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The Advent, Evolution, and Value of British Specialist Formations in the Desert War, 1940-43

ANDREW L. HARGREAVES

ABSTRACT

The strategic and geographical conditions confronting Britain during the Desert War presented a uniquely apposite forum for experimentation with, and exploitation of, small, highly specialized, heterodox bodies seeking to independently raid, harass, and perform reconnaissance. This article examines how and why formations such as the Long Range Desert Group, Special Air Service, or Popski's Private Army arose and developed; charting the nature of their operations; addressing the complicated manner of their command and control; and assessing their impact and value. In performing such an analysis, the article highlights a clear innovatory and evolutionary process: what, in 1940-41, was a fundamentally new form of almost piratical warfare waged by an eclectic range of outwardly freebooting "private armies" had, by the start of 1943, become a legitimate and well-regarded ancillary to conventional operations undertaken by increasingly professional and well-directed special forces. Overcoming a multitude of evolutionary hurdles, Britain was ultimately able to develop a workable concept of special operations and thus began to reap broadly disproportionate rewards aiding the prosecution of their main campaign. By 1943, the most flexible and successful of these irregular groupings had transcended the stigma of the "private army" to become the progenitors of modern special forces units.

KEYWORDS

Desert War; Egypt; Libya; Tunisia; Middle East; North Africa; Special Forces; special operations; private armies; intelligence; Ultra; espionage; reconnaissance; raids; raiding forces; topographical survey; Command and Control; Operation CRUSADER; Operation "Agreement" (Tobruk raid); Operation "Flipper" (Rommel raid); Special Operations Executive (SOE); Special Air Service (SAS); Long Range Desert Group (LRDG);

Layforce; British Army Commandos; 1st Special Boat Squadron (SBS); Special Interrogation Group (SIG); Secret Intelligence Service (SIS); MI9; Libyan Arab Force (LAF); Popski's Private Army (PPA); Indian Long Range Squadron (ILRS); Wavell, General Archibald; Auchinleck, General Claude; Rommel, Field Marshal Erwin; Graziani, Marshal Rodolfo; Bagnold, Ralph; Wingate, Orde; Stirling, David; Peniakoff, Vladimir ("Popski")

Introduction

Special forces, or Special Operations Forces (SOF), are today generally well-regarded, understood, and arguably indispensable components of modern military force structures. Though historically complex, the principal foundations, in both theory and practice, for the modern conception of these units lie within the 1939-1945 experience.¹ The Second World War was the nursery of modern special forces and, for Britain, the Desert War was the cradle. The campaign waged between 1940 and 1943 in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia bore witness to the advent and steady proliferation of various unorthodox bodies. Although in terms of composition, methods, and outlook there could be notable diversity between the individual heterodox units "born of the desert," there was, nevertheless, certain uniform characteristics to each that, in many regards, remain cornerstones of the special forces genus of military formation. Proportionately small in establishment, these formations comprised specially selected volunteers led by dynamic and innovative, albeit often unconventional, characters. Each of these units trained in a curriculum foreign to conventional units, and placed a premium on individual initiative and rigorous planning. Each of these bodies sought to conduct a diverse range of operations, in uniform and at depth, which, in broad terms, fell beyond the capabilities of existent, conventionally organized, trained and equipped formations.

In their larval forms, such nascent groupings were commonly regarded, with almost equal parts derision and romanticism, as "private armies": esoteric rubric for which terms of the likes of "funnies" or "mobs for jobs" on occasions served as substitute. Though the connotations of such terms are often negative, such descriptions do, nevertheless, provide quite apt description for Britain's early, and somewhat *ad*

1. It would be quite erroneous to assume, however, that during the Second World War the term "special forces" was widely used, clearly defined, or broadly understood. Those units which today might be regarded as SOF came, during the war, under an eclectic range of titles including, but not limited to: raiding forces, long range patrols, commandos, guerrillas, rangers, saboteurs, scouts, raiders, special service troops, and private armies.

hoc, forays into irregular units during the Second World War. From such humble beginnings dominated by adventurous youths and gifted amateurs, however, something much more prominent evolved. Over the course of less than two-and-a-half years of campaigning, the more successful of the irregular units which had arisen in theatre had evolved in establishment, utility, professionalism, and effectiveness. By the time the Allied armies had reached Tunis, a practical concept of military special operations had developed and those units charged with the conduct of such work had transcended the "private army" stigma to gain a margin of institutional legitimacy and acceptance. By the start of 1943, the most versatile, widely employed, and successful of these units would win clear, albeit not necessarily permanent, positions in the Allied force structures for future campaigns. A definable genre of military formation had emerged which, in both direct and more abstruse terms, represented the lineal forebears of modern special forces. This article serves to address this process of evolution.

The Route Towards Unconventional Means

At the outbreak of the Second World War Britain was, like so many other nations, both quantitatively and qualitatively militarily deficient. In both physical and intellectual terms, Britain was under pressure to swiftly mobilize to cater for the exigencies and complexities of the unfurling total war. It was such an atmosphere which promoted Britain, from the summer of 1940 onwards, to swiftly exploit individual innovation and enterprise and embrace the development of units and organizations to undertake raiding, sabotage, subversion, espionage, propaganda, and special operations. Even the most fleeting glance at military history from the Sixteenth Century onwards reveals that such areas were nothing new for the British who had regularly exhibited a cultural familiarity with, or amiability towards, the use of irregular methods and the exploitation of the periphery. An examination of the activities and campaigns of the likes of Sir Francis Drake, General James Wolfe, Lord Thomas Cochrane, or T.E. Lawrence would alone be sufficient to serve as evidence of a historical cultural proclivity towards irregular action, raids, and the employment of the "indirect approach." As General Sir John Hackett, who as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Desert War would command Britain's first dedicated special operations command, commented:

The British way in war is not that of continental nations, whose natural tendency is generally towards massive frontal action. It lies more in looking for the open flank and then making use of it, often by distant action and deep penetration. The British method lies predominantly in the oblique approach, in going round or under or over whatever stands in the way, whether in

terms of physical obstruction or military forces.²

Even given their relatively recent experiences of (both practicing and being targeted by) unconventional operations in the likes of the Boer War, the Arab Revolt, the "troubles" in Ireland, the long history of campaigns on the Northwest Frontier, or the Palestinian revolt of the 1930's, Britain would enter the Second World War with no real doctrines or organizations in place for the conduct of irregular operations.³ In spite of their legacy of irregular action, the pace and extent of Britain's proliferation and exploitation of irregular groupings and organizations during the early stages of the Second World War would, in historical terms, be quite unprecedented.

Within only a proportionately short space of time following the outbreak of the Second World War, Britain began to embark upon the development of various irregular solutions to the exigencies which it suddenly faced. The most notable catalyst for the development of such approaches was the continental exclusion following defeat in France and the Low Countries. Within weeks of the Dunkirk evacuation, Britain's new Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, would provide clear illustration of a continued British enthusiasm for the unconventional when he authorized the creation of both the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the Army Commandos in an effort to wrest back the strategic initiative from a triumphant enemy.

The creation of wartime irregular units was so often spurred on by exigency and desperation: they would arise as a result of real, or imagined, weaknesses and limitations with the application of conventional means. In their creation, Plato's tenet that "necessity ... is the mother of all invention" certainly held weight. The reverses of Narvik, Dunkirk, and Greece (and later, Crete, Tobruk, and Singapore) would reinforce all too vividly in many minds the spectre of the Somme or Passchendaele. Specialist formations, small bands of specially selected men willing to take great risks for low outlay, thus became a naturally attractive tonic for conventional inactivity or impotence: they offered a proportionately cost-effective means of gaining broadly disproportionate results; they

2. General Sir John Hackett in foreword to David Lloyd Owen, *Providence Their Guide: The Long Range Desert Group, 1940-45* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2001).

3. The only real exception to this was the work of the small branches of GS(R) (later known as MI(R)) of the War Office and Section D of the SIS. Both branches had been formed in 1938 with loose mandates to investigate and prepare for guerrilla warfare and sabotage operations. Upon the outbreak of war, both branches undertook some tentative steps towards putting such theories into practice, but both were soon to become amalgamated into the Special Operations Executive upon its creation in June 1940. For a good summary of the work of these departments, see: William Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE: Special Operations Executive 1940-1945* (London: St. Ermin's Press, 2002).

offered the potential to undertake operations and strike at targets otherwise inaccessible or impractical for conventional formations given limitations of time and space; they offered a mechanism of regaining the strategic initiative and, by successful action, could personalize conflict, create heroes, and represent a glimmer of hope in an otherwise bleak looking period.

Another common theme in the inception of these formations was the initiative and driving force provided by individual innovatory actors. Often a relatively junior officer, an "errant captain," these individuals not only conceived of the original idea for a unit, but also so often subsequently proved instrumental in both orchestrating its establishment and in directing its operations in the field. As Hackett would observe:

It is often the appearance of the unusual person on the scene which causes the opportunity or the requirement to be first recognised. It is his own proposals which are often seen to be the best (and sometimes the only) way of doing what ought to be done and if he is the best person available to take charge (as he is sometimes the only one) the project is likely to be handled in the way he proposes. This is often how private armies are born.⁴

Regardless of however innovative the scheme of an "errant captain," or however persuasive his character, little would come of such ideas were it not for support within the higher echelons of command. Without such backing, these innovative individuals would be unable to surmount the obstacles of orthodoxy. Behind the establishment of every specialist formation there was thus a "champion": a sympathetic, or equally unconventional, senior officer who was well-positioned both to lift the "red tape" to establish units in the first instance and, subsequently, provide backing and patronage in the field. These patterns of expediency, "errant captain," and "champion" are evident in the creation of practically every British specialist force raised during the Second World War.

Bagnold's Long Range Patrols

In the summer of 1940, in the very same climate of desperation sweeping Whitehall following Dunkirk, General Archibald Wavell, Commander-in-Chief Middle East, faced with rapidly changing strategic circumstances, was both willing and able to serve as "champion" for the first (and arguably most successful) of Britain's wartime special forces. The man, the "errant captain," responsible for the creation of this force was Major Ralph Bagnold of the Royal Signals. Prior to the war, Bagnold had been an avid traveller of the Libyan Desert and was a prominent

4. Lieutenant-General Sir John W. Hackett in foreword to Otto Heilbrunn, *Warfare in the Enemy's Rear* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), p. 9.

member of the "Zerzura club" of explorers. Bagnold's desert expeditions, occurring from 1927 onwards, had furnished him with a virtually unrivalled expertise in the travel and negotiation of deserts and had fostered within him an almost pathological interest in the physics of sand.⁵ In 1939, whilst serving with the 7th Armoured Division in the Middle East, Bagnold would draw upon his pre-war expertise when considering the military potential for small forces working in depth across the desert. Whilst many regarded the southern desert flanks of Cyrenaica as impassable, Bagnold understood what a potentially fertile environment the Libyan Desert might provide for the operation of small-scale autonomous long-range desert patrols with a raiding and intelligence gathering mandate.

Working up his concepts into a proposal, which he admitted were something of a revival of the ideas behind the Light Car Patrols that had been used against the Senussi Arabs in 1915, Bagnold would twice submit these to GOC 7th Armoured Division. In November 1939, the ideas were presented to Major General Percy Hobart and, subsequently, in January 1940, to his successor, Major General O'Moore Creagh.⁶ On both occasions, however, Bagnold's proposals were rejected as being premature at a time when Mussolini, though sabre rattling, had yet to reveal his intentions.⁷ The scheme not only appeared to be an unwarranted drain on the scarce manpower and material resources in theatre, but there was further concern that such programs might provoke Italy into decision. A notable margin of scepticism about the potential efficiency of Bagnold's scheme was also evident at this time: the type of enterprise being proposed was quite unprecedented and few minds could grasp the potential for a unit operating across the inhospitable vastness of the inner Libyan Desert.⁸

The Italian declaration of war in June 1940 was the catalyst for the ac-

5. Saul Kelly, *The Hunt for Zerzura: The Lost Oasis and the Desert War* (London: John Murray, 2002), p. 136.

6. Ralph A. Bagnold, *Sand, Wind and War: Memoirs of a Desert Explorer* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1990).

7. When Bagnold's proposal was submitted, General Hobart (himself often regarded as being something of a military "maverick") was impressed and forwarded the scheme to GHQ who would subsequently reject it. That this occurred is illustrative of the fact that the presence of an "errant captain" with an idea (Bagnold) and an innovative and unorthodox senior officer willing to serve as "champion" (Hobart) was not itself enough to warrant the inception of a specialist formation. Exigency or great opportunity was an essential ingredient in propelling acceptance. Neither factor was present in sufficient quantities whilst Italy remained neutral. LRDG War Diary and Narrative – Chapter I "Formation of the Long Range Patrol – Organisation and activities up to September 1st, 1940," The National Archives: Public Records Office [Hereafter TNA:PRO] WO 201/807.

8. Robin Jenner, David List, and Mike Badrocke, *The Long Range Desert Group 1940-1945* (Oxford: Osprey, 1999), p. 5; Owen, *Providence Their Guide*, p. 7.

ceptance of Bagnold's proposals. With Italy as a belligerent, the strategic landscape had dramatically altered: 30,000 British personnel in Egypt were suddenly facing some 350,000 Italians, whilst in the Sudan some 2,500 British and 4,800 Sudanese confronted some 250,000.⁹ Exacerbating this precarious situation was the fact that the British remained broadly in the dark about Italian operational capabilities and intentions. Bagnold's scheme offered General Wavell a potentially valuable solution to two pressing problems: physical weakness and intelligence shortcomings.

The archetypal soldier-scholar, Wavell was perhaps uniquely amenable and positioned to serve as a "champion" for Bagnold's scheme. During the interwar period, not only had Wavell had various correspondence with the likes of T.E. Lawrence, Basil Liddell Hart, and J.F.C. Fuller on such ideas as a "motor guerrilla" which would "gather information and harass the enemy's rear elements," but he had also experienced irregular warfare firsthand during the Arab revolt in Palestine.¹⁰ Furthermore, he had personal experience of giving license to unorthodox personalities and granting such characters a degree of latitude for irregular schemes. In 1938 whilst serving as British commander in Palestine, Wavell had granted Captain Orde Wingate (later of Chindit infamy) permission to form his British-Jewish Special Night Squads – an effective unconventional solution to the problems of Arab guerrilla raids.¹¹ Given the difficult situation which Wavell faced in the summer of 1940, Bagnold's idea, which greatly appealed to his "imagination and love of the unorthodox," was naturally attractive.¹² Meeting with Wavell only thirteen days after the Italian declaration of war, Bagnold would come away with an enthusiastic *carte blanche* for his scheme. Even given the exigency of the situation, it remains a fair assertion that this would not have occurred without both Bagnold's "driving power and importunity" for his concept and for Wavell's patronage and willingness to support Bagnold in the

9. Henry Maule, *Out of the Sand: The Epic Story of General Leclerc and the Fighting Free French* (London: Odhams Books, 1966), p. 84.

10. Harold E. Raugh, *Wavell in the Middle East 1939-1941: A Study in Generalship* (London: Brassey's, 1993), p. 22; Ronald Lewin, *The Chief: Field Marshal Lord Wavell* (London: Hutchinson, 1980); Robert Woollcombe, *The Campaigns of Wavell 1939-1943* (London: Cassell, 1959).

11. Wavell continued to have a massive sway on Wingate's career. In both late-1940 in the Middle East and later, in early-1942, in the Far East, Wavell would personally summon Wingate to serve as his "expert in guerrilla operations." David Rooney, *Wingate and the Chindits: Redressing the Balance* (London: Arms and Armour, 1994), p. 34; Shelford Bidwell, *The Chindit War: The Campaign in Burma 1944* (London: Book Club Associates, 1979), p. 25.

12. I.S.O. Playfair, *History of WWII: The Mediterranean & Middle East*, vol. I, *The Early Successes Against Italy* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954), p. 295.

face of his own crippling shortages of personnel and equipment.¹³

Bagnold had only a short space of time in which to recruit and prepare his force (now known as the Long Range Patrols) for operations. Following a margin of diplomatic debate, it had been arranged that Bagnold's first cohort of recruits would be drawn from volunteers of the New Zealand Division. These personnel would be formed around, and directed by, an experienced nucleus of personnel which Bagnold had assembled from his assorted collection of pre-war friends and colleagues such as Pat Clayton, Bill Kennedy Shaw, and (later) Guy Prendergast.¹⁴ By September 1940, an HQ and three operational patrols had been created, each comprising two officers and twenty-five men operating in eleven vehicles.

The Long Range Patrols were created with the dual intention of fulfilling two immediate goals: the monitoring of Italian intentions and capabilities, and the harassment of enemy forces via "piracy."¹⁵ In the summer of 1940, there were notable intelligence shortcomings about Italian dispositions and strategy in southern Libya: high-grade signals intelligence had been impeded by recent changes in Italian service ciphers;¹⁶ appeasement and a lack of funding had left few agents in place for espionage; whilst photo-reconnaissance aircraft were in short supply and of insufficient quality for the rigors of desert work.¹⁷ Bagnold's Long Range Patrols led by experienced, or well-trained, desert travellers and each equipped to be capable of twenty-days, or 1,500 miles, of self-sufficient travel across hostile desert terrain offered a unique solution to this deficiency: providing a human intelligence means of examining enemy movements and dispositions.¹⁸ In tandem with this mandate for intelligence gathering and surveillance, these early Patrols were to also act offensively and harass far-flung Italian outposts. Such tasks, it was hoped, would help deceive the Italians to Wavell's strength and intentions and coerce Marshal Graziani into withdrawing some of this strength "away from the coastal region to the defence of scattered garrisons in the deep interior."¹⁹

By September 1940, following a couple of instructional patrols under-

13. W.B. Kennedy Shaw, *Long Range Desert Group: The Story of its Work in Libya, 1940-1943* (London: Collins, 1945), p. 27.

14. Kelly, *The Hunt for Zerzura*, p. 136.

15. Bagnold, *Sand, Wind and War*, pp. 123-24.

16. F.H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 1, *Its Influence on Strategy and Operations* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1979), p. 375.

17. Jenner, *et. al.*, *The Long Range Desert Group*, p. 6; Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, pp. 60-61; Wynter, *Special Forces in the Desert War*, p. 19.

18. The range of these patrols could be extended to over 3,500 miles given the existence of pre-positioned petrol and supply dumps.

19. Woolcombe, *The Campaigns of Wavell*, p. 22.

taken in August for training and acclimatization purposes, the first Patrols were ready for deployment. The immediate priority for the first operations was the undertaking of reconnaissances of the areas surrounding the Italian garrisons of Kufra and Uweinat positioned some 600 and 700 miles, respectively, south-west of Cairo. These Italian-held oases were known to be garrisoned by desert-capable formations (notably the Auto Saharan Company) and both were understood to possess a number of aircraft. It was feared that from these positions Graziani might launch a number of strategically-dangerous attacks: an Italian move east towards Wadi Halfa might threaten to sever the Egypt-Sudan lifeline; a move west could see strikes directed against French-controlled Chad; and movements north across the Great Sand Sea would enable the more direct harassment of British forces in Egypt.²⁰ The Long Range Patrols would be used as a mechanism to remove ambiguity surrounding Italian capabilities in the interior of Libya and help ascertain whether the Italians were planning any such offensive forays from these areas.

Departing from Cairo, the Long Range Patrols independently traversed the Great Sand Sea to reach their areas of operations around Kufra and Uweinat. Upon arrival, the patrols began to gather intelligence in a variety of ways: they inserted indigenous Arab agents (whom at this early stage were often "recruited" from pre-war personal acquaintances of Bagnold and Co.) to report on enemy dispositions in the oases; they examined the routes and traffic in the areas surrounding these garrisons to ascertain volumes and type of vehicles departing and arriving; and patrols more actively undertook some small-scale ambushes with the object of capturing prisoners and seizing official mail. In each of these operations, Bagnold's force would prove their worth. The Long Range Patrols had swiftly accomplished their primary mission and were able to confirm what other intelligence sources had been suggesting: that the Italians lacked any real offensive motivations in southern Libya.²¹

Having allayed Wavell's initial fears, from October 1940 the Patrols began to direct their efforts towards the conduct of minor harassment and "piracy" against enemy stores, facilities, and unattended airfields.²² The Patrols mined tracks, ambushed convoys, sabotaged aircraft, and airfield equipment, and blew up supply dumps; generally terrorizing, with good effect, the remote Italian garrisons. The results of these actions are generally regarded to have been of notable value in draining Italian morale and promoting the enemy's reinforcement of a strategic backwater. The Italians were forced to instigate a convoy system of movements

20. R.L. Kay, *Long Range Desert Group in Libya, 1940-1941* (Wellington, New Zealand: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1949), p. 4.

21. Wynter, *Special Forces in the Desert War*, p. 17.

22. Shaw, *Long Range Desert Group*, p. 42.

from one oasis to another; the garrisons themselves were reinforced and a system of daily aerial and overland patrols was instigated over a wide area. Such a diversion of effort and matériel to the interior was to the detriment to Italian efforts on the main battlefields in the north.²³ In both offensive and intelligence-gathering activities, these first Long Range Patrols had proven the potential efficacy of a small, flexible, well-trained, and sensibly-directed unit working in depth. Albeit in a rather *ad hoc* fashion, Bagnold's force had set a number of precedents for the conduct of future special operations.

The Long Range Desert Group (LRDG)

Only three months after Bagnold's proposal had been accepted by Wavell, the Long Range Patrols had met with tangible success and had thus carved a clear niche for themselves. Bagnold's scheme had been brought to fruition and, with little change, had laid out many of the fundamental principles for a small force operating at depth in the desert. LRDG patrol commander (and later CO of the unit) David Lloyd Owen would praise Bagnold for having established the fundamental principles for desert travel which, he believed, were equally applicable for "any small behind-the-line force." Owen believed these four tenets to be: "the most careful and detailed planning, first-class equipment, a sound and simple communications system and a human element of rare quality."²⁴ In the immediate wake of Bagnold's early successes there followed plans to expand both the size of his unit's establishment and the scope of their operations. There is no better illustration of the value attributed to these early operations than the alacrity with which GHQ MEF (General Headquarters, Middle East Forces) pressed for the expansion of the Long Range Patrol concept. Even before the first Patrols had returned to Cairo, Bagnold had been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and was instructed to double the size of his command by raising three more operational patrols. The expanded force would become the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) and, as a result of some early reticence from New Zealand authorities, recruiting for the additional patrols began from Guards, Yeomanry, and Southern Rhodesian regiments.

