678, Gervasio Bitossi, "Note sulla Divisione Littorio," August, 1940.

40. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frame 493. Prior to battle, aircraft were to conduct reconnaissance and protect armored units as they moved into position, then act as liaison, provide close support, and attack obstacles armor could not remove on its own.

therefore serve as "a steel spearhead that penetrates and shatters" (*costituisce la punta acciaiata che penetra e schianta*) the enemy line. Negro lamented the failure to assign the new armored formations specific tasks other than strategic reconnaissance and support in breakthrough, security, and cover. He believed that eventually they would be assigned tasks similar to those of other units and be organized organically as part of an armored corps with motorized divisions which could be used with either *autotrasportabile* or *celere* formations.[41]

Italians had used armored units in Libya, Spain, and Ethiopia, but no armored divisions had yet seen combat, and Negro considered it normal to doubt their worth, noting that skepticism was "common enough even among us" (*abbastanza diffuso anche fra di noi*). Even so, Italian "armored legionnaires" (*legionari carristi*) had written "glorious pages" for armor in Spain, and Negro believed that the Italian Army must develop armored formations because they were a key element of the "mobile war" (*guerra manovrata*) that formed the "basis of our strategic doctrine" (*base della nostra dottrina strategica*) and would be crucial in realizing "Italy's imperial destiny." Indeed, the open spaces of North Africa were essential for the sort of armored forces that Negro foresaw, because it was unlikely that an armored division would find the space to generate the necessary mass and shock he considered essential for it to be effective along Italy's mountainous and forested frontiers.[42]

Poland: a lucky and much misunderstood victory

In 1939, everybody saw in the German victories what they wanted to see, and the Italians were no different. Mario Roatta, Italy's military attaché in Berlin, believed that armored units had been used primarily for exploitation and pursuit in Poland, an observation in line with Italian doctrine.[43] Roero di Cortanze, Italy's air attaché in Berlin, saw little new in the German victory, save the dominant role played by air power, and he concluded that the "classical forms" of combat still obtained. Di Cortanze noted that seizing control of the air quickly had affected the course of the campaign by enabling the *Luftwaffe* to interrupt rail, telegraph, and telephone services; to destroy enemy airfields and factories; to support army units; and to terrorize civilians. Air power, not armor, had therefore initially disrupted Polish efforts to mobilize and depressed Polish morale. The air attaché concluded

41. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 327-28, 486-89.

42. Ibid., frames 329-31, 490-95. Negro thought repeated attacks by tanks in waves 300 meters apart on level ground would generate the necessary mass and shock to smash through fortified positions, especially if tanks moved into position and immediately initiated battle. Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 3-32, 62-66, notes that the "lack of good tank terrain on the Italian frontier reduced the attractiveness of the tank as a strategic weapon."

43. NAM, series T-821, reel 109, frames 74-77, Mario Roatta, Berlin, 15 October 1939. Roatta noted that the German high command might use armored divisions to effect breakthroughs in the upcoming campaign in France, not just for exploitation, as in Poland.

that "nothing has changed," with the exception of the new factor of aviation. But because "military considerations" were still constrained by "humanitarian considerations" and the air arms of both sides had not been "used without reserve," the battlefield continued to be the province of "traditional arms," with air power playing an important role.[44] Di Cortanze's report could therefore be read as a confirmation of the theories of both Giulio Douhet and Amedeo Mecozzi, Italian advocates of strategic bombing and tactical airpower, respectively.[45]

Although he stressed the importance of control of the air, di Cortanze was impressed with the performance of German armored and motorized units. Nonetheless, he believed that the Poles had nursed "a totally erroneous conception regarding the characteristics of modern warfare" (*una concezione assolutamente errata delle caratteristiche di una guerra moderna*) and had therefore placed too much emphasis on morale and not enough on weaponry, in part owing to their victory over the Bolsheviks two decades earlier – an interesting comment which is usually leveled against Italian military leaders. The Germans therefore benefited from both a flawed Polish strategy and a weak and dispersed Polish enemy. But their armored and motorized formations had also been favored by a lack of natural obstacles and a period of drought that had lowered river levels and hardened the ground so that vehicles could easily traverse open country. The destruction of the Polish air force, a lack of Polish medium and heavy anti-tank weaponry, and the disintegration of the Polish command allowed the Germans to use their "traditional" tactic of "envelopment on the wings" (*aggiramento per le ali*), with armored and motorized divisions further disorganizing Polish rear areas by making the deep thrusts formerly entrusted to cavalry and light infantry. The peculiar nature of the Polish countryside was therefore fundamental, and the Germans were able to exploit it thanks to Polish weakness, which was both doctrinal and economic.[46]

Nonetheless, as Mario Roatta noted, the Germans had made no effort to protect the rear and flanks of armored and motorized units, which simply bypassed strong points like Mława. Had the Poles been able to contest control of the air and had they possessed good anti-tank weaponry and mechanized forces, the Italian military attaché believed that Polish forces

44. NAM, series T-821, reel 113, frames 19-41, "Rilievi dello stato maggiore tedesco sulla campagna in Polonia (1940)," and reel 383, frames 893-96, Report, Lt. Col. G. Roero di Cortanze, 25 September 1939.

45. For the influence of Douhet and Mecozzi on Italian air doctrine, see Ferruccio Botti and Mario Cermelli, *La teoria della guerra aerea in Italia dalle origine alla seconda guerra mondiale (1884–1939)* (Rome: Stato Maggiore Aeronautica/Ufficio Storico, 1989), pp. 179-90, 309-92, 445-58, 469-94.

46. The Polish Minister of War had told di Cortanze that the Poles were superior to the Germans, prompting the Italian to note that fighting the Germans in 1939 was not the same as defeating the Bolsheviks in 1920. NAM, series T-821, reel 383, frames 886-87, Lt. Col. G. Roero di Cortanze, Berlin, 25 September 1939.

might well have cut off and annihilated German spearheads, which had regularly outrun their support, as they would again in 1940 during the campaign in France and in 1941 and 1942 on the Eastern Front.[47]

For the Italian air attaché, a child of Douhet and Mecozzi more than of Fuller and Liddell Hart, air, not armor, was the crucial new technical factor in Poland. Even Adolf Hitler saw air as the decisive factor.[48] But di Cortanze still judged rapid mobilization to be crucial, just as it had been in the previous century, and an analysis by Italian intelligence seemed to confirm his observations. Noting that the Poles had begun to mobilize in March 1939 but had delayed a full call-up until 30 August, five days after German mobilization was complete, a report by SIM (*Servizio Informazioni Militare*) concluded that the Poles had been extremely vulnerable because while rivers could act as natural obstacles, their artificial obstructions were not complete and the country's roads and rails converged on Warsaw, facilitating the movement of enemy units toward Poland's capital. The author of the report was unsure as to why the Poles had not fully mobilized, but speculated that Polish leaders had stood firm because they were urged to resist German demands by London and may not have expected Germany to attack. But German leaders had also seriously miscalculated the Polish will to resist, making war inevitable but not predictable, an analysis not that different from A.J.P. Taylor's later thesis that the major powers had blundered into war in 1939. What was clear was that with only thirty divisions mobilized, most of which were infantry and dispersed across Poland in a futile effort to protect the country's industrial areas, the outcome was never in doubt.[49] Although the Italian report did not note this, unlike Ethiopia and Spain, Poland had

47. The obstructions at Mława and on the Narew River stalled German armored units; NAM, series T-821, reel 109, frames 56-60, "Notizie sugli sbarramenti anticarro artificiali installati dai polacchi dinnanzi alla posizione fortificata di Mlawa [*sic*]," Berlin, 16 September – 8 October 1939, and frames 74-77, Report, Mario Roatta, Berlin, 15 October 1939.

48. Italy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, series 9, volume 3 (hereafter *DDI*, 9/3), doc. 570, for Hitler's observation during his meeting with Mussolini on 18 March 1940 that air, not armor, had been the decisive factor in Poland.

49. NAM, series T-821, reel 383, frames 907 ff., esp. 911-19, SIM, "L'occupazione della Polonia," Notiziario Mensile Stati Esteri, N. 7, 15 December 1939. SIM estimated Polish forces at thirty infantry divisions, with reserves of four to five infantry divisions, fifteen cavalry brigades, two motorized brigades, and eight "national defense" brigades. A Polish infantry division consisted of three regiments, each of three battalions, supported by a cavalry group with a squadron of horse cavalry, a company of cyclists, and an armored car section with two vehicles; a group of heavy field artillery with two batteries of 150mm and one of 105mm guns; a battery of towed 37mm anti-tank guns, and another of 40mm anti-aircraft guns. Divisional arms included forty-eight field, eighteen anti-tank, and six anti-aircraft guns; 260 machine pistols (*fucili mitragliatrici*), and 134 machine guns (*mitragliatori*); 162 light and nine heavy (81mm) mortars; and two armored cars. Cavalry divisions had three to four regiments, each of five squadrons, with a group of horse-drawn artillery. Overall, SIM judged Poland's mobile formations to be weak and its more powerful infantry divisions to be unwieldy.

been rich in strategic targets within the range of tactical aircraft, enabling the *Luftwaffe*, which had been designed as a tactical air force, to play a major role.

Mario Roatta also considered the drive and initiative of the "young" German officer corps to have been important in making *Blitzkrieg* work, a question of spirit, training, and morale. He considered the German tactic of "flooding" the battlefield with fast and maneuverable motorized and armored units, which were primarily used to thrust deeply into the enemy rear, as very similar to the Italian concept of a *guerra di rapido corso*.[50] This was also the conclusion of a September 1940 study by the Italian *Celere* Army Corps (*Corpo d'Armata Celere*), which surveyed the Polish, Finnish, Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian, and French campaigns, with particular attention to the organization of German forces. The study identified several key elements of a new form of warfare that were similar to those already adopted by the Italian armed forces: (1) the organization of armored units in armored Army Corps operating autonomously and leading the advance; (2) the use of armored units for maneuver and exploitation rather than as reserves; (3) the integration of armored units into Army Corps; and (4) the circumvention of enemy positions with lateral probes and their neutralization with quick advances. Victory was thus a function of organization and speed. "The rapid successes gained in forward areas," the Italian study concluded, "were the best means to prevent enemy action on the flank and to the rear of advancing units."[51]

Of particular interest is the study's conclusion that a German Army Corps was organized similarly to its Italian counterpart, with two to four infantry divisions, a cavalry regiment, a regiment of medium tanks, a machine gun battalion of four companies, and a reinforced reconnaissance group of two armored car companies, a motorized machine gun company and a motorized artillery company with four 20mm and two 150mm guns. Armored divisions consisted of four tank battalions, each of three light tank and medium tank companies (for a total of 292 light tanks and fifty-two medium tanks), supported by three infantry battalions, a reconnaissance group identical to the one integrated into infantry divisions, an artillery regiment with two 105mm groups, and an anti-tank group with a machine gun company and three anti-tank companies. "Light" divisions were approximately half the strength of an armored division, with one or two tank battalions, each with

50. NAM, series T-821, reel 383, frames 915-17.

51. NAM, series T-821, reel 463, frames 1397-1410, Comando Corpo d'Armata Celere, Ufficio Operazioni e Informazioni, "Studio sulle recenti campagne di Polonia, Finlandia, Norwegia, Olanda, Belgio, Francia," September 1940. The analysis was undertaken *"... allo scopo di mettere in evidenza l'impiego di nuovi organismi, mezzi e procedimenti e trarre quindi ammaestramenti che possono servire come orientamento per quell'evolversi delle modalità d'impiego, inevitabile con il perfezionarsi ed il molteplicarsi dei mezzi."* It concluded that, *"I rapidi successi, conseguiti in avanti, sono stati il migior mezzo per sventare un'azione nemica sul fianco e sul tergo delle unità avanzanti."*

three companies of light tanks (seventy-three tanks) and one of medium tanks (thirty-eight tanks).[52]

Light tanks, not medium or heavy tanks, therefore comprised the bulk of Germany's armored forces in 1939 and 1940, and its victory in Poland had been won by aircraft, armor, and motorized infantry operating with traditional infantry, most of which was on foot, a combined assault, not an armored attack, which succeeded in part because of the *élan* of German officers. Italian observers concluded that the Germans had obtained such a rapid victory not because armor was invincible or *Blitzkrieg* an unstoppable tactic, but because the Poles could not mount an effective defense and German units were well organized, well coordinated, and able to move quickly. Claims that Italian armored divisions were unique in relying on light tanks and that Badoglio and other Italian leaders did not understand the value of armor are therefore exaggerated.[53] The problem for Italy was that its medium tanks were only coming into service in 1939 and 1940 and that, unlike Germany, Italy could not draw on Czechoslovak armor, which comprised a quarter of German forces in France.

The lessons of 1939 and 1940 had underscored the importance of air and motorized infantry as much as they had armor, and it was clear to Italian military and air attachés that a weak and disorganized enemy was a tremendous advantage. It is therefore not surprising that Pietro Badoglio, a decidedly conservative general, saw the dispatch of seventy medium tanks to Benghazi as one of the keys to an upcoming offensive and ordered the entire fleet and the air force to escort the convoy carrying them to North Africa. Following the loss of eight to ten infantry divisions in Libya during the British offensive in 1940, the Italian high command dispatched an armored division, *Ariete*, not more infantry divisions.[54] The Italians clearly understood the usefulness of armor, and their refusals of German offers to supply armored units in 1940 were not based on doubts regarding the importance of tanks, but on the time needed to ship German units to North Africa (a minimum of three months) and the conviction that Italian troops were the equal of their German counterparts and needed tanks, not German commanders.[55]

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52. Ibid., frames 1410-15. The CAC/UOI study focused on organization at the squad, platoon, and company levels, and concluded that Italy needed to increase the number of anti-tank and automatic weapons with these units, to have commanders of smaller units take the initiative, and to be able to bring all arms to bear during the course of combat.

53. Ceva and Curami note, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 311-16.

54. *Verbali delle riunioni tenute dal capo di SM generale* (Rome: SME/US, 1983), Vol. I, docs. 9, 21 (2 July and 19 December 1940). *Ariete's* two battalions of medium tanks (eighty M13/40) were supported by the 10th *bersaglieri* regiment, one battalion of light tanks, and an artillery regiment.

55. *Verbali*, Vol. I, docs. 12, 20 (25 September and 18 December 1940). Roatta estimated three months to transport each German armored division, with fifty days to ship the 2,800 vehicles, 1,000 *motomezzi*, and services to support 14,000 German troops.

Tank doctrine and tank-hunters

Blitzkrieg was new in that it employed new weaponry (aircraft, tanks, mobile artillery), but old in that it followed a strategy of penetration and envelopment familiar to students of military history. While armor played a key role, Roatta, di Cortanze, and their colleagues understood that armor alone could not carry the day – that required a coordinated attack using aircraft, artillery, and tanks to batter the enemy and disrupt his rear areas; infantry to fix the enemy and armor and artillery to effect the breakthroughs; and then more armor and motorized infantry to exploit the breakthroughs and drive deep into the enemy's rear, weakening his ability to mount a counter-offensive. *Blitzkrieg* was therefore very much indeed like Italy's *guerra di rapido corso*, and Italian observers were not overawed; if anything, they identified those weaknesses in German doctrine that would eventually lead to the German army's defeat on the Eastern Front and in North Africa.

Italian observers were certainly not surprised that the success enjoyed by German armored units was a function of the support they received from aircraft and motorized infantry, nor that combined arms needed to be well coordinated to operate successfully; these were lessons the Italians had already learned in Ethiopia and Spain and codified as doctrine. The Italian Army's December 1938 manual on tank units defined them as integral parts of infantry, *celere*, and armored divisions. Deployed in deep columns, tanks were to use their speed, armor, machine guns, cannon, and range to assure surprise and to generate enough firepower and shock to break through strong points and gain the freedom to maneuver and exploit. Like German tanks, Italian tanks were also to be used in "mass" and to cooperate with other arms, with enveloping maneuvers preferred to direct assaults on prepared positions.[56]

The similarly of Italian and German doctrine led John Sweet to conclude that the *guerra di rapido corso* was in fact "lightning war," but with no tank-versus-tank concept, inadequate anti-tank weaponry, inadequate tanks, and little idea of the need for local air superiority and ground-air coordination.[57] This was only in part true – the army understood the usefulness of tactical air support, but the Italian air force never quite reconciled the strategic

56. Ceva, *Le forze armate*, pp. 258-59, sees Pariani's "theory of water" (*teoria dell'acqua*), with attacking units like a river in flood seeking weak points, as similar to the ideas of Sun Tzu and Liddell Hart, and the *guerra di rapido corso* as a *"concetto in sé ineccepibile,"* but undermined by the emphasis on *"forze morale"* rather than a sustained effort to equip units with the materiel needed to make the theory work. Stefani, *La storia della dottrina*, Vol. II, pp. 370-71, 373-74, thinks Pariani's theories replaced scientific and technological thinking with *"filosofismo"* and "pure theory," but believes that the 1938 manual contained "unquestionably valid principles and procedures" (*princîpi e procedimenti validissimi*). Also, Alberto Pariani, "La dottrina. Lo spirito (Prepare ed osare)," in T. Sillani, *Le forze armate dell'Italia fascista* (Rome: La Rassegna Italiana, 1939), pp. 123-27.

57. Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 132-43.

theories of Douhet and the tactical ideas of Mecozzi. Similarly, the Italians understood the need for a tank-versus-tank concept, but lacked the vehicles to implement it, and instead pushed their anti-tank guns forward, a lesson learned in Spain. Indeed, Filippo Stefani views Italian tank doctrine in 1939 as "among the most advanced and progressive of the period with regard to its norms and rules of employment on the tactical level" (*tra le più avanzate e progredite del tempo quanto a criteri e modalità di azione sul piano tattico*). Both Stefani and Sweet stress the lack of reliable tactical air support, a function in part of the autonomy of Italy's armed forces and the army's indecisiveness regarding how to employ armor strategically.[58]

The inability to decide where to concentrate its small armored forces was in large part a function of Italy's unenviable geopolitical situation. As Mussolini told Germany's Foreign Minister in March 1940, while the Germans had only one front facing France and Britain, the Italians had five, and they had neither the forces nor the strategic reserves to fight on all of them, a problem exacerbated by Berlin's failure to prepare for a long war.[59] Inter-service rivalries were not, of course, unique to the Italian armed forces, and the lack of a strategic concept was in part the result of having to plan for both colonial and European conflicts. The lack of anti-tank guns and medium and heavy tanks were the result of a weak industrial base and of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia and intervention in Spain. In June 1940, none of the new armored vehicles ordered in 1939 had been deployed; the first M13/40 tanks were delivered only in February 1941, sixteen months after they had been ordered and too late to be a factor in operations in North Africa the previous autumn.[60]

Given the Italian assessment of operations in Poland, it was clear that tactical air support and strategic control of enemy air space was essential to make armored warfare work, and the failure of the Italian air force to work more closely with the army was critical. As Sweet noted, Italy also lacked a tank-versus-tank doctrine, but it is not clear how serious that particular lacuna was, and there is no question that the Italians were aware of the need for mobile guns – preferably mounted in tanks – to deal with other tanks, as their observations during the Spanish Civil War demonstrated. In a paper written in September 1939, before Germany's victories in France, Captain Gabriele Verri argued that it was uneconomical to utilize tanks against tanks. Not only were they in short supply, but he believed that armored

58. Botti and Cermelli, *La teoria della guerra aerea in Italia dalle origine alla seconda guerra mondiale, (1884–1939)*, pp. 179-90, 309-92, 445-58, 469-94, 529-42, 578-83, think pilots gained experience in Ethiopia and Spain, but the air force wasted materiel and failed to modify its doctrine. Stefani, *La storia della dottrina*, Vol. II, pp. 543-50, 554-55, criticizes the air force for having precluded effective air-ground cooperation.
59. *DDI*, 9/3, docs. 511, 512, 567, and 694, for Lieutenant Colonel Damiano Badini's 15 March 1940 assessment of Germany's lack of preparedness for war and Efisio Marras' warning that Germany would probably not help Italy with materiel.
60. Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 274-75.

formations were best employed in "offensive tasks" (*per compiti unicamente offensivi*), such as strategic reconnaissance, flanking maneuvers, exploitation, and pursuit. Rather than using tanks to hunt tanks, Verri believed that enemy tanks could best be opposed by armored vehicles designed for the task, "tank hunters" (*carri cacciatori*) that would be grouped in armored cavalry units and cooperate closely with aircraft. Verri assumed that regular tank units would also engage enemy armor, so he argued that medium and heavy tanks should be equipped with the 47/32mm gun, which had a good range and adequate penetrating power to destroy most tanks in existence in 1939.[61]

Verri's remarks regarding the usefulness of the 47/32mm gun are worth considering because one of the common errors in assessing Italian armored development is a tendency to collapse chronology and compare tanks which only came into service late in the war with those already serving with units in 1939 and 1940.[62] In 1940, German armored divisions were still comprised largely of light tanks, the German Mark I and Mark II, and the Czechoslovak T35 and T38. None had armor thicker than 30mm, with the earlier versions of the Mark II carrying only 15mm. The Mark III German tank was relatively lightly armored (30mm) and lightly armed, with a 37mm gun, which was upgraded to 50mm in 1941. The German "heavy" tank, the Mark IV, weighed only eighteen tons and carried a short-barreled 75/24mm gun, intended for use against infantry, not tanks. Early versions had 15mm of armor, later ones 30 to 50mm. The Italian 47/32 could penetrate any of these early tanks at 1,000 meters. The Italian L6/40, the light tank that replaced the L3/35, had only a 20mm gun, but carried 30mm of frontal armor, as did the M11/39 medium tank, which had a 37mm gun. The M13/40, which would become the main tank for Italian armored divisions, carried a 47/32mm gun and had 40mm of frontal armor.[63] Verri was therefore correct in seeing the 47/32mm gun as adequate to destroy most tanks in service in 1939.