The creation of the LRDG was not, however, the end of more ambitious schemes for the expansion of Bagnold's concept. In October 1940, as the Long Range Patrols were being expanded, Major Orde Wingate arrived in theatre at the bequest of Wavell. Already something of an expert in guerrilla warfare, upon his arrival Wingate brought with him an

23. Bagnold, *Sand, Wind and War*, p. 125; General Wavell to Ralph Bagnold, 1 October 1940, TNA: PRO WO 201/807.

24. Owen, *Providence Their Guide*, p. 5; Account of origins of the LRDG, Imperial War Museum, London, Papers of David Lloyd Owen, PP/MCR/C13, Reel 4.

idea of using the LRDG to serve as a nucleus for a "fully mechanised desert force" of divisional strength which, supported by organic reconnaissance and strike aircraft, would utilize highly mobile columns for the conduct of ambitious strokes across southern Libya.²⁵ Wingate's scheme, which included various themes later brought to fruition in his actions both in the Sudan and Burma, was, however, widely impracticable and failed to recognize the precarious manpower and resources situation in theatre; the physical and logistical limitations of operating in the desert; or the significance of keeping operations to a small scale, a central tenet of special operations success. In spite of such clear limitations, Bagnold was, nevertheless, taken by some aspects of Wingate's idea and accordingly outlined a "Modified Wingate" in which he envisioned the LRDG becoming expanded into a self-supporting brigade, or "Desert Striking Force," possessing (in much smaller numbers than Wingate had proposed) its own organic artillery, light armour, infantry, and close air support.²⁶ Although more realistic and informed than Wingate's original concept, in 1940 such a proposal remained fanciful.²⁷ Very little would directly come from such schemes aside from some tactical trials whereby the LRDG would experiment with the employment of a handful of light tanks and low-calibre guns and, with more success, two light aircraft which the unit retained as their own "private airforce" used for liaison and reconnaissance.

Even before the new patrols of the LRDG had been raised and trained (they were all ready for operations by February 1941), the existing patrols continued undertaking reconnaissance and harassment raids and also began to work in a liaison capacity with Free French Forces in Chad. In November 1940, a patrol reached the Fezzan and the decision was made to undertake a number of combined LRDG-French operations against isolated Italian outposts. In January 1941, the Italian fort of Murzuk in the Fezzan was attacked and captured by a combined force, and in March patrols were employed as an advance guard for Colonel Leclerc's capture of the Kufra Oasis.²⁸

25. Rooney, *Wingate and the Chindits*, p. 48.

26. Major Ralph Bagnold, "Modified Wingate Scheme," 30 October 1940, TNA: PRO WO 201/807; Memorandum by Major Ralph Bagnold, 22 December 1940, TNA: PRO WO 201/808.

27. It was, however, clearly possible for Brigade-sized formations to operate at depth in the desert. In November 1941, for example, Brigadier Reid's "Force E," comprised of a battalion of 2nd Punjab Regiment, the 6th South African Armoured Car Regiment, and some Field and Anti-Aircraft gunners, seized in a manner analogous to Leclerc's attack on Kufra, the Oasis of Jalo in cooperation with the LRDG. From this position, Reid would undertake a number of larger operations. There was, nevertheless, a wealth of difference between such acts and the depth and nature of special operations conducted by irregular formations. Owen, *Providence Their Guide*, p. 69.

28. Maule, *Out of the Sand*, p. 83; Long Range Desert Group: War Diary and Narrative,

Alongside raids and reconnaissance, in late-1940 patrols also began to gather topographical intelligence, undertaking surveys of the conditions, or "going," of the terrain to the south and west of the main coastal regions. The patrols were asked to examine the potential for operational-level mechanized manoeuvre across such areas and make note of any potential locations for the establishment of dumps and airstrips. Such activities would be of notable importance, and would reap early benefits when such LRDG surveys, alongside reports originating from low-flying RAF aircraft, helped provide General O'Connor with sufficient topographical information to embolden his decision to thrust south-westwards across the desert to Msus – a move which led, on 5 February 1941, to the greatly successful battle of Beda Fomm that ejected the Italians from Cyrenaica.²⁹

With the front advancing towards the Cyrenaican border, the decision was taken to transfer LRDG "A" Squadron (comprising the New Zealand patrols) to Kufra which, it was hoped, they could use as an advanced staging post for future operations in depth. The situation of the summer of 1941 would, however, prove to be a frustrating one for the LRDG. Diminished fuel stocks at Kufra (supplying formations in inner Libya was a logistical nightmare) limited LRDG work in depth, whilst an absence of available personnel to garrison the newly-captured oasis ensured that to the LRDG men fell the onerous task of defensive duties. The situation did not begin to improve until August by which time dumps had been built up and the Sudan Defence Force had arrived to garrison the oasis. "B" Squadron (comprising the Guards, Yeomanry, and Rhodesian Patrols), meanwhile, was having an equally frustrating time having been dispatched to Siwa to undertake operations in closer proximity to the field formations of Western Desert Force. The Squadron would be employed primarily in short-range reconnaissance tasks, activities for which the men were broadly ill-equipped and would have been better performed by regularly constituted reconnaissance units.³⁰

Such relative misuse and disuse of the LRDG in the summer of 1941 was, however, perhaps to be expected: the unit was still a new proposition and the depth at which they sought to operate and the tasks they sought to conduct were, at this stage of the campaign, still quite unprecedented. It was only natural that it would take time, and a period of trial and error, before the best manner for the employment of such units was

December 1940 – March 1941, TNA: PRO WO 201/808; Brendan O'Carroll, *Bearded Brigands: The Diaries of Trooper Frank Joplin* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2002), p. 10; Bagnold, *Sand, Wind and War*, p. 138.

29. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, pp. 63-64.

30. LRDG trucks were of little match for German armored cars, which they were likely to come up against in such undertakings.

fully appreciated. In the mean time, such proportionate misapplication served to be educational. Representations were made to GHQ to try and prevent such misapplication of the LRDG from happening again, and General Auckinleck "went out of his way to assure me [Bagnold] that he would personally see that the unit wasn't mishandled and that we could count on him as a friend."³¹ As David Lloyd Owen would reflect "... everyone learnt some excellent lessons from all this, and the LRDG were seldom again used on tasks best carried out by reconnaissance aircraft or by armoured cars."³²

At the end of July 1941, and in lieu of some of the more ambitious schemes to expand the LRDG as had been aired by the likes of Wingate etc., it was decided to promote Bagnold to Colonel and appoint him to the position of "Inspector of Desert Troops" at GHQ MEF with a mandate to investigate the potential of forming upwards of five more LRDG-equivalent units for operations in the African and Syrian deserts.³³ At such a time the strategic situation was broadly supportive of such expansionist plans: the arrival of the *Afrika Korps* and Rommel's first offensive had dramatically altered the strategic climate. A new wave of exigency would mix with great opportunity for irregular means: in the summer of 1941 enemy lines of communication stretched invitingly over 900 miles from Tripoli to Sollum, a tempting target for even the most conventionally-minded staff officer. The ambitious plans for LRDG expansion were, however, soon dashed as GHQ simply "had no clear idea of how the necessary troops and equipment were to be found."³⁴ This initiative itself would only directly result in the creation of one formation: the Indian Long Range Squadron (ILRS). Created in late-1941 from volunteers from Indian cavalry regiments, the ILRS was trained by LRDG personnel in the expectation of undertaking LRDG-style operations for Persia and Iraq Command (PAIC). With little of such work available in PAIC, however, the ILRS was soon transferred to the Libyan Desert and placed under broader LRDG control.³⁵

After their "wasted summer," and with the changes brought about by both Wavell's departure in June and the creation of Eighth Army in September 1941, the LRDG began to be heavily directed towards intelligence gathering. Under direction of both GHQ MEF and Eighth Army Intelligence Branches, the Group were "charged with the conveyance of

31. Ralph Bagnold to Guy Prendergast, 24 September 1941, TNA: PRO WO 201/810.

32. Owen, *Providence Their Guide*, p. 46.

33. Long Range Desert Group: War Diary and Narrative, April-August 1941, TNA: PRO WO 201/809.

34. Brigadier H.W. Wynter, *History of the Long Range Desert Group in the Middle East, 1940-1943*, TNA: PRO CAB 44/151.

35. Major W. McCoy, Commanding Officer, Indian Long Range Squadron, Report on deployments, 5 June 1943, TNA: PRO WO 201/797.

agents to the interior of Cyrenaica, and the collection of their reports, and with gathering geographical information about the country south of the Jebel-el-Akhdar."³⁶ Furthermore, Lieutenant Colonel Guy L. Prendergast, Bagnold's replacement as CO LRDG, was given a loose mandate which dictated that "except when he had orders from GHQ for a specific operation, he was to use his own initiative in supplying intelligence" in broad areas around the oases of Zella, Marada, and Jalo.³⁷ At this time, structured raiding would temporarily cease and offensive action, or "piracy," would only be conducted against "targets of opportunity."

From August 1941, the Group was also directed to pay increased attention to its topographical survey and reporting capabilities.³⁸ Prior to the outbreak of war, little was known about the uncharted terrain west of the Egyptian Frontier; the best maps available were Italian pre-war sketched maps of a 1/400,000 scale that left much to be desired.³⁹ In light of the depth of their operations, their nucleus of pre-war experts, and their ever-increasing body of newly-experienced desert travellers, the LRDG uniquely had both the means and opportunity to rectify this situation and provide topographical, geographical, and demographic intelligence. To best attain such results, it was decided to stiffen the Group with the permanent attachment of other specialists, such as officers from Egyptian Desert Survey and topographical draughtsmen, who could train all ranks in such work, as well as undertake their own dedicated survey patrols. Gradually, it became expected that every regular LRDG patrol would, upon returning to friendly lines, provide detailed reports on the topography, demographics, and "going" encountered on their expeditions.⁴⁰ By the end of October 1941, such initiatives began to result in the production of more accurate maps, and a dedicated staff section of GHQ Middle East, known as General Staff Intelligence (Topographical), had been created to help collate all such reports and maintain and update a "master map" and help disseminate such information army-wide.⁴¹ Though such activities did not perhaps result in the most glamorous or daring of exploits, the value of such topographical intelligence should not be neglected. Such information was in genuinely short supply and would be quite essential both in the formulation of operational plans of manoeuvre and to future logistical calculations.⁴²

36. Wynter, *Special Forces in the Desert War*, p. 62.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

38. GHQ MEF to Ralph Bagnold, 10 July 1941, TNA: PRO WO 201/754; Long Range Desert Group: War Diary and Narrative, September 1940, TNA: PRO WO 201/807.

39. Shaw, *Long Range Desert Group*, p. 25.

40. Wynter, *Special Forces in the Desert War*, pp. 68-69.

41. Shaw, *Long Range Desert Group*, p. 26.

42. Wynter, *Special Forces in the Desert War*, p. 69.

Gradually, the LRDG was becoming increasingly well-integrated into the requirements and objectives of the main campaign. In late-1941 with the CRUSADER offensive in the offing, the LRDG was given more specific tasks to observe and report enemy movements in the rear areas. In September, "S" Patrol was ordered to observe the main coastal road (the Via Balbia) along which all Axis reinforcement and supply from Tripoli to Benghazi had to pass, and report all traffic seen. Establishing a static observation post slightly west of El Agheila, near the "Marble Arch" monument, this patrol observed the road and recorded all movements, night and day, for a continual period of 168 hours.⁴³ The resulting traffic census was quite exhaustive and the intelligence potential of the exercise was evident. In October the exercise was again repeated with equally beneficial results. Such work, soon to become known as the "road watch," was later taken to a very high pitch and for much of 1942 was virtually the *raison d'être* of the Group.

As CRUSADER got underway, the majority of the LRDG was positioned in the enemy's rear areas with a mandate to "observe enemy reactions" to any British offensive.⁴⁴ As the offensive faltered, however, the patrols found that they had little to report and, with the relief of Tobruk at hand, the Group was thus ordered to substitute their intelligence mandate with an offensive one. On 24 November, Eighth Army ordered that the patrols were "to act with the utmost vigour offensively against any enemy targets or communications within reach."⁴⁵ In the undertaking of such aggressive activities in support of the CRUSADER offensive, the LRDG shared a role with another nascent "private army" making their debut.

Enter the Special Air Service (SAS)

Although those former efforts to directly expand the LRDG had been thwarted because of the realities of the manpower shortages etc. in theatre, the broader enthusiasm towards special operations and the proliferation of irregular bodies had not been curtailed. The continued successes of the LRDG had created a definite climate of acceptability towards irregular ideas and independent formations; and the Group's work would thus provide obvious fillip for the establishment of other irregular units. It was in such an atmosphere that GHQ MEF was willing to give another "errant captain" license for another "private army." The story of the creation of what would become one of the world's most famous special forces, the Special Air Service (SAS), is a topic of seemingly never-failing popular interest and has been exhaustively covered in much re-

43. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

44. Shaw, *Long Range Desert Group*, p. 111.

45. Wynter, *Special Forces in the Desert War*, p. 99.

cent literature directed towards clarifying events and debunking myths.⁴⁶ There is little cause to regurgitate such debates here, however, and it is sufficient merely to sketch the main influences and factors of the unit's inception.

Although the SAS would develop in the wake of successes attained by the LRDG and in an environment broadly supportive of irregular enterprise, the more precise root causes for the creation of the SAS stemmed from perceived inadequacies with the establishment and use of Commando formations in theatre. The British Army Commandos had been created in the summer of 1940 with the broad intention of serving as amphibious hit-and-run raiding forces. Although many of the early Commando operations from Britain had been sporadic and broadly unsuccessful, it was hoped that the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern theatre would prove a perfect forum for hard-hitting raiding operations. In February 1941, Nos. 7, 8, and 11 Commandos were dispatched from Britain to join the locally-raised Nos. 50, 51, and 52 (Middle East) Commandos in theatre. Upon their arrival, however, it was swiftly found that the strategic situation in theatre was much less apposite for such amphibious raids than had been initially presumed. For these Commandos, which had been administratively grouped together as "Layforce" (named after their commander, Colonel Robert Laycock), general inexperience in combined operations; inadequate numbers of naval transports and an unwillingness to risk escort shipping; and a lack of aerial superiority would each transpire to abort many of the planned operations. Of those operations which were eventually mounted, such as the actions of No. 50 (ME) Commando at Casterlorizzo in February; the No. 7 Commando attempt on Bardia in April; or the Litani river operation of No. 11 Commando in June 1941, none, as General Auchinleck would admit, "... was a great success."⁴⁷ Most illustrative of the confused deployment of these Commandos at this time, however, was the use of Nos. 7 and 50/52(ME) Commandos as forming part of the rear guard covering the evacuation of Crete in May 1941: a broadly unsuitable role that resulted in considerable numbers of Commandos being killed or captured.⁴⁸ Given the acute manpower shortages plaguing GHQ MEF at this time, such losses, to a formation which had been underutilized to date, were thought to be un-

46. For recent examples of such works, see: Gavin Mortimer, *Stirling's Men: The Inside History of SAS in World War II* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004); Gordon Stevens, *The Originals: The Secret History of the Birth of the SAS, in their own words* (London: Ebury Press, 2005); Tim Jones, *SAS Zero Hour: The Secret Origins of the Special Air Service* (London: Greenhill Books, 2006); or Michael Asher, *The Regiment: The Real Story of the SAS* (London: Penguin, 2007).

47. General Auchinleck, Commander in Chief MEF, "Future of 1st SS Regiment," 24 and 26 July 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/728.

48. Peter Young, *Commando* (London: Pan/Ballantine Books, 1969), p. 42.

sustainable and in July 1941 the decision was taken to disband Layforce.

With the fragmentation of Layforce, various frustrated individuals, each who had been prepared for the conduct of irregular operations, were now suddenly displaced and many were reluctant to return to conventional units. One such individual was Archibald David Stirling (who never used his first name that he shared with his father), a subaltern from No. 8 Commando. Like so many of the men of Layforce, Stirling had become deeply frustrated by the infrequency and inadequacy of Commando operations and had become convinced that the use of "traditional" Commandos was fundamentally flawed, most crucially over the issue of scale. Recuperating in hospital following a mishap experimenting with parachutes, Stirling developed a proposal for the formation of a small unit that, he believed, would be capable of undertaking a broader and more flexible range of offensive actions than had heretofore been possible with a Commando. In July 1941, Stirling presented this proposal, as SAS mythology has it in a characteristically unorthodox manner by breaking into Middle East Headquarters, direct to the highest local authorities: General Claude Auchinleck, Commander in Chief Middle East and his Chief of Staff, General Neil Ritchie.⁴⁹ Coming at a time when the CRUSADER offensive was being planned and in an atmosphere in which plans for an increase in special operations were regularly being discussed, Stirling's move was both well timed and sensibly directed. As Tim Jones states, Stirling was "fortuitous that he was in the right place at the right time for such heterodox thinking to be accepted by top-level decision makers."⁵⁰ In a manner directly analogous to Bagnold's experience with Wavell one year previously, Auchinleck was willing to act as a "champion" for Stirling's scheme and accordingly promoted him to Captain and granted him a small establishment for his unit. The name of the force was to be "L" Detachment, SAS Brigade so as to lend a margin of truth towards a deception scheme already in existence which sought to convince the Axis of the existence of an entire airborne brigade in theatre.

Helped greatly by popular literature, Stirling and his proposals have attained almost mythological status. Illustrative of the aggrandizement of the man is Mike Morgan's contention that Stirling "ranks alongside Hannibal and Wellington as one of the most extraordinary gifted and original military thinkers of all time."⁵¹ Such opinions notwithstanding, the cent-

49. Stirling was, in a way that Bagnold was not, a member of the societal elite and the likes of Michael Asher and Tim Jones have recently debunked many myths by suggesting that Stirling had "deliberately targeted" Ritchie who was a friend of the Stirling family. Michael Asher, *Get Rommel: The Secret British Mission to Kill Hitler's Greatest General* (London: Cassell, 2004), p. 77; Jones, *SAS Zero Hour*, p. 29.

50. Jones, *SAS Zero Hour*, p. 19.

51. Mike Morgan, *Daggers Drawn: Second World War Heroes of the SAS and SBS*

ral themes of Stirling's proposal cannot be considered entirely original: the LRDG had been operating small groups in depth in this theatre for more than a year; whilst the February 1941 "Colossus" raid on the Tragino aqueduct in Italy, undertaken by the lineal forebears of the Parachute Regiment, had already proven the potential of utilizing the parachute for sabotage in depth.⁵² In an overall assessment, Stirling's idea has a wealth of different origins,⁵³ but most important perhaps was the influence of his colleague, and fellow Commando officer, Lieutenant John Steel "Jock" Lewes. Following the disbandment of Layforce, Lewes had established himself as an exponent of the night-time raid in a number of forays near Tobruk, and it was he who had been directed to undertake the trials with parachutes which had preceded Stirling's proposal.⁵⁴ Furthermore, once the SAS was raised, it was Lewes who devised practically all formative training schemes and tactics.⁵⁵ Such factors were certainly not lost on Stirling, and after Lewes' untimely death on an early raid, Stirling would himself write that "Jock could far more genuinely claim to be the founder of the SAS than I."⁵⁶

Rather than dwell on proportioning credit for the creation of the SAS, its inception is perhaps most profitably viewed as a partnership. Michael Asher has eloquently painted a picture of the SAS emerging from the creative tensions existing between two different personalities: "the analytic perfectionist" Lewes and the "romantic visionary" Stirling.⁵⁷ Stirling's own personal contribution was perhaps most acute, as was the case with most "errant captains," in having "the tenacity to drive it [the idea] through an unwilling and therefore unresponsive higher headquarters."⁵⁸ Stirling had this determination, as well as the guile to sidestep opposition, and the undoubtedly important fertile social connections to gain favor. Without such factors, it seems unlikely that it would have been possible for him to bring his concept to the field.

Central to Stirling's proposal for his unit was the belief that the scale of Commando operations was incompatible with the realities of the strategic situation in the Middle East. He was emphatic that a smaller unit

(Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 21.

52. The men who undertook "Colossus" were from "X-Troop" of a unit, coincidentally, named No. 11 Special Air Service. Lieutenant Deane-Drummond, Report on "Colossus," 19 December 1942, TNA: PRO CAB 106/8.

53. These are examined in detail in Jones, *SAS Zero Hour*.

54. See Report on First Parachute Jump in the Middle East, May 1941, TNA: PRO WO 218/173; Jones, *SAS Zero Hour*, pp. 160, 166.

55. Alan Hoe, *David Stirling: The Authorised Biography of the Creator of the SAS* (London: Warner Books, 1992), p. 73.

56. See John Lewes, *Jock Lewes: Co-Founder of the SAS* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2000), p. 247.

57. Asher, *The Regiment*, p. 35.

58. Hoe, *David Stirling*, p. 90.

could undertake raiding operations more efficiently than a Commando. Having been frustrated by the constant cancellation of Layforce operations (which he had not personally participated in), Stirling believed that the smaller a unit's deployments, the less likely it would be that the headaches of logistics, transportation, and administration would impede employment. By dividing men into a number of small patrols, each of approximately five men, he believed it would be feasible to engage a much wider range of targets than had been possible with the Commandos, moreover, he foresaw that the use of such autonomous groups simultaneously against different targets would magnify the disruptive and destructive effects of each raid and further increase the moral attrition of the enemy. Furthermore, by confining individual attacks to a small-scale, it was more likely that each would attain tactical surprise thereby increasing their margin of success, while at the same time reducing the potential cost of men and material lost should an operation fail.⁵⁹ The ultimate application and success of the SAS in the Desert War would, on the whole, validate this cost-effective logic.

The first operational deployment of "L" Detachment was a set-piece attack on airfields near Gazala/Tmimi in conjunction with Auchinleck's "Crusader" offensive of November 1941. Lack of experience in desert travel and an early fascination, in all quarters, with the potential of the parachute (influenced not least of all by the recent German use of *Fallschirmjäger* against Crete) ensured that this operation would be the first-ever operational parachute jump undertaken in the Middle Eastern theatre. In the event, however, atrocious weather conditions, relatively concentrated enemy ground-to-air defenses, and a broad inexperience about all aspects of airborne operations, all transpired to make this operation a disaster.⁶⁰ Thirty-four of the fifty-five men dropped were killed or captured whilst the objective remained unscathed.

The history of the SAS may well have ended here were it not for the resilience and inventiveness of the survivors. When those "L" Detachment personnel that had survived the drops were picked up for exfiltration out of the desert (as had been pre-arranged) by the LRDG, the foundations for a new tactical approach were laid which almost certainly saved Stirling's force from disbandment. During the return to Cairo,

59. David Stirling, "Origins of the SAS Regiment," 8 November 1948, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London, Papers of General Sir Roderick William McLeod; John Laffin, *Raiders: Great Exploits of the Second World War* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p. 22; Julian Thompson, *The Imperial War Museum Book of War Behind Enemy Lines* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1998), p. 50; John Strawson, *A History of the SAS Regiment* (London: Grafton Books, 1986), p. 36.

60. Lorna Almonds Windmill, *Gentleman Jim: The Wartime Story of a founder of the SAS and Special Forces* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2001), p. 77.

Stirling and the LRDG Patrol commanders would come to the conclusion that much could be gained from the LRDG transporting the SAS to, as well as from, their objectives (which the SAS would infiltrate to attack on foot).⁶¹ Following a very brief period of recuperation, Stirling's remaining men would swiftly embark upon such a series of joint operations. Not only did this move demonstrate Stirling's "most extraordinary" characteristic of being able to "bounce back after the most dismal failures," it also highlighted his merits as a tactician. On 13-15 December 1941, LRDG patrols transported "L" Detachment men to raids against enemy airfields at Sirte, Tamet, and Agheilo. These operations were very successful, some sixty-one enemy aircraft had been destroyed on the ground and various sections of the enemy's rear areas shot up. In one stroke, Stirling's original concept had been broadly validated and the short-term continuation of his force, at least, was assured.⁶² The advent of such attacks would also dramatically alter both the pace and volume of special operations being undertaken in theatre.