To facilitate targeting, Verri advised using AP tracer rounds, and he suggested that the eighty-four rounds carried in medium tanks consist of a mix of AP and "semi-AP." In a suggestion that seems odd in retrospect, he argued in favor of mounting the gun in the hull (*casamatta*), to assure rapid fire and facilitate targeting because a gun in a turret was more difficult to maneuver and fire. Although most tanks would mount their guns in their

61. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 460-64, Captain Dr. Gabriele Verri, "Le grandi unità corazzate e la lotta fra carri" [September 1939].

62. On the transition to heavier and more powerful weapons, see Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 3-12.

63. For Italian armored fighting vehicles, see Sampieri, "Carri, controcarri"; Ralph Riccio, *Italian Tanks and Fighting Vehicles of World War II* (Henley-on-Thames: Pique, 1975); Anselmo Donnari, *Il carro armato, storia, dottrina, impiego* (Rome: SME/US, 1995); Pafi, Falessi, Fiore, *Corazzati italiani, 1939-45*; and Giulio Benussi, *Carri armati e autoblindate del Regio Esercito italiano, 1918-1943* (Milan: Intergest, 1974).

turrets by 1945, this was not the case in 1939, nor was it the case for all tanks two years later; both the American Grant and the British Churchill mounted their main guns in the hull.[64]

Verri's tank hunter (*cacciatore*) was similar to the Italian L6 47/32 *semovente* (self-propelled gun), which mounted the 47/32mm gun, and the M13 *semovente* 75/18, which mounted the 75/18mm gun. Pariani had ordered the former in October 1939, and the latter proved effective against British tanks in North Africa.[65] A fast, agile machine with minimum armor, a low profile, and maximum hitting power, Verri's tank hunter would have given Italy a valuable weapon in the desert had they been developed and distributed to units prior to June 1940. However, the M13 *semovente* was not deployed in North Africa until 1942, too late to affect the course of battle there. Whether this was because there was resistance to the idea of a tank hunter is not clear, but Verri noted that such resistance existed.[66] However, it is clear that Negro, Bitossi, Verri, Grazioli, and other Italians had grasped the essentials of armored warfare and that the Italian army had adopted norms and regulations that created an effective armored doctrine. If Badoglio and his "clan" remained skeptical of armor, those officers most directly responsible for armored doctrine were studying the armored doctrines and practices of other countries and attempting to adjust theirs accordingly. In the summer of 1939, the Army of the Po, which had been created as a mechanized force, analyzed French doctrine and possible Italian responses based on documents obtained by SIM.[67]

France

In late May of 1940, while German columns were still chasing the disorganized remnants of the French and British armies across northeastern France, Efisio Marras, Italy's military attaché in Berlin, submitted a report on German operations to SIM. More detailed reports followed in late July. By then, Italy was at war with France and Britain, and the Chief of Italy's

64. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 464-74. Verri anticipated Italian practice when he urged that armored cars be deployed with armored units to increase reconnaissance capabilities, but his suggestion that radios be mounted in tanks so they could communicate with aircraft was decidedly futuristic. Also Giuseppe Vasile, "L'autoblindo nella seconda guerra mondiale," *Rivista militare*, Vol. 28 (1972), pp. 1348-87.

65. For self-propelled guns, see Vincenzo Sampieri, "L'artiglieria semovente italiana dalle origini ad oggi," *Rivista militare*, Vol. 31 (1975), pp. 70-80, and Giulio Benussi, *Armi portatili, artigliere e semoventi del Regio Esercito italiano, 1900-1943* (Milan: Intergest, 1975).

66. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frame 464, for Verri's comment that Vecchiarelli and others opposed construction of a tank hunter, and Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, p. 311, for the high command's failure to grasp the importance of armor.

67. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 332-35, "Opinioni francesi sull'attacco con carri armati nell'ambito della divisione di fanteria," and reel 107, frames 98-110, N. 2239, Ettore Bastico to Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, Ufficio Addestramento, Verona, 17 December 1939, and attachments.

General Staff, Pietro Badoglio, shelved the reports with the comment that, "We will study it when the war is over." (*Studieremo a guerra finito*.)[68] Had he read the reports, he would not have found much to recommend the use of massed armored formations. Indeed, Hitler told Mussolini on 25 May that only three German armored divisions had seen any significant combat.[69]

In the fall and winter of 1939-40, Badoglio's immediate concern was not armored doctrine, but how Italy could "close the doors of the house," create an effective defense against air attacks, and stockpile enough raw materials and fuel oil to wage war for more than a few months.[70] By the spring of 1940, the Italians were trying to find ways to defend themselves against Yugoslavia and France in Europe and protect their colonies in North and East Africa from the French and British.[71] They were also concerned over "the overweening and arrogant nature of the Germans" (*la natura invadente e prepotente dei tedeschi*), the closure of Suez and Gibraltar by the British, and a serious lack of artillery and tanks. Hence the consensus among Italy's service chiefs that the armed forces must remain on the defensive.[72]

Obviously bothered that Italy was unable to take the offensive, on 4 June 1940 Mussolini told Badoglio, "I am not inventing anything new; I am following the Germans and French, who faced one another for six months without doing a thing." (*Non invento nulla di nuovo: faccio come i tedeschi ed i francesi, che sono stati di fronte 6 mesi senza far niente*.) Badoglio in turn told the German military attaché in Rome that Italy could do nothing "spectacular" because Berlin had gone to war "three years before the agreed-upon date" (*3 anni prima dell'epoca fissata*).[73] Unfortunately, while German

68. NAM, series T-821, reel 130, frames 515 ff., n. 735/A, Marras to SMG/SIM, Berlin, 26 May 1940; frames 898 ff., referred by Captain M. Marcatili, Capo SIM/SMG, 21 July 1940; and frames 503 ff., n. 1213, Marras to SIM, Berlin, 23 July 1940. Also, see Sergio Pelagalli, *Il generale Efisio Marras, addetto militare a Berlino (1936–1943)* (Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito/Ufficio Storico, 1994), esp. pp. 85-101. Pelagalli does not discuss these documents. *DDI*, 9/4, doc.567, for Marras' 24 May 1940 report to Alfieri in which he notes that the Germans hope the war will be over by winter.

69. *DDI*, 9/4, doc. 584. Hitler noted that French, Dutch, and Belgian forces had fought well, but that the British had let their allies take the brunt of the German attack and if good in defense, were hopeless on the offensive.

70. *Verbali*, Vol. I, doc. 2 (18 November 1939), for Badoglio's concern "to close the doors of the house" (*chiudere le porte di casa*), problems provisioning Italy's colonies, and the failure to create an effective air defense, which he blamed on Giovanni Giuriati and the PNF.

71. *Verbali*, Vol. I, docs. 4, 5 (6 and 30 May 1940). SIM estimated that the British had 100,000 troops in Egypt and the French 314,000 in Tunisia, with 200,000 French troops in Syria. The Italians had 140,000 men in Libya, most unmotorized infantry or Black Shirt divisions, making it the most worrisome area for Badoglio and Italy's General Staff.

72. *Verbali*, Vol. I, doc. 3 (9 April 1940); Italian industry could supply only 300 medium tanks by the end of 1940 and shortages of artillery could not be remedied until 1942. Umberto Spigo, *Premesse tecniche della disfatta (dall'euforia al disastro)* (Rome: Editrice Faro, 1946), pp. 112-13; in 1939, Italy produced only forty-five artillery pieces a month.

73. *Verbali*, Vol. I, docs. 6, 8 (5 and 25 June 1940).

victories in Poland and France were enough to persuade Mussolini that he had little choice but to enter the war and obtain what he could at the negotiating table, the Germans balked at invading Britain, leaving the British free to reinforce Egypt and effectively transposing the barycenter of the conflict to the Mediterranean in the fall of 1940.[74] This was something of a shock to the Italians, who had been assured by the Germans that the war would be over within a matter of weeks.[75]

Analyzing the German victory in France turned out to be as tricky as predicting how long the French could hold out in early June 1940. According to Efisio Marras, Italy's military attaché in Berlin, German columns had been extremely vulnerable during their advance, and only 50-kilometer forced marches by the infantry had resolved a series of crises which would have proven fatal had the French and English possessed a well-organized defense and control of the air. Here, then, was a repeat of German practice in Poland, which worked in both countries because Germany's enemy proved incapable of pinching off exposed armor columns. Nor did the Belgians and French do better against the initial German attack. Marras attributed the rapid collapse of French and Belgian fortifications to their "linear" layout, which lacked depth, and to a lack of anti-aircraft, not anti-tank, guns. Had the French and Belgian fortress areas been two to three kilometers deep and able to call in air support and summon mobile reserves, Marras believed that the German attack would have stalled at the outset. The German success therefore had depended on failures by the French and the Belgians, much as Germany's victory in Poland was largely a function of their enemy's material weakness and strategic errors.[76]

Unlike most observers who have set down Germany's victory over France to the use of massed armor in the Ardennes, Marras saw the overrunning of the fortresses on the French and Belgian frontiers as crucial, and for this the Germans had used aircraft, 88mm guns, flamethrowers, and even 37mm guns, not masses of armored vehicles. As in Poland, the *Luftwaffe* had been crucial to the success of both infantry units and armored formations because it had destroyed French and British tanks and disrupted enemy rear areas. Also, as in Poland, Marras saw the *Luftwaffe's* success as a function of a failure on the part of the French and the Belgians, whose lack of anti-aircraft guns had allowed German aircraft to operate with impunity. As he had in his analysis of the Polish campaign, he again praised good German liaison, noting that good communications, not locating headquarters in forward

74. This was the Italian point of view; see *Verbali*, Vol. I, doc. 12 (25 September 1940). Even though the Italians were reluctant to attack Yugoslavia, a valuable source of raw materials, and Mussolini counted on resolving the Yugoslav and Greek "problems" at the "negotiating table," Badoglio deployed three divisions in Albania to "stabilize" the situation there.
75. *DDI*, 9/4, docs. 694, 726, for Badoglio's skepticism in early June 1940 regarding German estimates that they would need six to seven weeks to end the war in France.
76. NAM, series T-821, reel 130, frames 515-24.

areas, was the key to success. Finally, as he had for the Polish campaign, he stressed the role played by good training, high morale, and an abundance of modern equipment (*abbondanti mezzi tecnici*).[77]

Despite the tendency for Marras to downplay the importance of armor, the memorandum prepared by Mario Roatta for the Italy Army's Training Section in July 1940 stressed the role played by armored formations. Roatta, who had commanded the CTV in Spain, noted that German armor had effected and exploited breakthroughs while motorized infantry had protected the flanks of the armored formations and unmotorized infantry had filled in the center. French armor had proven unable to contest this tactic, in part because the Germans had used infantry and armor together, making it impossible to isolate and destroy German tanks, in part because French tanks had no radios and were therefore forced to operate in groups of twenty or fewer. Like Marras, Roatta also saw the *Luftwaffe* as "very useful" (*molto utile*), but he did not see it as the determining factor and he was not overly impressed with the German dive bomber, the Ju-87, which he considered to be little more than long-range artillery.[78]

Again, even when the role of armor was stressed, German successes were linked to French failures. French tanks had proven ineffective against German tanks and infantry not because they were forced to operate with infantry, something German tanks did as well, but because a lack of radios had forced French tanks to operate in small groups, also a problem for the Italians. A constellation of factors, not a single one, had determined the outcome of the German offensive, and while armor was a powerful new weapon, it was most effective when used in combined operations. Moreover, according to Marras, the German tank commander Heinz Guderian had concluded that mechanized units could operate only on certain terrain. Poland, Belgium, and the Ardennes region of France had proven to be ideal for armored and motorized formations, allowing the Germans to use tanks in large groups to penetrate the "gaps" in their enemy's line and then thrust deeply into rear areas. But Italian observers discerned risks as well as advantages to such a tactic, noting that armored units tended to outrun their support and that it had been old-fashioned unmotorized infantry which had resolved the crises created by the head-long dash of mechanized formations. So Marras concluded that Germany's success in France had been due to the use of mechanized formations in large groups, rapid movement, and a flexible tactical doctrine. However, he cautioned that a defense in depth could slow armor, noting that after 5 June German armor had been forced to cooperate closely with infantry for as many as four kilometers before it was able to break through hastily prepared, but deep, French positions.[79] In other words, even a much weakened French army was capable of slowing masses

77. Ibid.; *DDI*, 9/4, doc. 567.
78. NAM, series T-821, reel 130, frames 895-98, Mario Roatta, SM/RE, Report, Ufficio Addestramento, 3rd Section, 10 July 1940.
79. Ibid., frames 898-905, Marras, 21 July 1940.

of German armor, which needed infantry to penetrate defenses in depth.

Compared to Italy's binary divisions, German divisions were massive, raising the question of how well Italian forces would do against a French (or British) opponent. The answer, Marras suggested, was that it was not size, but speed that mattered. The speed of both German tanks and the ability of German infantry and services to keep up with armored spearheads had been the keys to Germany's victory in France. But speed had only been assured because German units had good logistical support, good communications, and engineering units able to overcome natural obstacles and enable the masses of armor and infantry to maintain a frenetic pace. Nonetheless, he noted that German divisions had proven cumbersome and that the German General Staff was therefore reducing the size of divisions, a measure that Marras interpreted as tending toward the Italian binary model.[80]

Table 1: Composition of German divisions, according to Italian reports, 1940

Type	Men	Vehicles	Motorcycles	Pack animals	Tanks
Infantry	17,500	2,100	500	5,000	. . .
Mountain	24,000	2,100	800	7,500	. . .
Motorized	13,000	2,000	1,500	. . .	. . .
Armored	14,000	2,800	2,000	. . .	450

Source: NAM, series T-821, reel 130, frames 503-08, Efisio Marras, 23 July 1940.

Marras therefore reassured his superiors that success against Britain would depend on speed of movement, good organization, good planning, high morale, initiative by unit commanders, and other factors that had traditionally contributed to victory on the battlefield. Armor was merely another new weapon, and armored formations were only useful when deployed in combined operations with a specific role. A key ingredient, armor was not the sufficient cause of victory.[81] It is therefore not surprising that *Popolo d'Italia* identified a variety of reasons for German successes, including "the traditional virtues of the soldier: Heroism, Physical toughness, Discipline," (*I valori tradizioni del soldato: Eroismo, Resistanza fisica, Disciplina*), which, of course, were also Fascist virtues.[82] There was not, in other words, a clear distinction between Fascist and military values, merely a question of emphasis.

Of course, propaganda in a popular newspaper should not be confused with military analysis. While Italian military observers valued traditional military virtues, they were hard-headed in their assessment of German operations and realistic in their appraisal of the potential of the role played by tanks and armored formations. They understood that their own armored formations needed the support of other arms to succeed, as did their superiors. By 1940, the Italian army considered armored and motorized

80. Ibid., frames 486-87, 503-09, and 514.
81. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 176-79, no. 39775, Fidenzio Dall'Ora, 17 May 1940.
82. Ibid., attached clipping of *Popolo d'Italia* article by Italian journalist Mario Appelius.

divisions most useful in "unstable" situations, with the stress on motorized infantry, which was used for reconnaissance and "infiltration," as well as during combat, exploitation, and pursuit. Divisions were to have a powerful reconnaissance component and powerful anti-aircraft weaponry, with considerable responsibility delegated to "column" commanders. Italian norms also stressed the need for good communications and the use of massed artillery, including the 47/32 gun and automatic weapons, in "strong-points" (*capisaldi*) to create "obstructions" (*sbarrimenti*), in effect funneling the enemy and compacting the front, and thereby providing targets for tanks and divisional artillery, which the Italians also used in mass.[83]

Theory and practice: CAC's estimates

In November 1939, Fidenzio Dall'Ora, commander of the Italian Armored Corps (CAC, *Corpo d'Armata Corazzato*), wrote an analysis comparing French infantry and Italian armored divisions, based on documents obtained by SIM. His conclusions were not encouraging; it appeared that an Italian armored division could not confront even a reinforced French infantry division on equal terms. A reinforced French infantry division had more infantry than an Italian armored division (nine battalions to two), more artillery (fifteen, and as many as thirty-nine, batteries to six), and more tanks (four groups with between 195 and 255 tanks to four battalions with between 147 and 180 tanks). French tanks also carried more armor than their Italian counterparts and were more heavily armed. Given the disparity in strength between the two formations, Dall'Ora recommended that an Italian armored division attack a French infantry division only once it was "*in crisi*," during "the final phase of an action" (*la fase conclusiva dell'azione*).[84]

Table 2: Comparison of an Italian Armored and a Reinforced French Infantry Division, 1939

Weapon	France	Italy
Tank	195-255	147-180
Anti-tank gun	52-58	24-32
Artillery batteries	15-39	6-15

Source: NAM, series T-821, reel 107, frames 102-05.

The Italians could count on superior speed and range, but the L3/35 and the L6, the first Italian light tank to mount a gun in the turret, were no match for the FCM and Renault tanks, and while the M tanks might stand some chance against the D1 and D2 tanks, the Italians had nothing comparable to the massive 32-ton support tanks deployed by the French. Italian anti-tank

83. Ibid., frames 179-244.

84. NAM, series T-821, reel 107, frames 98-110, esp. 100-02, "Raffronto fra le norme sull'attacco con carri armati nell'ambito della divisione di fanteria francese e le possibilità di contrastare l'azione da parte della nostra divisione corazzata con i propri mezzi organici," 29 November 1939. Ceva and Curami, *La meccanizzazione dell'Esercito Italiano*, Vol. I, pp. 276-78, consider Dall'Ora's analysis interesting, but note that the information regarding French divisions was not completely accurate.

guns were comparable to French weapons, but French infantry divisions had fifty-eight guns over 20mm, Italian armored divisions only twenty-four, and while the French Hotchkiss 13.2mm anti-tank gun could pierce the L3/35's armor, the Italian 8mm machine gun could not penetrate the armor of any French tank. In short, the French infantry division was superior to the Italian armored division in both tanks and anti-tank weaponry.[85]

When Dall'Ora wrote his report in 1939, Italy was not yet at war. But in August 1940, two months after Italy entered the war, CAC conducted summer maneuvers with two armored divisions (*Ariete* and *Littorio*) and two motorized divisions (*Trento* and *Trieste*). The exercises showed that while the Italians had learned a great deal and their doctrine was essentially sound, it was not yet fully developed and there was still a great deal to do if Italy's mechanized units were to be competitive with those of other major powers. In his comments on the exercises, Dall'Ora characterized Italian armored doctrine as still in an "embryonic phase" (*fase preformativa*) and noted various suggestions on how it might be improved. Although the comments and suggestions of commanders who had participated in the exercises varied, there was a consensus among them that armored divisions were best used against weakly-held positions, to widen gaps in the enemy's front, and to exploit positions that had already been breached by catapulting "waves" of mechanized and motorized units through the breaches.[86]

The comments and suggestions of CAC's commanders suggested that while Italian doctrine had actually progressed well beyond an embryonic stage, it needed fine-tuning, and that close cooperation with other arms was crucial. Colonel d'Antoni, commander of the 132nd Armored Regiment, suggested using a battalion of infantry and two to three battalions of tanks for exploitation, and General Baldassare, *Ariete's* commander and d'Antoni's superior, suggested attaching one of the *bersaglieri's* anti-tank companies to the tank regiment. Dall'Ora noted that tanks needed radios to improve communication and suggested using motorcycle units reinforced with armored cars to provide security on a division's flanks. Colonel Montemurro, commander of the 8th *bersaglieri* regiment, stressed the need for a better off-road capability and more support for his reconnaissance units. Colonel Chieli, commander of the 132nd armored artillery regiment, wanted additional anti-aircraft guns and requested better radios and tractors for his guns, which had a variety of tasks to fulfill – from clearing paths through minefields and attacking enemy infantry to destroying enemy armored and

85. NAM, series T-821, reel 107, frames 102-05. Caliber could be misleading. The Italian 20/35mm pierced 20mm of armor at an angle of 15 degrees at 500 meters, similar to the Hotchkiss 13.2mm, which pierced 22mm at a 90 degree angle at the same distance. The Italian 37/40mm pierced 34mm of armor at a 90 degree angle at 900 meters, and the 47/32, which Verri tagged for his tank hunter, pierced 43mm at a 90 degree angle at 500 meters, similar to the French 25mm gun, which pierced 40mm of armor at the same distance.

86. NAM, series T-821, reel 384, frames 266-94.

motorized units.[87]

From the comments during the debriefing, it was clear that the commanding officers of CAC's armored and motorized units possessed an aggressive spirit and placed a high premium on initiative by junior officers. But they did not consider high morale or an aggressive spirit substitutes for good doctrine and modern equipment. As professional soldiers, they understood the need for good doctrine, realistic training, and coordination. They were struggling to create a viable mechanized force under less than ideal conditions; they were neither foolhardy nor ideologues. As *Trieste's* commander, General Ferroni, cautioned, while it was essential to press a retreating enemy, "boldness" (*audacia*) could easily become "foolhardiness" (*temeraria*) if the chances of success were not at least fifty percent.[88]

Concluding remarks

During the 1930s, the Italian army's corps commanders, military attachés, and junior officers had followed the progress of other armies and sought to learn from their own experience in Ethiopia and Spain in order to discover ways to improve Italy's motorized, *celere*, and armored forces. Whether their superiors translated those lessons into doctrine and practice is a question for another article, but the army's creation of a section specifically to learn from the Spanish Civil War suggests that they were also interested in learning. There were public debates involving Colonel Federico Saverio Grazioli, Colonel Sebastiano Prasca, and General Ottavio Zoppi, all of whom pressed for radical innovation, and there were internal debates and suggestions by officers like Capitan Gabriele Verri, who groped for a viable tank-versus-tank doctrine, and Colonel Livio Negro, whose analysis was both realistic and oriented toward the future. As a young officer in charge of converting the cavalry to tanks, Gervasio Bitossi pressed for better equipment, and he continued to do as he moved up the ranks and assumed command of armored units in Spain and an armored division in Dalmatia. Colonel Valentino Babini, Colonel Augusto D'Amico, and General Ettore Bastico all offered recommendations based on their experiences in Spain, and military and air attachés – Colonel Adolfo Infante, Colonel Efisio Marras, Lieutenant Colonel Roero di Cortanze, and General Mario Roatta – kept Rome informed of developments outside Italy and dissected German operations in 1939 and 1940.

CAC's 1940 maneuvers were the last in a series of exercises designed to test and improve armored doctrine and determine the types of formations and weapons Italy needed. By 1940, those Italians concerned with mechanization understood the need for a more powerful *bersaglieri* regiment, all-terrain vehicles capable of carrying infantry, and tracked vehicles for supporting services, self-propelled guns and more anti-tank

87. Ibid., frames 271-72.
88. Ibid., frames 286-88.

(47/32mm and 75/34mm) guns, a light tank to replace the obsolescent L3/35, and both a medium and a heavy tank to give armored divisions adequate firepower. CAC's general staff and its training section paid serious attention to the lessons learned at home and abroad, and even Badoglio understood the importance of tanks to operations in North Africa in 1940, just as Mussolini understood the usefulness of open debate on doctrine during the early 1930s.[89]

If the development of tanks had a relatively low priority, this was in part the result of efforts to create *celere* divisions and modernize the infantry and the artillery, as well as uncertainty regarding where Italian forces would fight and the need to lock the doors to the house, as Badoglio put it. Much has been made of Italy's situation as the "least of the great powers," but most of those who have criticized the Fascist regime and the Italian military have assumed that Italy could either afford to create an elite mechanized force, as Federico Baistrocchi suggested, or to equip a conscript army with modern weaponry, as Alberto Pariani did in part. But both assumptions cannot be true – if Italy was the least of the great powers, then it is not surprising that it had difficulty creating armored forces able to compete with those of Great Britain and France, both of whom disposed of global empires, larger industrial plants, reservoirs of raw materials, and considerably more financial resources than did Italy. More serious, while Italy's German ally was hard-pressed to supply its own armed forces, Britain could count on the Commonwealth and a powerful American ally.

Even had Italy created an elite mechanized force of fifteen divisions, they would have been of little use in Albania, Yugoslavia, the French Alps, or Ethiopia, where the bulk of the Italian army operated in 1940 and early 1941.[90] That some officers, like Augusto D'Amico, still saw a use for horses and mules was not evidence of backwardness, but a recognition of reality. Most of the German army consisted of unmotorized infantry and horse-towed artillery, as did a major part of the American army in 1940. Although decidedly old-fashioned, horses and mules proved useful to supply units and move guns in Spain, and mules were indispensable on mountain tracks in Albania.[91]

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89. Ibid., frames 403-59; for Mussolini's protection of Grazioli and his interest in the 1934 Soviet maneuvers, see Luigi Emilio Longo, *Francesco Saverio Grazioli* (Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito/Ufficio Storico, 1989), pp. 208-20, 673-78, 376-81.

90. Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 3-5, 15, 23, 30-32, 47, 132, 163, 175, 180-86, noted that Italian armored units were "successful" against Yugoslavia, a campaign for which they had been designed. For the campaign in Dalmatia, see NAM, series T-586, reel 487, Gervasio Bitossi, Comando Division Corazzata *Littorio*, "Relazione sulle operazioni per la conquista della Dalmazia." Rinaldo Panetta, *Il ponte di Klisura (i carristi italiani in Albania: 1940-1941)* (Milan: Mursia, 1965), pp. 68-80, and *passim*, for problems with mud and mountainous terrain in Albania, and Campini, *Nei giardini del diavolo*, pp. 33-40, who notes that at the Klisura gap, five of sixteen tanks were lost in an hour because they could not ford the swollen river.

91. R.L. DiNardo, *Mechanized Juggernaut or Military Anachronism?: Horses and the*

Italian military leaders worked within certain realities, sometimes quietly, sometimes under protest. But they understood them, and they elaborated their doctrine of *guerra di rapido corso* in order to make wars fast and short because they knew that they could not fight a long attritional war. It was a doctrine designed to enable even the least of the great powers to win a war, and as Lucio Ceva and others have noted, it cannot be faulted as doctrine; it was the material that was wanting.[92] Of course, without the material, the doctrine was not merely useless, it was dangerous because it created the illusion that victory was possible. But the same was true of Germany, whose tanks were inferior to their Soviet counterparts in 1941, and of the United States, which failed to match German armor in the West until 1945. The difference was that Germany had five times Italy's industrial capacity, and the Soviets and the Americans both out-produced the Germans, leading to an obvious conclusion – doctrine is basic, but in the 1940s implementing it and actually winning a war was ineluctably linked to adequate and secure supplies of raw materials, a large industrial output, and massive reserves of manpower.

Nonetheless, it is clear that during the late 1930s there was a serious debate among members of the Italian military regarding how armor should be integrated into the Italian concept of a war of rapid movement (*guerra di rapido corso*), which was based on Italy's inability to wage a lengthy war, a desire to avoid a repetition of the mass slaughter of World War I, and the lessons learned in Libya, Spain, and Ethiopia.[93] The Italians underscored the need for armor to cooperate with other arms, including the infantry, effectively a combined arms approach to warfare. To dismiss such thinking as handcuffing armor to infantry misses the point that the infantry to which most tank units were tied was trucked and motorized infantry, designed to move quickly and create a critical "mass" on the battlefield.[94] Each of the

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German Army of World War II (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1991), *passim*, and Hofmann, "The Tactical and Strategic Use of Attaché Intelligence"; for Greece and Albania, James J. Sadkovich, "Italian Morale during the Italo-Greek War of 1940–1941," *War & Society*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (May 1994), pp. 92-123.

92. Ceva, *Le forze armate*, pp. 258-59; Fortunato Minniti, "Aspetti della politica fascista degli armamenti dal 1935 al 1943," in Renzo De Felice, ed., *L'Italia fra tedeschi e Alleati: la politica estera fascista e la seconda guerra mondiale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1973); and Fortunato Minniti, "Due anni di attività del 'Fabbri-guerra' per la produzione bellica (1939-1941)," *Storia contemporanea*, Vol. 6 (1975), "Il problema degli armamenti nella preparazione militare italiana dal 1935 al 1943," *Storia contemporanea*, Vol. 9 (1978), and "Le materie prime nella preparazione bellica dell'Italia (1935-1943)," *Storia contemporanea*, Vol. 17 (1986); also James J. Sadkovich, "Minerali, armamenti e tipo di guerra: la conflitta italiana nella seconda guerra mondiale," *Storia contemporanea*, Vol. 18, No. 6 (December 1987), pp. 1267-1308, and "Understanding Defeat: Reappraising Italy's Role in World War II," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (January 1989), pp. 27-61.

93. NAM, series T-586, reel 487, frames 047619-621. Bitossi believed armor (the CV 33 operating with other units) would reestablish the primacy of the offense over the defense.

94. Stefani, *La storia della dottrina*, Vol. II, pp. 518, 547-48, 530-31, 551. By an attack

arms in the equation had distinct characteristics, but they all possessed two critical common denominators – speed and the ability to generate shock. The insistence that infantry and armor work together was the fruit of experience in Ethiopia and Spain, where armored forces operating alone or without adequate air cover had proven vulnerable to enemy infantry and armor. By 1938, Italian doctrine saw good reconnaissance, surprise, firepower, and the ability to generate shock all as crucial, with the use of "massed" tanks in coordination with other arms to breach enemy lines. Far from the British doctrine of an all-armored force, Italian doctrine was similar to the thinking of J.F.C. Fuller and foreshadowed the sorts of units that would actually operate successfully in North Africa during World War II.[95]

An attack using infantry, *celere* units, and armored units, supported by massed and mobile artillery, promised to make a "war of rapid decision" possible during maneuvers in Sicily in 1937 and in Libya in 1938.[96] As Lucio Ceva has noted, Italian armored doctrine was conceptually valid (*concetto in sé ineccepibile*), even if it lacked reliable air support, and a lack of equipment led to an overemphasis on morale. But Italy did not begin to fall behind the French and British after 1935 owing to a stress on morale.[97] It did so because of the wastage in Ethiopia and Spain, exacerbated by limited financial resources and a relatively small industrial plant.[98] As Rovighi and Stefani note, in 1940 Italian forces in North Africa would have been more

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in "mass," Italians meant the simultaneous use of many units on a given front, so tanks never attacked singly, but in groups of four (a platoon) and ideally with artillery, infantry, and air support, much as Soviet tanks did. All arms were to be trained with armored units, and *celere* and infantry officers were expected to be able to assume command of tank units.

95. Ibid., pp. 531-33, 535-39, 543-45. While tanks were hindered by being tied to the infantry before 1933, after the formation of *celere* units they gained greater freedom of action, initiative, and maneuver. Medium and heavy tanks were to operate with infantry, light tanks with cavalry, *celere*, and *bersaglieri* units; all three types were to be integrated into armored divisions. Italian theory was thus similar to British use of Royal Tank Regiments with infantry brigades and armored brigades with divisions. The Italian insistence on "set-piece" battles and detailed planning before combat were in part a function of the CV's poor visibility, in part to the difficulty of communicating once battle was joined, but it echoed Fuller's thinking and was successfully used by Montgomery at El Alamein and by O'Connor at Sidi el Barrani. For Fuller, see Brian Holden Reid, "J.F.C. Fuller's Theory of Mechanized Warfare," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 1 (1978), p. 310, and *passim*.

96. For the 1937 maneuvers and subsequent debates over doctrine, see Botti and Ilari, *Il pensiero militare italiano*, esp. pp. 202 ff.

97. Ceva, *Le forze armate*, pp. 258-59; Sweet, *Iron Arm*, pp. 100-05, believed that while Italy's achievements were "substantial," they began to fall behind the British and French in 1934 and the British in 1935.

98. *Verbali*, Vol. I, doc. 1 (26 January 1939), for Badoglio's comment that since 1935 the Army had "consumed a lot of materiel" (*ha divorato molto materiale*) in East Africa, North Africa, and Spain and the need for foreign currency to buy a range of materials, including steel, given an Italian production of 1.8 million tons a year, a fraction of Germany's 21.0 million tons.

mobile and packed a bigger punch had they had the 7,500 vehicles and 442 guns left in Spain.[99] The debate over whether to create a motorized or a mechanized army is therefore misleading because without equipment, the best doctrine is merely good theory.

Similarly, the search for a peculiarly Fascist stress on the need for boldness, initiative, movement, and decisive victories obscures the reality that Italy's armored units were born as siblings to *celere* units and integrated into a coherent theory of warfare that emphasized both high morale and modern weaponry as the keys to generating the speed and shock necessary to shatter enemy lines, with tanks and motorized infantry conferring the ability to maneuver, exploit, and pursue a broken enemy, while spiritual force infused their operators with the desire to defeat their opponents. From the comments of officers like Negro and the injunction of the CTV commander to keep a "clear head" in battle to the distinction that one of CAC's commanders made between daring and foolhardiness, it is clear that the Italians did not see peculiarly Fascist spiritual qualities as replacing materiel; they saw both spiritual and material forces as necessary antidotes to the trench warfare that had mired Europe's armies in an attritional stalemate for four long years between 1914 and 1918.

Ironically, these particular antidotes led to a war that was certainly more mobile, but every bit as attritional as the Great War, and one that took a much higher toll of both soldiers and civilians. The Italians had learned their lessons well enough, but even had they disposed of the time and material to implement them, they would have been unable to avoid a long, bloody war that, given their ally and their enemies, they would have lost. Better mechanized forces would merely have prolonged the agony.

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99. Rovighi and Stefani, *La partecipazione italiana alla guerra civile spagnole*, Vol. II, pp. 482, 515, and *Documenti e allegati*, Vol. II, docs. 114, 115, 115bis, 116. The Army sent 1,801 guns and 5,791 vehicles to Spain, and the Italians ceded 149 L3/35 tanks, 4,264 trucks, and 1,189 tractors to Franco's forces. Spigo, *Premesse tecniche della disfatta*, p. 45, and Mazzetti, *La politica militare italiana*, p. 217, who cites Spigo's figures. For the Ethiopian campaign, Italy deployed 16,612 vehicles; 450 aircraft; 1,123 artillery pieces; 89,130 quadrupeds; 235 tanks; fifty-two armored cars; and fifty-nine automobile service centers. In 1936, the war absorbed eighteen billion lire of Italy's forty-three billion lire budget. Spain cost six to seven billion lire.

Hedgerow Hell, July 1944

SIMON C. TREW

Dying for Saint-Lô: Hedgerow Hell, July 1944. By Didier Lodieu, with Thierry Guilbert and Frédéric Deprun. Paris: Histoire & Collections, 2007. Illustrations. Maps. Cloth. Pp. 176.

Although hardly a well-known figure, many readers of *Global War Studies* may recognize Didier Lodieu as an enthusiastic part-time writer who somehow manages to combine running a restaurant in Elbeuf, on the banks of the River Seine, with producing articles for French-language history magazines on a variety of military topics. He is also author of a number of more substantial works, including an interesting study of III Panzer Corps during the battle of Kursk and histories of various German and Allied formations during the Normandy campaign. Perhaps his best book is *45 Tiger en Normandie*, which uses personal reminiscences, documentary sources and some impressive photographic research to describe the actions of the German 503rd Heavy Tank Battalion in July and August 1944.[1] Now, in the second of his works to be translated from the original French, Lodieu has turned his attention to recounting some of the engagements fought between U.S. and German forces in western Normandy prior to Operation COBRA, during the "Battle of the Bocage." The result is a modest yet helpful addition to our understanding of an important but somewhat neglected topic.

In structural and analytical terms, *Dying for Saint-Lô* is neither a complicated nor an ambitious book. After providing a short overview of the strategic and operational situation in Normandy at the end of June 1944, it takes the form of a blow-by-blow account of a series of tactical actions starting on 7 July, when American troops crossed the River Vire as part of First United States Army's general push southwards. Thereafter, apart from occasional excursions into adjacent sectors, the author focuses almost entirely on the battles fought between the U.S. 30th, 35th, and 29th Infantry Divisions and their opponents west and east of the Vire. The narrative concludes on 18 July, with the capture of the important communications center of St.-Lô. There is no attempt to situate the fall of the town in a broader operational context, nor to analyze in detail the evolution of either side's fighting techniques during the period under examination. Instead, Lodieu is mostly concerned with telling the story of what happened, often at

1. *45 Tiger en Normandie: La s. Panzer-Abteilung 503* (Louviers: Ysec Editions, 2002).

the level of the individual soldier's experience. To this end, extensive use is made of personal accounts (not all of them entirely accurate).[2] The author also tries hard to clarify the orders of battle of the units involved in specific engagements, particularly insofar as the Germans are concerned. In this respect, the book offers new material – some of it drawn from prisoner of war interrogations – that complements information available from existing U.S. unit histories, and which will be particularly useful to those wishing to trace the course of the fighting on the ground.[3]

Readers interested in the American experience of the Normandy campaign will already know David Garth's superb work on the St.-Lô battle (in the *American Forces in Action* series), as well as a small number of other books that tread similar ground.[4] In terms of writing style alone, it has to be said that *Dying for Saint-Lô* does not bear too close a comparison with most of these works. Nor does it significantly challenge or enhance our understanding of major events or the decisions made by senior commanders. Nevertheless, it has some real strengths, one of which is its photographic content. As well as a substantial number of U.S. National Archive images (not all of them related to the St-Lô fighting – something that the captioning might have made clearer), the book contains numerous photographs from the

2. For example, quite extensive use is made of detailed reminiscences provided by Rudi Frübeisser, who fought as a member of 3rd Parachute Division in 1944. Unfortunately, although parts of his account appear reliable and valid, there is good documentary evidence to refute some of his claims – notably, that American forces enjoyed significant air support during their attack on Hill 192 on 11 July 1944 (a day when bad weather actually grounded all but a few sorties, most of which appear to have hit U.S. forces rather than German).

3. Having provided copies of the some of the POW interrogation reports (sourced from the WO 208 files in the UK National Archives) himself, this reviewer must admit some small contribution to Mr. Lodieu's book. However, the manuscript was neither seen nor commented upon before publication.

4. *St-Lo, 7 July–19 July 1944* (Washington, DC: War Department, 1946); the manuscript for this book was written by David Garth, one of the team of combat historians deployed by the U.S. Army to the ETO, and edited by his commanding officer, Colonel Charles H. Taylor. Other specialist English-language works on the battle include: Peter Yates (pseudonym), *Battle for St-Lô* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004); and Leo Daugherty, *The Battle of the Hedgerows: Bradley's First Army in Normandy, June-July 1944* (St. Paul: MBI, 2001). The second of these is based largely on relevant sections of the U.S. Army official histories by Gordon Harrison and Martin Blumenson. Numerous other works address the St.-Lo fighting as part of a broader analysis of the Normandy campaign, including some very good unit histories and memoirs; among the latter, Charles R. Cawthon's truly outstanding *Other Clay: A Remembrance of the World War II Infantry* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1990). But there is still no academic monograph on the subject to compare with James Jay Carafano's *After D-Day: Operation Cobra and the Normandy Breakout* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000) or Mark J. Reardon's *Victory at Mortain: Stopping Hitler's Panzer Counteroffensive* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002). Even more significantly, there is no serious treatment (beyond the official histories) of First United States Army's general offensive that began on 3 July 1944, which included the battle for St.-Lo among a number of other actions. This reviewer is currently working on a study which is intended to fill this particular gap.

Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, plus others from private German collections. Most of these – including some fine pictures of the German 3rd Parachute Division – appear to be published here for the first time, and their quality is generally excellent (a fact enhanced by the use of high quality art paper and attractive page design). Furthermore, where the text and the illustrations coincide, the effect can be impressive. This is especially true of an eighteen-page section that describes the Panzer Lehr Division's counter-attack west of the River Vire on the morning of 11 July. This was one of the larger German offensive efforts during the Normandy campaign (although this is not saying very much), and Lodieu's account makes a genuinely new contribution to our knowledge and understanding of how and why it failed. Similarly, the final few chapters of the book mix text and photographs in a manner that enhances existing accounts of the capture of St.-Lô, and which help the book to finish on a powerful and convincing note.

Dying for Saint-Lô does not observe scholarly conventions – there are no footnotes and the list of sources provides inadequate assistance to readers who might want to track down the more interesting personal accounts or documents for themselves. However, it is highly representative of an extensive range of titles originating from specialist French military history publishers. Many of these utilize local knowledge and contacts with visiting veterans to produce detailed and lavishly illustrated narratives of aspects of the Normandy campaign, or of the experiences of units (mostly German) involved in the fighting. Up to now, few of these books have been translated into English. Histoire & Collections, therefore, is to be commended for making Lodieu's work available to a wider readership, and one hopes that publishers of similar material (notably Heimdal) will follow their example. Admittedly, their books are unlikely to cast significant light on the most controversial questions regarding the planning and conduct of the Normandy campaign, but they do allow us to better understand events at the "sharp end of war," where generals' plans are tested and so often found wanting. And, bearing in mind Clausewitz's observation that "Battles decide everything," perhaps that is something that is worth just a little of our attention.[5]

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DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.03

5. Carl von Clausewitz, *Principles of War*, as cited in Trevor Royle, ed., *Collins Dictionary of Military Quotations* (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 1991, paperback edition), p. 272.

Book Reviews

Pacific Crucible: War at Sea in the Pacific, 1941-1942. By Ian W. Toll. New York: W.W. Norton, 2011. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xxxvi, 597.

Seventy years have come and gone since air forces of the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked units of the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Despite the passage of decades, popular interest in that event and in the war that immediately ensued has remained high and historians have worked diligently to meet the demand for information that has been generated by that interest. Most of the books and articles produced by these historians have focused either on the attack and who should be blamed for it or on the rise to complete dominance of U.S. forces beginning with the Battle of Midway in June of 1942. There has been comparatively little popular attention paid to the period in between, a period during which Japanese power was on the rise and American power was at its lowest ebb.

Ian W. Toll, the acclaimed author of *Six Frigates: The Epic History of the Founding of the U.S. Navy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), attempts to rectify this oversight with his latest offering, *Pacific Crucible: War at Sea in the Pacific, 1941-1942*. Succinctly put, the work is a popular synthesis of some of the latest scholarship in the field of Pacific War studies that the author has supplemented with his own research in various oral histories, memoirs, and government reports. A well-crafted piece of prose, it is a good general history of the first six months of the war in the Pacific – but it is not perfect. This review will focus first on the general structure of the book as well as the author's main argument. Next it will touch upon some of the more positive aspects of the book. Finally, it will detail some problems, both major and minor, that need to be addressed.