As a result of the startling successes of "L" Detachment's December operations, the decision was taken to formalize the partnership between the LRDG and SAS into what historian Eric Morris has called "a marriage not of mutual convenience but of complementary skills and expertise."⁶³ The SAS would take advantage of a safer and more efficient manner of transportation, navigation, and administration, whilst the LRDG would receive help in facilitating their offensive duties, which would allow them to focus increased attention upon their intelligence mandate.⁶⁴ Such benefits notwithstanding, for the LRDG the arrival of the SAS must be viewed as having been something of a mixed blessing in light of the increased burden which it placed on the Group. For at least five months the expanding SAS force would be almost wholly dependant on LRDG patronage for navigation, signals, and transportation. Even in the summer of 1942 when "L" Detachment had both secured their own transportation and had amassed much experience in desert travel, this reliance upon the LRDG in matters of logistics (and to a lesser extent navigation and signals) would continue.⁶⁵

61. Both David Stirling and David Lloyd Owen, a LRDG patrol commander, would later claim to have been responsible for this idea. But, as with all such processes, the truth is likely to be that the idea arose as a result of collective discussion.

62. Mike Morgan, *Sting of the Scorpion: The Inside Story of the Long Range Desert Group* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2003), p. 96; Adrian Weale, *Secret Warfare: Special Operations Forces from the Great Game to the SAS* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), p. 101.

63. Eric Morris, *Guerrillas in Uniform: Churchill's Private Armies in the Middle East and the War against Japan 1940-1945* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), pp. 72-73.

64. Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches* (London: Webb, Son and Co., 1949), pp. 193-94.

65. Stephen Hastings, *The Drums of Memory: An Autobiography* (Yorkshire: Leo

Expansion and Overstretch

As contrasted to the myriad of tasks undertaken by the LRDG in the Desert War, the role of the SAS was comparatively simple: they were fundamentally aggressive but versatile raiders, unflatteringly described by General Auchinleck as being of "the thug variety."⁶⁶ The principal targets of the SAS, and one which they excelled at tackling, were enemy aerodromes and aircraft thereon. Against these targets, small parties operating on foot employed hand-placed demolition charges (the "Lewes" bomb of their own design) and met with broad success.⁶⁷ Despite the obvious value of such work, Stirling remained wary of his unit becoming docketed at GHQ as being solely capable of attacking airfields. Constantly conscious of the importance of remaining flexible in order to ensure the greatest potential employment of his force, and undeniably expansionist in his desires, Stirling actively sought to expand the repertoire of targets which his unit could attack.

In January 1942 in the wake of his first successful operations against airfields, Stirling turned his eyes towards the potential for overland raids against the harbors of, and shipping at, Benghazi and Bouerat. In order to better achieve this goal, Stirling was able to secure the attachment to his unit personnel belonging to another heretofore independent specialist force: the 1st Special Boat Section (SBS).⁶⁸ The SBS had been created in July 1940 as a result of the ideas and efforts of another archetypal "errant captain" and Commando subaltern: Lieutenant Roger Courtney. A pre-war game hunter and experienced canoeist, Courtney would develop various ideas about the military potential of employing a small-scale canoe-orientated force to conduct raids and reconnaissance. Whilst training in Scotland as a member of No. 8 Commando, Courtney took time to arrange an unorthodox demonstration to exhibit the potential of his

Cooper, 2001), p. 45; Owen, *Providence Their Guide*, p. 103.

66. General Auchinleck, "Future of 1st SS Regiment," 26 July 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/728.

67. To cope with evolving enemy techniques of airfield defense, the SAS had to remain flexible in their methods of attack. The most notable departure from the on foot, hand-planted demolitions approach was the 26 July 1942 massed-jeep attack on the airfield of Sidi Haneish near Fuka. This innovative, but more risky, approach succeeded in destroying some forty aircraft, but would not again be repeated. The experimentation was, however, illustrative of Stirling's perceptual search for diverse tactical approaches. As Asher has claimed: "Stirling's genius as a special forces commander lay in the elasticity of his intellect: he saw his campaign as an elegant mental dance with the enemy." Asher, *The Regiment*, p. 141.

68. Barrie Pitt, *Special Boat Squadron: The Story of the SBS in the Mediterranean* (London: Century Publishing, 1983), p. 25; G.B. Courtney, *SBS in World War Two: The Story of the Original Special Boat Section of the Army Commandos* (London: Robert Hale, 1983), pp. 21-22.

scheme.⁶⁹ In so doing, he caught the eye of Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, Director of Combined Operations whom, suitably impressed, promoted Courtney to Captain and directed him to raise a twelve-man "Folbot Section" for his Commando.⁷⁰

In February 1941 Courtney's group was sent to the Middle East with the Layforce Commandos. In April the unit became administratively divorced from Layforce when it was attached to the 1st and 10th Submarine Flotillas in Alexandria and Malta and was renamed the 1st SBS.⁷¹ Throughout 1941, the 1st SBS were widely employed from submarines (and in early-1942 from MTBs) and would be utilized in an extensive range of successful operations broadening their initial role to include beach reconnaissance, pilotage, sabotage operations, raids, and personnel transport.⁷² At the start of 1942, Courtney and a number of other key SBS officers were recalled to Britain in order to help facilitate the creation of a second SBS unit, and for the remainder of the SBS personnel in theatre, this heralded a period of closer association with the SAS with whom they shared a base in Kabrit.⁷³ Whilst those overland SAS operations which sought to directly utilize SBS canoe "pairs," such as the attacks on Bourat and Benghazi, would be largely ill-fated (principally a result of the undesirability of carrying canvas boats in the back of trucks), the SBS men would independently continue to operate (albeit with a few tribulations) throughout the Mediterranean until late-1942.

At the same time as Stirling had envisioned diversifying his unit's target set via the attachment of the SBS, he had also expanded the size of his command by securing, in January 1942, the attachment of an under-employed unit of Free French parachutists (*1 Infanterie de l'Air*) under Commandant Georges Bergé.⁷⁴ These Frenchmen were first used, alongside experienced SAS and SBS personnel, in an ambitious series of raids launched on 12 June 1942. In an effort to destroy enemy aircraft plugging supply convoys for Malta, the plan was that Stirling would pre-

69. Courtney, without seeking permission, paddled out to a Royal Navy ship moored off the coast and stole a gun cover. Withdrawing undetected, Courtney revealed what he had achieved to the higher powers who then offered him the opportunity to affect another demonstration involving paddling up to a ship and placing chalk markings where he would place limpet mines. John Parker, *SBS: The Inside Story of the Special Boat Service* (London: Headline, 1998), p. 18.

70. The folbot was a form of folding canoe. It is occasionally referred to as a folboat or a foldboat. Courtney, *SBS in World War Two*, pp. 23-26.

71. Parker, *SBS*, p. 26.

72. For reports of various SBS operations during this period, see documents in: TNA: PRO DEFE 2/970.

73. Thompson, *War Behind Enemy Lines*, p. 74.

74. Later, at the end of 1942, Stirling would come to a similar arrangement securing to his command the attachment of the small Greek Sacred Squadron which had been trained in offensive maritime special operations.

pare nine simultaneous raids on the same night against airfields across Libya and the Eastern Mediterranean. Michael Asher would comment that the complex strategic nature of these operations was the "mature expression of Stirling's original concept."⁷⁵ Whilst experienced "L" Detachment veterans struck at Benghazi destroying some twenty aircraft, three SBS "pairs" raided Axis airfields at Maleme, Timbaki, and Kastelli on north-west Crete destroying eight aircraft. At the same time, an SAS-trained section of Frenchmen led by SAS Captain the Earl George Jellicoe (who had been tasked with developing "L" Detachment's own maritime capabilities) targeted Heraklion destroying some twenty-one aircraft, at the loss of all of the Frenchmen who were killed or captured.⁷⁶

By far the most ambitious of these June coordinated raids was the use of the French paratroops to raid the Axis airfields at Derna. In order to help facilitate the operation and provide a tactical edge, Stirling enlisted the services of yet another "private army." The deceptively-titled "Special Interrogation Group" (SIG) had been raised in April 1942 from personnel of "D" Squadron Middle East Commando (and formerly of No. 51 (ME) Commando). An independent unit of platoon strength, SIG comprised fluent German linguists, mainly Palestinian Jews of German descent, and was commanded by a bilingual British officer, Captain Herbert Buck, who had conceived of the idea for the force having successfully escaped from enemy lines employing little more than the German language and a stolen forage cap. The SIG's *raison d'être* was to don enemy uniforms and masquerade as *Afrika Korps* personnel enabling them to infiltrate enemy lines from which they could undertake intelligence and sabotage tasks.⁷⁷ In June 1942, Stirling was able to secure the temporary attachment of the SIG to his command hoping that this band could escort "his" Free French raiders through enemy lines to attack targets in Derna. The result of this audacious scheme was, however, unfortunate. The commonly accepted view of events is that treachery within the SIG ranks, resulting from a German NCO acting as something of a double agent, compromised the operation and led to the majority of the force being captured or killed.⁷⁸ Francis Mackay, however, has emphasized a potentially more plausible scenario by contending that the Derna operation was compromised as early as 11 June by intercepted signals emanating from the U.S. Military Attaché in Cairo, Colonel Bonner Fellers.⁷⁹

75. Asher, *The Regiment*, p. 116.

76. Parker, *SBS*, pp. 45-47; Strawson, *History of the SAS Regiment*, pp. 96-101.

77. Colonel T.S. Airey, Director of Military Intelligence to Brigadier G.M.O. Davy, Deputy Director of Operations, 1 April 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/732.

78. Russell Miller, *The Commandos* (Chicago: TimeLife Books, 1981).

79. Francis Mackay, *Overture to Overlord: The Preparations for D-Day* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2005), p. 82; Michael Asher, on the other hand, similarly argues that treach-

As the SAS grew in size and ambition, GHQ MEF began to pay increased attention to Stirling's force. In particular, and endemic with the widespread fascination with the potential for airborne operations prevalent at this time, eyes turned towards the nascent airborne talents of the SAS.⁸⁰ Despite their first operations having been a disaster, Stirling had insisted that all SAS recruits train in the use of the parachute. Such instruction helped maintain the flexibility of his unit for future operations and remained a solid means of gauging the character of any recruit. As a result, the SAS had developed a parachute training facility at Kabrit, which was the only such example in the Middle East at this time. Whenever GHQ considered the formation of an airborne brigade, the SAS men seemed to be obvious candidates for forming a cadre and supplying the instructors.⁸¹ In March 1942, Lieutenant General Arthur Smith, DCGS in Cairo, wrote to Lieutenant General Neil Ritchie, GOC Eighth Army, that:

Stirling's chief value is that of commanding a parachute force. We are therefore, anxious that he should not be thrown away in some other role and I hope that any plan he has made will be carefully examined so as to ensure, as far as possible, that he does not do something foolhardy."⁸²

Such ideas, and the concomitant submission that the SAS actually be responsible for the training of an Indian Parachute Brigade, would provoke vehement counterarguments from Stirling who was adamant that this was not the SAS role and contrasted the use of his men in such capacity as "using medical specialists as stretcher bearers."⁸³ Ultimately, it was the range of SAS operational obligations and their regular margin of success attained which was enough to prevent the SAS being saddled with large-scale instructional commitments. This fact notwithstanding, until late-1942 the unit's facilities, which having gradually been stiffened by specialist Army and RAF instructors had become the No. 4 Parachute Training School RAF in May 1942, would remain responsible for all parachute instruction required within theatre.⁸⁴

With the SAS being increasingly well-utilized in offensive capabilit-

ery was not involved, but instead contended that the operation was compromised from the outset by the German "Rebecca" spy ring operating in Cairo. See Asher, *The Regiment*, p. 122.

80. Anthony Kemp, *The SAS at War: The Special Air Service Regiment, 1941-45* (London: J. Murray, 1991), p. 37.

81. Windmill, *Gentleman Jim*, p. 116.

82. Lieutenant-General Arthur Smith, Deputy Chief of the General Staff to Lieutenant-General Neil Ritchie, GOC, Eighth Army, March 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/731.

83. David Stirling to GHQ MEF, 3 May 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/732.

84. "Brief history of 'L' Detachment SAS Brigade and 1st SAS Regiment 1941-1942," TNA: PRO WO 201/721; Mackay, *Overture to Overlord*, p. 87.

ies, the LRDG was able to crystallize their role as an intelligence-oriented formation. After Rommel's January 1942 counterattack had taken the British by surprise (a result of intelligence failings in correctly ascertaining Axis intentions and capabilities), GHQ began to place increased stock in the LRDG's value as an intelligence-producing unit. Recalling the potential exhibited before "Crusader," in February 1942 the Group was ordered to instigate a continuous "road watch" of the Tripoli-Benghazi coastal road in roughly the same location as in the previous year's trials. Maintaining such a continual watch was arduous work which placed a notable burden on the Group. Each patrol would man the watch for a fortnight, and three patrols in total would be absorbed in maintaining one watch: one performing the watch, one travelling to relieve the watching patrol, and one returning to base having performed the task. Road watches were widely employed during 1942, the longest continual watch (and undoubtedly the most significant) being that mounted near "Marble Arch" from early March until 21 July 1942. This operation, and a number of other watches mounted on tracks farther east, would continue sporadically until the end of the year.

Despite the pressures of maintaining the road watch, the LRDG's other commitments did not cease and the small and overburdened unit was placed under increasing amounts of strain.⁸⁵ Although the road watch would normally take precedence over other activities, the Group continued to be called upon to undertake aggressive activities when the strategic situation demanded it. The flexibility which the unit had demonstrated was to their detriment and would lead, at times, to contradicting orders. In April 1942, for example, Eighth Army advised the Group that "obtaining information had 'absolute priority,' and that the interruption of the enemy's supplies was on no account to be allowed to interfere with it," yet in May, in the wake of Rommel's attack on Gazala, the Group was ordered to undertake offensive actions against the very same stretch of road that it was covertly observing.⁸⁶ Furthermore, despite only being an ancillary role in the first half of 1942, the Group was still expected to continue undertaking topographical surveys and escorting various personnel behind enemy lines.

The Libyan Arab Force Commando

From the outset it was clear that Long Range Patrol/LRDG forays would be a perfect conduit for the infiltration, supply, and collection of agents and behind-the-lines personnel. Long before LRDG had performed such a service for "L" Detachment, the "Libyan Taxi Service" regularly per-

85. Brigadier T.S. Airey, Director of Military Intelligence, Notes on LRDG Road Watch, 14 December 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/771.

86. Wynter, *Special Forces in the Desert War*, pp. 139-40; 147.

formed such tasks for SIS or, as it operated in theatre, the "Inter Service Liaison Department" (dealing with espionage and intelligence collection); MI9 (concerned with escape and evasion); and SOE, known as both G(R) and the Directorate of Special Operations (concerned with sabotage, subversion, and the orchestration of resistance amongst indigenous personnel). The most common geographical area serviced by the LRDG in such a role was the Jebel Akhdar: a large and mountainous, yet fertile, area of north-east Libya, north of Benghazi and south of Derna. The Jebel was inhabited by numerous Arab tribes of known anti-Italian sentiment and was the perfect (and strategically well-positioned) location for the orchestration of sabotage, subversion, and intelligence gathering amongst indigenous personnel.

The undertaking of work alongside the indigenous peoples of the Jebel Akhdar was, however, fraught with complications and the value of such activities varied widely. Of particular debate was the worth of intelligence-orientated missions in these areas; heavily dependant upon the unvetted reports of indigenous personnel, this was a haphazard means of intelligence collection often resulting in unverifiable, fragmented, partially accurate, and out-of-date intelligence. In late November 1941, flawed intelligence emanating from such sources was the prime justification for mounting operation "Flipper," a raid on what was thought to be Rommel's North African headquarters at Beda Littoria. The raid, undertaken by a group of men formerly of No. 11 Commando (and assisted by men of the 1st SBS) who had formed something of a "private army" under Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Keyes, was conducted in the wake of political pressures to keep Commandos employed in theatre and, led by the son of the Chief of Combined Operations and overseen by Colonel Robert Laycock (who was to remain on the beachhead for the operation), it certainly had sufficient high-level clout behind it. "Flipper" was, however, a costly failure: the Commandos were decimated (Keyes won a posthumous VC during the raid) whilst only two men, one of whom was Laycock, were able to affect an overland escape. Adding insult to injury was the fact that the raid was misdirected from the outset. Not only was the targeted house never Rommel's HQ, but the raid was also launched at a time when Rommel was not even in Africa. Whilst the latter, salient, fact had been discovered by Ultra, the Commandos could not be contacted in time to abort their mission.⁸⁷ Intelligence historian and wartime practitioner Ralph Bennett was critical that in this instance, "Proper liaison between intelligence and operations could have produced a hint that he was unlikely to be found at Beda Littoria on the night chosen for the raid, but in 1941 the two were still too often segregated."⁸⁸

87. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, p. 188.

88. Ralph Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy 1941-1945* (London: Hamish

In light of the limitations evident with indigenous intelligence gathering, in March 1942 GHQ was prompted to give license to another "errant captain" whom offered up a potential solution. Vladimir Peniakoff, or Popski as he would soon become widely known, had, like Bagnold, amassed much pre-war knowledge of the Libyan Desert, its Arab populations, and their language. Since 1924, Popski had worked in Egypt and had undertaken some modest expeditions into the desert as a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.⁸⁹ Soon after the outbreak of hostilities with Italy, Popski was able to secure a general list commission and found himself appointed to the Libyan Arab Force (LAF), a predominantly British-officered brigade-sized force composing Cyrenaican Arab refugees. Within a relatively short period of time, however, Popski would become frustrated with the relative inactivity of this unit and accordingly took it upon himself to find more interesting employment. After a brief stint working with the King's Dragoon Guards, Popski began developing ideas about working in depth in an intelligence capacity. Popski wanted to utilize his knowledge of the desert and of its various Arab tribes to establish an intelligence network covering "the Jebel Akhdar from Derna to Benghazi." He sought "to take control of the friendly Arab tribes in that area and, as a minor object, to destroy enemy petrol dumps."⁹⁰

Rather than remaining reliant on the former cumbersome system of obtaining intelligence from indigenous Arabs, Popski believed that if he were to place himself in the field he would be able to find, develop, and validate his own intelligence sources and, having assessed their relevance, believed he would be able to regularly update Eighth Army in a timely fashion. In his words, he believed he could "present Eighth Army Headquarters, not with disconnected pieces of information, but with a co-ordinated picture of the enemy position in Cyrenaica kept up to date day by day."⁹¹ In light of former intelligence limitations, this scheme, demanding as it would very few resources, was certainly attractive. In March 1942 Popski was given opportunity to implement his ideas when he was appointed commander of the LAF Commando.⁹² The "Com-

Hamilton, 1989), p. 88.

89. Robert Park Yunnice, *Fighting with Popski's Private Army* (London: Greenhill Books, 2002), p. 121.

90. Vladimir Peniakoff, *Popski's Private Army* (London: Cassell, 2003), p. 61.

91. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

92. Popski claimed that he gained license for his ideas by emphasizing to his immediate superiors the potential for sabotage. He asserted: "The indifferent success achieved by the Libyan troops ... had already caused the disbandment of one of the five battalions, and further retrenchments were likely. The officer commanding the Force hoped that small spectacular stunts by his newly-formed 'Commando' might, if properly advertised, help to avert the axe and thus preserve some substance to his command." *Ibid.*, p. 62.

mando" was authorized as a means of providing a margin of glamor and impression of activity to the heretofore underutilized LAF. Popski did not seek a large command, however, and was never expansionist in the same sense that Stirling was. Popski thus selected his force and the "Commando" nomenclature became rather grand-sounding for a unit comprising Popski, twenty-two Arab soldiers, one Arab officer, and a British sergeant. Essentially a one-man-show, the Arab contingent was, in Popski's words, little more than a "personal bodyguard."⁹³

Transported by the LRDG and embedded in the Jebel Akhdar, from April 1942 Popski did as promised and began to recoup some modest intelligence returns. David Hunt, an intelligence officer at GHQ MEF, was of the opinion that Popski's force was "practically the only such organisation that produced results. ... They were especially useful ... for topographical intelligence but they could also pinpoint the location of enemy encampments in the rear areas and give some idea of what troops were in them."⁹⁴ In addition to establishing this intelligence network, the "Commando" also worked with personnel of MI-9 in helping escaped and evading prisoners of war.⁹⁵ Popski did not actively pursue more offensive roles and remained adamant about the primacy of his intelligence activities. He stated:

I wanted to blow up dumps only when it would seriously embarrass the enemy at a critical moment and on a large scale, I was completely opposed to undertaking minor acts of violence such as raids and ambushes on isolated trucks or individual soldiers. I considered such small operations to be of no military usefulness whatsoever, and their only possible result would be reprisals on our friends the Arabs and the upsetting of my intelligence organisation.⁹⁶

In spite of such beliefs, strategic necessity would dictate that Popski's unit undertake more aggressive duties. As Rommel began renewed offensives towards the Gazala line, in May 1942 Popski was ordered to spread "alarm and despondency" and was asked to pay particular attention to the destruction of enemy petrol supplies. Undaunted by such orders, on 19 May Popski was to prove the adaptability of his force by mounting a successful attack on the Italian petrol dump at El Qubba. The result, it is alleged, was the impressive destruction of an estimated

93. Ibid., p. 62.

94. David Hunt, *A Don at War* (London: Frank Cass, 1990), p. 91.

95. Michael Foot and J.M. Langley, *MI 9: The British Secret Service that fostered Escape and Evasion, 1939-1945, and its American Counterpart* (London: The Bodley Head, 1979), pp. 95-96.

96. Peniakoff, *Popski's Private Army*, p. 61.

100,000 gallons of petrol.⁹⁷

The Problem of Command and Control

With the gradual proliferation of disparate irregular formations in theatre, the development of effective mechanisms for their command and control gained ever-increasing importance. The command and control of highly individualistic "private armies" each operating at depth, utilizing unfamiliar methods and equipment, and led by the dominant personalities of "errant captains" would, with no precedents in place, present a uniquely complicated dilemma. To be effective, any command and control arrangement would need to cater for, almost at the same time, two contradictory and often intractable mechanisms. On the one hand, there was the requirement for a malleable, innovative, and loose approach to command that gave a degree of independence and autonomy to individual units and that did not stifle individual initiative and flexibility. On the other hand, there was perhaps an even greater requirement for a suitably restrictive centralized control mechanism capable of harnessing these units and directing their actions to the best benefit of greater operational and strategic plans; lest they become wasteful, redundant, or come into conflict with the activities of other actors. Centralization was also important so as not to burden unnecessarily small operational units with the dilemmas of administration and logistics etc. and equally, so as not to allow these units to become a burden on the conventional channels having to cater for them.