The basic structure of the book can be described very simply. Toll provides the reader with an introductory prologue in which he describes the relationship between the United States and Japan during the early twentieth century. His emphasis in this prologue is on the issues playing out during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, issues that he believes will help the reader understand how and why the Americans and the Japanese were at odds with one another by 1940 and 1941. He then chronicles the most important events from December 1941 to June 1942, essentially dividing them into four main storylines: the attack on Pearl Harbor, the initial post-Pearl Harbor Japanese successes, the Battle of the Coral Sea, and the Battle of Midway. The author's argument is difficult to discern. The story related by Toll is rather episodic in nature, without a strong analytical structure to tie it all together. He seems to argue that, ultimately, the Japanese misjudged American determination in the face of adversity and entered into a war for

which they were not really prepared. They fought valiantly during the first six months of the war, but bad luck, Japanese mistakes, and American perseverance conspired against them. The U.S. strategic and tactical victory in the Battle of Midway gave the Americans a momentum that the Japanese inevitably could not stop. There is nothing original in these conclusions, but the reader does not get the sense that Toll is trying to plow any new historiographical ground here. The tale's the thing, and he charges forward into it with gusto.

The author is a technically accomplished writer who demonstrates an historian's respect for evidence and a journalist's nose for a good story. He has absorbed much from his sources and he uses information gleaned from them to good effect. His use of relevant quotations from oral histories is particularly impressive. These quotations impart to the reader a visceral appreciation of what the participants saw, smelled, heard, and felt, bringing the reader right into the middle of the action and more often than not leaving him or her wanting more. The manner in which he weaves the story of the American breaking of the Japanese codes into the fabric of the narrative, using the latest scholarship to fill in where earlier popular histories have tended to be vague and inconclusive, is to be commended. Also to be commended, and for similar reasons, is the amount of detail concerning Japanese planning and execution that he is able to include without slowing the flow of the story. The reader will have a much better appreciation for the interplay between luck and skill in the outcome of these early battles after reading the author's account of them.

The aspect of Toll's work that is particularly worthy of praise is his evenhandedness in describing the various Japanese and American personalities involved. It is best evidenced in his description of the relationship between the principal American naval commander in the Pacific, Chester W. Nimitz, and his immediate superior in Washington, Ernest J. King. This relationship lay at the heart of what proved to be an effective counterattack against the Japanese in May and June of 1942. Thomas Buell, a respected naval historian, analyzed this relationship in two books written over thirty years ago. First, he wrote a biography of Raymond A. Spruance which was originally published in 1974. He then wrote a biography of Ernest J. King, which was published in 1980. Buell's portrayal of Chester W. Nimitz and of the relationship between Nimitz and King is different in each book. This difference can only be explained by saying that Buell fell into the trap of adopting his subject's attitudes regarding people and events rather than maintaining a detached and independent attitude, which is what an historian should at least attempt to do. Toll references Buell's works, as well as E.B. Potter's biography of Nimitz and King's autobiography, and produces a description of that very important relationship that does justice to the relationship itself as well as to the two men involved.

All positive assessments aside, however, *Pacific Crucible* is not flawless. Some examples can be quickly enumerated. First, Toll does not mention the

1907 California Legislature bill restricting Japanese immigration when discussing U.S.-Japanese relations during the time of Theodore Roosevelt. The bill was one of the issues at the heart of the controversy that eventually led to the "Gentlemen's Agreement" and should be included in a description of the process. Second, the author's description of the 1903 Springfield rifle as "thoroughly obsolete" is not accurate. Compared with the standard issue Japanese rifle of World War II, it was more than adequate for the task. Third, Toll does not mention the British modification of torpedoes in their attack on Italian ships in the Battle of Taranto in 1940 when describing similar Japanese modifications in preparation for Pearl Harbor. Fourth, there were no Japanese "marines." As Joseph H. Alexander goes to great pains to explain in his book *Storm Landings: Epic Amphibious Battles in the Central Pacific* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997), the Japanese used Special Naval Landing Forces called *Rikusentai* rather than a force like the U.S. Marine Corps. Fifth, American carriers did not have armored flight decks until the introduction of the *Midway* class at the very end of the war. Use of the phrase "steel plate" in describing damage to the flight deck of the USS *Yorktown* (CV-5), therefore, is misleading. Sixth, the United States did not use 600-pound bombs during World War II. The standard general purpose bomb used by the U.S. Navy at the beginning of the war weighed 500 pounds. Finally, 20mm mounts did not have chairs. The gunner stood behind the gun-mount and was strapped so that he would remain cradled between two shoulder rests. There might be headless bodies strapped in those harnesses after an air attack, but they would not be seated in chairs.

Three other problems need to be addressed in more detail. First, in defending William Manchester's ranking of Yamamoto as second only to Horatio Nelson as the greatest admiral in history, Toll lists several similarities of personality and life experience between the two admirals as evidence of the accuracy of Manchester's conclusion. While such similarities did exist, they cannot be used as a basis for such a comparison. Nelson succeeded many more times than he failed while Yamamoto, after the brilliant apparent success of the Pearl Harbor operation, failed more often than he succeeded. Success, and success alone, should be the measure of greatness of a military or naval commander. Yamamoto, as opposed to Nelson, falls short. Alan D. Zimm's recent work, *Attack on Pearl Harbor: Strategy, Combat, Myths, Deceptions* (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2011), should be read along with Toll's glowing assessment of the admiral before the reader comes to any conclusions as to Yamamoto's brilliance.

Second, Toll explains Nagumo's shortcomings at the Battle of Midway, in part by saying, "In such an environment, without peace or privacy, the admiral must have found it difficult to hear himself think." While the accuracy of this statement as a description of the environment surrounding Nagumo on 4 June 1942 is beyond reasonable questioning, its use as an excuse for Nagumo's mistakes in judgment is not. Such an environment is in the very nature of naval combat and a commander is expected to function acceptably regardless. The explanation for Nagumo's failures lies elsewhere.

The third problem concerns Toll's insistence that both American and Japanese naval commanders were thinking in strategic and tactical terms first laid down by Alfred Thayer Mahan beginning in 1890. A strong argument can be made that the Japanese were still enamored with Mahan. This argument is problematic when applied to the Americans, however. Both Jon Sumida and Herbert Rosinski have produced works, accessible to Toll but not referenced by him, in which they convincingly argue that World War II-era American naval officers were not slaves to Mahan's teachings. Toll would do well to read these works as well as various naval history anthologies concerning Mahan edited by John Hattendorf.

Ian W. Toll, whose professional background is in financial analysis and political speechwriting, has once again demonstrated his ability to tell a story in a fresh and exciting way while reasonably respecting the historical record. As such, *Pacific Crucible* deserves a place on the general reader's bookshelf. Toll has provided a synthesis of the latest scholarship concerning a period of Pacific War history that, outside of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Battle of Midway, has been neglected by the majority of popular historians. Though flawed, it serves its purpose well. One looks forward with interest to the author's next effort.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.04

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Hellcats: The Epic Story of World War II's Most Daring Submarine Raid. By Peter Sasgen. New York: NAL Caliber, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 320.

Author Peter Sasgen is a veteran chronicler of submarine warfare and *Hellcats* extends this tradition by examining the insertion of nine U.S. submarines (the "Hellcats") into the Sea of Japan in June 1945. Whether this event (Operation Barney) was "the most daring submarine raid of all time," as Sasgen argues (p. 2), or even the most daring submarine raid of World War II, is debatable. After all, five U.S. submarines already had entered the Sea of Japan in 1943. And, what of Günther Prien's 14 October 1939 successful foray into the Royal Navy's anchorage at Scapa Flow? Or, what about Eugene Fluckey's USS *Barb* (SS-220) landing sailors on Sakhalin Island and blowing up a train on 23 July 1945?

Sasgen's primary tool for telling the story is to follow the career of Commander Lawrence Lott Edge, the commanding officer of the USS *Bonefish* (SS-223), the only one of the nine committed submarines to be lost in the operation. Therein lies one of the dilemmas of the book. Since it will never be known precisely how the *Bonefish* was lost, or how it spent its final minutes and hours, the author must speculate about that event. The only

evidence available is a post-war examination of wispy Imperial Japanese Navy records suggesting that the *Bonefish* may have been sunk by depth charges in the Toyama Wan area of the Sea of Japan on 18 June 1945. Nevertheless, as in the case of Günther Prien's death at sea, it is not entirely clear how Commander Edge and the *Bonefish* perished.

It is not easy to culminate a book with an event (the sinking of the *Bonefish*) that is shrouded in mist. Sasgen's proffered solution is to provide copious discussion of the background and conditions leading to the event. He reiterates the post-Pearl Harbor challenges facing the U.S. submarine arm and provides well-known information about faulty MK-14 torpedoes, submarine command problems, the evolution of submarine attack strategies, and Admiral Charles A. Lockwood's decisions as the Commander of the Pacific Submarine Force.

The difficulty here is not the accuracy of his rendition of U.S. submarine warfare in the Pacific prior to Operation Barney, but instead that these stories have been told many times before, including by Lockwood himself in three books – *Down to the Sea in Subs: My Life in the U.S. Navy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967); *Sink 'Em All: Submarine Warfare in the Pacific* (New York: Dutton, 1951); and *Hellcats of the Sea*, with Hans Christian Adamson (New York: Greenberg, 1955). In addition, there are other well-known volumes such as Edward L. Beach, *Submarine!* (New York: Henry Holt, 1952); Clay Blair, Jr., *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War against Japan* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1975); Theodore Roscoe, *United States Submarine Operations in World War II* (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1949); and Steven Trent Smith, *Wolf Pack: The American Submarine Strategy that Helped Defeat Japan* (Hoboken: John Wiley, 2003). While Sasgen's discussions are on target, they do not cover new ground.

Sasgen also relies upon literary devices such as taking the reader on a tour of the *Bonefish* by means of describing what Commander Edge would have seen had he traversed the length of the boat. On many occasions, he attributes thoughts running through the minds of individuals he did not interview. In Sasgen's defense, his deductions of what was going on in the minds of individuals such as Admiral Lockwood and Commander Edge's wife, Sarah, are reasonable given the written evidence available such as the moving correspondence between Edge and his wife. Nevertheless, only sometimes does Sasgen qualify his deductions about what such individuals were thinking by inserting "may have thought" along with his conclusion.

The most distinctive and valuable material in *Hellcats* begins with Sasgen's treatment of the U.S. Navy's development and testing of its new FM Sonar (FMS) equipment designed to enable ships to locate mines. The FMS device, which relied upon a continuous modulated sonar signal rather than periodic "pings," could conduct a 360-degree scan for mines in only eight seconds. The author describes in detail the mixed results that emanated from tests of the FMS; some tests generated superb results, while others were flops. This is a story that has been told before in Smith's *Wolf Pack*.

The proficiency of the FMS was critical to Lockwood's long held desire to send more U.S. submarines through the heavily mined Tsushima Strait into the Sea of Japan. Such a venture made sense at this stage of the war only if the FMS worked well. The Navy's Submarine Operations Research Group (SORG) was asked to evaluate Lockwood's proposal to push submarines into the Sea of Japan and concluded that the mission could not be justified in light of the expected risks compared to the expected benefits. Indeed, SORG confronted Lockwood head on and concluded that "Operation Barney should not be launched," and put this in italics to leave no doubts (p. 171). Lockwood chose to disregard SORG's advice, remarking that "Wars are not won that way" (p. 172).

In the most powerful portions of the book, Sasgen prominently features the testimony of skeptics who since the war have labeled Lockwood's decision to go ahead with Operation Barney a "stunt" designed to generate publicity for an arm of the military services that had not received great notice (p. 242) and therefore might lose prominence in post-war decision making. Weighing the evidence, Sasgen labels Operation Barney, which did result in twenty-four Japanese ships being sunk for the loss of one submarine (only slightly below the U.S. Pacific average of 25.3 per submarine lost), as constituting no more than a "pinprick" (p. 268) at that stage of the war. He concludes that the operation was "simply not worth the risks it entailed to sink ships in the Sea of Japan and avenge Mush Morton and the *Wahoo*" (p. 269). (Morton and the *Wahoo* had been lost in the 1943 venture into the Sea of Japan.) Ultimately, Sasgen opines that "Certainly it was not worth the loss of the *Bonefish*" (p. 269).

Military hindsight often is 20/20 or better and it is not difficult to criticize Admiral Lockwood's decision to proceed with Operation Barney in Summer 1945. He did ignore the best advice available and appears to have been motivated by emotional and publicity considerations in addition to those military. Still, in June 1945, the atomic bombs had neither been tested nor used. Thus, while in retrospect his decision may have been unwise, it was not irrational.

Sasgen writes well and illuminates a comparatively little known aspect of U.S. submarine warfare in the Pacific even as he plows much familiar ground in the book's 320 pages. At the end of the day, there is more filler material than more knowledgeable readers likely will prefer, but probably the right amount for those who are not very familiar with the subject. Readers at all levels of knowledge would benefit if there were more than the single map provided in the book.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.05

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For Country and Corps: The Life of General Oliver P. Smith. By Gail B. Shisler. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xvii, 323.

When one contemplates outstanding leaders in the history of the Marine Corps, many candidates come to mind, but General Oliver P. Smith is not usually one of them. He was not a recipient of a Medal of Honor for an epic battle, as was Merritt "Red Mike" Edson at Bloody Ridge on Guadalcanal. He did not develop a legendary personal rapport with enlisted Marines like Lewis "Chesty" Puller. He was not a flamboyant character in the manner of Smedley "Gimlet Eye" Butler. And he did not establish a reputation for intellectual contributions akin to that of Victor "Brute" Krulak. He did not even have a flashy nickname like so many of the great characters that have marched across the tapestry of the Corps – to most of his contemporaries he was simply "O.P." Yet Smith deserves to be one of the most admired men ever to wear the eagle, globe, and anchor insignia. This latest biography, *For Country and Corps*, goes a long way toward establishing his proper place in Marine lore.

In the preface, author Gail Shisler points out that she is not attempting to use Smith's story as "a lens through which to view a particular military campaign…or even the institution of the Marine Corps itself" (p. xi). Her focus is solely "upon the remarkable character" of the man himself. She admirably achieves that goal, bringing to life Smith's persona. On one hand she had great advantages in doing so, since she was a granddaughter who grew up in his house and had access to his voluminous personal papers (not all of which are publicly available). But his well-known reserve and his reluctance to put his innermost thoughts in writing presented a challenge that she nonetheless managed to overcome. Her portrait of him is often far more intimate than most biographers achieve; at one point she opens a window into his heart by describing the three photographs that graced his bedroom in later life.

Although her firsthand knowledge of the Marine Corps is largely limited to the perspective of a young family member, she generally avoids the more common mistakes of those who are not veterans or experienced military historians. However, she does so in part largely by steering clear of many operational and institutional details. With the sole exception of the Chosin Reservoir campaign, which she rightly presents as his highest accomplishment, she provides only the barest description of battles. As an example, he commanded a reinforced regiment during part of the World War II campaign on New Britain, leading his unit in one significant amphibious assault and subsequent lengthy operations ashore. She spends two paragraphs on his role in planning the battle and another on his thoughts during a difficult night movement to the objective, but relegates the actual events to a single sentence: "The landing was a hard-fought success, as were the weeks of patrolling that followed" (p. 63). The reader learns that he is a good planner, but has no basis for judging the quality of his combat

leadership. Her discussion of the 1944 Peleliu campaign, where he was an assistant division commander, is more expansive, but less reliable. In writing about Smith's visit to a regimental command post a day or two after the landing, she notes that Puller's outfit would be fighting in the Umurbrogol ridges "over the next few weeks." In reality, the 1st Marines were in the front lines for only the first nine days of the battle – just a single week after the event described. The lack of operational detail is emphasized by the paucity of maps; there are none for his three campaigns in World War II and only four to depict his division's numerous actions in eight months of combat in Korea.

While she did not set out to explain campaigns, she does not always do justice to her subject's part in them because she glosses over so much. On Okinawa, for instance, Smith was the Marine deputy chief of staff for Tenth Army, a headquarters composed primarily of Army personnel. Despite his role as the senior Marine on the staff, the author does not address the inter-service controversy regarding a Marine-proposed amphibious landing to flank the Japanese defensive line that held up Tenth Army's advance for weeks. Her reticence might have been due to a lack of mention of this dispute in Smith's voluminous personal papers, but that highlights the shortfall in her research, which depends almost entirely on that collection, three dozen official oral histories, and some secondary sources (not always well-chosen ones). Although Smith made use of operational reports in developing the memoirs included in his papers, she apparently did not delve into these types of primary sources herself to evaluate his statements or provide additional information. While she had access to his medical records, she notes that his fitness reports were lost, but nowhere mentions the remainder of his official personnel file and does not cite the type of material that would have been found therein. In a similar fashion, she relies repeatedly on the oral history of Smith's division operations officer in Korea to explain what General Matthew Ridgway thought, only rarely citing direct sources from the Eighth Army commander. At times, however, her synthesis of events is unusually perceptive, as when she observes that seldom has a unit performed in such a wide range of types of operations and climates as the 1st Marine Division in the first year of the Korean War.

From her perspective as a relative, she is not always objective in her assessments, though this is often equally true of biographers who become too enamored of their subject. During the unification debate following World War II, several officers serving under Smith played a major role in fighting for the Corps' institutional survival. A man of strict moral character, he was taken aback by their guerrilla warfare in the political arena. Some of them, in turn, later sneered at his failure to support them or join in the effort. Shisler disparages those Marines for not operating under the constraints that Smith imposed on himself, while presuming that the objective would have been achieved anyway. Her limited knowledge in this realm is highlighted when she names the legislator most responsible for protecting the Corps in the National Security Act of 1947, but mistakenly indicates he is a senator

(rather than a representative) and places him in control of the wrong committee (Armed Services rather than Expenditures in the Executive Departments). She notes, justifiably, that Merrill Twining was ungracious in his assessment of her grandfather. However, she returns the favor when she gives Smith all the credit for preparing Marines to go to Korea during his tenure as commander of Camp Pendleton during the last two years of that war, pointedly ignoring the role of Twining, who headed the Training and Replacement Command under Smith.

On balance, the author achieved exactly what she set out to do, which was to thoroughly portray the character and personality of her grandfather. In the process, she far surpasses the only other existing biography of Smith, which relied far too heavily on long quotes from Smith's unpublished memoirs and demonstrated even less awareness of Marine Corps history. Nevertheless, there remains a need for a more balanced and thorough look at this important Marine that will better describe his many accomplishments and place them in their proper light.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.06

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Archibald Wavell: The Life and Times of an Imperial Servant. By Adrian Fort. London: Jonathan Cape, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xiv, 498.

Field Marshal Earl Archibald Wavell was one of the most cerebral soldiers that Britain has ever produced. An accomplished writer, he had the misfortune to hold high command in the most difficult days of the Second World War. Between 1939 and 1943 he oversaw fourteen campaigns, and while he won victories over secondary enemies (the Italians, Vichy French, Persians, and Iraqis), he was unsuccessful in campaigns against the Germans and the Japanese. Like Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, Wavell was removed by an impatient Churchill from command in the Middle East, and his subsequent reputation has been eclipsed by that of Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery, who assumed command just when the balance was tipping in the favor of the Allies.

Wavell was a prolific writer. His early publications included work on the First World War Palestine Campaign and biographical studies of the commander of that campaign, General Allenby. He also published several collections of his articles and lectures in book form. For example, General Sir Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship* (London: The Times, 1941) was based on the Lees Knowles lectures delivered at Cambridge University in 1939. Others included *Speaking Generally* (London: Macmillan, 1946); *The Good Soldier* (London: Macmillan, 1948); and

Soldiers and Soldiering (London: Cape, 1953). Sir Penderel Moon edited some of Wavell's diaries: *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973). However, the book for which Wavell is probably best remembered is *Other Men's Flowers* (London: Cape, 1944), an anthology of poetry based on those poems that Wavell knew by heart, that was continuously in print until the 1980s. Wavell died before he could write his memoirs, and many of those who have written on Wavell aimed to rehabilitate his reputation.

Some of the early works on Wavell are narrative histories of the early victories under his command in North Africa and the Middle East, such as H. Rowan-Robinson, *Wavell in the Middle East* (London: Hutchinson, nd.); R.H. Kiernan, *Wavell* (London: Harrap, 1945); and William F. Burbidge, *The Military Viceroy: Being a Brief Account of the Life and Campaigns of Field Marshal Viscount Wavell* (London: John Crowther, nd.). These early biographical studies show the high esteem that Wavell was held in during the Second World War and immediately afterwards.

R.J. Collins, *Lord Wavell (1883-1941): A Military Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947) was written before much source material was available. Collins, a major general, ventured some mild criticisms of Wavell's performance in the Second World War, but for the most part was highly favorable. Bernard Fergusson, a fellow member of the Black Watch, wrote a brief sketch of the man he had known, whom he regarded as a "great soldier": *Wavell: Portrait of a Soldier* (London: Collins, 1961). Fergusson also contributed "Field-Marshal the Earl Wavell" to Michael Carver, ed., *The War Lords* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), which was more an analytical piece that stressed the difficulties Wavell faced in conducting testing campaigns with inadequate resources. Some years earlier, Robert Woollcombe, *The Campaigns of Wavell 1939-43* (London: Cassell, 1959) had also stressed the appalling problems Wavell faced in his campaigns and describes him as "an Arthurian figure," fighting for "pure survival," basing his research on official dispatches and secondary sources.

Wavell's official biographer, John Connell, produced a two-volume treatment: *Wavell: Scholar and Soldier* (London: Collins, 1964) and *Wavell: Supreme Commander* (London: Collins, 1969). The second volume was edited and completed by Michael Roberts after Connell's death. These formidably detailed tomes are based in large part on Wavell's papers. Connell depicts Wavell as a great man and soldier, although one who did make his share of mistakes.

Connell's volumes held the field until the publication of Ronald Lewin's *The Chief: Field Marshal Lord Wavell, Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy, 1939-1947* (London: Hutchinson, 1980). This was a revisionist study that took into account the impact of Ultra on Wavell's conduct of operations. Lewin was rather more critical of Wavell than some previous biographers, and argued that, pace received wisdom, Wavell was not forced by Churchill to divert troops to Greece in 1941 against his will. However, it was largely based on published sources. Ian Beckett's useful article on "Wavell" in John

Keegan, ed., *Churchill's Generals* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991) took Lewin's revisionism into account.

A more recent full-length study on Wavell is Harold E. Raugh's *Wavell in the Middle East, 1939-41: A Study in Generalship* (London: Brassey's, 1993). Based on a formidable array of sources, this book subjects Wavell's generalship to intense scrutiny, and pronounces Wavell as an "outstanding" commander, the "most able" British general of the Second World War. Victoria Schofield's *Wavell: Soldier & Statesmen* (London: John Murray, 2006) was only published six years ago and was based on a thorough trawl of all the available private papers, but not Wavell's, which remained closed.

With this large amount of previous biographical studies, the question demanded is whether there is a need for another one? Adrian Fort's study is sub-titled "an Imperial Servant," which seems an interesting choice for a career soldier. The author is keen to stress Wavell's time as Viceroy, as he states in his introduction:

> Although there have been previous books on the subject, some are so uncritical as to do Wavell little justice, and most are now very out of date, both in their presentation and in the light of recent assessments of modern, post-imperial developments. Despite its being hardly possible to present a full picture of Wavell without considering his career both as a soldier and as Viceroy of India, until now there has been only one account that covers both.

It seems rather surprising therefore, that the author relies heavily on Connell's volumes published in the 1950s and there is no mention of either the work of Raugh or Schofield in the bibliography. It would seem from the acknowledgements that although Wavell's papers were made available to the author, there is little evidence of this in the notes.

Some of the author's streetwise language such as "newly-minted tycoons" can mildy irk some readers, but he does cover familiar ground well illustrating that Wavell's taciturnity led to much misunderstanding, particularly with politicians. The importance of his innovative training in the inter-war years is dealt with, as are Wavell's early victories, his later defeats, his patronage of Wingate in Palestine, Abyssina and Burma, and early encouragement of the Long Range Group and other special forces, his underestimation of the Japanese military forces, and his liberal views as Viceroy. The strength of this study is amply described by Fort in his introduction:

> The truth is that, besides being an outstanding soldier and an enlightened imperial administrator in wild, exceptional times, he was a cultured man of letters relishing a bohemian atmosphere and companions as much as, if not more than, the more prosaic company of soldiers and officials that many highly placed people thought appropriate for him. There seems little reason to deny the modern reader a glimpse of this aspect of a great man.

This is certainly achieved in this volume including a chapter describing his stay in London prior to taking up the post of Viceroy, when Wavell stayed with "Chips" Channon and was feted in the London social scene.

Lastly, some of the author's conclusions are questionable. For example, rather than blaming Wavell for the failure of the disastrous First Arakan campaign in 1942-43, he states that "Wavell has sometimes been accused of lacking a full quotient of ruthlessness, but the Arakan campaign certainly belies that suggestion." Wavell consistently underestimated the Japanese and this campaign was another tragic example of this. Thus, to answer the question posed earlier, although a readable and engaging biography, there is little new material. It does, however, ensure Wavell becomes the Second World War general with the most biographical studies.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.07

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A Tale of Three Battalions: Combat Morale and Battle Fatigue in the 7th Australian Infantry Brigade, Bougainville, 1944-45. By Gavin Keating. Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2007. Maps. Tables. Notes. Paper. Pp. viii, 70.

The monograph reviewed here is not new, with five years having passed since its publication by the Australian Army's Land Warfare Studies Centre. It is, however, deserving of attention, being a succinct and readily available study that offers insight into a relatively little known campaign of the Second World War – Bougainville, 1944-45 – and into the topical issue of combat fatigue. In this instance it is especially pertinent to jungle warfare, although with lessons that may be applicable to other forms of warfare.

Bougainville was one of the final campaigns in the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA). In mid-1943, American forces established a foothold on the island and developed a base at Torokina – an important airbase for operations against Rabaul, New Britain. The U.S. XIV Corps was inserted and was content to push inland and along the coast only so far as necessary to protect the base area. When II (or 2) Australian Corps took over in late 1944, somewhat controversially it was committed to offensive operations. The Australian objective was to capture the main Japanese bases on the northern and southern tips of the island. This was perceived by many observers and those fighting to be unnecessary and largely a waste of time and lives. A challenge for commanders was to sustain fighting spirit when virtually every man realized he was fighting and possibly dying in a backwater.

Gavin Keating is an Australian Army officer who completed this study while attending the Australian Command and Staff College. He was also the

biographer of the commander of II Australian Corps, Lieutenant General Stanley Savige – *The Right Man for the Right Job: Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Savige as a Military Commander* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2005) – and thus had some familiarity with the campaign. His monograph starts with a typically Australian statement to the effect that: "The Anzac tradition does not talk much about what happens when combat morale falters and battle fatigue undermines military effectiveness." Australians (and New Zealanders) maintain that their war fighting tradition was forged by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) at Gallipoli in 1915, hence "Anzac tradition." That fighting tradition is little different to any other country's and, fortunately, it is not central to Keating's work and he does not dwell on it.

One point that may need to be explained is that the Australian Army in the Second World War comprised the wartime-raised and "glamorous" Australian Imperial Force (AIF), an all-volunteer force, most of which saw action in the Middle East before returning to the Pacific; and the part-volunteer and part-conscript Citizen Military Force (CMF), or militia, roughly equivalent to the British Territorial Army or the U.S. National Guard, which served only within the Pacific and was never accorded the same recognition and approbation as the AIF. The subject of this monograph, the 7th Infantry Brigade, was a CMF brigade that had first seen action at Milne Bay, Papua, in 1942. This had been the first Allied victory on land in the SWPA, earning the brigade more kudos than most other CMF brigades enjoyed, however this did not prevent it being relegated to a relatively unimportant campaign. Today, it may be well remembered for its exploits in 1942, but few Australians, let alone anybody else, would know what it did in 1944-45.

Keating traces the fortunes of the 7th Brigade in Bougainville, with focus on leadership and morale. He had access to the brigade and battalion war diaries – a splendid resource, now available online on the Australian War Memorial's website – and to the personal diaries of the brigade commander, two battalion commanders, and an intelligence officer, each providing their particular insights. The brigade comprised three infantry battalions – the 9th, 25th, and 61st Battalions – which suffered 122, 228, and fifty-eight casualties, respectively, between October 1944 and May 1945. All three battalions were recruited from the same home State (Queensland), presumably contained the same type of man, and were committed to the same areas of operation. However, their experiences of operations differed markedly. The 9th and 25th Battalions fought some relatively significant actions, reflected in the higher casualty figures, and emerged with reputations intact. The 61st Battalion, on the other hand, was employed largely in holding actions, consolidating positions taken by the other battalions and spending months undertaking jungle patrols, with occasional clashes against small numbers of Japanese. Despite the lower casualties, the 61st Battalion suffered greater morale problems, which undermined its performance and impaired its reputation.

Other historians have maintained that the morale problems evident in the 61st Battalion signalled a shortcoming or failure in the battalion commander. They have tended to suggest that the battalion's CO and junior officers were not as strong as those of the other battalions. Keating argues convincingly that other factors need to be taken into account in assessment of the battalion, such as the fact that because it missed out on notable battles, the 61st Battalion spent weeks at a time operating in the forward area, "experiencing all the stresses that jungle warfare inflicted," but not able to point to a notable victory. It missed out on the praise from brigade and divisional commanders, which left the men feeling under-acknowledged and their contribution to the campaign unappreciated. Even without heavy fighting, the unpleasant terrain and physical demands of jungle warfare sapped the energy of men and of the battalion. In a campaign that virtually nobody felt was worthwhile, this must have been demoralizing.

Keating's research is assiduous and he writes in an engaging fashion. This was definitely a well chosen case study for the purpose of assessing morale and fighting spirit, as Keating is able to compare and contrast the experiences of battalions with somewhat different experiences, in spite of fighting in the same brigade. While the Bougainville campaign is specifically Australian (and Japanese) and may be little known to many readers of *Global War Studies*, a particular strength of this monograph is that no prior knowledge of the campaign is required to make good use of it. Having started out as an Australian Command and Staff College paper, and then published as part of a series intended to educate contemporary soldiers, it is hardly surprising that Keating should conclude (pp. 63-64) with some lessons for today:

> The 61st Battalion's experience of war on Bougainville could be said to share much in common with current deployments – long periods of operating in complex terrain against a largely unseen enemy, where the experience of combat is not of big battles but instead numerous small actions. In this age of the 'Long War', the way in which the combat fatigue induced by this type of environment gradually wore down morale in the 61st Battalion, over a prolonged period, is of particular importance. As the 7th Brigade found, training leaders to maintain morale and manage battle fatigue under these circumstances is not an easy task.

The Australian Land Warfare Studies Centre is to be commended for picking up this study and making it widely available.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.08

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***Military Effectiveness*, Volume 2, *The Interwar Period*, New Edition**. Edited by Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Maps. Notes. Index. Paper. Pp. xix, 281.

Although entitled New Edition, the only thing new about this book is the introduction. The eight substantive essays are identical to the original essays in the 1988 edition, with no changes whatsoever. To publish as a New Edition a classic of literature that is nearly twenty-five years old leaves this reviewer wondering, why? The last two-plus decades have seen remarkable publications covering the interwar period for each of the countries in this book. Even some of the original essay authors themselves have added significantly to our understanding since 1988. Robert Doughty, author of the essay on France, has published two books on the subject since he wrote the original essay: *The Breaking Point: Sedan and the Fall of France, 1940* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1990) and *Pyrrhic Victory: French Strategy and Operations in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005). Ronald Spector, author of the essay on the United States, has published prolifically, with at least six books since 1988, none of them, however, on the subject of the interwar period. The authors of the essays on the Soviet Union (Earl Ziemke), Germany (Manfred Messerschmidt), Italy (Brian R. Sullivan), Japan (Carl Boyd), and Great Britain (Brian Bond and Williamson Murray) have also published other books since the original essays were crafted. There is also a summary essay by Alvin D. Coox, originally published in 1988.

However, even more problematic for this New Edition are the numerous authors who have published on the interwar period since 1988. Perhaps the base facts related in the 1988 edition may not have changed with time, but the interpretations certainly have changed in nearly twenty-five years. For the Soviet Union, one could list, among many others, Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military History of the Soviet Union* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Roger R. Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience: A History of the Soviet Army, 1917-1991* (London: Routledge, 2000); or Tobias R. Philbin, *The Lure of Neptune: German-Soviet Naval Collaboration and Ambitions, 1919-1941* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994). For the United States, the list of new contributors and new interpretations may be even longer. Since 1988 several works on the U.S. military in the interwar period have emerged. Edward M. Coffman, *The Regulars: The American Army, 1898-1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Kenneth Finlayson, *An Uncertain Trumpet: The Evolution of U.S. Army Infantry Doctrine, 1919-1941* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001); William O. Odom, *After the Trenches: The Transformation of U.S. Army Doctrine, 1918-1939* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999); David E. Johnson, *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers: Innovation in the U.S. Army, 1917-1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Paul A.C. Koistinen, *Planning War, Pursuing Peace: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1920-1939* (Lawrence:

University Press of Kansas, 1998); and Peter J. Schifferle, *America's School for War: Fort Leavenworth, Officer Education, and Victory in World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010) have all added different interpretations of the U.S. military effectiveness in the period. There are also numerous works which have significant chapters on the interwar period, including Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999). For the essay on the German military, new scholarship is even more plentiful and full of new and important interpretations different than those of Messerschmidt from 1988. The reader is directed to the works of James S. Corum, Robert M. Citino, John Mosier, Karl-Heinz Frieser, Shimon Naveh, and Antulio J. Echevarria, to name only a few of the most outstanding scholars of German interwar performance.

Therefore, all of these essays originally written for publication in 1988 need to be read very carefully, and then reviewed in light of more recent scholarship. The introduction, the only new part of this book, offers little to the reader other than background on the original publication, and some very generic lessons learned by Williamson Murray and Allan Millett. Even these lessons are far from new, or unique to these authors. They include the following: that national leaders often find it difficult to assess their strategic issues (p. xv); that innovation in militaries frequently comes from outside the institutions, either through personnel changes or political demands to speed up the pace of change (p. xiv); and that strategic errors can usually not be overcome through operational or tactical brilliance – the errors are just too grave (p. xvi). For another view of these types of lessons learned, the reader could also turn to Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995) for significant lessons from the period.

So, what is the utility of this re-publication? The first edition was the result of a commission from the United States Department of Defense Director of Net Assessment (p. xi) to investigate the challenge of making militaries more effective. This commission turned into three volumes, one devoted to World War I, one to the interwar period, and the last to World War II. Each essayist was asked to discuss the military (army, air force, and navy) effectiveness of their country in terms of political, strategic, operational, and tactical effectiveness. Political effectiveness usually concerned the ability of a country, through its political process, to evaluate policy requirements and then both fund and instruct its military accordingly. Strategic effectiveness focused on the actual strategic aims of the country and how they were accepted, or rejected, or ignored, by the military. Operational and tactical effectiveness, in turn, discussed large formation (army and above or equivalents) and smaller formation (corps and below) ability to fight the necessary form of war required by the political and strategic national aims. Each essay, although very dated in terms of more recent historiographic interpretation, may still be useful to the new student or the experienced historian searching for a place to start an investigation. However, for more up-to-date interpretations of military effectiveness, all

are urged to consult more recent works, which are available on every nation assessed in this book.

A more recent work, Harold R. Winton and David R. Mets, eds., *The Challenge of Change: Military Institutions and New Realities, 1918-1941* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), may be a better place for a student or historian to start. The book has five chapters devoted to interwar issues in, respectively, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Dennis Showalter completes the book with a sixth chapter addressing change in the period in general. Although more deliberately focused on one or two issues per country, and without the meta-narrative imposed by Millett and Murray on their authors, this book, since it is a dozen years more recent, is arguably the better book on the interwar period, if one was limited to a single work.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.09

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***Military Effectiveness*, Volume 3, *The Second World War*, New Edition**. Edited by Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Maps. Notes. Index. Paper. Pp. xix, 375.

In the early 1980s, two of the leading military historians of their generation, Allan Millett and Williamson Murray, conceived of an intriguing idea. They hypothesized that a comparative, historical case study of military institutions could enhance their understanding of the problems confronting the U.S. military at that time. When they proposed this idea to Andrew Marshall in the Department of Defense, they were pleasantly surprised to receive substantial funding for a three-volume study, spanning the first half of the twentieth century. The last volume covered World War II. For this book, Millett and Murray recruited many equally great historians with orders to assess military effectiveness on a nation by nation basis, in each person's own particular area of expertise. The result of their recruiting efforts was an all star cast. The work includes essays by Alvin Coox on Japan's war effort, MacGregor Knox on Italy's armed forces, Jürgen Förster on the German military establishment, Ronald Chalmers Hood on France's "bitter victory," John Jessup on the Soviet military, Earl Ziemke on general military effectiveness, Lieutenant General John Cushman on operational and tactical problems, and the peerless Russell Weigley on the political and strategic dimensions of military effectiveness. The editors did not exempt themselves from the mission. Millett penned a chapter on the U.S. armed forces in the Second World War and Murray wrote one on Great Britain.

Cambridge University Press originally published this book in 1988. Now,

in the belief that the study still has much to offer in the way of lessons for the present, the press has reissued the book in an attractive paperback format. This edition begins with a new foreword by the editors entitled "Military Effectiveness Twenty Years Later," which explains the genesis of the idea, their avowed purpose to use the lessons of the recent past to inform decisions of the present and future, and places much of this in the context of the early twenty-first century. The actual essays, though, are unchanged from the original 1988 edition. Each essay is heavily documented with notes at the end of the chapter, rather than in a special section at the back of the book. Though the subject matter is sometimes a bit dry, the chapters are well written, informed, and authoritative. The theme of military effectiveness (or lack thereof), hangs together quite nicely from essay to essay, indicating firm leadership on the part of the editors. By its very nature, this is not the sort of book that many readers, save for a few military professionals or scholars, will read from cover to cover. Present day military historians and soldiers will find it very useful as a reference of sorts for their particular area of interest. In my opinion, the best chapters are those written by the editors themselves. Millett's chapter on the mobilization, training, doctrine, and effectiveness of the U.S. armed forces is an excellent, well written overview of the topic – a veritable must for anyone wishing to understand the American war effort. The essay is only marred by Millett's overemphasis on S.L.A. Marshall's deeply flawed ratio of fire theory to assess American tactical effectiveness. At the time Millett wrote the piece in the 1980s, though, the theory had not been as thoroughly challenged and debunked as it has been by so many historians in the intervening years. In fact, this brings to light the book's only significant flaw. Because the scholars wrote several decades ago, their essays are not conversant on more recent historiographical trends.

In the bigger picture, though, this hardly matters. Each essay stands as a useful piece of scholarship. This new edition of *Military Effectiveness*, Volume 3, will educate a new generation of Second World War scholars on so many important aspects of the war.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.10

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Wartime Courage: Stories of Extraordinary Courage by Exceptional Men and Women in World War Two. By Gordon Brown. London: Bloomsbury, 2009. Maps. Index. Paper. Pp. xiii, 238.

In the short preface to what is a short book, the author writes that its origins came with his desire "to understand more about wartime courage." Having previously written what could in many respects be considered a companion

volume, albeit one whose focus was a series of individuals who had proven courageous in pursuing "great causes and high ideas," this suggested a reflective and revealing study to follow. The very fact that the author also happens to have been Britain's prime minister at the same time as the book was being written – in its conclusions it betrays a certain political agenda, which may or may not have also been a feature in its inspiration – did little to dampen such hopes. As he acknowledged at the outset, the Second World War was "a vast conflict" which offers to those involved in its recounting a "sheer wealth of material" from which to select both individuals and incidents worthy of study. His aim, therefore, was to attempt to encompass the main fighting services, civilians, and what he terms as "some less regular formations" in an examination that ranges across the conflict's six years and its global battlespace. At the same time whereas his earlier volume had drawn upon an international cast, on this occasion he would look exclusively at the British experience. Faced by these many guiding parameters, the final results are certainly most commendable even if the final product can surely be classed as little more than an introductory narrative of greatest interest and value to a more general audience.

Seventeen individuals are identified by name along with associated and supporting figures. Some of them died, some lived, some received medals or their exploits should already be known even to those with only the most basic knowledge of this conflict, and some remained largely unknown. For example, there is the story of Eric Liddell who might well have remained a peripheral figure in the history of Britain's wartime experience were it not for the significant exposure his remarkable story gained as part of the multi-Oscar winning film *Chariots of Fire*. In it his heroism is acknowledged with a single sentence in its closing credits, but this provides an inescapable if uncertain poignancy; Brown provides a most effective brief biography of his fellow Scot, which fills in the gaps and confirms the bravery of this missionary worker who was imprisoned by the Japanese. There is also the neat little pen portrait of Violette Szabo, perhaps one of the most widely known members of Special Operations Executive, the clandestine organization that so successfully set Europe ablaze. There are added to this a number who are less renowned but whose exploits cannot help but force the reader to reflect on the nature of courage. At a time when the work they perform on a daily basis in Afghanistan and elsewhere gains ever greater recognition, John Bridge, a naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer, to use the modern title, has eleven pages devoted to him and it is notable how many times the word "immense" features. Of his many courageous acts, the day he saved the critically valuable Nijmegen road bridge from destruction merits a much larger study in itself. The modesty of Company Sergeant Major Hollis of the Green Howards who landed in Normandy on D-Day on 6 June 1944 and was to become the only recipient of the Victoria Cross awarded to any of the tens of thousands of his comrades who landed with him is a feature of his account.

Perhaps the most unusual of the selections – but also the most enjoyable –

is the final chapter which is devoted to Bill Slim. His exploits have been well documented, but perhaps here they are something of an odd choice. The justification provided by the author is that courage is required in high command, leading at the most senior levels and balancing strategic and operational considerations against the welfare of your men. Using this maxim, perhaps Winston Churchill was worthy of a chapter as there was surely no Briton who during the war years displayed greater courage! At Britain's Staff College Slim's command and leadership skills are still widely studied and within such examinations his professionalism and the courage that formed part of it are never once brought into question. The author clearly has considerable admiration, even affection, for the humble ironmonger's son from Birmingham, but his story would perhaps have sat better in another volume on great wartime commanders. Nonetheless, it does offer reason to question the manner in which courage differs, how the idea of "moral courage" should be viewed, and possibly even the difference between "courage" and "bravery."