As nascent creations, the largely unknown potentials offered by these units ensured that, initially at least, the best manner through which they could be utilized appeared to be to offer each element enough latitude with which to plan and conduct their own operations. Whilst leadership should not be confused with command and direction, during the formative period of these forces the two factors were often symbiotic. The relationship between the "errant captain" and the "champion" so often defined the early mechanisms for the command and control of these "private armies" and this would lead to the development of inherently informal command procedures. Individual units were afforded a loose mandate, timeframe, and area of operations, and within such restrictions, commonly had the latitude to plan and conduct operations as they saw best. Such proportionate administrative and bureaucratic freedoms afforded to these units would be significant factors in helping to germinate many of the criticisms and resentments towards "private armies."

The scepticism, animosity, and resentment that were directed at these unconventional groupings are certainly understandable. Their unique

97. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

compositions, recruitment practices, missions, equipment, discipline, and methods of administration served as a chasm between these units and more conventional bodies and led to suspicion, whilst their impression of elitism and exclusivity undoubtedly fostered an impression of favoritism producing resentment. The result was, as Peter Fleming (who during the war worked for SOE in Norway and Greece, and later undertook deception work in the Far East) contended, that the "unorthodox warrior always fights on two fronts."⁹⁸ Notwithstanding the crucial support received from their "champions," those staffs and subordinates which had to deal directly with the demands of irregular units were seldom enthusiastic about catering to the needs of the *prima donna* "pets" of the high command.⁹⁹ Unorthodox and relatively junior officers bypassing bureaucratic normalcy and getting a "direct-line" to the top could be the cause of significant resentment and jealousies amongst command hierarchies. David Stirling was outspoken about his frustration with such situations, and reflected that: "Most branches of Middle East HQ were helpful at the top level but astonishingly tiresome at the middle and lower levels." He referred to those echelons as "that freemasonry of mediocrity" or, more bluntly, as "layer upon layer of fossilised shit."¹⁰⁰

In overcoming the obstacles and prejudices of orthodoxy, the importance of tangible successes in the field should not be underestimated. The early successes of Bagnold in the teeth of orthodox military conceptions had swiftly opened up many minds in the high command. Thus by operation "Crusader," GHQ MEF was certainly amenable towards the use of additional "special means": giving "L" Detachment SAS their debut and permitting the ill-fated "Rommel Raid" to be undertaken. Similarly, opposition towards "L" Detachment became remarkably subdued once its worth had been proven in a succession of profitable attacks on airfields. The significance of these early victories was not lost on Jock Lewes who, shortly before his death, predicted that the SAS "cannot now die, as Layforce died; it is alive and will live gloriously, renewing itself by its creative power in the imagination of men: it has caught hold on life."¹⁰¹

To the practitioners of special operations it was clear from the outset that their direction, or "tasking," would be an acute problem. When first developing his ideas for the LRDG, Bagnold understood there was a need for his force to operate directly under the highest practicable au-

98. Peter Fleming, "Unorthodox Warriors," *The Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, vol. CIV, no. 616 (November 1959), pp. 378-89, p. 381.

99. Roger Beaumont, *Special Operations and Elite Units, 1939-1988: A Research Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1988), p. 7; Shelford Bidwell, "Irregular Warfare: Partisans, Raiders and Guerrillas," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies*, vol. 122, no. 3 (September 1977), pp. 80-81, p. 80.

100. Hoe, *David Stirling*, p. 71.

101. Lewes, *Jock Lewes*, p. 245.

thorities in theatre: believing that only GHQ control would see his unit "strategically" directed and properly wedded into the broader picture.¹⁰² Wavell's consent established a precedent of GHQ control for such units, which would give each body a great deal of latitude in planning, training, discipline, and administration.¹⁰³ Thus when Stirling established "L" Detachment, a similar arrangement was made with Auchinleck.¹⁰⁴ For a lengthy period of time, this loose method of command and control was generally effective. Both units worked independently under GHQ MEF (with liaison officers attached to Western Desert Force/Eighth Army) having little formal organization of command and control. They were each responsible for their own administration and training, and whilst the LRDG conducted planning alongside the Director of Military Operations (DMO),¹⁰⁵ albeit often with a great deal of liaison with, and direction from, the Intelligence Branch, the SAS was generally responsible for its own planning within the remits of broad directives as laid out by DMO.¹⁰⁶

Despite the fact that autonomous command practices could work well, the approach did not rest easily in all quarters. Concerns about such independent groupings were not only the preserve of regular "hidebound" officers and some of the fiercest debates concerning these units actually emanated from other irregular agencies. SOE (or G(R), as it was known in theatre), in particular, which held a mandate for the conduct of unconventional operations that, in places, clearly overlapped with the activities of irregular "raiding forces," not unreasonably held prejudices towards the proliferation of autonomous irregular groupings.¹⁰⁷ As the various "private armies" grew in both prominence and establishment, this animosity increased and, before the end of 1941, SOE had begun to concertedly lobby for a margin of control over all "military" raiding operations being undertaken in theatre.

The catalyst for concerted SOE moves in this direction was the decision to resurrect the Middle East Commando. With the disbandment of Layforce in July 1941, many of its more heterogeneous personnel including British, Spanish, Palestinian, Egyptian, Syrian, Arab, and Jewish personnel (predominantly formerly of No. 51 (ME) Commando) had remained in theatre broadly underemployed or unassigned. In October, fol-

102. J.W. Hackett, "The Employment of Special Forces," *The Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, vol. XCVII, no. 585 (February 1952), pp. 26-41, p. 34.

103. Bagnold, *Sand, Wind and War*, p. 125.

104. Hoe, *David Stirling*, p. 61.

105. For the first three months of their existence, Bagnold's Long Patrols worked under the Intelligence staff. The Patrols ceded to the control of DMO in October 1941.

106. Brigadier J.F.M. Whiteley, Deputy Director of Operations to Eighth Army, 11 October 1941, TNA: PRO WO 201/731.

107. Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE*, pp. 182-83.

lowing lobbying from the likes of Lieutenant Colonel Robert Laycock and supported by the Prime Minister, it was decided to reform a Middle East Commando. In light of the limitations with Layforce, however, it was freely recognized that at this time the former Commando mandate of amphibious raiding was largely impracticable in this theatre. Instead, the force would be docketed principally as a "fifth-column organisation under SOE" and thus despite its confusing nomenclature, the unit was not intended to serve in a manner akin to the other "conventional" Commandos as remained on establishment in the UK.¹⁰⁸

When the Commando (initially comprising some 300 men) was placed under SOE's charge, it was argued that the smaller "private armies" of "L" Detachment, SAS, and the 1st SBS (but not the LRDG) should be similarly amalgamated.¹⁰⁹ Such arguments directed towards reorganization certainly carried some favor from within regular channels. The likes of Brigadier Whiteley, Deputy Director of Operations, for example, would argue that "GHQ could not deal with a large number of small units, [and] that a CO and administrative staff was necessary to look after their interests, and a CO of a certain experience was required for general disciplinary purposes." In correspondence with Brigadier A.G. Smith, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Whiteley would comment: that "some unit commanders, such as STIRLING, want to be absolutely independent and directly under GHQ. Our experience in the past has proved this very unsatisfactory."¹¹⁰ Smith replied: "Yes, Agree. It is of course quite wrong to have a number of little private armies each under GHQ."¹¹¹

The battle for custody over "L" Detachment and the SBS would continue for some time, but until the summer of 1942 each of the discussions directed towards amalgamation would end in broadly the same way. As the virtuosity and evident success attained by both the SAS and SBS contrasted very favorably against the broadly inactive SOE and

108. Though the nomenclature was confusing, it was decided to retain the "Commando" name "partly as a cover, and partly because the Prime Minister wanted the name 'Commandos' to continue." Brigadier Davy, Deputy Director of Operations to Chief of the General Staff, MEF, 25 April 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/732.

109. The LRDG were not considered for such amalgamation: its more cerebral activities thought to be incompatible with the work of "raiding forces," and the increasingly high-regard in which the unit was held was enough to prevent any concerted discussion of making alteration to the Group's organization or manner of direction. See: Lieutenant-Colonel Airey, Directorate of Special Operations, "Absorption of folbot section into SS troops," 26 October 1941, TNA: PRO WO 201/731.

110. Brigadier J.F.M Whiteley, Deputy Director of Operations to Brigadier A.G. Smith, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, GHQ MEF, 25 December 1941, TNA: PRO WO 201/731.

111. Brigadier Smith to Brigadier Whiteley, 25 December 1941, TNA: PRO WO 201/731.

Middle East Commando in theatre, every initiative was thwarted by simple logic which dictated that it would be unwise to appreciably alter arrangements which were working so well in the field. The nature of the Desert War transpired to be largely supportive of autonomous action by irregular bodies in depth and the experience of the first year-and-a-half of the campaign had illustrated that such loose arrangements were both possible and eminently profitable. As Lieutenant General R.L. McCreery, Chief of General Staff, MEF, was forced to admit, in reference to such command arrangements, "[it] may be untidy in principle but in practice it works."¹¹²

By mid-1942, however, the "raiding circus" was getting out of hand, and the heretofore informal mechanisms of control began to falter. Even given the value of results attained by the broadly autonomous LRDG and SAS, the development of tighter control and administration arrangements began to become regarded not just as desirable, but as absolutely necessary for the best application of these units.¹¹³ There were several principal justifications for affecting change. With the growing tempo of operations in the enemy's rear areas and the expansion of bodies performing such work, the need to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each formation and coordinate their actions so as to prevent overlap was of increasing importance. In 1940-1941 the LRDG had been masters of the interior and of their destiny therein, but the arrival of independent and disconnected formations of the likes of the SAS and Middle East Commando changed matters. Of particular concern was the acute incompatibility between covert intelligence gathering and raiding operations within the same narrow area of operations. When occurring in close proximity, there was great risk that the attention stirred up by raids might compromise or impede static observation and intelligence gathering. The value placed on the LRDG "Marble Arch" road watch in early 1942 brought such tensions to the fore and served as an accelerant for change. Increased coordination between the heretofore disparate units was also thought necessary in order to prevent inter-unit and inter-agency competition for equipment, personnel, and, more notably, targets. The most fundamental premise behind calls for tighter control was, however, that it would help ensure that the work of these units was best wedded to the direction and priorities of the main campaign.

From the perspective of higher command, it was becoming viewed as quite essential that one body should be provided with the sole authority for the coordination of the activities of each of the disparate irregular groups and within theatre. Given the comparative inactivity of SOE, at-

112. GHQ MEF document, 17 November 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/752.

113. Michael Crichton-Stuart, *G Patrol: The Story of the Guards Patrol of the Long Range Desert Group* (London: Tandem, 1958), p. 92.

tention turned towards the LRDG as a possible solution. By 1942 the LRDG were the well-established masters of the desert and the unit held an excellent reputation at both GHQ MEF and Eighth Army. In April 1942, therefore, Lieutenant Colonel Guy Prendergast, CO LRDG, was made responsible for the coordination of all activities occurring "behind the enemy's lines" in Libya which would include, whilst in the field, the LRDG, SAS, LAF Commando, and the Middle East Commando as well as various SOE, SIS, and MI9 agents. This move was an important step in tacitly recognizing the legitimacy and value of the LRDG.

It was hoped that coordination (but not amalgamation) under Prendergast would be of particular benefit to the heretofore depressingly underutilized Middle East Commando. Since the revival of the Commando in October 1941, the force had met with much disappointment and the original plans to utilize the unit as a "fifth column" under SOE had come to naught. By March 1942, therefore, the restless men of the Commando had begun experimenting with alternative methods of employment. At a time when a proportion of "D" Squadron of the Commando had gone on to create the SIG, both "A" and "C" Squadrons would seek employment in LRDG-style work. In March 1942 personnel of "C" Squadron were directly attached to the LRDG, but attempts to employ these men in "road watches" near the Jebel Akhdar met with many misfortunes and, as Lieutenant Colonel John A. Graham, CO of the Commando, excused: his men "never received training in this type of work and are entirely unsuited for it."¹¹⁴ Similar proposals in May 1942 which suggested that "A" Squadron of the Commando (which was soon afterwards renamed the 1st Special Service Regiment in an effort to avoid the perennial confusion arising between them and the Commandos maintained in Britain) be equipped with their own transportation to take over LRDG reconnaissance duties in Cyrenaica were, in an overall assessment, equally fruitless.¹¹⁵

The LRDG-focused command experiment was, in the event, not of any notable worth. The LRDG had never asked for this role and had been quite content with their former relative autonomy. Prendergast was neither in a sufficient position, nor arguably of the right character, to truly harness or temper the strong personalities and ambitions of the likes of Stirling. Furthermore, this mandate for coordination only increased the magnitude of the burden which LRDG faced when nurse-maiding other formations and bodies. In so doing, the arrangement also threatened to erode the Group's own operational efficiency: Prendergast was becoming increasingly frustrated by the many and varied individuals

114. Reports of Lieutenant Colonel John Graham, CO 1st SS Regiment to GHQ MEF, 13 July 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/732.

115. Eighth Army to GHQ, MEF, 7 May 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/2624.

coming to the LRDG in need of "petrol, rations, maintenance, information, training and accommodation." He commented that such demands "were usually met, but not without putting a strain on the unit's resources and personnel."¹¹⁶

This somewhat *ad hoc* arrangement was clearly not sufficient, and in August 1942 representatives from each of the various relevant parties were summoned to a conference at GHQ to resolve the issue. The result of this conference was a firm decision that it was necessary to establish an independent command branch of GHQ which would have the specific duty to coordinate the actions of these different "private armies." It was further deemed necessary to finally rationalize the independent existence of the SAS, 1st SS Regiment, and SBS via amalgamation (the LRDG again remained separate from such discussions).¹¹⁷ By this stage, reorganization and amalgamation were deemed essential to help ensure the most cost-effective application of these bodies; to help streamline the planning of special operations and better enable the integration of their activities into the direction and objectives of conventional forces; help prevent competition over resources and targets; lead to a more efficient use of resources and a greater sharing of experience; and help avoid overlapping roles and missions which could easily lead to disaster in the field.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, GHQ finally wanted to resolve the unfavorable situation of having to deal independently with three, or more, subordinates.¹¹⁹ With such changes becoming an inevitability, both Lieutenant Colonel Graham of the 1st SS Regiment and Stirling of "L" Detachment began to lobby for control of the new amalgamated grouping.

Though Graham was able to issue a passionate and soundly-reasoned

116. "LRDG's part in the 8th Army Operations, April 19th – May 26th," 7 June 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/813; Owen, *Providence Their Guide*, p. 89.

117. In his admirable appraisal of "warfare in the enemy's rear," Otto Heilbrunn suggested that "there is no reason why special reconnaissance forces should not be incorporated as a reconnaissance squadron into the special force which operates offensively in the same area; there was no need in the desert for the separate existence of the SAS and LRDG." In practice, however, this suggestion simply would not have worked. The conditions of the Desert War called for both offensive action, at which the SAS was very successful, and deep reconnaissance, in which the LRDG was unrivalled. Although the SAS was at times capable of acting as information-gatherers and the LRDG was all the better for "an occasional beat-up," their everyday roles and temperament were different, and their operations best kept apart. These were very different duties and could not reasonably have been performed by one unit without a great deal of reorganization and training which, given the operational tempo, would likely have sacrificed operational effectiveness. Heilbrunn, *Warfare in the Enemy's Rear*, p. 117; General Sir John Hackett in foreword to Owen, *Providence Their Guide*.

118. Lieutenant-Colonel Graham, Commanding Officer 1st SS Regiment to GHQ MEF, 8 August 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/732.

119. General McCreery to General Alexander, September 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/732.

argument with his plea, he was unfortunate in that he had neither Stirling's flair for backdoor lobbying nor his record of success. Graham was further disadvantaged by the fact that Stirling's already favorable family and social connections¹²⁰ had recently become greatly enhanced by a recent meeting with Prime Minister Winston Churchill. In May, Stirling had allowed Randolph Churchill, son of the Prime Minister, to "join" his unit on a raid on Benghazi. This astute political move bore fruit and soon after the conclusion of the operation, which in purely military terms achieved negligible results, Randolph dutifully recounted all to his father in a suitably embellished letter that reads like a *Boy's Own* novel.¹²¹ When the Prime Minister visited the Middle East in August 1942 he was thus suitably prepared to invite both Stirling and SAS Captain Fitzroy Maclean (also on the raid and with whom, as a former Member of Parliament, Churchill was already acquainted) to dine with him. In the opinion of Stirling's biographer, this experience alone was very "important to the long-term survival of the unit."¹²² It was fortuitous for Stirling that this meeting coincided with the discussions occurring about the amalgamation of raiding forces; thus precisely one day after Graham's proposal had been submitted, Stirling would write to the Prime Minister stating his case. He argued that not only should "L" Detachment be enlarged, but that: "Control to rest with the Officer Commanding 'L' Detachment and not with any outside body superimposed for purposes of co-ordination. The planning of operations to be carried out by 'L' Detachment to remain as hitherto the prerogative of 'L' Detachment."¹²³ Elevated by such high-level support, Stirling would win the point over Graham and so guarantee the continuation of his command. Yet, even Stirling's diplomatic savvy and record of success would not be sufficient to avert the clear need for a centralized coordinating branch for all irregular forces in theatre.

The creation of such a branch was not, however, as simple an exercise as it might first appear. The individual irregular units remained highly idiosyncratic and, rather than risk ruining their *esprit de corps* or corroding their heretofore successful activities, it was evident that any coordinating branch would need to be sufficiently flexible and enlightened to continue to provide these formations with a degree of independence,

120. Asher claimed that: "If Stirling's family precedent had given him a head start, his network of social contacts had buoyed him at every turn His success was also due to his own personal qualities of rhetoric and empathy, as well as astute politics." Asher, *The Regiment*, p. 177.

121. Major Randolph S. Churchill to Winston Churchill, 24 June 1942, File 24, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London, Papers of Major-General Sir Robert Edward Laycock.

122. Hoe, *David Stirling*, p. 148.

123. David Stirling to Winston Churchill, 9 August 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/728.

flexibility, and latitude in both planning and mounting operations. Particularly in the case of those harassment or "alarm and despondency" operations in depth, much could profitably be gained by assigning units broad areas of operations in which they could have a virtually free hand. As Churchill would himself assert: "If you want to use the inventiveness and audacity of the people who are best adapted for the job ... you must give a good deal of latitude lower down in how they operate."¹²⁴ It was therefore fortunate that these factors were understood when, in September 1942, a branch of the General Staff was created under the Director of Military Operations, GHQ MEF, holding a mandate to coordinate the actions of each of the various "private armies." This branch, known as G(Raiding Forces) or G(RF), was the responsibility of Lieutenant Colonel John "Shan" Hackett. Hackett's roles were "to rationalise the kaleidoscope of special forces without diminishing the priceless individuality of the men in each"; to improve inter-army cooperation, to educate regular officers in the existence and methods of special operations, and make their work more palatable to high command; and to ensure that individual unit commanders would not be able to harass army or theatre commanders without first going through him.¹²⁵ Before the G(RF) branch could become properly operational, however, the failure of a coordinated series of raids in September 1942 that involved, to some extent, each of the different specialist forces in the Middle East would serve only to highlight some of the foremost reasons for its creation.

Soon after the fall of Tobruk in June 1942, Lieutenant Colonel Haselden, yet another adventurous pre-war Arabist who since 1940 had been widely involved in undertaking intelligence operations in theatre, conceived of an idea for a small-scale raid on the port. He envisioned that a small force, heavily reliant on surprise, might be able to infiltrate the town and sabotage dumps and port facilities. This potentially attractive scheme would soon become distorted, however, as it escalated into a much larger combined operation. Operation "Agreement," as the plan evolved into, was a complex scheme that would see the SIG, masquerading as the enemy, "escort" a larger assault force predominantly composed of 1st SS Regiment personnel, disguised as prisoners of war, directly into Tobruk. Occurring simultaneously would be an amphibious assault against the harbor which would comprise the 11th Royal Marine Battalion and a group of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders guided by

124. Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 2, *Their Finest Hour* (London: Cassell, 1950), p. 413.

125. General Sir John Hackett in foreword to Charles Messenger, George Young, and Stephen Rose, *The Middle East Commandos* (Wellingborough: William Kimber, 1988), p. 9; GHQ MEF Operational Instruction No. 145 to Lieutenant-Colonel Hackett, 28 September 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/743; Roy Fullick, *Shan Hackett: The Pursuit of Exactitude* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2003), pp. 57-62.

SBS personnel. Instead of seeking to sabotage a few fuel tanks, Haselden and his engorged force was now expected to capture and hold Tobruk for twelve hours whilst ships and harbor installations were destroyed in detail.¹²⁶ In addition, and to further increase the disruptive effect of this operation which was being launched in an effort to blunt any further attacks by Rommel, it was decided to simultaneously mount a number of subsidiary attacks: a raid on Benghazi (operation "Bigamy") by a force comprised predominantly of "L" Detachment SAS; a raid on Jalo (operation "Nicety") undertaken by the Sudan Defence Force; and a LRDG raid on Barce (operation "Caravan").¹²⁷

Undertaken in September 1942, each of these operations would, however, and with only one exception, prove to be costly failures. The attack on Tobruk was a disaster. Very little was achieved to compensate for the loss of one cruiser, two destroyers, four motor torpedo boats, and two Fairmiles sunk, and 280 naval officers and men, 300 Royal Marines, and 160 soldiers killed or captured.¹²⁸ The SIG leading the deception was decimated and Haselden was killed. The majority of the other ancillary strikes were equally ill-fated. The SAS raid on Benghazi met with stiff opposition and was aborted before the target was reached, in the process Stirling would lose approximately twenty-five percent of the attacking force killed, wounded, or captured and an estimated seventy-five percent of their transport disabled or destroyed.¹²⁹ Equally unsuccessful was the Sudan Defence Force's actions against Jalo which, having been delayed by two days, sacrificed strategic surprise and was resultantly repelled by a strong Italian garrison. The only glimmers of hope in these otherwise grim series of events were the activities of the LRDG at Barce.¹³⁰ There, a small party of a manageable size under Jake Easonsmith raided in a style perhaps more synonymous with the SAS, but proving that the LRDG was more than capable of similar feats, and was able to destroy some thirty enemy aircraft.¹³¹ This attack was so successful that the Italian defenders, it was reported, attributed it to "British armoured cars," a clear tribute to the dash and efficiency of the LRDG.¹³²

The failings of the September raids were all too clear: the raids had no

126. Miller, *The Commandos*, p. 87.

127. Owen, *Providence Their Guide*, p. 104.

128. Barrie Pitt, *The Crucible of War: Year of Alamein 1942* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), p. 201.

129. Hoe, *David Stirling*, p. 198.

130. The ubiquitous LRDG had a hand in each of these operations in so far as they helped escort the various raiding parties across the desert towards their targets. They would also be invaluable in helping to subsequently pick up evading survivors.

131. Virginia Cowles, *The Phantom Major* (London: Armada, 1989), p. 272.

132. I.S.O. Playfair and C.J.C. Molony, *History of WWII: The Mediterranean & Middle East*, vol. IV, *The Destruction of the Axis Forces in Africa* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), p. 23.

single commander and were instead all run by *ad hoc* committee; the raids were too ambitious; too complex (resulting in the failure to achieve the all-important synchronicity); and would ultimately rely upon good fortune for success.¹³³ Aside from poor organization and planning, the most often cited reason for these failures was the atrocious security surrounding the operations.¹³⁴ As a result of the cumbersome number of people intimately involved in the planning stages of these operations, it is a commonly-made allegation that Axis intelligence was aware of the operations ten days before they commenced.¹³⁵ Popski, who had joined the LRDG on the Barce raid, estimated that the only information not in the enemy's possession "concerned the routes and timings of the parties moving up: this was an LRDG responsibility and they were trained to keep their own council."¹³⁶ British intelligence, however, must also shoulder some of the blame, as information about enemy strengths, defenses, and dispositions were each woefully inadequate.¹³⁷

The September raids were a watershed moment for the evolution of the various specialist formations in theatre. The raids served as the death knell for the unfortunate Middle East Commando/1st SS Regiment (and the SIG who were virtually destroyed) which was disbanded in its aftermath.¹³⁸ For the SAS, although the raid on Benghazi had been an unmitigated failure, it served, nonetheless, in the opinion of Hoe, to emphasize the SAS's "speed of planning and deployment; its versatility in action; the outstanding competence and courage of the troops and the powerful leadership abilities of David Stirling."¹³⁹ It could just as well be argued, however, that the raid merely served to illuminate how successful the unit had been previously when possessing a greater margin of latitude in both planning and execution. Nevertheless, on 28 September 1942, the decision, which had been brewing since the discussions of August, was

133. Adrian Gilbert, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the Desert War* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1992), pp. 197-98.

134. Lessons of "Bigamy" and "Nicety," October 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/748.

135. Examining the SAS "Bigamy" attack on Benghazi, however, Asher makes the intriguing comment that no intelligence leak was ever proven and that the blunder in this operation "lay in Stirling's failure to send a recon party, to make a thorough survey of the route," and of Stirling's mistaken "decision to concentrate on a roadblock rather than go for an assault from several directions." He claimed: "Bigamy went wrong not because of a security leak, but through a lack of precision and planning by Stirling." Such an opinion certainly serves to highlight the fact that in this early stage of special operations everyone, including the "founding father" practitioners, had much to learn about these nascent arts. Asher, *The Regiment*, pp. 173-74.

136. Peniakoff, *Popski's Private Army*, p. 175.

137. "Operation – AGREEMENT, Lessons from the Military Aspect," undated, TNA: PRO WO 201/745; Lessons of "Bigamy" and "Nicety," October 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/748.

138. Messenger *et al*, *Middle East Commandos*, p. 118.

139. Hoe, *David Stirling*, pp. 200-01.

taken to promote Stirling to Lieutenant Colonel and expand his force into the 1st SAS Regiment (integrating the remaining SBS men and any suitable volunteers from the 1st SS Regiment).¹⁴⁰ The significance of the creation of the 1st SAS Regiment holds much more gravitas than a mere change of title alone; it served as testimony to a fundamental recognition of the value and legitimacy of such units and their methods.

Blossoming in the wake of the "Agreement" debacle, John Hackett's G(RF) branch had received vivid illustration of its importance. Once the G(RF) system came into being, and for the next few months in which the arrangement was strictly necessary, it was broadly effective: not least of all because Hackett, though not at that date personally experienced in special operations, was, nevertheless, something of a kindred soul to the "errant captains" under his charge. Hackett developed a sound understanding of the roles and tactics of these formations and he permitted the individual units to remain largely independent of one another under G(RF). Hackett was "reluctant to try to impose too much control," understanding that in the field "faced by situations that changed rapidly, the special-force commander on the spot sometimes seemed the individual best qualified to make decisions about what targets to hit."¹⁴¹

American historian John Gordon contended that the "chief flaw of the desert special-operations venture" was the failure to devise controlling apparatus to "keep pace with ... proliferation." Though he admitted the value of G(RF), he nevertheless postulated "how much more effective it might have proved had it been expanded into something more substantial – a "Joint Desert Special Operations Command."¹⁴² Such a move was, however, neither practicable nor strictly necessary in the unique conditions of the theatre which, for the most part, welcomed autonomy and freedom of action. If there was a flaw in command, it was not the absence of a complex controlling body, for ultimately G(RF) was more than adequate in catering for the single-service special operations which were being conducted without a reliance upon attendant supporting elements, but was in the late development of any controlling apparatus. Had G(RF) been created earlier, it would have helped ensure the best possible application of specialist forces; may have prevented some of the wilder schemes (not least such debacles as "Agreement"); and would have led to a better organised, and more cost-effective, use of personnel and resources (particularly of the Middle East Commando).

Whilst the G(R) branch was made broadly redundant by the rapid shift

140. Lieutenant-General R.L. McCreery, Chief of General Staff to General Alexander, September 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/732.

141. John W. Gordon, *The Other Desert War: British Special Forces in North Africa 1940-1943* (London: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 156.

142. *Ibid.*, pp. 187-88.

of operations to Tunisia and the fragmentation of many of the units under its charge, it would set a precedent for the effective command and control of special forces and would serve as a model for approaches adopted in other theatres. September 1942 had, in so many ways, begun to usher in what Barrie Pitt called the "beginning of the end of the private army."¹⁴³ The development of effective command and control mechanisms to deal with the proliferation of disparate and relatively autonomous irregular bodies was ultimately a central factor in the increased professionalism and legitimacy of these bodies. They were beginning to formally transcend the spectre of the "private army."

Special Operations during the Advance to Tunisia

In spite of all of the apparent centralization and rationalization of existent irregular forces at this time, the spirit of private enterprise had not totally diminished and Hackett would himself illustrate his unorthodox streak by personally overseeing the creation of the archetypal "private army." During the chaos of the retreat to El Alamein, Popski's proportionately tiny and highly autonomous LAF Commando had largely been forgotten about. When Popski returned to Cairo, nearly six months after the creation of his Commando, his unit was disbanded. After joining the LRDG on the Barce raid, Popski met with Hackett who would suggested that a unit operating on the lines of the LAF Commando "but with bigger means and transport of its own," might perform useful service harassing the enemy's withdrawal following El Alamein.¹⁴⁴ Popski sought to fulfil this proposition commanding a LRDG squadron, believing that so doing he "would achieve results far greater than if ... saddled with the responsibilities of a unit" of his own.¹⁴⁵ This did not, however, transpire ostensibly as it would place the LRDG over their War Establishment, but also because of a reticence amongst experienced LRDG hands towards the prospect of nursemaiding another new unit. Instead, Popski was permitted to form his own force and on 3 November 1942, No. 1 Demolition Squadron, Popski's Private Army (PPA), was created as the smallest independent unit in the British Army. Popski was given only fourteen days to recruit, equip, and organize his twenty-man "army."¹⁴⁶ The speed of PPA's creation at this late stage in the campaign is illustrative of the continued desirability of such irregular formations even after material superiority had been attained and the strategic initiative regained.

143. Len Deighton, "The Private Armies," in Derek Jewell, ed., *Alamein and the Desert War* (London: Sphere Books, 1967), p. 137.

144. Historical summary of No. 1 Demolition Squadron PPA, December 1945, TNA: PRO WO 106/2332.

145. Peniakoff, *Popski's Private Army*, p. 210.

146. *Ibid.*, p. 212; Yunnie, *Fighting with Popski's Private Army*, p. 10.

PPA was established as an autonomous motorized group and thus sought to follow the established *modus operandi* of other existent specialist forces. The intended tasks of PPA were analogous to those which the LAF Commando had performed. During Rommel's post-Alamein retreat, they were to cause "alarm and despondency" in the Jebel Akhdar and pay particular attention to the destruction of fuel supplies.¹⁴⁷ In the event, however, such undertakings did not occur. In the short amount of time that it took PPA to be raised, Eighth Army had liberated Cyrenaica. The move towards Tunisia ensured Popski would be faced with conducting operations over unfamiliar terrain in which neither his Arab contacts nor his geographical knowledge would be of much worth. Furthermore, the shortening Axis lines of communication meant that enemy fuel dumps were becoming both less of a problem for Rommel and less accessible to raiders.¹⁴⁸ Despite such limitations, the decision was taken to allow PPA to continue to operate in close conjunction with the LRDG (to whom they were briefly attached) undertaking reconnaissance and topographical survey ahead of Eighth Army. Later, whilst operating independently, PPA was, albeit more by accident than by design, the first complete Eighth Army unit to link up with First Army.¹⁴⁹

With the enemy's defeat at El Alamein in early November 1942, the roles and employment of the other specialist formations also began to alter. For the LRDG, the enemy's pre-Alamein advances had rendered the "classic" "Marble Arch" road watch of less importance than it had been over the previous months. Rommel's access to the ports of Tobruk and Benghazi following his advances ensured that he was no longer almost solely dependant on the Via Balbia. Meanwhile, the evacuation of Siwa ensured that the LRDG patrols would have farther to travel and faced greater problems in maintaining the watch. With an almost daily increase in the proficiency and volume of British signals intelligence, the value of this operation was diminishing and it was temporarily discontinued at the end of summer 1942. By October 1942, however, and in anticipation of the climax at El Alamein, this watch was reinstated with alacrity as a means of checking on and verifying Rommel's retreat. In November the watch was moved farther west towards Tripoli and would continuously

147. Popski's success at El Qubba had in the eyes of GHQ MEF docketed him as "a petrol destroyer." SAS successes against airfields had had much the same result. Peniakoff, *Popski's Private Army*, p. 210; Bernard Ireland, *The War in the Mediterranean 1940-1943* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1993), p. 191.

148. Peniakoff, *Popski's Private Army*, pp. 210, 226.

149. Reequipped from the stores of the U.S. II Corps, PPA continued to operate from First Army lines concentrating on "harassing enemy convoys and on raiding headquarters and landing-grounds." War Diary of No. 1 Demolition Squadron, PPA, March 1943, TNA: PRO WO 169/11083; Historical summary of the activities of No. 1 Demolition Squadron, PPA, December 1945, TNA: PRO WO 106/2332.

operate until the end of December.

As Eighth Army advanced into Tripolitania, they were entering territory that was, heretofore, foreign to conventional British units. Given their relative knowledge of these areas amassed over the past two years, Eighth Army would turn to the LRDG (and by association, the ILRS, which had been placed under LRDG control in October 1942) for guidance into Tunisia. Deployed ahead of field formations, LRDG patrols would report daily over wireless on the going, obstacles, cover, water supply, and possible sites for landing aircraft. When returning to friendly lines, patrol leaders would confer with divisional headquarters and help erect models and maps to demonstrate possible lines of advance. In addition to reconnaissance and survey, LRDG patrols were also used more directly in undertaking pathfinding for field formations. As Rommel retreated, Montgomery dispatched various columns across the enemy's desert flank seeking encirclement. LRDG patrols were tasked to reconnoitre and lead some of the larger of such thrusts: the unit helped escort the 22nd Guards Brigade across the desert to the Benghazi-Agedabia road south of Gebel Akhdar; patrols led the 4th Light Brigade and New Zealand Division in a 400km outflanking manoeuvre at El Agheila; and later, joined by the ILRS, patrols helped escort elements of Colonel Leclerc's command across the Fezzan.¹⁵⁰ The most notable of such operations, however, was the Group's January 1943 discovery of "Wilder's Gap" (as it was subsequently known – named after Captain Nick Wilder, the patrol commander that discovered it) around the Mareth Line. In March 1943 this LRDG patrol would escort Eighth Army's New Zealand Division through this route in the Matmâta hills which enabled the circumvention of the heavily-defended positions on the Mareth Line. The value of this discovery is best emphasized by General Montgomery's subsequent commendation of the unit which stated: "Without your careful and reliable reports the launching of the 'left hook' by the NZ Div would have been a leap in the dark; with the information they produced, the operation could be planned with some certainty and as you know, went off without a hitch."¹⁵¹

As the LRDG were focusing on reconnaissance and pathfinding, the newly-created SAS Regiment, meanwhile, sought to support Eighth Army's advance by undertaking a wide range of offensive operations. Their "target set" as laid out by G(RF) was illustrative of the perceived value of the unit by this stage of the campaign. By September 1942, that "set" consisted of: landing grounds and aircraft; locomotives and rolling

150. Major W. McCoy, Commanding Officer Indian Long Range Squadron, Report on deployments, 5 June 1943, TNA: PRO WO 201/797.

151. General Montgomery to Lieutenant-Colonel Prendergast, Commanding Officer LRDG, 2 April 1943, TNA: PRO WO 201/816.

stock; railways and road communications, including bridges; supply dumps and administrative installations; enemy tanks and troops in leaguer; motorized transport in leaguer or on the move; headquarters and associated buildings; landline communications; and base ports and shipping.¹⁵²

As Eighth Army advanced towards Tripoli, the SAS was widely employed on attacks against enemy convoys and railways. It was estimated that the unit managed to cut the "coastal railway in one place or another between TOBRUK and DARBA for 13 days out of the 20 immediately preceding the successful EL ALAMEIN push of 23 October 1943."¹⁵³ In such operations, and during the advance towards Tunisia, however, the SAS sustained a greater proportion of casualties than heretofore. The causes of increased casualties and difficulties in conducting special operations were clear: disrupted lines; a more concentrated enemy who was beginning to pay increased attention to actively countering raids in rear areas; less suitable and more unfamiliar terrain; and more hostile indigenous Arab tribes. Furthermore, vehicular raiding and harassment of a retreating enemy was both more overt and therefore risky than many of the attacks heretofore mounted. The inexperience and youthful enthusiasm of a number of newly recruited (and often partially trained) SAS personnel also caused a margin of greater problems.¹⁵⁴ For each of the specialist formations, the transition of operations towards Tunisia would mean a greater number of difficulties: the halcyon days of ubiquitous raiding were beginning to pass.

Impact and Value

An assessment of the advent, employment, and evolution of these various specialist formations of the Desert War is of little value without addressing what, on overall assessment, did they achieve? How did they help the conventional battle? Were they worth the diversion of effort that the creation and use of such forces entailed? Broadly speaking, did these units show enough of a profit on their investment, were they cost-effective? Symptomatic of the inevitably abstruse nature of any answer, such questions are rarely addressed in any detail. Attempting to make an assessment of the impact and value of these units is fraught with complica-

152. GHQ MEF Operational Instruction No. 145 to G1(Raiding Forces), 28 September 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/743.

153. AFHQ appraisal on "Scope, Employment and Organisation of SAS Troops," 13 February 1944, TNA: PRO WO 204/1949.

154. "B" Squadron of the SAS, which was largely comprised of new officers and men following their Regimental expansion, was undertrained and inexperienced and suffered a great many casualties in the immediate period post-El Alamein. Stirling himself would be captured whilst attempting to rashly infiltrate the Gabès Gap in early 1943. Asher, *The Regiment*, p. 186-92.

tions in light of the inherent degree of ambiguity evident when trying to precisely quantify the impact and value of any one small event on the course of the much larger campaign as a whole. Whilst tangible results, like the destruction of personnel or materials, provide some illustration of value, ascribing a margin of effect, or independent causal impact, to such isolated activities is, however, practically impossible.

Whilst it can be profitably argued that the special operations undertaken during the Desert War were of noteworthy value in aiding the course of the wider campaign, it is essential to keep such achievements in perspective. They were not, as Morgan has contended, "a phenomenal and decisive contribution to the overall victory."¹⁵⁵ These actions taken, in either isolation or cumulatively, were not decisive acts, but ancillary and contributory events to the course and conduct of the main campaign. As Alistair Timpson, a patrol commander of the LRDG, would assert:

.... set against Montgomery's nine divisions at Alamein, the nine Italian divisions and the German Panzer Army's five divisions, the glamour which is attached to irregular formations is not entirely fair. An infantryman or trooper or gunner or sapper with his unit could do little but try his best to fulfil his duty and slog it out.¹⁵⁶

Despite the aggrandizement and mythologizing of specialist achievements prevalent in both wartime and post-war literature (and most commonly found in popular histories narrowly focused on one single unit or operation), it should be considered axiomatic that special operations do not independently win battles or campaigns. Their achievements, whilst often notable, were dwarfed by the sheer magnitude of the wider conflict.

Whilst not decisive, if one takes into account the physical and material destruction which raiding operations inflicted upon the enemy during this campaign, the impression of a very favorable return on investment is apparent. The most tangibly quantifiable success in offensive terms was undoubtedly the SAS's achievements against enemy aircraft. Their destruction of an estimated 350 aircraft was alone of obvious significance in materially aiding the beleaguered Desert Air Force "to tilt the balance of air power in the Mediterranean Theatre."¹⁵⁷ This achievement, widely

155. Morgan, *Daggers Drawn*, pp. 14-15.

156. Alistair Timpson and Andrew Gibson-Watt, *In Rommel's Backyard: A Memoir of the Long Range Desert Group* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2000), p. 12.

157. So favorably did this compare with the total destroyed by the RAF that serious consideration was given to awarding these operators the DFC instead of the DSO and MC. Hackett, "The Employment of Special Forces," p. 33; Thompson, *War Behind Enemy Lines*, p. 420; David Stirling, "Origins of the SAS Regiment," 8 November 1948, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London, Papers of General Sir Roder-

heralded as the SAS's greatest feat in the campaign and arguably the war, provoked GHQ MEF to make the assessment that the SAS "had a great bearing on the final defeat of the enemy in Tunisia."¹⁵⁸ The result of such work would cause Erwin Rommel to comment in his diary when David Stirling was captured (when trying to infiltrate through the Gabès Gap into Tunisia in early 1943), that: "The British lost the very able and adaptable commander of the desert group which had caused us more damage than any other British unit of equal strength."¹⁵⁹

Offensive successes were, however, not limited to attacks on aerodromes, nor were they the sole preserve of the SAS. Ambushes, "beat ups," and raids against isolated enemy positions or troops in transit were widely undertaken by various units during the campaign, yet taken in isolation even the most successful of these small-scale raids would seldom be of more than pinprick value. When taken together, however, the sheer frequency and variety of special operations undertaken during this campaign had notable cumulative value. Special operations served as a valuable force multiplier.¹⁶⁰ This had been the intention from the outset. Wavell had authorized Bagnold's Long Range Patrols with the explicit motivation of the unit conducting operations far and wide to help bluff the Italians into an "impression of British ubiquity throughout the interior of Libya."¹⁶¹ The results were as intended. Though occurring on a very modest scale, the actions of the Long Range Patrols in inner Libya helped distract Graziani during "Compass" and compelled him to increase the defense of his interior.¹⁶² In Wavell's own words, Bagnold's unit had made "an important contribution towards keeping Italian forces in back areas on the alert and adding to the anxieties and difficulties of our enemy."¹⁶³

The Italian reaction to an incursion of only a handful of men in their rear areas is evidence of what is potentially one of the most significant

ick William McLeod. The import of this achievement gains some perspective when it is considered that in June 1942 there were a total of some 183 German and 248 Italian frontline aircraft in theatre. John Ellis, *The World War II Databook: The Essential Facts and Figures for All the Combatants*, 2nd edition (London: Aurum Press, 2003), p. 232.

158. GHQ MEF, Brief history of "L" Detachment SAS Brigade and 1st SAS Regiment, TNA: PRO WO 201/721.

159. It should perhaps be noted that it is improbable that Rommel was aware of the distinctions between the SAS and LRDG. B.H. Liddell Hart, ed., *The Rommel Papers* (London: Collins, 1953), p. 393.

160. As Colin S. Gray asserted: "special operations can work either as an economical equaliser or – better still – as critical leverage for victory." Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (London: Greenwood, 1996), p. 170.

161. Bagnold, *Sand, Wind and War*, p. 125.

162. *Destruction of an Army: The First Campaign in Libya, Sept. 1940 – Feb. 1941* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1941), pp. 58-59.

163. General Wavell to Ralph Bagnold, 1 October 1940, TNA: PRO WO 201/807.

benefits of special operations: they can prey on enemy insecurities and help coerce him into undertaking excessive precautions as insurance against further operations. After the war, General Sir John Hackett contended that the most significant aim "... in using these special forces is to hinder the most effective application of the enemy's resources in war and to secure advantages in the employment of our own."¹⁶⁴ Later LRDG and SAS operations would each provoke similar returns: promoting amongst the enemy an ever-growing need to defend and patrol rear areas, something that drained manpower, materials, and resources from the frontlines. Such a diversion of enemy effort would be a consequence almost as significant as any physical destruction of personnel and resources caused by the raids themselves. As a War Office pamphlet written at the end of the war would comment, special operations forced the enemy to waste disproportionate manpower, resources, and time in the "feverish and almost ceaseless search for the Will-o'-the-wisp that flitted about the enemy's back garden while the whole panoply of Allied might was swarming across his front lawns."¹⁶⁵

Equally as important, if not more so, than the successes which these units obtained in offensive raiding operations, were the results attained in the undertaking of more cerebral intelligence-orientated activities. In an assessment made by LRDG patrol commander Anthony Timpson, the timely provision of intelligence and information was "the most decisive influence which the LRDG could exert."¹⁶⁶ This claim was mirrored by comments made by fellow patrol commander, David Lloyd Owen, who stated that "the Road Watch, as carried out during those anxious months of 1942, was enough to justify the existence of the LRDG, without even taking into consideration any of the other work that it did."¹⁶⁷ If the SAS contributed to victory in the Desert War by their regular harassment of enemy lines of communication and their destruction of aircraft, then the LRDG can be viewed as having easily matched their contribution with their invaluable provision of topographical and human intelligence. Gauging the precise value of such work is, however, fraught with complications. As John Ferris observed, "one rarely has the equivalent of a laboratory experiment in which all other variables remain constant and one can gauge with precision the effect of changes in intelligence."¹⁶⁸

Of all of the LRDG's activities undertaken during the Desert War it was the road watch mounted throughout 1942 which is so often heralded

164. Hackett, "Employment of Special Forces," p. 28.

165. War Office "Notes from theatres of war, No. 22: Long Range Desert Group," December 1945, TNA: PRO WO 231/28, pp. 37-38.