In many respects, the fourteen pages of the Afterward prove most rewarding to students of military affairs, and particularly the book's final four pages. Here an individual who was Britain's then wartime leader attempts to provide some sense of deeper explanation as to why he has produced what he often refers to as a "short book" about military courage. In writing it he professes to have learned that this subject is "infinitely more complex than it seems at first." Although he does not say so explicitly, a point he has chosen to advance throughout his text, and a very important and quite proper one, is that the role of civilians should not be forgotten (indeed, six of his seventeen characters did not serve specifically within the military). He then makes, unfortunately, a somewhat crass statement which many who have been involved in Britain's conflicts of the last decade might have grave cause to question. It is his belief, he concludes, that "the military covenant is one of mutual commitment, and the entirety of our society in every generation has a duty to honour it." Surely there are few who would disagree with this sentiment. Occupying first the senior financial role and then as the most powerful political figure within the country, the debate will continue for many years as to the degree to which his government allowed this very precious informal understanding to break down. Politics aside, this is a highly polished and professional piece of work which with its eleven stories largely accomplishes its stated aim. It is difficult, though, to put the politics to one side.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.11

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Moral Combat: A History of World War II. By Michael Burleigh. London: Harper Press, 2010. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xxi, 650.

This is an impressive work by an accomplished author confronting a difficult task. The work is an effective and searching account of the war in which the key episodes are considered in a tone of appropriate scholarly judgement. Thus, we have perceptive remarks about Allied bombing, about the nature of the evidence for relations between Hitler and his generals, and about relations between the Allies. It is no criticism of Burleigh, a distinguished scholar, to say that there is little new here, as the facts are well rehearsed and the controversies scarcely new. Burleigh himself has already published important specialist work on Nazi racialism, Eastern policy, and genocide, all of which play a major role in this book, as he (correctly) sees them not only as highly significant in their own right, but also as important to the issue of moral judgement. Yet familiarity is not a criticism, for what one hopes for from a major scholar is an ability to offer a sound and judicious guide to an established subject, and Burleigh provides this. It is also interesting to see his method, which ranges from the discussion of pertinent experiences at the sharp end to the consideration of politics and strategy, a range of material and perspective that is skilfully interwoven. The pertinent experiences covered include the nature of casualties in infantry combat, the treatment of prisoners, and the extent of fatigue, including that of senior German generals. The balance between war with Germany and that with Japan is good, and if China is underplayed, notably in 1944-45, that is in accordance with the general treatment of the war and also reflects problems in the availability of sources.

Burleigh moves successfully between his examples, from the fate of tank crews in Europe to the nature of close-quarter fighting in New Guinea. After brief mention of Japanese cannibalism, he then moves on to consider the problems of shooting accurately, the deadly fate of snipers when captured, and the extent to which assimilating battle with the world of work made it easier to deal with it. Such rapid shifts are handled well by the author.

Morality is carefully linked to consequences, idealism to realism, in Burleigh's perceptive analysis. Thus, the bestiality of the German assault on Poland in 1939, an assault accompanied by drunkenness, looting, and murder – by the *Wehrmacht* as much as the SS – is considered in part in terms of the squandering of moral capital, a squandering that made it difficult to win any support. He carefully points out that more than racism was involved as the front-loaded, mobile German campaign ensured that relatively few military resources were devoted to securing rear areas behind the advancing troops. This is a thoughtful book by an accomplished writer.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.12

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Weller's War: A Legendary Foreign Correspondent's Saga of World War II on Five Continents. By George Weller. New York: Crown Publishers, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Cloth. Pp. 644.

The history of World War II has been chronicled by professional historians as well as those directly involved in the conflict. Among those contributors, war correspondents provided the earliest firsthand accounts of wartime events. Many of these brave correspondents, including the well known Ernie Pyle, gave their lives in pursuit of the story. In *Weller's War: A Legendary Foreign Correspondent's Saga of World War II on Five Continents*, writer George Weller detailed his war travels from 1942 through 1945.

Weller's War is the story of World War II through the eyes of an American reporter. Sent from the *Chicago Daily News* nearly a year before America's involvement in the conflict, George Weller crossed several continents in search of stories. The book is essentially a collection of Weller's dispatches, written from around the war-torn world.

The book contains twenty chapters which have little relation to each other. Each chapter includes a short introduction summarizing a group of dispatches. Comprised of over 600 pages, the work includes more than 100 dispatches and several photographs of Weller and others mentioned in the dispatches, two maps showing the European and Pacific campaigns, and occasional copies of primary documents.

The book provides insights into less studied areas of World War II. The first chapter is a collection of dispatches from Portugal, Spain, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. While chapter two accounts Weller's four months in Greece, where he chronicled the Greek Army's struggle against Italy and Germany. He also described the tragedies and heroism of the Greek people. Weller also traveled to the other side of the world, spending time in New Guinea, Australia, India, and China. He spent five months on several Pacific islands and six weeks in the Middle East. From the Orient to "darkest Africa," Weller seemed to travel to the most remote corners of the world war playing field.

Most of the dispatches emphasize the horrors and cruelties of war. However, some of the stories were written for entertainment purposes. One such story detailed an appendectomy performed on a sailor on a submerged submarine. The "surgeon," a twenty-three-year-old pharmacist's mate and laboratory technician, used a scalpel, tablespoons, and fingernail scissors to successfully operate on his nineteen-year-old patient. Another dispatch described Weller's encounter with glowing mushrooms in New Guinea. Still another dispatch discussed African natives' thoughts on Henry Stanley and his 1887 expedition to find Dr. Livingston.

The last dispatches were written from Japan after the atomic bombs were dropped. Weller described the conditions of some of the victims as well as the terrain. Despite being restrained by censorship, he was able to convey some of the horror of nuclear detonation. Some of these dispatches were not previously published. The final dispatch was written in October 1945 aboard

a U.S. Navy hospital ship en route from Nagasaki.

The book serves many purposes. It is both a history of the war and a tribute to the bravery of war correspondents. According to the author, "the … book is as much about being a war correspondent as it is about what one man witnessed" (p. 7). Still, the emphasis is on George Weller. Edited by Weller's son, the book is essentially a sentimental tribute from son to father. Describing him as "legendary," Anthony Weller does not want his father forgotten. *Weller's War* serves as a memorial to George Weller and his fellow reporters who risked their lives to bring home the story.

The book is a popular history rather than scholarly literature. However, a reader must have some background in World War II in order to understand the work. The chapters are disjointed and jump from one theater of operations to another. Present-day readers might wince at the 1940s terminology, which conflicts with 21st century political correctness. For example, Weller described Australian women as "fanatical, merchandise-hungry Amazons," speaks of "kinky-headed natives" in Africa, and makes frequent references to "Japs" and "China Men." He also discussed how "shoeless boys" from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Arkansas are more comfortable stalking the Japanese than "city bred" soldiers (pp. 337, 377, 391).

Still, *Weller's War* gives readers a firsthand account of war on five continents. The book is especially useful in providing information on Greece. Also, it provides insight into the lives of war correspondents – where and how they traveled, the diversity of the people they met, and the stories they told.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.13

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Good Girls, Good Food, Good Fun: The Story of USO Hostesses during World War II. By Meghan K. Winchell. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 255.

Growing up in the 1960s, the USO was a ubiquitous presence with public service advertisements on television constantly urging Americans to contribute financially to the organization. Bob Hope's longtime association with the USO elevated it to iconic status in American culture. Despite the importance of the organization in World War II and the continuing role it played in the postwar era, historians have paid little attention to it and *Good Girls, Good Food, Good Fun* is an important addition to the literature. Meghan Winchell has not written a comprehensive history of the USO, but she tackles one crucial aspect of the organization's history – the role women volunteers played in the success of the clubs it operated within the United

States during the war. By 1944, the USO operated 3,035 clubs and thousands of women each night voluntarily gave up their time to cook, greet, chaperon, and dance with GIs seeking a few hours escape from military life.

The USO is a remarkable model of ecumenical cooperation – founded in 1941 by the YMCA, YWCA, Salvation Army, Jewish Welfare Board, National Catholic Community Service, and the Traveler's Aid Society with the goal of meeting the recreational needs of the American servicemen. For the War Department, recreational opportunities were seen as not only bolstering the morale of troops, but an essential tool in reducing the staggering rate of venereal disease infection within the ranks. To accomplish this goal, Winchell describes the systematic efforts of the USO to create clubs that featured food, comfortable surroundings reminiscent of home, and a host of volunteers, mostly women, who served as hostesses. The legion of volunteer hostesses who served in the USO worked in a tightly controlled environment with carefully defined gender-based rules. Specifically, USO clubs encouraged interaction between women and servicemen, especially dancing – but they were not places where women should seek boyfriends or men should look for an easy pickup for casual sex. To encourage moral probity, USO clubs banned alcohol and enforced elaborate rules regarding the conduct of women volunteers.

Winchell goes into great detail on how gender roles and expectations were dictated by the USO. Senior hostesses were to be older, married, and to perform the role of surrogate mother for servicemen as well as supervise junior hostesses. In turn, junior hostesses were to be young, unmarried, outgoing, and to have sterling references regarding their character – women deemed promiscuous or having a sordid reputation were screened out. High expectations were set for hostesses regarding dress and the emphasis centered on serving the needs of visiting servicemen. For instance, they were discouraged from eating food provided at club affairs, asked not to sit down during dances, and on occasion even encouraged to let servicemen win cards, ping pong, and other table games to soothe their egos. Clubs often dropped volunteers who remained lax in their commitment or who had broken rules regarding dating.

This is an era where the double standard thrived – while the military preferred that servicemen would avoid engaging in casual sex, they also issued them condoms and maintained prophylaxis stations. Junior hostesses, while expected to dance and even on occasion kiss servicemen, were to be chaste and casual sex was a strong taboo. Why did so many women support these gendered divisions? Many wanted to make a contribution to the war effort and the USO provided such an outlet. Although the USO stressed the role of the hostess to serve the needs of male servicemen, women did form female networks for friendship, fun, and mutual support. At the same time, a number of women did circumvent, often subtly, the official rules that frowned upon dating.

Localism remains a recurring theme throughout Winchell's work. For instance, some clubs were located in urban centers and staffed by hostesses

from working class backgrounds. Others in more suburban settings attracted more affluent volunteers. Regionalism influenced what types of dances were popular and some southern clubs were more permissive about allowing dating between servicemen and junior hostesses. One disturbing pattern of localism is the defiance of many clubs of official policies mandating equal treatment of African American servicemen. As a result, the black community responded to this discrimination by forming a network of clubs staffed by African American women who catered to the needs of black troops.

Although the focus of this monograph is not a wider history of the USO, nonetheless it would be strengthened by offering a more detailed examination of the relationship between the national headquarters and constituent clubs. For instance, how did organizations with such varying religious traditions manage to create a culture that embraced little overt religiosity? Winchell does mention that the USO clubs sponsored by the Salvation Army did not feature dancing as part of their repertoire of activities for servicemen, but does not develop this point. At the end of the war, a spiritual revival in the Hattiesburg, Mississippi region led to a lack of women willing to serve as junior hostesses, and one wonders if this happened elsewhere over the course of the war given the strong antipathy to dancing by some Protestant denominations.

Winchell also misses an important difference between the USO clubs and Stage Door Canteens. In the case of the latter, they were operated by the American Theatre Wing and the connection with the USO remained tenuous. The most famous Canteen on Broadway stressed not only dancing, but also performance by stars of the stage, music, and film. Moreover, the Stage Door Canteen in Manhattan remained committed to racial integration and serving enlisted men from all Allied nations. As a result, the Canteen catered to a much more diverse clientele than many of the USO clubs in the interior. It not only featured prominent black performers, but it insisted that junior hostesses dance with all servicemen and not discriminate in any way. As Robert C. Roarty outlines in his doctoral dissertation, "More Than Entertainment: The American Theatre Wing During World War II" (City University of New York, 2002), the American Theatre Wing refused to open a canteen in New Orleans because the local officials refused to allow integration.

Despite the many strengths of this work, one wishes the author had expanded the sources she drew upon. Her oral histories were confined to a relatively small group of USO women volunteers who lived in the vicinity of Phoenix, Arizona – although fortunately many had lived in different parts of the country during the war. Surprisingly, she does not draw upon oral histories conducted with servicemen and servicewomen who went to USOs during the war. Although the focus of this study is on women volunteers, nonetheless, drawing on these interviews might have offered a more nuanced view of the construction of gender roles by the USO.

These limitations aside, Meghan Mitchell has written a pioneering book – she is one of the first historians to take a serious look at the history of the

USO in the Second World War. Her work will hopefully spur other scholars to examine this important organization. As she observes in her epilogue, while the USO clubs at home emphasized wholesome values, the USO Shows often featured entertainment abroad that included off-color jokes. Moreover, while the USO clubs were revived during the Korean War, the model faded and the organization focused primarily on serving service personnel stationed abroad.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.14

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New Perspectives on Austrians and World War II. Edited by Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Barbara Stelzl-Marx. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009. Illustrations. Notes. Paper. Pp. 375.

History is like panning for gold: it requires a lot of patience, and there is a great deal of ordinary material to sort through to get to the valuable stuff. Anyone who has authored a book, a dissertation, or even a good master's thesis knows this. They also know how exciting it is when that nugget turns up, especially if it is in their field. It is a feeling that comes mostly at conferences, where the discovery can be mutual and personal, but also occasionally in collected volumes like this one. Which is not to say there should be a gold rush on the volume; but those truly interested in Austrian history *and* the Second World War will find a few thrills. One or the other probably will not do, as the articles are mostly, well, sand and gravel. The reviews tacked on are largely ballast, though not without value.

There is, in fact, a lot to wish for in the volume. Gerhard Weinberg points out most of the flaws in his introduction to the work, which seems a rather strange practice; nevertheless, he is correct. The role of the Catholic Church in Austria during the war is not addressed. The fate of the Roma (gypsies) is ignored. The articles on the euthanasia program in Austria (by Brigitte Kepplinger) and the fate of Austrian prisoners of war (by Stefan Karner) could be further refined. The translations, he might have added, are clunky, the papers show signs of poor but heavy editing, and the conclusions are rarely thought through fully. This is raw history, even if by seasoned historians in most cases.

Like sausage, history is not always the prettiest thing in the making; it does have interesting moments though. Oliver Rathkolb's examination of memory and the myths of the *Anschluss*, for instance, provides a fascinating look at contemporary Austrian opinion. The wording (or perhaps the translation) makes it hard to be precise, but his survey data show that more and more Austrians are accepting the idea that their state was, at least in part, responsible for the crimes committed in the Second World War (pp. 24-

26). Rathkolb does not go on to draw any inferences, but the notion certainly merits further reflection. Likewise, Richard Germann's work on Austrian soldiers and generals in the war makes some interesting points, but does little with them. Who knew, for example, that the soldiers of the *Wehrmacht* celebrated Thanksgiving, and what the implications are of Germann's conclusion that Austrian soldiers "quickly forgot the Republic of Austria" even when they retained their local identities (pp. 37-38)? Thomas R. Grischany addresses that last question, at least in part, in his article on "Mental Aspects of Austrian *Wehrmacht* Service," but this is where conferences are superior to collections: in making connections. While Grischany contends that one of the key integration mechanisms used by the Germans after 1938 was to "let the Austrians remain Austrians to some extent […] as long as they demonstrated their capability as soldiers," this is not a complete or satisfactory response to Germann (p. 49). A good Q&A would increase the worth of the information.

Such is the life of a gold miner; frequently, the material in the pan needs further sifting, or even an assay to find out what it is worth. It is clear, for instance, that both Karner, who writes on the Soviet camp system after 1945, and Barbara Stelzl-Marx, who relates the complex story of Major Carl Szokoll's connection to the Soviets, have hit veins of material that look quite promising. The records coming out of the Soviet and East European archives contain fascinating details. It is also clear, however, that neither author has quite figured out what to do with them. Like Fritz Keller, whose article on food and diet in Austria during the Second World War is filled with amusing and interesting tidbits, they have not really arrived at an answer to that essential historical question: "yes, but so what?"

This is in some ways better, and in others worse, than the fate of Ela Hornung, who set out to study denunciation in the Austrian military during the war, but found no one willing to talk. "So my research was not very successful," Hornung writes. "I realized that […] I had entered into a field of various conflicts from the past to the present and strained relations that are still alive in the next generation" (p. 69). It sounds awful, yet promising to a trained historian; the fact that people still carry these burdens half a century later must mean something. Every historian has been there, and many have found that fool's gold is nevertheless useful. The question is: how does one get at the real stuff?

The answer, just as in gold mining, is hard work and patience. Presenting work at conferences and in volumes like this is an excellent first step. Historians who are truly interested in Austrian history during this period will likely have some thoughts on these topics, and be able to use some of the notions posted here. The articles here on how small towns experienced the war, on how slave labor was used in Austria, on Jewish-Austrian émigrés are small but important pieces of a larger puzzle. This series on contemporary Austrian studies – the volume reviewed here is the 17th – was designed expressly for the purpose of bringing such pieces to light. Austrian historians will certainly take note of them; German historians of the Second

World War or the Third Reich would do well to do so also. There is just enough flash in the pan to make paying attention worthwhile.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.15

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Camp Z: The Secret Life of Rudolf Hess. By Stephen McGinty. London: Quercus, 2011. Illustrations. Index. Cloth. Pp. xvi, 336.

So many conspiracy theories have been propagated about the unexpected arrival of Rudolf Hess in Scotland in May 1941 that it is at last a relief to find a book that is based on facts and declassified documents, not supposition and speculation.

Camp Z was the cover-name for Mytchett Place, a sizeable mansion close to the garrison at Aldershot that, between 20 May 1941 and 26 June 1942, provided secure accommodation for the Deputy *Führer* who was subject to the closest supervision in rooms that had been wired for sound by the Secret Intelligence Service. After he had been transferred to the Tower of London following his capture in a field near Glasgow, Hess was passed from military custody into the hands of SIS, but within a year he had persuaded his captors that he was practically insane and sent to Maindiff Court, an asylum in Monmouthshire. There he remained until he was transferred to Nuremberg in October 1945 to stand trial at the International War Crimes Tribunal, which sentenced him to life imprisonment.

Stephen McGinty's account keeps narrowly to the period Hess was detained at Mytchett and is largely based on reports compiled by Hess's two interrogators, Frank Foley and Thomas Kendrick, both SIS veterans fluent in German. He convinced them that he had acted without Hitler's knowledge or even his tacit approval, and was sufficiently self-deluded to think he could negotiate peace between the Nazis and what he mistakenly supposed was a group of Churchill's political opponents.

SIS reluctantly came to the view that Hess was so deranged that he was not even of propaganda value, and eventually washed their hands of him, but not before he had been interviewed by some senior figures in the government, among them Lord Simon and Lord Beaverbrook. Throughout *Camp Z* are fascinating anecdotes about the prisoner's weird behavior and his clumsy bid to take his own life by throwing himself into a stairwell, which gave him a broken leg and a belief that he was being poisoned by his conscientious but exasperated medical orderlies.

Thus history was left with two or three minor mysteries that have preoccupied a sizeable number of historians who suspected that he had been lured to Britain deliberately in a plot hatched by MI5 or SIS, or both. In an even more bizarre interpretation, circulated by Hess' doctor while serving his

prison sentence at Spandau, the prisoner was not really Hess, but actually his double.

The proposition that British Intelligence had schemed to influence Hess's decision to make his fateful flight is not supported by any evidence, but rather by what is considered to be a strange delay in handling the critical correspondence that had been sent by Albrecht Haushofer who is thought by some to have acted as an intermediary between Hess and the Duke of Hamilton, the man he believed was in contact with Churchill's opponents. On this latter score, Hess was entirely wrong, for Wing Commander Hamilton was a loyal RAF officer with no political ambition and even more reluctance to meddle in such matters. When asked whether he would travel to Lisbon to establish direct contact with Haushofer, he said he would do so only with reluctance, and under official orders. The explanation for the hiatus from September 1940 to May 1941 in reaching a decision on how to respond to Haushofer's invitation to attend a meeting in Portugal was simply that MI5, while initially enthusiastic about establishing a link with Haushofer, mislaid his letter and then lost interest when Hamilton proved uncooperative. Could MI5 have been so incompetent? The answer, based on plenty of declassified wartime documents, suggests that Security Service personnel were far from immune to the chaos that engulfed Whitehall during the invasion autumn of 1940. It would seem that although MI5 abandoned the plot, fate intervened and Hess took it upon himself to embark on his extraordinary flight.

The second issue, which goes unaddressed by McGinty, concerns the true identity of Hess, with W. Hugh Thomas' *The Murder of Rudolf Hess* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979) in the vanguard, asserting that the man incarcerated at Spandau until his death in 1987 was a substitute, and definitely not the Deputy *Führer* who had suffered a shrapnel wound in his chest in July 1917.

While the author sets out the circumstances of Hess' stay at Mytchett with great clarity, he ignores the conspiracy theorists, perhaps confident that reliance on archival material is more than sufficient to undermine past idiocies. Nevertheless, the failure to explicitly lay these canards to rest does detract from the otherwise comprehensive nature of the analysis. Unfortunately, he also occasionally strays beyond his area of expertise by making some minors gaffes, such as describing the XX Committee as existing, and being run by Tommy Robertson, in 1940. Neither is true, and nor is the oft-told statement that Kim Philby had been recruited by the Soviets while he was at Cambridge, when of course it is well established that this happened in December 1934, months after he had graduated. The slips are trifling, and the apparent belief that the Soviets were entrusted with ULTRA summaries, or that the famous Swordfish "stringbags" were torpedoes and not the biplanes that launched them, suggest the author trespasses into other fields at his peril, but these infelicities have little bearing on the main conclusion, that Hess was an insufferable hypochondriac who blundered briefly onto the stage of history but never had

any business being there. In terms of learning more about the conduct of the intelligence war, it is remarkable how much interest Stewart Menzies took in Hess, but it did not take long for Hess' inquisitors to conclude that the prisoner was valueless as a source of military information or insight into the Nazi leadership's strategic intentions.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.16

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Kill the Führer: Section X and Operation Foxley. By Denis Rigden. Stroud: The History Press, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Paper. Pp. xi, 227.