166. Timpson and Gibson-Watt, *In Rommel's Backyard*, p. 17.

167. Owen, *Providence Their Guide*, p. 87.

168. John Ferris, "The Intelligence-Deception Complex: An Anatomy," *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 14, no. 4, October 1989, p. 731.

as having been of the most value. The act of physically charting all east- and west-bound traffic along the arterial coastal road ensured that the LRDG helped build up an exceptionally detailed picture of the Axis supply and reinforcement situation. Brigadier T.S. Airey, Director of Military Intelligence, GHQ MEF, believed the road watch to be of "quite exceptional importance" that provided

.... an indispensable basis for certain facts on which calculation of enemy strength can be based. Without their reports we should frequently have been in doubt as to the enemy's intentions, when knowledge of them was all important; and our estimate of enemy strength would have been far less accurate and accepted with far less confidence.¹⁶⁹

Prior to the revelation of the "Ultra secret," the LRDG road watch was often noted as having been of quite decisive impact. In an examination of Ralph Bagnold, Trevor Constable, for example, recounted that: "When Ritter von Thoma, Rommel's deputy, was captured ... the German general was shocked to learn that Monty knew more about the supply status of the *Afrika Korps* than he did. Most of this information reached Monty via LRDG road watch patrols."¹⁷⁰

To most accurately gauge the intelligence contribution of the LRDG it is, however, essential to place them in perspective against the value of other intelligence sources. It is particularly important to emphasize the significance of the signals intelligence produced by both "Y" Service intercepts¹⁷¹ and "Ultra" decrypts during this campaign. Intelligence from these sources are generally, and quite accurately, considered the most valuable intelligence assets available to Britain throughout this campaign, and when the net result of LRDG work is set against the scope and completeness of intelligence from these sources, it pales in comparison in both qualitative and quantitative terms. This point notwithstanding, in a climate dominated by signals intelligence, LRDG activities retained their value and offered a number of tangible advantages over other intelligence means. Until July 1942, the attack on Enigma was neither continuous nor were the analytical techniques in its interpretation far advanced. At those times when signals intelligence was incomplete or unpredictable, the continuity and certainly offered by the road watch was certainly well valued.¹⁷² Furthermore, as a source, the road watch was

169. Brigadier Airey, Notes on LRDG Road Watch, 14 December 1942, TNA: PRO WO 201/771.

170. Trevor James Constable, *Hidden Heroes: Historic Achievements of Men of Courage* (London: Arthur Barker, 1971), p. 141.

171. "Y" Service was responsible for wireless interception and direction finding of low-grade or tactical messages.

172. When, for instance, between 2 June and 31 July, no tank returns were received via

also considered highly trustworthy for, as a consequence both of its depth and its covert nature, the watch was almost invulnerable to subversion or interruption from enemy deception, radio silence, wireless security measures, and camouflage which might mar other sources. It should perhaps be further noted that LRDG patrols were also of more abstract value because they would provide a wonderful cover, or plausible source, to which intelligence originating from "Ultra" intercepts could be attributed.

Set against other forms of intelligence, LRDG reports held further advantages. Despite a growing proficiency in aerial photo-reconnaissance in the later stages of the campaign, the use of aircraft for reconnaissance and survey could never hope match the depth, time-on-target, and completeness of information attainable by LRDG patrols. Furthermore, the use of aircraft for such tasks in the desert was a complicated proposition as navigation proved difficult and observation was impaired by the "heat haze." In terms of cost-effectiveness, too, the use of long range patrols represented much less of an investment than the maintenance of a regular series of aerial patrols that could be severely impeded by enemy action. The intelligence value of the LRDG also comes off favorably when set against many of the espionage undertakings in theatre which, as has previously been noted, could be fragmentary and of inconsistent quality. David Hunt, an intelligence staff officer at GHQ MEF argued: "... all the agents' reports ever received through all the cumbrous and many-branched organisations set up for the purposes of espionage put together, never amounted to enough to be weighed in the balance against the information which the Long Range Desert Group supplied."¹⁷³ When making such assessments it is also important to recognize the debt to which the likes of SIS and SOE owed, in this theatre, to the LRDG as a transportation service.

Despite such potential advantages accrued by the use of the LRDG to supply intelligence, it is clear that the LRDG's intelligence work did not reach its highest pitch until many other hurdles impeding the collection and dissemination of detailed, timely, and accurate intelligence had already been surmounted. The LRDG's intelligence contribution would

Ultra, the increased importance on the intelligence provided by other sources such as the LRDG was clearly evident. There is evidence that LRDG tank returns were taken very seriously. On 6 May 1942, for example, Ultra returns suggested that the Germans had 270 tanks available, and yet Cairo estimates were above this figure, something approaching 350 tanks. The additional tanks, it seems likely, and as Bennett has postulated, came from figures made up from the road watch. The estimate would prove very accurate: when battle commenced on 26 May, 332 German tanks were on the field. Bennett, *Ultra and the Mediterranean Strategy*, pp. 119, 137; Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, pp. 207-08.

173. Hunt, *A Don at War*, p. 132.

be both complimentary to, and dependant on, the more general growth of intelligence proficiencies. Whilst the Group's road watches were predominantly only verifying information already obtainable from other sources it was, however, an activity of notable worth in removing ambiguity and verifying the accuracy of various other sources. Nor should the value of the Group's topographical findings be neglected; such information was not readily available and would have been very difficult to obtain through other means. Alongside the Group's pathfinding activities, this work was of great importance in aiding and facilitating, particularly during times of advance, planning and operational manoeuvre.

Not even counting the LRDG's successes in offensive operations, the benefits of such intelligence-orientated undertakings would alone far outweigh any modest costs associated with the creation and use of the unit. As a whole, few specialist formations would prove as startlingly as cost-effective as the LRDG: the unit remained of a modest size throughout the campaign (never exceeding an operational strength of 250 men and often working with considerably less); it made no outrageous demands on equipment or resources; and was almost continually employed. It has been estimated that between December 1940 and April 1943 a total of only fifteen days passed without a LRDG patrol operating behind or on the flanks of the enemy.¹⁷⁴ Such factors would promote General Julian Thompson to argue that the LRDG should be considered "the yardstick by which one should gauge those [special forces] that came after them."¹⁷⁵

During this campaign the SAS was also broadly cost-effective.¹⁷⁶ "L" Detachment's first operations in partnership with the LRDG were undoubtedly worth the investment: the destruction of so many aircraft at the hands of such a small unit "... far outweighed the personal score achieved by any aircrew, whose training was both long and costly, and who attacked in expensive aircraft maintained by a large number of ground crew."¹⁷⁷ As the SAS expanded in size, however, the unit began to show slightly diminished results and an increase in casualties, which would lead LRDG patrol commander David Lloyd Owen to contend that in the later stages of the campaign, the SAS "balance sheet showed too great an excess of expenditure over achievement."¹⁷⁸ This downturn in effectiveness must, however, be viewed as proportionately small and did not itself subvert the overall value of the unit. It would have been fantasy

174. Jenner *et al*, *The Long Range Desert Group 1940-1945*, p. 5.

175. Thompson, *War Behind Enemy Lines*, p. 33.

176. By 1944 the SAS had been expanded into a multi-national brigade comprised of some 2,500 men. At this stage, there is certainly much greater margin for engaging in debates about the cost-effectiveness of an expanded SAS.

177. Thompson, *War Behind Enemy Lines*, p. 420.

178. Owen, *Providence Their Guide*, p. 120.

to assume that the phenomenal successes of some of their earliest "L" Detachment operations would remain the norm. Those raids which saw, for example, five men destroy thirty-seven aircraft and a petrol dump without casualty (as an SAS section led by Lieutenant Bill Fraser was able to attain against Ajadabiyya in December 1941)¹⁷⁹ were, of course, quite phenomenal in terms of cost-effectiveness, but could not be expected to have been regularly repeated given an increased enemy awareness and defensive evolution to cope with overland threats. Any decrease in the cost-effectiveness of the SAS was not, therefore, a result of the physical expansion of the unit (even though rapid regimental expansion in an active campaign did lead to the cutting of some corners in the selection and training of new recruits), but rather was a result of situational changes stemming from a better prepared enemy, shortened enemy lines of communication, and a more hostile environment. Even with higher losses, however, SAS operations remained of value, and their results were at least proportionate with any investment.

The value and cost-effectiveness of specialist formations varied widely and turned on many calculations. Yet it is both proportionality (in the number of formations raised and the scale of each) and utility (the frequency, duration, and significance of their use) that are perhaps the most significant considerations. Whilst the value and cost-effectiveness of the LRDG and SAS in this campaign are hard to refute, there is definite room for argument concerning the proliferation of some of the other formations. Rising as *ad hoc* expedients, "private armies" were prone to develop without a rational plan for structure or organization. On the basis of the embryonic nature, it is hardly surprising that the proliferation, utility, and retention of these units did not proceed along the most cost-conscious lines: flaws in establishment, duplication of effort, disuse and misapplication, and competition for employment was inevitable. Had the concept of specialist formations or irregular warfare been a clearly established precedent before the war, and had commanders and practitioners alike had a doctrinal point of reference upon which to refer, a more sensible procurement policy for specialist formations may have occurred.

"Private armies" were prone to attract considerable ire and Adrian Gilbert well summed up the most prevalent criticisms when he stated that it was all too common that "good officers and men and too large a quantity of scarce resources were wasted on hare-brained schemes of dubious worth."¹⁸⁰ In application to the Desert War, such criticisms can,

179. Asher would claim that "in terms of stealth and efficiency alone it [the Ajadabiyya raid] would be equalled but never surpassed. It was as perfect a raid as any the SAS ever carried out." See Asher, *The Regiment*, pp. 88-94.

180. Gilbert, *Imperial War Museum Book of the Desert War*, p. 200.

with some justification, be mounted against the retention of the Middle East Commando/1st SS Regiment. This unit, which was perpetually underutilized, would demonstrate only too clearly the ills of a unit being raised without a properly defined role beforehand.¹⁸¹ Such criticisms have also promoted certain commentators to make similarly negative judgements about the proliferation of other "private armies." Utilizing the principal justification that the LRDG and SAS were already in existence when the likes of the ILRS, PPA, and SIG were formed, historian Eric Morris is broadly disparaging towards the establishment of these latter formations.

Morris is critical that the ILRS stemmed not from practical necessity but from "political pressures" to furnish the Indian Army with skills attained by the LRDG. He continued that "... such a diversion of effort and manpower to meet a role which was already more than adequately catered for by an existing force [LRDG] was an extravagant waste."¹⁸² The fact that the training of the ILRS diverted a number of LRDG men away from operational duties and the fact that the Indian Squadron would spend the better part of a year seeking employment of negligible worth in PAIC whilst the LRDG were overstretched in Libya was an unfortunate result of an erratic proliferation policy. Nevertheless, towards the end of 1942 the ILRS, though never really matching the successes of the LRDG, was certainly of value in helping to alleviate the burden on the LRDG by undertaking useful reconnaissance and pathfinding tasks.

Employing similar logic has led Morris to continue that "it is extremely difficult to support the creation" of either PPA or the SIG because the SAS or LRDG would likely have been able to perform the roles of both units.¹⁸³ Morris's criticisms, particularly in the case of the SIG are, however, heavily jaundiced by hindsight. Broadly ignoring the significance of original innovation in driving the evolution and tactical success of these specialist formations, Morris neglects the salient fact that both the SIG and PPA were created because they each had unique talents (the German language and intimate knowledge of the Arabs and the Jebel Akhdar, respectively) not possessed of in requisite quantities within either the SAS or the LRDG. Furthermore, in both instances the investment, in terms of manpower and material, taken up in these formations was proportionately so tiny, that there was little to lose via such experimentation.

In light of the unit openly flaunting the more romantic title of a "private army," Popski's eponymous formation has attracted much negative attention. There is certainly room for a margin of criticism as regards

181. Messenger *et al*, *Middle East Commandos*, p. 134.

182. Morris, *Guerrillas in Uniform*, pp. 83-84.

183. *Ibid.*, p. xvi in introduction.

the timing of its creation at a time when the Jebel Akhdar, the area in which Popski's unique knowledge and experience would be best exploited, was so close to liberation. Despite the fact that the LRDG and SAS would likely have been able to undertake the work of PPA in Tunisia, and the fact that they may have done so more effectively than some of Popski's band newly adjusting to the unique rigors of special operations, PPA was still able to find gainful and useful employment. PPA achievements in this theatre, as Popski would report them at the end of the war (one suspects including both the LAF Commando and PPA tallies) were: the destruction of thirty-four aircraft; six armored and 110 other vehicles; dumps worth 450,000 gallons of petrol; and the capture of 600 Italian prisoners of war. The cost to the unit at this time was two men wounded, one captured, and seven vehicles lost.¹⁸⁴ In any assessment, the creation of the PPA, though illustrative of the continued propensity for erratic proliferation of irregular bodies, thus appears to have been a worthwhile enterprise. Seymour put it well when, although admitting that PPA's achievements during the Desert War were broadly "insignificant," for a unit of only twenty-three men, he believed them to be "highly credible."¹⁸⁵

The real debate about PPA and SIG is not so much about the merits of their creation or use, for ultimately they were employed with good effect, but instead whether they should have been created as independent bodies, a decision which potentially increased competition for both resources and targets, and risked increasing the burden of administration and command and control. It could certainly be argued that these smaller units could have profitably been formally incorporated (as opposed to rely on *ad hoc* attachments) into the SAS or LRDG folds without sacrificing their own operational niche or innovatory benefits. Though successful, it is clear that the British forays into irregular formations during this period were not always conducted as efficiently as they might have been. At virtually all stages a learning curve needed to be surmounted about how these units should best be utilized, organized, and controlled. The tribulations of Layforce and the Middle East Commandos and the confusion apparent in developing a workable command and control arrangement to orchestrate the coordination of these various units is indicative of this learning process.

In spite of all their former successes as autonomous bodies, it was only with the development of a clear and centralized command system in September 1942, which afforded these units "born of the desert" a de-

184. Historical summary of the activities of No. 1 Demolition Squadron PPA, December 1945, TNA: PRO WO 106/2332.

185. William Seymour, *British Special Forces: The Story of Britain's Undercover Soldiers* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2006), p. 173.

gree of legitimacy, which enabled them to properly begin to escape from the stigma of the "private army." By the end of 1942, the structure of special forces had become firmly established in this theatre. Of the various irregular bodies which had arisen, only the most successful and cost-effective formations remained. The process can be regarded in almost Darwinian terms.

Conclusion

Over the course of two-and-a-half years, the Desert War bore witness to the birth, proliferation, and application of a variety of irregular formations. The conditions, requirements, and opportunities presented in the North African and Middle Eastern theatre during the period 1940-1943 were, in terms of both strategic situation and geography, perhaps uniquely apposite for experimentation with, and exploitation of, such irregular means. When the conduct of special operations in this campaign is considered, the gradual evolution of special forces as a unique genre of military formation is clearly evident. What, in 1940-1941, had begun as an eclectic range of outwardly freebooting "private armies" had, by the start of 1943, become a broadly acceptable and legitimate component of Allied force structures. For proportionately little outlay, Britain successfully exploited the innovatory and adventurous spirit of the "errant captains" and, in so doing, reaped broadly disproportionate rewards of benefit to the prosecution of the main campaign. The successes which these units met in undertaking a wide-range of tasks at unprecedented depths were of the utmost importance in breaking down institutional barriers, setting precedents, and forging understanding.

By early-1943 the great opportunities for raids and reconnaissance in enemy rear areas had, for this campaign, passed. Nevertheless, a precedent had been firmly established. The successes attained by specialist formations had placed them firmly on the radar of higher command and virtually guaranteed both the LRDG, the SAS, and PPA a role in future campaigns. What had emerged from the desert was something equating to what Gordon has termed a "cult of special forces." By the spring of 1943, the prestige of these various units "virtually ensured that new roles would be found for them as the war shifted to the other side of the Mediterranean."¹⁸⁶ Although alterations of operating environment and the changing nature of battle would pose various problems for these formations and, in many cases, would necessitate the development of new tactics, methods, and command and control structures to cope with the increased complexity of Allied operations in depth, each of these units went on to serve with good effect supporting future Allied campaigns.

186. Gordon, *The Other Desert War*, p. 179.

Though these formations were all disbanded at the end of the war, their lineal (and in the case of the SAS, physical) legacies went on much further. Those irregular units "born of the desert" in the period 1940-42 are, in terms of organization, methods, and application, each representative of progenitors of modern special forces units.

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The RAF's Free French Fighter Squadrons: The Rebirth of French Airpower, 1940-44

G.H. BENNETT

ABSTRACT

This article examines the process by which French pilots were incorporated into the Royal Air Force after the fall of France in 1940. This process is analyzed in terms of the experiences of those French pilots, their military and political value, and from the perspective of Great Britain's often difficult relationship with the Free French movement. Despite British promises to sponsor the emergence of a Free French fighter force wholly French in character, the realities of war meant that this goal was never achieved. French fighter squadrons within the RAF differed only superficially from units composed of British, Canadian, and other nationalities. Complications arising out of the expansion of the French fighter force in Britain in 1944 provided a foretaste of the divisions which would mark post-war French society.

KEYWORDS

Royal Air Force; Fighter Command; Free French; *Luftwaffe*; Soviet Air Force; Churchill, Winston; de Gaulle, Charles

Introduction

D-Day, 6 June 1944, was a particularly poignant moment for the French men who made up four of the RAF's fighter squadrons. From dawn to dusk they flew a variety of missions in support of the landings on the invasion beaches. Most of them had been exiled from France since the disastrous defeats of June 1940, rallying to de Gaulle in London or marooned in parts of the pro-Vichy French empire. D-Day was an important step on the road for many personal journeys and it was also a significant milestone on the road to a reborn French Air Force. This article, focusing on the French contribution to RAF Fighter Command, examines the

many steps along this road between the Fall of France and D-Day. Comparatively little has been written about the process by which the RAF became the sponsor of a reborn French Air Force. Archival sources are also relatively thin, being complicated by the handover of personnel between the British and French Air Forces in 1945. However, the Frenchmen who flew for the RAF distinguished themselves during and after the war by their literary productivity. Two maintained extensive diaries, several others wrote extensive memoirs, while others were willing to recall past experiences for French aviation journals such as *Icaré*. In the 1950s and 1960s, against a backdrop of turmoil in French politics, the young men of 1940 continued to fight in the literary sphere for what they felt was the soul of France. In the 1960s and beyond many of the men of the wartime Free French Air Force would continue to support de Gaulle: the man who had fought to preserve a French Air Force in 1940.

Twenty years before this, on 18 June 1940, Brigadier General Charles de Gaulle had given an emotional radio broadcast on the British Broadcasting Corporation. A comparative unknown, few of his listeners had heard his name before. He had only been promoted to the rank of General on 1 June. Five days later, he had been appointed Under-Secretary of National Defense. His period of office lasted just ten days as the Reynaud Government resigned to make way for the collaborationist regime of Marshal Petain. The former hero of the First World War considered it his duty to make peace with the Germans, to work with them and to secure a national, conservative revival. For Petain on 18 July on the verge of securing an armistice, de Gaulle's broadcast had constituted an unwelcome rallying cry for Frenchmen to carry on the fight against Nazi Germany. However, to some extent, de Gaulle's call to arms could be dismissed as a minor nuisance. The armistice was signed some four days later and a radio broadcast by the youngest General in the French Army was scarcely likely to have any significant effect. Indeed, hardly anyone in France had heard it.

In the midst of a tragic and ignominious defeat, some seven thousand young Frenchmen would opt to continue the fight and agree to serve under de Gaulle. This small band was predominantly made up of men from the French Army and Navy. The French Air Force contributed only five hundred men to de Gaulle's cause by the end of June 1940. Few were fully qualified pilots. Most critically of all in view of the impending Battle of Britain, only a handful of Free French fighter pilots would be ready for immediate action. The fact that personnel from the French Air Force made up less than 10% of the initial complement of Free French Forces was a result of the way in which the campaign in the West had unfolded during May and June 1940. In the first week of June 1940, the Royal Navy completed Anglo-French withdrawals from Norway and from the Dunkirk-Calais pocket. At the point that the armistice was

signed, a number of French warships had taken refuge in British ports such as Plymouth as their home bases fell under the range of German artillery. Lacking much of their equipment, those French soldiers evacuated to Britain awaited an opportunity to go back to France to resume the fight against the Germans. The declaration of an armistice, under whose terms they were to return to a defeated France, shocked many. The call to carry on the fight by de Gaulle, recognized as leader of the Free French by the British on 28 June, created a dilemma for relatively few French soldiers and sailors. Most would obey the orders of the legally-appointed French government.

The French Air Force had not had a good war. In the 1930s it had been dogged by inconclusive debates about the role and future of French airpower. Most Army commanders had little appreciation of the possibilities of airpower and saw the future for the French Air Force in terms of tactical cooperation with the Army. Senior commanders in the French Air Force, such as General Philippe Fiquant, meanwhile saw airpower in terms of an independent strategic force. Lack of political will and leadership resulted in failure to "resolve unambiguously the place of the Air Force in national strategy and within the command structure."¹ The rearmament programs of the 1930s, which would see the development of modern fighters such as the Dewoitine 520, were bearing fruit just as the Phoney War in the West came to an end in May 1940. The productivity of the French aircraft industry had risen to 500 aircraft a month. This still left a critical shortage of pilots, with only some 700 fighter pilots being available to meet the German offensive. Most of them would have to take to the skies in obsolescent aircraft as the newer types languished in delivery depots away from the front. While some individual pilots would enjoy great success against the *Luftwaffe*, the Franco-British air units were not able to stem the German tide, especially when they found their airfields overrun by advance German units. As Martin Alexander has argued: "war in and from the skies remained the Achilles heel of French defence right down to 1940."² Those pilots not killed in combat were able to retreat southwards, and many found their way with their aircraft to the French colonies in North Africa as final defeat loomed. Thus, while circumstance had conspired to place thousands of French soldiers and sailors in Britain by the time of the signature of the armistice on 22 June, there would be comparatively few airmen, and even fewer ground personnel from the French Air Force, in a position to immediately rally

1. Martin S. Alexander, *The Republic in Danger: General Maurice Gamelin and the Politics of French Defence, 1933-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 168.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

to the cause of Free France. Those pilots remaining in France, or who had retreated to the colonies, found their superiors ready to comply with the terms of the armistice, which meant that many aircraft were disabled and individuals were to be prevented from joining de Gaulle's forces in Britain.

For de Gaulle, the make-up of the potential Free French Air Force (an accident of geography and the process of defeat) offered real difficulties. In view of the impending air battles over Britain, trained pilots constituted potential leverage over his British hosts. On those hosts depended the future of the Free French movement. In the short term, partially trained aircrew, who might take eighteen months to two years to complete their training, threatened to be a burden on the RAF rather than an asset. Indeed, unknown to de Gaulle, on 24 July RAF representatives overseas were asked to evaluate any Frenchmen seeking service in the Free French Air Force and to assist only those considered potentially trustworthy, fit, "and qualified to take their place immediately."³ The Czechoslovak and Polish Governments in exile in making demands on the British Government and the RAF enjoyed greater leverage because of the number of fully trained pilots at their disposal. De Gaulle's recognition of the political and military realities of the situation conditioned his dealings with the British between 1940 and 1942, and made him ready to accept less-than-ideal outcomes for the Free French Air Force.

Undoubtedly, the future of the Free French Air Force potentially hung in the balance in June-August 1940. Four critical questions had to be dealt with. The first three of these were internal to the Allied camp. Firstly, would de Gaulle, as a prophet of tank warfare, finally resolve the strategic squabbles of the 1930s and turn the Free French Air Force into a support weapon for the French Army? Secondly, would the Free French Navy, with its own Fleet Air Arm and under whose authority the handful of Air Force personnel were placed for administrative reasons in June 1940, advance a claim for future control of the air arm (Admiral Emile Muselier was appointed as acting head of the Free French Air Force in June 1940)? Thirdly, would British aid extend to the maintenance and development of a Free French Air Arm? Given the pressing emergency posed by the Battle of Britain, and the need for every pilot and aircraft, this was potentially problematic.