Throughout the brief six years of its existence, the implacable enemy of Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II was Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). Mutual enmity was rooted in a head-on clash of *modus operandi* (SOE's "big bang" approach versus SIS's soft-soled preference for silence and discretion on enemy soil). SIS spent much of its war undermining SOE, thwarting its intentions, and plotting its disintegration. Yet Sir Stewart Menzies, Head of SIS, ordered that every scrap of his organization's dangerously-harvested information relating to Adolf Hitler – his habits, well-being, movements, travel arrangements, and personal details – be shared with the rival upstart organisation: SOE was planning to kill Hitler. Against that objective at least, bitter inter-departmental rivalries would be pushed aside.

An attempt on Hitler's life had long been an obvious and attractive option. Indeed, it had come close to succeeding when Polish patriots attempted to blow up Hitler's train in autumn 1941. With several kilograms of explosives buried beneath the railway track, they saw their plan thwarted when a last-minute stop of the *Führerzug* on the line between Freidorf and Schwarzwasser allowed another train to slip past. More than four hundred Germans died in the ensuing explosion. Hitler, however, was not among them. He would live on to die by his own hand in 1945, his survival enhanced by his own gathering incompetence as those who considered his assassination became aware that Hitler alive and in inept control of Germany's strategic war effort was of greater value to the Allies than his removal and possible martyrdom by bomb, bullet, or poison.

Kill the Führer explores in exhaustive detail these and other plots to remove Germany's deranged leader. With access to newly-released SOE files at Britain's National Archives, Ridgen paints a chilling and detailed picture of the politics and possibilities of sanctioned killing. Operation Foxley was the codename for the plot to kill Hitler. Senior members of Hitler's entourage including Goebbels, Himmler, and Otto Skorzeny, the

Waffen-SS Colonel who masterminded Mussolini's mountain-top rescue in 1943, all had their own sub-plots. These were known as Foxley IIs or, more informally, "Little Foxleys," and merit inclusion in a book whose strength lies in the chilling detail and murderous inventiveness of the options that were seriously considered in a gathering climate of possibility after the Allied landings in Normandy in June 1944.

The plot to have a sniper kill Hitler as he took his regular morning walk between the *Berghof* and the Mooslaner Kopf tea house is now well known and exhaustively covered by Rigden, whose depth of detail reveals that someone – whether SOE or SIS is unclear – had remarkable access to Hitler's mountain retreat. Apart from a detailed ground plan of the exterior and interior of every building within Hitler's huge estate on the Obersalzberg, Rigden reveals that SOE knew internal telephone numbers together with a wealth of personal details relating to the hundreds of regular staff and visitors to Hitler's inner sanctum. The Foxley papers also show that SOE knew the addresses of "safe house" locations nearby where would-be assassins could seek shelter. Less well known, perhaps, are some of the other plots – some outlandish, some little better than suicide missions – that were considered, explored, and then rejected.

Rigden's book, originally published in 1999, provides fascinating insight into the mindset of those who worked for SOE.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.17

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T-Force: The Race for Nazi War Secrets, 1945. By Sean Longden. London: Constable, 2010. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Paper. Pp. xiii, 442.

"Target-Force" was formally established in July 1944 by General Dwight Eisenhower with the purpose of sweeping up anything in occupied western Europe connected with the manufacture or storage of new German weapons. Its tasks were to prevent the Germans from destroying their own handiwork, to ensure that Allied troops did not loot it, and to make sure that liberated slave laborers did not smash it. Shortly after the end of hostilities it undertook an additional function, ensuring that neither scientific personnel nor material likely to be of future strategic importance fell into Soviet hands. Once they entered Germany, T-Force focused its efforts on three kinds of targets: military R&D facilities; static military headquarters, government departments and ministries; and weapons factories. They were looking for two things: material and personnel that would be useful for the short-term prosecution of the war, and those that might be exploited in the longer-term.

The men of T-Force were a motley collection of engineers, pioneers, and ordinary infantryman, with a sprinkling of surplus gunners, Royal Marines,

and landing craft crews. Sean Longden tells the story of the work of this force, from its inception as the brainchild of Commander Ian Fleming, the personal assistant to the Director of Naval Intelligence and later the creator of James Bond, up to its disbandment in 1947. This is a lively and engaging book. Drawing upon a considerable number of documents he has uncovered in The National Archives at Kew, as well as material he has gleaned from interviews with survivors of the unit, Longden is able to describe their work in great detail, although there are times when the reader might wish for a little less detail and more explanation of its significance. For it is when the author comes to explore the context of his story that his grip becomes less sure. It is odd to find Eisenhower's Chief of Staff referred to as "Lieutenant General W.B. Smith, an officer at Supreme Headquarters" (p. 44).

However, more significantly, the author has done too little to locate his own findings within the existing secondary literature. Paul Maddrell's important study about how British and American intelligence agencies exploited German scientific and engineering manpower and intelligence after 1945 – *Spying on Science: Western Intelligence in Divided Germany 1945-1961* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) – and Julian Lewis' equally important work on Britain's post-war defense policy – *Changing Direction: British Military Planning for Post-war Strategic Defence, 1942-47* (London: Frank Cass, 2nd edn., 2003) – are both missing from the very brief bibliography of secondary sources that the author has consulted.

Longden argues that "The fact was that, at that moment and for much of 1945, the future security of the Western democracies hung in the balance and, had the men of T-Force failed in those tasks, the entire future of the Western world might have been very different" (p. xix). He bases this assertion on the claim that "There is little doubt that the Nazis had been victorious on the technological battlefield of the Second World War." They had developed the world's first operational jet fighter, rocket plane, ballistic missile, flying bomb, high-speed submarine, as well as new chemical weapons such as sarin. Such an assertion raises several difficulties. It takes no account of the fact that the Western allies had their own scientific triumphs, notably the atomic bomb, radar, and penicillin, nor that the RAF also had its own operational jet fighter flying by 1945. The implication that these German inventions would have somehow tipped the military balance against the Western powers and in favor of the Soviets if their blueprints, and the engineers and scientists who had produced them, had fallen into Russian hands requires some qualification. German rocket planes were probably as dangerous to their pilots as they were to Allied bombers because they had a nasty habit of blowing up on landing. Similarly, when the British tested German high-speed submarines powered by engines running on hydrogen peroxide and developed their own vessels with similar power plants, they found them to be equally dangerous to their own crews.

But even more important, as Julian Lewis has shown in his analysis of the work of the Chiefs of Staff, when they looked at the probable impact of new scientific developments on the post-war military balance of power, they

identified the atomic bomb as being the single most important new weapon that was likely to revolutionize warfare. They were right to do so, and in 1945 that was a weapon where the Western powers had a very clear lead over their erstwhile allies, a factor that Longden himself mentions in passing. The material, blueprints, and personnel that T-Force secured were in some cases, such as rocketry and poison gasses, valuable acquisitions for Britain and its Western allies after 1945. T-force was responsible for securing considerable scientific and technical reparations from Germany, although Longden is uncertain of their total value. But to claim that the work of the unit changed the course of history in any very significant way is placing more weight on the evidence than it can sustain.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.18

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Missiles for the Fatherland: Peenemünde, National Socialism, and the V-2 Missile. By Michael B. Petersen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xii, 276.

Glancing at the title of this work, knowledgeable readers might wonder why its author investigated a subject seemingly already exhaustively treated by both popular and professional historians. Published not quite fifteen years after Michael J. Neufeld's impressive *The Rocket and the Reich: Peenemünde and the Coming of the Ballistic Missile Era* (New York: Free Press, 1995), Michael B. Petersen's work constitutes one of many books and monographs on the V-2 and its creators that have appeared over the last half-century. What more, they might ask, did he believe needed to be said, or indeed could be said, that was not already well-known?

In fact, *Missiles for the Fatherland* constitutes an important, indeed seminal, contribution to the literature of the Third Reich, and particularly its rocketry program. Though Petersen is refreshingly careful to acknowledge his debts to those historians such as Neufeld who have pioneered the field, his book has no trouble standing on its own. It is, and undoubtedly will remain, an essential reference for any scholar researching the nature of the Nazi national security state; its approach to secrecy; its industrial policies; Nazi-era science and technology partnerships between academics, industry, and the military; and the Nazi state's infamous use of forced labor to further the goals of the Hitler regime.

Petersen's book is the outgrowth of a dissertation he completed at the University of Maryland on the German rocket program. A student of Jeffrey Herf, one of the most distinguished and influential historians of Weimar and Nazi-era Germany, Petersen has drawn well from the work and example of his mentor and advisor, particularly in his acceptance of Herf's construct of a

German "Reactionary Modernism" wherein the Nazi leadership sought to use the highest of modern technology to fulfill goals rooted in a *Volkisch* mythos dating to Nordic primitivism, and reflecting as well in a distressing nihilism and casually prevalent anti-Semitism.

Written with clarity and insight, it rarely betrays the pedantic structure common to most dissertations turned into books. Unlike previous accounts, Petersen studies the rocket team as a community of individuals operating within the closed confines of a pervasive security system, in which individual freedom was at essentially every level and at all times subordinated to the needs of the state. Where adherents of the earlier common narrative had sought to portray the isolation of the rocket team from mainstream German life as indicative of an equivalent isolation from the Nazi system, Petersen shows just the opposite. The members of the Peenemünde team were, by German standards, at least as loyal as average Germans towards the Nazi state, and in most cases far more so. They willingly accepted the strictures of security, including the obligation to report and inform on one another (and did so, frequently), and they accepted without question the desirability of using coerced labor to achieve their ends.

Underpinned by exhaustive research in American and European archives, much of it using primary source materials in the original German, *Missiles for the Fatherland* portrays a group of dedicated and gifted researchers committed to the goals and larger purposes of the Nazi state, working ever-more-frantically as the pace of the war turns against Germany to give the Nazi state the weapons it needs to achieve victory over the Allies. This is a very different portrayal than that offered in earlier accounts, which conveyed an impression of the Peenemünde team effectively "marking time" until the end of the war and figuring ways to bring their invention to America. As Petersen shows, it was by no means assured that they would do so. Intelligence reports based on preliminary interviews of the project team after its withdrawal to Bavaria revealed that at war's end, many were still largely convinced that Germany could win the war. One report concluded: "It was thought by some that they would enjoy somewhat of a vacation until the Wehrmacht drove the Allies back across the German border, at which time the research people would return to their work" (pp. 144-45). While this thinking was clearly delusional, it speaks to a mindset very different from that of the merely space-obsessed.

Readers familiar with the workings of government secret programs will not be surprised by the security procedures discussed in this book, including the use of special passes and area identification access permits, inspection of belongings, and the like. What might surprise is the draconian dedication Peenemünde test site commander General Walter Dornberger and others showed to achieving program security, with the constant threat of punishment, banishment to a concentration camp, or even execution held over the heads of program participants, both military and civilian. And executions there were – suspected spies, saboteurs, and assorted prisoners and forced laborers – both at Peenemünde and, unsurprisingly, at

Nordhausen, site of the *Mittelwerk*, the vast underground complex of tunnels in which slave laborers toiled in conditions of primitive brutality to bring the fruits of modern technology to war.

Petersen adopts some of the "history from the bottom up" approaches of social historians to gain insight into the workings of the Peenemünde community and its members. He finds the average member resourceful in the face of adversity, and dedicated to the point of callousness towards the forced laborers who did so much to assist, noting "The Peenemünders' narrowed ethical outlook, a result of their strong identification with each other and the goals of their project, meant that the concerns of others barely weighed in the balance" (p. 10).

Finally, Petersen's grasp of technological history and the workings of missiles and rocket propulsion systems is admirable, and far beyond what normally one expects in a work of this sort. Thus, *Missiles for the Fatherland* makes an excellent contribution to the history of technology as well as to the social and political history of the Third Reich, standing firmly on its own as an essential and authoritative reference for anyone interested in the fascinating – and sobering – story of how the Hitler regime regarded rockets, human beings, and war.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.19

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***Me 262*, Volume One (Revised Edition)**. By J. Richard Smith and Eddie J. Creek. Crowborough: Classic Publications, 2003. Illustrations. Appendices. Index. Cloth. Pp. 224.

This impressive book is the first volume of a four-part series detailing the developmental and combat history of the Messerschmitt Me 262, the first turbojet-powered aircraft to see combat. Smith and Creek, along with their collaborators, have been researching the evolution of German jet aircraft for decades, and have produced a readable and authoritative study of a transformative moment in aviation history.

The volume begins with a brief company history of Messerschmitt AG and a look at its chief designer, Willy Messerschmitt, and other key personalities. Subsequent chapters trace the evolution of the revolutionary and temperamental power plants, the development and flight testing programs, and the myriad changes and refinements that turned the prototypes into (barely) operationally-ready war machines, all set against the Byzantine backdrop of Nazi Germany. The volume ends with the first production Me 262s being readied for combat. A series of appendices includes a discussion of camouflage and markings. Also included are superbly reproduced photographs, technical drawings, and color artwork.

The authors take a fresh look at the conventional wisdom surrounding the aircraft's development history. They argue that Adolf Hitler's desire to deploy the aircraft as a fighter bomber to disrupt the critical first hours of an Allied cross-Channel invasion was not unreasonable. Developmental delays were due as much to the Messerschmitt firm's unwillingness to give the aircraft top priority in early 1943, despite clear directives from Field Marshal Erhard Milch at the Air Ministry, as to Hitler's ill-advised meddling. Their discussion of Messerschmitt's slippery attempts to shift the blame elsewhere represents a major contribution to the literature. Yet at bottom this is a technical study, capturing such matters as the uncertainty and danger of 1940s flight testing and the hasty efforts to develop suitable bomb racks for the Me 262 in response to Hitler's demands.

Most problematical is the complete lack of citations in the work. This first volume contains no source notes, or even a bibliography. Some of the material was gleaned from older published works, such as David Irving, *The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe: The Life of Field Marshal Erhard Milch* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), from which the authors have drawn most heavily. Others seem to come from postwar interviews with designers, engineers, and test pilots. Most commendably, the authors have unearthed many original documents covering the Me 262's developmental phase. A number of these items are reproduced as facsimiles in the text. And there lies the rub: it does little good for the publisher to boast of "detailed and unrivaled research" without full documentation of same. Some of these important documents are available in major archives. The famous one-page hard hitting report by Adolf Galland after his first flight in the Me 262 in May 1943 ("The aircraft represents an enormous leap forward; it would give us an unimaginable lead over the enemy if he adheres to the piston engine.") may be found at, among other places, the U.S. National Archives (ObdL, General der Jagdflieger, 25.5.1943, Milch 56.37, National Archives and Records Service (NARA) T-321, reel 157/no frame #s.) Other documents are more obscure; even if these are from private collections, some indication of provenance and date should be provided.

There is a tendency for scholars to dismiss such works as merely "books for buffs" – long on pictures and hyperbole, and short on substantive research and analysis. This would be a mistake. A more complete examination of this aircraft's gestation and combat history is unlikely to appear. Detailed studies of weapons, personalities, or tactics by writers working outside the academy are often extremely valuable and useful. The serious study of military history is a big tent, and we ought to welcome books such as the *Me 262* series into it.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.20

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***Armageddon in Stalingrad: September–November 1942* (*The Stalingrad Trilogy*, Volume 2)**. By David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xxii, 896.

In a follow-up to their first volume of *The Stalingrad Trilogy*, David Glantz and Jonathan House have created a tome that presents the reader with a refreshing perspective and interpretation of the battle for Stalingrad. Using unprecedented amounts of detail, the authors evaluate the struggle for the city from both the German offensive and Soviet defensive perspective; the end result is a narrative considerably different from the traditional account of the 1942 campaign. Based on a multitude of previously inaccessible sources, the authors have taken it upon themselves to dispel numerous myths that developed around this titanic clash within Stalingrad and on its periphery. Building on what Jason Mark accomplished in *Island of Fire: The Battle for the Barrikady Gun Factory in Stalingrad, November 1942–February 1943* (Sydney: Leaping Horseman Books, 2006), Glantz and House have utilized combat journals of divisions/brigades that participated in the defense of Stalingrad, as well as those of the 62nd Army, including various General Staff and STAVKA orders and reports, to create a detailed day-by-day account of the activities Soviet forces undertook during the siege. Simultaneously, the authors used divisional histories and reports from Corps, Armies, and Army Group B to show the German side of the battle. This approach allows the historians to compare and contrast both accounts. Whereas before, David Glantz could be accused of leaving out much of the German side in favor of Soviet sources, this volume strives to present a balanced account.

In discussing the lead-up to the battles for Stalingrad proper, the authors briefly explain initial German advances in the south, mainly covered in the first volume. The authors maintain that the city itself was never declared a major objective until Hitler decided to split Army Group South into Army Groups A and B. A concentration of Soviet forces in the Stalingrad area became "a magnet pulling Army Group B eastward" (p. 11). Besides being of strategic and operational value for the Germans, Stalingrad also bore the name of the leader of the Soviet Union. Its capture, thus, would give a boost to German morale, and serve as another crushing defeat to the Soviets, perhaps beyond measure.

While the German Sixth Army was the main offensive tool used against Stalingrad, according to the authors only some 80,000 troops took part in the initial attack. Furthermore, throughout the ensuing assault more than half of the army was locked in battle with five Soviet armies to the north and northwest of Stalingrad. This initial attack, conducted by two panzer and an army corps, was intended to "roll up the city from the flanks, with XIV Panzer Corps pressing down from the north, XXXVIII Panzer Corps advancing from the southwest, and LI Corps advancing from the west" (p. 31). A Red Army offensive in the Kotluban' region, however, drew German

forces away from the northern region and forced the attacking corps to conduct costly frontal assaults against the Soviet 62nd Army. The Red Army faced a similar problem in that most of their forces were also positioned outside Stalingrad proper. While politics dictated the city could not be given up, the real planning conducted by the Soviet high command concentrated on the flanks of the Sixth Army, rather than the fighting within Stalingrad. The 62nd Army, eventually trapped in the city, was continually fed new units in order to pin German forces within the ruins of Stalingrad while Red Army forces were being concentrated on the flanks of the Sixth Army for the eventual counteroffensive.

The northern axis, including the Kotluban' region, figures prominently in this narrative. The authors show that there were numerous Red Army offensives launched from this location by four armies, including several tank corps. While ultimately they were unsuccessful in their intended goal of a link-up with the 62nd Army in Stalingrad, these attacks nevertheless kept further German forces from participating in the battles within northern Stalingrad. Although fewer divisions fighting against the 62nd Army helped, the question arises whether that help was worth the resulting number of casualties in men and tanks the Red Army sustained.

After the initial assault on Stalingrad faltered, ensuing operations by the *Wehrmacht* were carried out in two regions – the city and its north and northwestern outskirts – and divided into three distinct stages. The first phase, from 13 to 26 September, included an assault against central and southern Stalingrad by the Sixth and Fourth Panzer Armies; the second, from 27 September to 13 October, involved the capture of the workers' settlements west of Stalingrad's factory district; and the last phase, from 14 October to 18 November, featured an attack on the city's factory district (p. 108). Limited operations took place elsewhere, specifically to the south against the Soviet 64th Army, but the iconic battle for Stalingrad was made up of the above offensives.

As the German assault against the 62nd Army intensified in mid-September, the ad-hoc preparations for the defense of Stalingrad were candidly described in an account by an NKVD officer. Highlighting the activities of the 13th Guards Rifle Division, the report described the high losses sustained by the division on 15 September, both in manpower and material, the desperate need for artillery support, and the lack of means to transport the wounded to the other side of the Volga. In these circumstances, the lack of transport meant lightly wounded soldiers were building rafts and ferrying their severely wounded comrades across the Volga.

The authors also challenge the accepted view that elite units were sent to defend Stalingrad. At least two of the divisions thrown into the city during September, 13th Guards and 95th Rifle Division, were composed of a small cadre of veterans and recovered wounded, but mainly consisted of new recruits. The fame the 13th Guards Rifle Division enjoys today was absent before its actions in Stalingrad. Coming into the city it was just another division. Only during the battle, due to the unit's actions, did recognition

follow. Any units released by the STAVKA reserve were eligible to be sent into the city's defense; their previous performance was a moot point when numbers were needed to keep the Sixth Army pinned down in urban combat. As Red Army regiments and battalions were bled white in city fighting, the head of the 62nd Army, Vasily Chuikov, singled out capable commanders and staff officers, retained their headquarters, and subordinated all troops in an area to it. As the authors explain, "…once a unit had become depleted he [Chuikov] would evacuate the regimental and divisional staffs to the eastern bank, where they would re-form with new replacements and return to the battle at a later date" (p. 212). As a result of the above, new recruits and arrivals, either in the Stalingrad area or Stalingrad proper, were given experienced commanders and staff to work with.

Despite the concise and technical language of the officers' reports, from which much of the information is derived, one gets a clear picture of the intensity of fighting and the desperation of both attacker and defender. When Chuikov took over command of the 62nd Army, some rifle divisions were reduced to mere hundreds of men, although the Germans seemed to be not much better off (pp. 80, 518). Moreover, while the head of the Sixth Army, Friedrich Paulus, was forced to deal with logistical difficulties, it was Soviet troops who seemed to suffer the most in terms of supplies. As a result, they were frequently forced to engage the advancing Germans in bayonet and hand-to-hand combat (p. 322).

All in all, those intimately familiar with the battle of Stalingrad will undoubtedly feel themselves humbled after reading this volume. The authors have put together an exhaustive study that has reoriented the standard narrative of the battle for Stalingrad, how it was fought, and how much we still have to learn about what happened on the banks of the Volga.

Nevertheless, throughout the narrative there are a few occasions where the authors' conclusions can be challenged. For instance, when describing the diversionary attacks against German forces located north of Stalingrad between the Don and Volga Rivers, Glantz and House conclude that while these operations were meant to keep German forces in place and out of Stalingrad, German forces were already, before operations by the Red Army began, in no condition to send help to neighboring forces fighting within the city. But no information is presented to explain if the Soviets knew the exact condition of the units they were facing. While in hindsight we can agree with the authors that the attacks were "useless and costly gestures," in reality they might have been interpreted as needed by those on the ground (p. 453). At the same time, in all fairness to Glantz and House, their conclusion does discuss the "subjective judgment" that exists when confronted with the above dilemma.

The authors also posit the idea that, as a result of the multiple failed offensives launched north and south of Stalingrad, the Germans were lulled into a false sense of security. After witnessing the ease with which they could fend off Red Army attacks, the "persistent faith on the part of German senior commanders in the *Wehrmacht's* apparent invincibility would have a

particularly telling effect on how these commanders responded to an ever-increasing number of intelligence reports warning them of troop movements indicative of a future Soviet counteroffensive" (p. 540). Nevertheless, as discussed above, whether Soviet offensives affected the Germans "psychologically," heightening *Wehrmacht* hubris and paving the way for an eventual German dismissal of a real threat on the Sixth Army's flanks, and whether they were worth the cost in "Soviet blood" and equipment, is entirely subjective (p. 711).

Aside from the enormous amount of detail offered throughout the book, for both sides, Glantz and House also offer numerous maps, some clearer than others, to guide the reader through the action(s) they describe. Furthermore, lists of units, commanders, numbers of men and tanks as well as their locations help the reader keep track of losses, reinforcements, and command changes. One of the most informative tables lists the Red Army units arriving in Stalingrad during September and October, giving Chuikov needed reinforcements, as well as the German forces being withdrawn and thrown into the fight for Stalingrad during the same two months.

In undertaking such a task, there are bound to be some inaccuracies and mistakes. A minor error occurs when examining the state of the German divisions attacking Stalingrad, on two separate dates in order to show the attrition rate(s), the authors mistakenly quote the numbers of battalions rated as "average" and "weak" as representative of those rated "weak" and "exhausted." This somewhat skews the reality of the situation, but the correct numbers are readily available in a table on the same page (p. 504).

Notwithstanding the above, the attention offered to the fighting taking place in the Caucasus is an additional strength of this volume. From the beginning of the 1942 summer campaign, Hitler and Army Group South sought to reach the Caucasus oil fields. But as Glantz and House explain, while Stalingrad has "mesmerized the generals of both sides and historians into believing that Operation Blau expired in the ruins of Stalin's namesake city," it was the defeat of Army Group A on the approaches to Taupse and Ordzhonikidze, in the first week of November, which signaled the end of Operation Blau (p. 599). Although only a chapter is devoted to the activities of Army Group A and the respective Soviet fronts it faced, that is enough for the reader to begin raising their own questions about an entire front relegated to the periphery of Eastern Front studies. Why has Stalingrad overshadowed the events taking place in the Caucasus? On the German side, is it a result of the disaster the loss of the Sixth Army signified to the *Wehrmacht* and Germany? Unlike what happened to Army Group B, where a field marshal and an entire field army were encircled and slowly destroyed, the majority of Army Group A did escape the Soviet threat of encirclement. Does the same apply to the Soviet side? Whereas they kept Hitler's main objective out of his hands, thereby facilitating the defeat of Operation Blau, did the propaganda campaign created around Stalingrad take on a life of its own and come to signify more than the defeat of another Barbarossa-like campaign?

In the end, the authors have done a tremendous service for both the history of the Great Patriotic War and the battle of Stalingrad. This volume has set a new standard not only in detailing the German defeat within Stalingrad, but in establishing which direction Eastern Front histories should be moving. Ample use of sources from both the German and Soviet side, juxtaposed and presented to the reader for scrutiny, create an atmosphere of objectivity heretofore missing in the majority of Eastern Front histories.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.21

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The Bismarck 1941: Hunting Germany's Greatest Battleship. By Angus Konstam. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2011. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Paper. Pp. 96.

Without a doubt, one of the best known maritime exploits of the Second World War is the one and only combat action of the German battleship *Bismarck* in May 1941. This short action has all the ingredients of a first-class drama. The *Bismarck*, the most powerful battleship of her day, puts to sea to cut British supply lines in the Atlantic. The Royal Navy gains knowledge of the *Bismarck's* impending deployment and makes preparations to stop her. Among others, the British deploy the fast battleship HMS *Hood*, the very symbol of British seapower in the inter-war period. When the two meet off Iceland, the *Hood* is destroyed by a cataclysmic magazine explosion from which only three of her crew survive. From this point, all British resources are employed to track down the *Bismarck* and avenge the *Hood*. Nevertheless, the *Bismarck* eludes her pursuers and seems on the edge of reaching the sanctuary of a port in German-occupied France. The only hope the British have to prevent this is a series of strikes by torpedo-armed biplanes from carriers. At virtually the last possible moment, one of the aircraft scores a hit on one of the *Bismarck's* most vulnerable spots – her rudder. Now unable to maneuver, the *Bismarck* is forced to circle helplessly as the heavy units of the British Home Fleet close in for the kill. The *Bismarck's* final battle is quick, and the Royal Navy gains the satisfaction of her destruction, avenging the *Hood* and ending the threat of German heavy surface raiders to British maritime life lines.

As dramatic as the real event was, the author of one of Osprey's recent offerings in its Campaign series immediately introduces an element of the overdramatic by claiming that the *Bismarck* could have single-handedly severed England's life lines. Her survival could "call into question Britain's very ability to continue the war." As powerful as the *Bismarck* was, she obviously had weaknesses and the entire German strategy of employing unsupported heavy surface ships as commerce raiders could easily be

questioned. No one ship had the ability to knock Britain out of the war, and the author's claims otherwise are patently ridiculous.

After its overdramatic beginning, the book does a good job of putting Operation *Rheinubung* (Rhine Exercise), the codename for the *Bismarck's* sortie, into context. In 1941, it was difficult to find a ship in the expanses of the Atlantic, giving the Germans reason for optimism. The German commander, Admiral Günther Lütjens, was operating under the concept of limited risk. He had to decide when and if to engage knowing that any significant damage to the *Bismarck* could prevent her from returning safely.

The book also does a good job describing both fleets, especially the strengths and weaknesses of the Royal Navy's Home Fleet. The author does not fall into the trap of portraying the *Hood* as a helpless potential victim of the *Bismarck*. He puts her weaknesses into context and points out that properly employed she was far from a liability. The concepts behind *Rheinubung* are well described, as is Lütjens' operational thinking.

The first action of the *Bismarck* episode was the Battle of the Denmark Strait on 24 May. In this seventeen-minute engagement, the *Hood* was sunk and then the *Bismarck* outfought the British battleship HMS *Prince of Wales*; however, the *Bismarck* herself was damaged in return. The damage from British shells created an oil leak, which made Lütjens' decision not to refuel earlier in Norway when he had the chance to do so very problematic. The battle changed the complexion of *Rheinubung* since the *Bismarck* was now forced to break off her mission as a commerce raider and return to France.

On 25 May, things got even more interesting. Early in the morning, Lütjens outfoxed the trailing British and eluded contact. Unaware of his success, he immediately squandered this advantage by sending a long radio message. This proved a fatal error. The next day, thirty-one hours after losing contact and twenty-four hours after the *Bismarck's* radio message, the British regained contact. By the time the *Bismarck* was again sighted, she was winning the race to reach France safely. The British heavy ships were facing fuel constraints since they were unable to refuel at sea. Only a single unit, Force H out of Gibraltar, could stop the *Bismarck* from reaching the safety of a French port.

Against all probability, the strike launched from Force H's aircraft carrier succeeded beyond all expectations. A single hit on the *Bismarck's* rudder rendered her helpless and allowed the pursuing Home Fleet to close for the kill. The *Bismarck's* last battle, fought on the morning of 27 May, was anticlimactic. The opening rounds from the British battleship HMS *Rodney* went out at 0847 hours. By 0930 hours, the *Bismarck's* guns were silent and by 1040 hours she had slipped under the waves. With her fire control knocked out early in the battle, and unable to maneuver, the *Bismarck* did not score a single hit.

Throughout the book, the text is clear and concise. In particular, all tactics are explained with a minimum of padding. The maps are valuable and add to the text. However, there are annoying factual glitches which detract from the

book's value. These range from photographs of the Home Fleet being misidentified (p. 54) to the bizarre statement that the Versailles Treaty limited German battleship construction to a maximum of 35,000 tons (the Versailles Treaty actually forbade Germany from having battleships, and since Germany was not a signatory to the Washington or London Naval Treaties, the author is presumably trying to refer to the Anglo-German Naval Accord).

Though possessing no new insights and little critical thought, this book does provide a good overview of the epic events of 18-27 May which saw the brief life of the *Bismarck* come to a close. Those seeking more detail and background are advised to consult one of the many other titles dealing with this subject. *Battleship Bismarck: A Survivor's Story* by the senior surviving officer, Baron Burkard von Müllenheim-Rechberg, is particularly interesting (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1980).

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.22

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The Ethiopian Patriots: Forgotten Voices of the Italo-Abyssinian War, 1935-41. By Andrew Hilton. Stroud: Spellmount, 2007. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Paper. Pp. 192.

The Italo-Abyssinian conflict is a relatively neglected topic in the historiography of the origins and course of the Second World War. Yet Italy's invasion of Abyssinia in October 1935 began the slide that led to another global conflict and dealt the League of Nations a fatal blow. Its ineffectual sanctions were in place from November 1935 to June 1936, lifted after the fall of Addis Ababa to Italian forces, which allowed Mussolini to proclaim victory. In reality, Abyssinian resistance continued as an irritant to the fascist occupiers. Finally, when General Wavell, with Churchill's blessing, elected to send in forces from the Sudan to collaborate with the Abyssinian guerrillas, the end was swift and within three months Emperor Haile Sellassie had been restored to his throne, returning in triumph to his capital exactly five years since Italian forces entered it on 5 May 1936.

Andrew Hilton's welcome contribution to the literature consists of interviews conducted with the survivors from the Abyssinian resistance movement. His study began when he noticed several elderly Abyssinian men dressed in colonial-style uniforms at the emperor's ceremonial funeral in November 2000. He was introduced to the Patriots and soon became fascinated by their tales of a medieval force, armed with spears, sticks, and single-shot rifles bravely attempting to stem the invasion of a modern twentieth century army brisling with artillery, machine guns, tanks, and aircraft. They told him of pitched battles where "bullets showered down like

rain drops," which were no contest. Despite the disparity in equipment, the Patriots determined to fight on.

The Association of Ethiopian Patriots turned out to hold no archives. To record their stories for posterity Hilton, encouraged by noted expert Professor Richard Pankhurst of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa, recruited a history undergraduate, Yonatan Sahle (the son of his taxi driver!) to conduct interviews with veterans. In all, fourteen interviews were conducted in the capital between 2003 and 2004. After they were translated and transcribed into English, Hilton set about making corrections (though he has commendably retained their manner of speaking) and adding notes. The veterans ranged in age from seventy-seven to ninety-one, making this the last opportunity to capture their memories.

To these veterans, the Italian invasion of their homeland was equivalent to the Nazi aggressions that were to follow and their eventual rescue of the same magnitude as the D-Day landings to the liberation of Western Europe. After each incident or battle with the Italian occupying forces, the Patriots would compose chanting songs, several of which are included here. All the veterans were happy to be explicit about their deeds, which accords with the tradition of "boasting ceremonies."

As a non-historian, Hilton enlisted the help of Professor Pankhurst, who contributes a short introduction to contextualize the interviews, and the late Bill Deedes, a young *Morning Post* journalist sent to East Africa in 1935 to cover the war, who wrote the foreword. There is also a useful glossary and note on firearms together with a chronology. Illuminating maps are included and there are sixteen pages of rare photographs culled from the Imperial War Museum, the Bettmann Collection, and the author's collection, which help bring the stories to life. Each interview transcript is preceded with a photograph of the subject.

It would be remiss of this reviewer to recount the often fascinating stories within. What does come across is the unremitting devotion of the Patriots to their emperor, their loathing for the Italians who were seen as selfish colonizers with no benign streak unlike the British, and the absolute determination to continue the struggle notwithstanding the seemingly hopeless odds stacked against them. Had the League of Nations provided modern weapons for the Patriots then the Italian invasion might have been thwarted. As it was, it took the illegal spraying of mustard gas (the effects of which are referred to in grisly detail) to subdue the warriors before survivors took to the hills and mountains to continue the struggle.

A substantial study still needs to be written on the Italo-Abyssinian War and its author would do well to consult this book, a labor of love which contains some fascinating insights into an almost forgotten conflict.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.23

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Holocaust and Justice: Representation & Historiography of the Holocaust in Post-War Trials. Edited by David Bankier and Dan Michman. New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 343.

There was a time in the not so distant past when the only discussion about the Holocaust and justice revolved around the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg. Today Nuremberg is the starting point of the discussion, not an end in itself, which is clearly reflected in *Holocaust and Justice*, a rich and diverse collection of essays that came out of a 2006 conference at Yad Vashem in Israel commemorating the 60th anniversary of the IMT judgment at Nuremberg.

The collection reflects the current state of research on the Holocaust and the post-war trials that followed, and is divided into three sections. Organized chronologically, the book thus begins with six essays on Nuremberg, followed by four on the German post-war trials; it concludes with a section, by far the most varied, on the representation of the Holocaust and Holocaust memory in trials in European countries outside Germany. The essays range widely and draw on a variety of disciplinary approaches including law, history, and film studies. The themes, issues, and arguments that animate the collection will undoubtedly be familiar to many readers: the link between war crimes trials, history, memory, and politics; the role of Nuremberg in the creation of international criminal law; the role of witnesses in trials of the Holocaust; media and public perceptions of the trials and perpetrator criminality; and finally, specific cases of Holocaust trials in the Soviet Union, Belgium, Poland, France, and Italy.

Those familiar with the on-going debate about the purpose of war crimes trials raised most famously by Hannah Arendt who emphatically claimed that a trial's only function is to "render justice and nothing more" will appreciate the editors decision to open the volume with an essay by Lawrence Douglas challenging Arendt's thesis. Since the publication of his book, *The Memory of Judgment: Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), Douglas has consistently and adamantly argued that the role of trials is "didactic" as well as legal; however, what society later does with that knowledge is entirely out of legal hands, and thus the law cannot be blamed for misrepresentations of history.

Katrin Stoll's essay, "Hitler's Unwilling Executioners? The Representation of the Holocaust through the Bielefeld Bialystok Trial of 1965-1967," uses Douglas' thesis as a starting point, arguing that in the case of the Bialystok trial at least, the narrative of the Holocaust was shaped by the law. The evidence the prosecution used to make its case which provides the historical record, was determined by its legal relevance, both in terms of the defendants and their guilt as well as with the Jewish witnesses who were called to testify. Stoll's essay is a thorough and informative case study of the integrated relationship between historical narrative and legal processes in which she convincingly argues the primacy of law in shaping historical

understanding.

Donald Bloxham's essay, "Prosecuting the Past in the Postwar Decade: Political Strategy and National Myth-Making," also takes up where Douglas leaves off. Unlike Stoll, he sees Nuremberg as a didactic failure, not because of some fault with the law, but rather because of the context in which the law operated. The cold war, argues Bloxham, impacted German perceptions of the post-war trials held by the Allies, especially German nationalists who became convinced that the Nuremberg trials were nothing more than arbitrary acts of victor's justice. In other words, Nuremberg, contrary to Douglas and Stoll's claims, ultimately failed to fulfill its reeducative function and convince Germans of the legitimacy of the transgressions committed by those on trial and in fact, generated a myth which lives today: that Nuremberg was illegitimate.

Both Inge Marszolek's essay on German media coverage of the Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz trials and Annette Weinke's essay on German perceptions of the Holocaust stand out as test cases of Douglas and Bloxham's theses about the didactic and reeducative role of trials in German society. Marszolek finds the assumption that Germans did not care about the crimes of the Third Reich or were simply angry about the trials as too simplistic because they do not take into account the post-1945 generation's influence on cultural memory. She also wonders whether perpetrator trials are in fact the right medium for reeducation and what she refers to as self-purging, ultimately calling into question the role of law in remaking post-war German society. As true as this may be, she nonetheless fails to offer an alternative in a society that used the law as a primary way to expose German culpability. Weinke, on the other hand, believes that German public perceptions after the war were fluid, ever changing depending on the political context of the trials themselves. She easily illustrates this in the case of the IMT where the German response to the trial of major war criminals was initially quite positive, shifting only when Germans grew disgruntled with the Allied denazification process and burgeoning cold war. In terms of the value of trials conducted by Germans against Germans the jury is still out, what she is certain of though, is that Holocaust and perpetrator trials are not the only medium by which Germans succeeded or failed to work through the past – what the alternatives are though, she does not say. Rather more important, she believes, is understanding the trials in the political, legal, and cultural framework in which they functioned, and not as ends in and of themselves.

In the final section of the book, Michael Marrus' engaging essay on the role of the French railways in the deportation of French Jews examines the relationship between the law and our historical understanding of the Holocaust in a context outside of Germany – contemporary France. Marrus' focus is on a 2006 legal decision by the French Administrative court in Toulouse in which the court found the French national railway culpable – as a national organization – for their role in deporting French Jews. The actions of the French state during World War II are controversial to this day,

illustrating that the French are, like the Germans, still coming to terms with their own past.

Other major issues come up in *Holocaust and Justice*. Martin Dean makes the important point that it was not only Germans who were responsible for the crimes of the Holocaust. The trial records of the Soviet Union illustrate the degree to which locals collaborated in the European-wide murder project. Arieh Kochavi and Boaz Cohen look at the role of third parties in the preparation and execution of the Nuremberg trial, and Michael Bazyler examines the development of international criminal law, noting that the laws by which perpetrators are judged today had their genesis in the crimes of the Nazis during World War II, especially crimes against humanity. Dieter Pohl considers the role of prosecutors and historians in changing perceptions and understandings of the Holocaust and finally, Paolo Pezaino and Guri Schwarz conclude the volume with an examination into changing Italian perceptions of the German occupation of Rome and how that impacted the place of Jews in the history of Italian fascism and the memory of it.

While possessing some of the same shortcomings as all collections that derive from conferences that take years to publish, *Holocaust and Justice* is still a valuable collection. There are a number of outstanding and engaging essays that draw the reader into the most recent debates about the location and relationship of the Holocaust to the law that was used to hold the perpetrators of atrocities to task and as someone who has read a lot in this field, I still enjoyed reading most of them.

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.5893/19498489.09.01.24

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Call for Papers:
Decision in the Atlantic

17-18 May 2013, King's College London

In the history of warfare, few campaigns have been as long, as complex, or covered as large an area as the Battle of the Atlantic. The contest for Allied maritime communications began on the first day of the war in 1939 and continued until the German surrender in 1945. On the seventieth anniversary of the climax of the battle, this conference aims to draw together international scholarship with a view to highlighting recent approaches to its study and its emerging role in the wider historiography of the war. Where are we today in understanding convoy operations, or the application of air power and intelligence? Although the core theme is the turning point in the spring of 1943, papers dealing with broader issues like logistics, economic aspects, agriculture and industry, maritime communications, and grand strategy are encouraged. Equally important is the human experience, the weather, morale, the impact on the home front, and the role of ports and internal transport.

Paper proposals should be submitted by **15 December 2012** along with an abstract and curriculum vitae to the conference organizers: Marcus Faulkner, (marcus.s.faulkner@kcl.ac.uk); Malcolm Llewellyn-Jones, the Society for Nautical Research (malcolm.llewellynjones@btinternet.com); Robert von Maier, *Global War Studies* (globalwarstudies@gmail.com). Attendance for presenters will be free and it is planned to publish the conference proceedings in due course.

Call for Papers:
1944: Seventy Years On

14-17 April 2014, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

Global War Studies and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst are pleased to announce an international conference on the Second World War with 1944 as the core theme. The conference seeks to promote an interdisciplinary and international study of the period 1919-1945 by means of drawing upon the latest scholarship from a variety of disciplines. Papers dealing with one or more of the following topics are welcome and while 1944 is the focus, papers covering other periods or taking thematic approaches are also encouraged.

Military Operations / Naval Warfare / Air Power / Intelligence / Homefront
Alliance Politics / The Holocaust / Neutral States / Theaters of War
Economics / Grand Strategy / Mobilization / Industry
Displaced Persons / Prisoners of War / Science & Technology

Paper proposals should be submitted by **15 March 2013** along with an abstract and curriculum vitae. Panel proposals are welcome and should include a brief description of the panel's theme. Submissions and queries should be addressed to: Robert von Maier (globalwarstudies@gmail.com) and Marcus Faulkner (marcus.s.faulkner@kcl.ac.uk) respectively. Additional details, including registration and accommodation, will be available soon. It is planned to publish the conference proceedings in due course.

Global War Studies: The Journal for the Study of Warfare and Weapons, 1919-1945
ISSN 1949-8489