These questions were partially resolved in the understandings reached between Churchill and de Gaulle in June-July 1940. Their complete resolution would follow between 1940 and 1942 as a result of the compromise reached between the two leaders in the midst of French defeat. In June 1940, Churchill agreed that British aid would be given unstint-

3. Air Ministry Circular, 24 July 1940, National Archives, Kew (NA) FO371/24339.

ingly to develop the Free French Army, Navy, and Air Force. The Free French Air Force was the subject of a specific undertaking by Churchill that he expected the Royal Air Force to help fulfill. Churchill promised de Gaulle an air force wholly French in character.⁴ It was a grand gesture from a man who held "an intensely sentimental affection for a France he had visited often and whose army he had extolled between the wars."⁵ Churchill was very much caught up in the drama and emotion of the defeat of a great nation. It followed on from his willingness to proclaim the union of Britain and France as a means to try and keep the French fighting.⁶

The details of what Churchill's promise would mean in practice would take several more months to debate and agree and would rely on the availability of a growing numbers of pilots, suitable facilities, and equipment. Seemingly, the decision was taken without recourse to the higher echelons of the RAF. There had been no opportunity to think through the potential complications of British support for a French Air Force in Britain. Perhaps most importantly of all there was no recognition on Churchill's part of the political problems of how to manage similar demands from the Czechs and Poles who had a stronger case, in terms of the number of available pilots, for a separate national Air Force within the RAF. The Prime Minister's promise had the potential to Balkanize the RAF just at the moment of its greatest challenge. Good sense, practical problems, and RAF insistence on certain standards, including that French pilots should go through a conversion course designed to ensure their adherence to RAF operational procedures, would mean that the Free French Air Force was somewhat less than "wholly French in character." Within the United Kingdom at least, French pilots would follow RAF operational procedure and fly RAF types outside of training. There was also no question in the short term of allowing the French to form their own squadron within the RAF. Available French pilots would find themselves posted to fill gaps in existing squadrons. It was not feasible to keep them together, even as sub-units (flights) within squadrons.

The thirteen French fighter pilots available in 1940 were given full operational training by the Royal Air Force and sent into combat in British squadrons towards the end of the Battle of Britain. There was no desire to accelerate their training, or in the midst of a national emergency, to accept their proficiency and treat them with a light touch. Indeed, the

4. "Training, Employment and Organisation of Free French Personnel in UK, 1940," National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR 2/2512.

5. Max Egremond, *Under Two Flags: The Life of Major-General Sir Edward Spears* (London: Phoenix, 1997), p. 195.

6. Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. II, *Their Finest Hour* (London: Cassell, 1949), pp. 183-84.

thoroughness of the training, particularly in areas such as proficiency in English and operational procedure, seems to have been designed to ensure that French pilots flying for the RAF were indivisible from their British counterparts. However, the relationship between the RAF and the emergent Free French Air Force was not without real benefits for the fledgling force. The Churchill-de Gaulle agreement placed the Free French Air Force under the protective wing of the RAF. Having fought its own battles during the 1920s and 1930s to remain an independent strategic force, RAF protection would ensure the independence and growth of the Air Force within Free French circles.

De Gaulle's understanding of the realities of French defeat extended to the propaganda potential of a French air arm. Free French Army units would take time to re-equip, train, and work-up. Free French naval units, beset by crew members returning to France under Vichy instruction, would similarly require time to get back into the war. Fighter pilots and medium bomber crews could be brought back into action much more quickly even though the RAF would insist that they receive conversion training. It was vital to maintain a sense of momentum if the Free French movement was to survive and prosper. Before the end of July 1940, de Gaulle's London headquarters was able to announce: "Our airmen took part in operations carried out on Sunday night by the RAF over North-West Germany. All our airmen returned safely."⁷ The blows struck by French bomber crews by the end of July 1940 were of limited military value. However, their symbolic value in demonstrating that the flame of French resistance would be maintained by the Free French movement was considerable.

Those qualified pilots who had rallied to de Gaulle in June 1940 would, in July-August 1940, have to face the fourth pivotal issue facing the French Air Arm: whether or not to obey Vichy instructions to return to France or the colonies. At the end of July, the Vichy Government issued an ultimatum to those who had joined either de Gaulle or enlisted in the British armed forces: return to France by 15 August or be sentenced to death. For most, the ultimatum served to confirm their decision not to follow the orders of Vichy. René Mouchotte wrote in his diary:

What are the real French of France thinking about? Do they perhaps reject us too?... A week ago we learned we had been deprived of citizenship. What does that matter? Will our country not receive us with open arms when we have contributed, after victory, to ridding her of the vermin who are laying her waste?⁸

7. *News Review*, Thursday, 25 July 1940, p. 15.

8. Mouchotte Diary, 31 July 1940, in André Dezarrois, ed., *The Mouchotte Diaries* (London: Panther, 1957), p. 42.

In response to the Vichy threat, a "Ball of those Sentenced to Death" was organized for 14 August. Attended by the condemned and by British high society, the event was held in London as a very public response to the Vichy declaration. De Gaulle also tried to counter the Vichy line, and the dangers of accepting fifth columnists into Free French ranks, by personally interviewing his pilots in order to gain their personal loyalty.⁹ This gave rise to some concerns within the RAF that de Gaulle was out to create a personality cult. One French pilot later recalled the experience:

Someone promised me that I would be presented to General de Gaulle, to the head of the Free French! I am summoned... I arrive, feeling overawed, in the office of the aide-de-camp. The wait is only brief. There I am in front of the general. He asks about my escape. I tell him everything.¹⁰

The personal loyalty which de Gaulle exacted from his pilots could not disguise the dangers they potentially faced on operations over French or occupied territory following the threats of the Vichy government. One British newspaper commented after initial operations by French bomber crews in late July 1940:

Had the bombers in which they flew been shot down over Germany, they would have been sent to France for a court martial by Petain and shot; or perhaps just shot out of hand by the Nazis who do not want people in France to know that Frenchmen are still fighting against Germany.¹¹

As protection for their families, several French pilots took a *nom de guerre* in 1940. Fighter pilot Jean Demozay, for example, took the name "Moses Morlaix" to disguise his identity while honoring his Breton ancestry.

French Air Force personnel escaping to Britain were initially sent to RAF Odiham as a holding center. Beyond the immediate employment of qualified pilots into RAF squadron service there was a considerable delay before policy was agreed on what to do about completing the training of a large number of unqualified French airmen. With training activities located well away from the front in areas such as Brittany, trainee pilots stood a greater chance of survival and escape than front line pilots. The number of partially trained French airmen reaching Britain in June 1940 via sea journeys from Brittany or the South of France, and other routes, vastly exceeded the number of fully trained French pilots. For ex-

9. Egremont, *Spears*, p. 199.

10. Jacques Andrieux, *Le Ciel et l'Enfer: France Libre 1940-1945* (Paris: Société Nouvelle des Editions G.P., 1967), pp. 18-19.

11. *News Review*, Thursday, 25 July 1940, p. 15.

ample, virtually the whole of Brittany-based Elementary Training School No. 23 had been evacuated to Britain on 19 June 1940 at the behest of its commanding officer, Lieutenant Pinot. On 18 June he had chartered the *Trébouliste*, a large fishing vessel, which had conveyed over 100 trainee pilots of the school to England. Others had reached England by rather grander means (see Appendix B for escapes from France by sea).

On 24 June 1940, Jean Maridor and five other comrades had left the Etampes fighter school, which had been evacuated to Suaubrigues, unsure of what they would do next and thoroughly unprepared for any journey. Deeply disturbed by the defeat of France, and determined not to become prisoners of war, they hid in the woods at Landes. There they held a council of war to decide what to do next at which they weighed up the rights and wrongs and the pros and cons of a variety of actions. Maridor in particular had been upset at the prospect of being labelled a deserter. The council of war had been disturbed by a group of Polish soldiers who announced that they were headed to Saint-Jean-de-Luz where they hoped to find a ship to escape to Britain.¹² "Borrowing" a car, they headed South talking their way past a police checkpoint by claiming that they had been ordered to find their captain in Biarritz. At Saint-Jean-de-Luz they struggled to get aboard the Blue Star line's *Arandora Star*, which had been busy evacuating British and other personnel from Brest and other ports in Western France. The run to Saint-Jean-de-Luz had constituted the last hope of evacuating sizeable numbers of personnel from the collapse of France. Maridor and his companions were initially turned away from the ship by a British officer more interested in embarking Poles than deserters from Vichy. However, the six trainee pilots, helped by a group of Polish airmen who disguised the Frenchmen using Polish insignia, were able to get past the embarking officer on the second attempt.¹³ They had been fortunate to get on board the ship, which left with 1,700 personnel, the majority of whom were Poles. In England, Maridor and his party joined hundreds of other young French aviators desperate to complete their training and rejoin the battle against the enemy.

On 29 August, the Air Vice Marshal commanding 22 Group wrote to the Under Secretary of State at the Air Ministry to point out that although there had been a considerable correspondence between the ministry and the Commanding Officer of RAF Odiham, "no communication from the Air Ministry" had been received by him "outlining any policy for training personnel of the French Air Force."¹⁴ The situation was

12. Roland Leblond, Claude Béasse, René Lebian, Gérard Léon, and Maurice Traisnel.

13. Marcel Jullian, *Jean Maridor: Chasseur de V1* (Paris: Le Livre Contemporain, 1955), pp. 75-76.

14. Air Vice Marshal commanding 22 Group RAF to Under-Secretary of State at the Air

clearly unsatisfactory but entirely explicable in the midst of the Battle of Britain and the imminent prospect of a German invasion. The Air Vice Marshal's prompt led to a meeting at the Air Ministry between Free French and RAF officers on 12 September. Odiham would become a Flight Training School for the Free French Air Force. Instruction would be by French pilots using French trainer aircraft. Forty French pilots would form the initial intake with the potential addition of a small number of Belgian pilots. While the RAF would go a long way to support Churchill's agreement for a Free French Air Force, wholly French in character, it was stipulated very clearly that at Odiham all pilots "should be instructed systematically in the English tongue."¹⁵ Qualified pilots would then go into RAF Advanced and Operational Training.

In August 1940, a mixed Free French air unit was formed at RAF Odiham. It was rapidly embarked for service in North Africa. It comprised four flights with different types of aircraft. Flight No. 1 would operate two Dewotine 520 fighters. Flight No. 2 would operate six Blenheim medium bombers. Flight Numbers 3 and 4 would each be equipped with six Lysander aircraft for reconnaissance. The unit was equipped with two Lucioles for Army cooperation. They would be lost during the abortive attack on Dakar in September 1940. The failed attack confounded some hopes for De Gaulle's ability to win over pro-Vichy parts of the French Empire.

However, the disappointment of Dakar was dwarfed by the impending threat to the British Isles of German invasion from July-October 1940. The commitment of thirteen Free French pilots to the Battle of Britain had a symbolic rather than a military value.¹⁶ Recognition of it was perhaps more apparent on the French than the British side. To the Free French movement, their pilots demonstrated that they remained a "force

Ministry, 29 August 1940, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR2/5212.

15. Record of a meeting at the Air Ministry on 12 September 1940, Wing Commander Pori, Lieutenant Ladous, and Squadron Leader Wells in attendance, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR2/2512.

16. During the Battle of Britain, the following French pilots saw combat with RAF squadrons: Blaize, Adj P.M., served with 111 Squadron and was posted as missing on 15 April 1941; Bouquillard, Adj H.J., served with 615 and 249 Squadrons and was killed on 11 March 1941; Briere, Adj Y.J., served with 232 Squadron and was posted as missing on 14 May 1941; Chorán, Adj M.P.C., served with 64 Squadron and was posted as missing on 10 April 1942; de Laboucher, Adj F.H.E.J.A., served with 85 Squadron and was killed on 5 September 1942; de Montbron, Sgt X, served with 64 Squadron; Demozay, 2nd Lt J.E., served with 1 Squadron and was killed on 19 December 1945; de Scitivaux, Capt C.J.M.P., served with 245 Squadron; Fayolle, PO E.F.M.L., served with 85 Squadron and was killed on 14 August 1942; Guerin, Adj. C.P., served with 232 Squadron and was posted as missing on 3 May 1941; Lafont, Adj. H.G., served with 615 Squadron; Mouchotte, Adj R.G.O.J., served with 245 and 615 Squadrons and was killed on 27 August 1943; Perrin, Adj G.C., served with 615 and 249 Squadrons.

in being" which was still continuing to engage the enemy. To the British, the contribution of just thirteen pilots was a powerful reminder of the inadequacies of the Free French movement.

The thirteen pilots committed to battle by De Gaulle had endured considerable risks to reach Britain usually staging escapes via aircraft or the sea in order to reach British territory (see Appendices A and B). Escapers via air faced a range of dangers including Vichy loyalists, the enemy, the unserviceability of aircraft, and (for those approaching Gibraltar) the anti-aircraft guns of Franco's Spain. Also, the level of training for some of those who escaped left a great deal to be desired. For example, Jean Demozay, had been accepted as a trainee pilot by the French Air Force in February 1940, having been previously discharged from military service three times due to ill-health. Serving as an interpreter with No. 1 RAF Squadron during the Battle for France, Demozay retreated with the squadron until they arrived at Nantes.¹⁷ On 18 June, the surviving Hurricanes of No. 1 Squadron took off for Britain leaving a skeleton ground staff to try to get away by ship from a French port. Demozay received orders to report to headquarters. Rather than do this he persuaded the ground staff to make a temporary repair to the broken tail wheel of a twin-engined Bristol Bombay transport aircraft that remained at the airfield.¹⁸ They agreed and subsequently climbed aboard the aircraft. Demozay was able to take off and pilot the Bombay to an airfield in East Anglia. Not only was this a remarkable feat of airmanship, trying to take off in a crippled aircraft with sixteen ground crew on board, but it also demonstrated Demozay's confidence in his own abilities. East Anglia was Demozay's destination not because it was the closest place in Britain to land, but because a majority of ground crew lived in the area and they wanted the opportunity to return home.

Another airmen who made his escape by air in order to see Battle of Britain service was René Mouchotte. Based at Oran in North Africa, Mouchotte followed the collapse of his country with shock. Phrases recorded in his diary such as "It isn't possible" and "France can't be beaten" capture the young pilot's growing sense of surprise and disgust.¹⁹ While some pilots like Demozay would escape in the heat of the moment before the final fall of France, Mouchotte was one of those men who had to go through considerable inner-agonies before he could decide where his duties lay. He set down his thoughts in his diary as he wrestled with concerns for his mother, love of country, a desire to do his duty, and his

17. Chaz Bowyer, *Fighter Pilots of the RAF 1939-45* (London: William Kimber, 1984), pp. 109-10.

18. Paul Richey, *Fighter Pilot: A Personal Record of the Campaign of France, 1939-40* (London: Pan, 1969), p. 142.

19. Mouchotte Diary, 17 June 1940, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 8.

fears for the future: "What is my duty? To give moral and material help to those I love or attempt a dubious adventure to satisfy an idea of vengeance?"²⁰

By 20 June he had resolved his inner dilemma: "I mean to go to England. Since my country has rejected me as a combatant I will fight for her in spite of her and without her."²¹ Resolving the dilemma added to his feelings of hatred towards the Germans: "I dream only of shooting down some of these Boche vermin. I see red, as they say: my life no longer matters to me. Only on the day when I kill my first Boche shall I be able to congratulate myself that I followed my destiny."²² With the pro-Vichy authorities at Oran busy disabling aircraft in order to prevent escapes by the end of June 1940, Mouchotte had decided to escape. On 30 June he and five other airmen stole a transport aircraft. With Mouchotte as pilot, they landed at Gibraltar despite the fact that the aircraft had mechanical difficulties.

These stories of escape serve to demonstrate one abiding feature of the Free French Air Force in 1940-42. It was an exclusive club with potential members requiring unusual qualities in order to enter it. To get into it required qualities of airmanship combined with courage, ingenuity, determination, and initiative. These admirable qualities were complemented by tendencies towards insubordination and free thinking. In making their escape, several pilots demonstrated criminal qualities ranging from theft through to fraud and deception. Individualists by their nature, they balked at bureaucracy, indecision, restrictions on their actions, and anything which might delay the fastest return to action with the enemy.

In some ways, the RAF was an ideal home for them. RAF Fighter Command in 1940 was made up of individualists, and an airman was judged on his individual qualities whether he be British, Czech, Polish, or French. Background mattered little in 1940 and every squadron had its own character usually moulded by the commanding officer. One officer later wrote:

Squadron commanders had a tendency to train their pilots in a personal way so that when it came to tactics, most of them being individualists, they were convinced the tactics they employed in their own Squadrons were the best. Command directives were issued and manuals provided but hardly anyone took any notice of this bumph, which was usually pushed into a drawer in the Adjutant's desk. Then again no two Squadron Commanders thought the same as to how best to utilize their

20. Mouchotte Diary, 29 June 1940, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 13.

21. Mouchotte Diary, 20 June 1940, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 10.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

Squadron aircraft in order to get the greatest efficiency out of them. They arrived at similar conclusions but by different routes.²³

What was also remarkable was that despite their individualism, the bonds between Free French fighter pilots were considerable. They had shared considerable adversity and that bond extended to General de Gaulle, although many did not share his political outlook. René Mouchotte met de Gaulle for the first time on 30 October 1941. He wrote in his diary: "For the first time I have been near our Chief, the great leader of Free France, to whom go out the hopes of all the true French in the whole world."²⁴ Anglo-American attempts to sideline the General later in the war cemented the relationship between de Gaulle and his fighter pilots as the "Free French rallied around ... [him] and became Gaullists."²⁵

The burden of expectation placed on the initial cohort of French pilots was considerable. Not only were they feted, but their exploits were followed avidly. René Mouchotte on a visit to Free French Headquarters in London in September 1940 received a briefing which made the position very clear:

As the first French fighter pilots in England, from today we represent the nucleus of the French Air Forces. The whole of France has put her last hope in us. Our example will perhaps make many a hesitant young Frenchmen follow in our steps.... I am sure Headquarters is feverishly awaiting our first victories. They need a bit of publicity.²⁶

Mouchotte and French Headquarters need not have worried too much. The victories would come as he and other pilots entered squadron service. Jean Demozay, for example, reached No. 1 Squadron based at RAF Wittering in October 1940. Still familiarizing himself on the Hurricane, he shot down a Ju88 on 8 November while on a solo flight. Later that same month, and on another solo flight, he shot down an Me109.

The pressures on the young French pilots were considerable. Homesickness was a serious problem, and one which was probably made worse by dispersing French pilots throughout the squadrons of RAF Fighter Command. On a personal level, British pilots went to considerable efforts to make their French guests feel welcome. As René

23. Group Captain W.G.G. Duncan Smith, *Spitfire into Battle* (London: John Murray, 1981), p. 127.

24. Mouchotte Diary, 30 June 1940, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 119.

25. Roger Blitz, "J'ai quitté la France avec les Polonais," *Icare*, no. 133, 1990, *Les Forces Aériennes Françaises Libres*, tome 2, pp. 157-58 (trans.).

26. Mouchotte Diary, 19 September 1940, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 51.

Mouchotte recorded:

The English pilots in the squadron are charming to us and we live on terms of close friendship with them... I have only one French comrade with whom I can exchange melancholy memories....[The British] do all they can to make us forget we are in a foreign land and we really are one family.²⁷

The newsreels and British press publicly treated them as heroes and in 1940 one British newspaper went so far as to include a digest of news in French for the benefit of Free French personnel.²⁸ Despite such efforts, Mouchotte and others, plagued by concerns about family in a France over which they could fly but could not land, felt homesick and isolated.

RAF policy also did not help the state of mind of French pilots. Mouchotte was upset in September 1940 when he was posted to an RAF base in Northern Ireland instead of to one of the fighter stations in the South of England. He complained at "patrolling in a desperately empty sky" while "fretting to know why the Air Ministry has sent us here while at this very moment the Polish squadrons are covering themselves with glory."²⁹ He also had cause to complain when in early 1941 the RAF went on the offensive conducting fighter sweeps of France and Belgium. With the bulk of the *Luftwaffe* being switched to the East in preparation for Operation Barbarossa, the RAF went onto the offensive. Initially, and with the agreement of French headquarters, Mouchotte and the other French pilots found themselves barred from operations over French soil out of fear that they would be shot down, caught, and executed as deserters. By February, the RAF had relented and French pilots were released for operations over their own country. Later it became apparent that German, Italian, and Vichy authorities would accord shot down Free French Air crew the same protection as other Allied prisoners of war.

The numbers of the original thirteen would slowly be augmented in early 1941 from four directions: men who had escaped from France in 1940 completing their pilot training under the Royal Air Force in 1941; post-armistice escapers from France and the pro-Vichy colonies; men arriving from the French equatorial African colonies that had declared for de Gaulle in August 1940; and qualified French pilots arriving in England from the Americas. Pilot training would also be re-organized. Fully operational by December 1940, the flight school at RAF Odiham had already turned out fifteen French pilots and six Belgians who collectively had accounted for four kills. However, Odiham was less than ideal in several ways. One student pilot later commented in his memoirs that

27. Ibid.

28. *Western Morning News*, 24 December 1941, p. 5.

29. Mouchotte Diary, 19 September 1940, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 52.

in its camouflage the base appeared somewhat "sinister" and "gloomy." The training aircraft at the base were also at the mercy of German intruder aircraft. The same trainee again recalled: "On the base itself life is not peaceful. A Junkers 88 flies over with a surprise rat-a-tat-tat during our English lessons. A Messerschmitt picks off an innocent English training aircraft. Thus we lose Eno and his English instructor."³⁰ The rapid expansion of RAF training in 1941, through implementation of the Empire Air Training Scheme and American based programs such as the Arnold and Towers schemes meant the closure of training at Odiham. French pilots would go to other establishments, enjoying better weather and removed from the combat zone over South Eastern England, for training purposes.

Training remained absolutely rigorous and many pilots found the language requirements of the RAF particularly onerous. Some found the effort particularly taxing: 'I set about English in large doses – four hours of compulsory lessons every day. I find that is not enough. With two other comrades, I visit, for the best of motives, a cantankerous old English woman who 'kills us with work.'³¹ The casualty list continued to grow as novice pilots went on to advanced and operational training. The demands of piloting a high speed, single engine monoplane and learning the rudiments of aerial combat were a world away from the gentler and more forgiving Tiger Moth: "Aerial accidents make big holes in the class. On 23 August 1941, Le Bihan crashes into a mountain and is killed. On 11 October, Linden spins in. On the 22nd Delecray disappears. Training goes on. Aircraft become more and more complicated."³² Flying Hurricanes at an Operational Training Unit at Llandow in Wales, the station commander, the highly decorated "Taffy" Jones, explained to his French students: "You have no right to kill yourself!... It is forbidden to crash an airplane."³³ To emphasize the point after a fatal flying accident to Sergeant J. Berre, the station commander arranged to further press the issue. The body of the Sergeant pilot was brought down off the Welsh hillside into which he had crashed. It was placed in the middle of the camp and pilots were forced to parade past it. The development of the French fighter force would come at a high price.

Admiral Muselier, for one, was determined to expand the size of the Free French Air Force and by November 1940 he was already sounding out the British Air Ministry about the prospects of forming an all French squadron. De Gaulle's headquarters was very sensitive to the fact that

30. Andrieux, *Le Ciel et l'Enfer*, p. 20.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Andrieux, *Le Ciel et l'Enfer*, p. 21.

with separate squadrons the Czechs and Poles were enjoying considerable press attention.³⁴ More aircrew, especially ground crew, were needed if a separate French Squadron was to become a reality. As Edward Spears, head of the British mission to de Gaulle commented in January 1941: "The development of the French Air Force is being completely held up for lack of ground personnel."³⁵

The defections of the French colonies in equatorial Africa in late 1940 had done little to ease the situation. Operating French types such as the Bloch fighter, the detachments of the French Air Force stationed at Fort-Lamy in Chad, Pointe-Noire in the French Congo, and Doula in the Cameroon joined the forces of the Free French Air Force. Very quickly the units of the mixed Free French Air Unit formed at Odiham in August 1940 were assigned to new bases with flights of Lysander aircraft to Point-Noire and Fort Lamy. A flight of five Blenheim aircraft, one having been lost in the liberation of Gabon in November 1940, were assigned to Doula. The Air Force helped to secure De Gaulle's emerging power base in equatorial Africa, and that power base in turn provided yet more pilots with which to strengthen the Free French Air Arm. The arrival of eight more Blenheims at Takoradi on the Gold Coast gave the Free French a powerful force with which to support Allied operations in North Africa and Ethiopia. While French ground crew would be available in the Middle East, they would remain in critical short supply in Britain.

During 1941, the critical shortage of French Air Force personnel eased steadily as trainee pilots came through the RAF's training establishments. Significantly, the flow of French pilots into the RAF training remained steady. Escapes of trainee and fully qualified pilots continued after the armistice. Jacques Andrieux, for example, escaped from the Breton port of Camaret-sur-Mer in December 1940. Enlisting in the Air Force in 1937, he gained his wings but did not see action before the armistice. Determined to reach Britain, he used his knowledge and contacts in Brittany (he had been born in Lorient in 1917 and his surgeon father lived in Carhaix) to plan an escape by sea. Settling on the port of Camaret-sur-Mer opposite Brest, he bought a fishing boat, *L'Emigrant*, on 16 December together with another of other escapers.³⁶ The following day they landed in Cornwall. The escape was literally under the noses of German forces who at one point boarded the boat with dogs. The escape

34. Alan Brown, *Airmen in Exile: The Allied Air Forces in the Second World War* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), p. 145.

35. Edward Spears to W.H.B. Mack (Foreign Office), 23 January 1941, National Archives, Kew (NA) FO371/28448.

36. Roger Huguen, *Par Les Nuits Plus Longues: Réseaux d'évasion d'aviateurs en Bretagne 1940-1944* (Spezart: Coop Breizh, 2003), pp. 103-04.

required careful preparation, a network of sympathisers, the creation of an elaborate cover story, and alterations to the boat to create a hiding place for the additional escapers. Andrieux would go straight into training with the RAF. Others would be less successful and their experiences demonstrate the high stakes involved for Frenchmen trying to reach Britain in order to join the Free French Air Force.

On 12 February 1941 fifteen men, the majority pilots, boarded a fishing boat in La Fresnaye Bay on the north coast of Brittany. Unfortunately, the boat was in such poor condition that the engine failed and the halliard for the main sail parted completely disabling the vessel which slowly began to sink. They were then spotted by a high speed launch of the German air-sea rescue service. Taken in tow to Guernsey, the men were arrested and sent to the naval prison in Cherbourg. Tried before a German military Tribunal at St Lo on 3 March 1941, they were found guilty of having "deliberately and willingly departed from a foreign country occupied by German forces during a war against the Reich, in order to assist the forces of the enemy."³⁷ Sergeant-Major Jean-Magloire Dorange and Corporal-Pilot Devouassoud were sentenced to death. Twelve of the remaining men were sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labor. Maurice Gueret, who was sixteen, was sentenced to seven years imprisonment on account of his youth. Dorange, age twenty-nine, and Devouassoud were executed at St-Lo on 12 April amidst shouts of "Vive la France" and "Vive l'Angleterre." The risks and dangers for Frenchmen in occupied or Vichy France wishing to join the Free French Air Force were indeed considerable.

For others hoping to fly for France the route was rather more straightforward. Amongst those pilots who made their way to Britain from the America's two in particular were to become very significant in the history of the Free French Air Force. Pierre Clostermann, the son of a diplomat, was born in Curitiba, Brazil in 1921. He was educated in Paris before returning to Brazil where he gained his pilot's license. He later studied aeronautical engineering in Los Angeles and worked as a commercial pilot in California. His request to join the French Air Force on the declaration of war was turned down and he remained in Brazil. In 1942 he crossed the Atlantic and joined the Free French Air Force. He would later fly 420 sorties and emerge as the top French ace of World War II.

Martial Valin was another pilot left marooned in South America by the armistice of 1940. Valin was a career officer who had joined the Army in 1917. Following the end of the war in 1918, he had decided to specialize in aviation, qualifying as a pilot in 1928. During the Phoney War of 1939-40 he had served as a staff officer in the North East sector

37. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

of operations working closely with the British. In March 1940 he had been sent to the French military mission in Rio de Janeiro, being promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in June. Further promoted to the rank of full Colonel, he declared for de Gaulle in 1940 eventually reaching Britain in March 1941. De Gaulle then appointed him Commander in Chief of the Free French Air Force, and promoted him to the rank of Brigadier General in August 1941. The appointment of a senior Air Force officer to command the Air Force was a further victory to ensure the independence of the Air Force against the French Navy.

Valin's arrival came not a moment too soon in the on-going politics of the Free French movement. On 24 September, de Gaulle set up the *Comité National Français* (French National Committee). The Allies recognized it for what it was – a government in exile. Preparations for the committee, which included a British declaration that the Government of Vichy could not be regarded as being in any sense independent, had been on-going since July. Loyal Gaullists worried that the formation of the Committee would suggest the Napoleonic goals of the General. Admiral Muselier was not afraid to share his concerns with de Gaulle. He wrote to the General urging that de Gaulle should occupy only an honorary position in the Committee and that real power would reside elsewhere. To press home his view, he threatened to withdraw the Navy from Free French control. The Navy would continue the fight against Germany but it would be under his personal control rather than that of the Committee or Free French headquarters. As de Gaulle related in his memoirs:

My reaction was clear and the discussion was short. The admiral yielded, alleging a misunderstanding. For reasons of sentiment and expediency, I made a show of letting myself be convinced, took cognizance of his undertakings and appointed him Commissioner for the Navy and Merchant Marine in the National Committee.³⁸

In the politics of the Free French movement, the arrival of a loyal Gaullist like Valin was extremely welcome. His support would help de Gaulle withstand the continued scheming of Muselier, which would culminate in early 1942 in the Admiral's resignation, and a dispute with a British Government concerned about a potential split in the movement and the effective loss of the Free French Navy to the Battle of the Atlantic. Muselier's behavior placed a question mark in de Gaulle's mind over the loyalty of the French Navy. That in turn made him more reliant on the Air Force and more determined to promote the interests of its loyalists.

38. Charles de Gaulle, *War Memoirs*, Vol. 1, *The Call to Honour, 1940-1942* (London: Collins, 1955), p. 258.

Thus, the growing availability of qualified pilots in 1941-42 prompted further steps to be undertaken to deliver on Churchill's promises to de Gaulle. Initially in 1940 French pilots were expected to wear Royal Air Force battledress. Following from the logic of the Churchill–de Gaulle understanding of 1940, by 1941 the Royal Air Force had agreed to support the wearing of French Air Force uniform and insignia by Free French pilots. Free French pilots would only be eligible to "wear the French insignia or flying badge" if they completed their final pilot training with the Royal Air Force.³⁹ The extent to which these intentions were complied with is open to debate. In view of Vichy threats, some French pilots preferred to wear Royal Air Force battledress rather than French Air Force uniform. Some even went so far as to wear the "Canada" shoulder flash on their battledress in the hope of being able to pass for a French Canadian.

René Mouchotte was one of those French pilots who wore the "Canada" shoulder flash in 1940/early 1941. He was somewhat angered by the refusal of the RAF to provide him with the false papers to support his story of coming from Toronto. However, he reasoned that his chances of having to pass himself off as a Canadian were outweighed by the chances of a fatal crash. He found the RAF's provision of escape equipment somewhat amusing:

The English amuse themselves by encumbering us with a quantity of small objects of undeniable usefulness if fate should make us the quarry in some absorbing manhunt.... We go with our pockets stuffed with odd paraphernalia: compasses hidden almost everywhere in the form of trouser buttons, propelling pencils and collarstuds; miniature hacksaw sewn into the belt; maps, on silk, of Holland, Belgium and France hidden in shoulder pads. We carry nutritive chocolate, pills to stop us going to sleep, an ampoule of morphine with a needle to inject it, tablets to purify water and a great deal of French and Belgian currency. With all that, we are ready to face the terrors of a grand pursuit.⁴⁰

By early 1941, approximately thirty to forty French pilots were arriving each month from overseas, or were coming available for service after completing their training with the RAF. In March 1941, one flight of 73 Squadron RAF was labelled *Escadrille de Chasse* No. 1 "Alsace." Equipped with Hurricanes, it operated in Egypt and Libya until August 1941. At this time, with growing availability of pilots particularly in

39. Squadron Leader Skepper (Spears mission) to Flight Lieutenant J.A. de Laszlo, Air Ministry, 9 October 1941, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR2/6284.

40. Mouchotte Diary, 21 October 1940, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 118.

North Africa, it had been expanded to a *Groupe de Chasse* armed with a mixed complement of aircraft including the Hurricanes, Dewotine 520, Morane 406, and Curtiss H-75A. Mirroring these developments in North Africa, in July 1941 the time had come to take a step forward on the promise of a Free French Air Force wholly French in character as General Valin secured British consent to form a wholly French fighter squadron in Britain. The new squadron would become 340 "Ile de France" Squadron in the RAF. Equipped with Mark I and IIa Spitfires, it would form up at Turnhouse in Scotland in November 1941.

The birth and early history of the squadron were beset by difficulties. With pilots and aircrew drawn from both the Free French Air Force and Navy there were considerable disputes over pay, rank, and seniority. The defeat of 1940 had created a fresh set of issues to divide Frenchmen, as well as reviving far older political disputes. As Alan Brown has explained: "Republicans and royalists taunted each other, and those who still nursed anti-British grudges after Oran quarrelled with Gaullists and spread defeatism."⁴¹ Political interference with the squadron led to serious difficulties as pilots were promoted and demoted according to their adherence to the Gaullist cause, rather than their operational performance. It was with some difficulty that the RAF reached a compromise with the French authorities in May 1942 that while de Gaulle's headquarters could make recommendations for promotion, final authority on such personnel issues would rest with the RAF.⁴²

Within 340 Squadron there were also concerns about how to make the unit authentically French. As senior pilot Bernard Dup erier commented in his memoirs:

I should like to say something about our pilots.... [I] thought the world of them. From first meeting them I had found that wonderful youthfulness and that exuberance which prevailed in our squadrons in France. However, none of them had known what that was like, because they had all been trained in English flying schools. It was all very well for the French pilots we had found here, and at bottom they were proud of it. But most of them had known no other service life than that of the RAF and, if their spirit was French, their reflexes were English, as much in the mess as among themselves at "dispersal." Far be it from me to complain of this, but I wished, nevertheless, to remove that "trademark" and reestablish completely what I had known in France when war broke out. Our duty towards these young men themselves was, moreover, to build up a French unit which

41. Brown, *Airmen in Exile*, p. 151.

42. Anglo-French agreement 1 May 1942, National Archives, Kew (NA) FO371/32207.

would be able to take its place – and it ought to be first place – when we would be reunited with the French Air Force in North Africa. Those who had made so many sacrifices to carry on the struggle here, and so many of whom would pay with their lives, deserved the respect of their comrades who, for one reason or another, had not been able, or had not wished, to leave North Africa or metropolitan France. It would never do for them to be anglicised, and might then be regarded quite wrongly as mercenaries, which they have never been.⁴³

Dupérier considered that ensuring that all French pilots wore their own uniform instead of that of the RAF was a step in the right direction. The battle would be on-going as outside of Ile de France some French pilots were anxious to disguise their identity as far as possible in case they were shot down.

Dupérier was very much alive to symbolism as a means to reinforce the identity of the Free French Air Force. Earlier in the year he and the other French pilots in 242 Squadron had tried but failed to convince the RAF to allow them to fly down the Champs-Élysées on Bastille day, 14 July, while releasing blue, white, and red smoke. However, on 12 February 1942 Dupérier was able to persuade his superiors to allow the squadron to fly in a twelve-aircraft formation in the shape of the cross of Lorraine. The occasion was a visit to the squadron by General de Gaulle.⁴⁴ It would not be the last time that the special formation was flown by a French Squadron. On 29 March, the squadron received orders to transfer to Westhampnett, a satellite station for RAF Tangmere. They arrived there on 6 April 1942 to await the first combat mission of the squadron.

The repercussions of a squadron beset by distractions became manifest on 10 April 1942 when Ile de France flew its first combat mission. The squadron was escorting twelve Hurri-bombers to attack Boulogne, on a mission that would cost it three pilots. In the late afternoon, Wing Commander Michael Robinson, the British officer commanding the Tangmere wing, sighted enemy aircraft below the squadron. Robinson dived away so suddenly that only three aircraft were able to follow his Spitfire. This was the start of a battle which would, according to Lieutenant de Vaisseau Gibert, involve around 300 aircraft.⁴⁵

Dupérier subsequently heard over the radio both Robinson and Mauritius Choron who, with Philippe de Scitivaux, leading the squadron, had

43. Bernard Dupérier, *La Vielle Equipe* (Paris: Editions Berger-Levrault, 1950), p. 77.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

45. "La naissance difficile du squadron mixte <<Air-Marine>> Ile de France," in *Les Ailes Françaises 1939-1945*, no. 7, December 2007, pp. 6-7. See also Dupérier, *Equipe*, p. 107. See also Bernard Dupérier, combat report 10 April 1942, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR50/131.

dived away at first sight of the enemy. Choron spoke of setting an enemy aircraft on fire and Robinson could be heard calling for Ile de France to reform over Calais. Robinson, Choron, and de Scitivaux were quickly ambushed by Focke Wulf 190s from JG-26, the infamous Abeville boys who were amongst the best pilots in the *Luftwaffe*. They would claim four Spitfires in the vicinity of Calais/Etaples during ten minutes of fighting in the late afternoon of 10 April 1942. Robinson and Choron were amongst the victims of JG-26 on 10 April. So, too, was Philippe de Scitivaux. The loss of each pilot was keenly felt. De Scitivaux had done much to establish Alsace and get it ready for combat. Within minutes of landing, Bernard Duperier was asked whether he had seen what had happened to de Scitivaux:

What? Him? Philippe? My comrade in the bad days and in so many air battles? Him I had seen emerge unscathed from many extraordinary scraps? Him who had twice crossed the Ostend [anti-aircraft] barrage? Him with whom we had set up, and with such pride, the group which we had led into battle that day'?⁴⁶

For the men of Ile de France, the first combat mission of the first French fighter squadron had made a lasting impression. Such was the concern within French and RAF circles that on 11 April Bernard Dup erier, now the acting Squadron leader, was called to French headquarters in London. General Vallin advised that the British wanted to pull Ile de France out of the front line for further training. It was only with considerable difficulty that Dup erier persuaded Vallin to lobby the RAF to maintain them in the line. He argued that the squadron's losses on its first combat assignment were nothing more than bad luck, and that the pilots of Ile de France could put the losses of three pilots behind them. Dup erier won his battle and almost immediately, on 14 April, Ile de France, along with 81 and 129 Squadrons, was sent back to France bound for a mission over Caen. Ile de France became embroiled in a dogfight with Focke Wulf 190s of JG-2. One pilot was slightly wounded and had to make a forced landing, but otherwise the squadron acquitted itself well. The squadron continued to escort bomber operations over France throughout the rest of the month losing in the process two more pilots including another to the pilots of JG-26 on 27 April. That pilot was Marc Hauchemaille, one of the oldest pilots serving with the Free

46. Dup erier, *Equipe*, p. 110. De Scitivaux's loss was somewhat cushioned by the fact that he had been able to bale out of his aircraft and although wounded was taken prisoner by the Germans. His wife, who he had left behind in 1940, would arrive in England just after he had been posted as missing. Even in captivity, de Scitivaux would carry on resisting. His third attempt, on 26 April 1945, would be successful. Stories seem to have circulated in mid-1942 that Choron's body had been recovered from the sea about a month after he was shot down.

French Air Force, who was serving as Dup erier's wing man. His death depressed morale throughout the squadron. Back at base, the chief of the crew which serviced Hauchemaille's Spitfire sat on one of the chocks in front of the empty space for the aircraft and openly cried. "Nonoche" had been a father figure to many of the young pilots.

By the end of April 1942, there were serious concerns within British and French circles that Ile de France was in danger of being labelled a hard luck outfit. With the exception of two "probables" on 10 April, the Squadron had yet to claim its first "kill." Valin visited the squadron to instruct the men that "they 'were not giving complete satisfaction'" and to threaten "them with courts of enquiry, demotion, and even expulsion from the squadron if they did not pull their weight and give maximum effort for the cause of France."⁴⁷ However, the fortunes of the squadron turned on 3 May during a morning fighter sweep over Calais. Dup erier and Jean Tedesco each claimed a Focke Wulf 190 destroyed. A further Focke Wulf was damaged in the engagement. The squadron received telegrams of celebration (and relief) from the Air Ministry and Free French headquarters. With the victories of 3 May, and with the strong leadership of Duperier, the fortunes of 340 Squadron began to improve rapidly.

Even so, for most Free French pilots the airwar from 1941 to 1942 was a depressing war of attrition fought above the sea approaches to the United Kingdom and over Northern France. Fighter sweeps were rarely productive as the *Luftwaffe* repeatedly refused to give battle in order to save its strength. Escorting daylight bombing missions over France compromised the tactical operation of fighter aircraft, and the gunners on American bombers were known for being "very trigger happy."⁴⁸ There was also the horror for French pilots of watching bombs fall on their homeland. Jean Maridor was certainly affected by flying over his homeland in support of bombing missions on French targets. One of his biographers would later write of how he had been troubled by a mission on 18th December 1941. Flying from RAF Perranporth in Cornwall to support a force of fifty-four bombers whose mission it was to attack the French port of Brest, Maridor was upset by the experience:

The young pilot thought of the people of Brest, which yesterday's air raid alert had perhaps surprised on their way to the shops which were still open. They would have been getting ready for Christmas, despite the difficulties at that time. Jean knew about the busy time at the end of December.... His father and mother went out on various pretexts which fooled nobody,

47. Brown, *Airmen in Exile*, p. 151.

48. Air Vice-Marshal J.E. "Johnnie" Johnson, *Full Circle* (London: Pan, 1964), p. 239.

and they came back with mysterious parcels in their hands.⁴⁹

Later, Maridor showed that he was ready to take issue with fellow pilots who, during the course of operations, did not show due care and attention for the lives and welfare of French citizens. Intelligence room film shows involving camera gun footage would sometimes be punctuated by outbursts from Maridor delivering rebukes to his fellow pilots for actions likely to endanger French lives on the ground.⁵⁰

The Free French movement expanded slowly in 1942. The landings in Madagascar in May, the conquest of Syria and Lebanon in June-July, and the landings in French North Africa in November 1942 increased the number of qualified pilots and potential aircrew trainees available for the Free French Air Force. However, the overall numbers were disappointing, confirming doubts about the real appeal of General de Gaulle. Less than one in six of the French troops "freed" by the liberation of Syria chose to join the Free French movement.⁵¹ The small number of additional airmen produced by the operations in 1942 would take time to become ready for front line squadron service. They would require, at the very least, operational training on British types and in British methods.

It would take time to replace the losses of French airmen sustained in late 1942 as RAF Fighter Command had stepped up their offensive over France. The offensive would culminate with the air battles fought in support of the Dieppe raid on 19 August 1942. Over Dieppe, the RAF lost more than 100 aircraft to the *Luftwaffe's* seventy. Most of the losses were sustained by the squadrons of RAF Fighter Command as it used the Dieppe raid as a test to see whether it could establish air supremacy over a landing beach on the coast of France. The inadequacies of the Mark V Spitfire in combat with the Focke Wulf 190 were laid bare by the action over Dieppe. One French pilot later put it: "Our Spits did not have a chance, neither diving nor climbing, against the FW [190]."⁵² Fighter Command would lose ninety-one aircraft (twenty-seven pilots rescued from the sea by Allied vessels). French pilots were to the fore of the action. Five of them were killed in action over Dieppe and one of them was among the seventeen Allied pilots captured by German forces on the ground. The loss of the popular Francois Fayolle, the French commander of 174 Squadron, hit morale throughout the Free French Air Force. When news of his loss reached the Ile de France Squadron, Bernard

49. Marcel Jullian, *Jean Maridor: Chasseur de VI* (Paris: Le Livre Contemporain, 1955), p. 132.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-33.

51. Alistair Horne, *The French Army in Politics, 1870-1970* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 70.

52. André Gibert, "A Floteurs et à Roulettes," *Icare*, no. 133, 1990, *Les Forces Aériennes Françaises Libres*, tome 2, p. 121 (trans.).

Dup erier was distraught: "I broke down. Francois, on whom luck always seemed to smile, who was loved by all..., had disappeared... No one knew anything."⁵³ It would take until 1998 for the body of an unknown RAF Squadron leader pulled from the sea on 19 August 1942 to be identified as that of Fayolle.

At the same time as growing numbers of French pilots were being lost over France in 1942 de Gaulle had found fresh duties for his pilots. By the end of 1941, Charles de Gaulle had identified the fighting in Russia as offering some fresh opportunities for the Free French Air Force and the Free French movement in general. With the enemy at the gates of Moscow, the situation on the Eastern Front remained critical. Stalin had made desperate appeals to both the British and the Americans to increase their aid to the Soviet Union and to intervene in Western Europe in ways which could draw German units away from the East. The outcome of the fighting on the Eastern Front would determine the outcome of the war. The Soviet Air Force in particular had been outclassed and decimated by the *Luftwaffe*. The commitment of French pilots to the fighting on the Eastern Front offered de Gaulle considerable opportunities. Their commitment would signal the continued growth of the strength of Free French forces and their willingness to meet the enemy on every battlefield. There would be considerable propaganda and prestige to be derived from sending French forces to Russia. Stalin would be grateful for de Gaulle's support. This would make him less dependent on the whims of the British and the Americans. The Americans in particular had demonstrated by 1942 that they regarded de Gaulle, especially with regard to issues relating to the French Empire, as a problem rather than a valuable ally. The political pay offs from the commitment of a small group of French pilots to the Russian cause were considerable thus de Gaulle gave the go-ahead to the formation of a French fighter squadron on Russian soil. On 1 September 1942, *Groupe de Chasse GC 3 "Normandie"* completed the process of forming up at Baku in Azerbaijan. They were then put into a process of Operational and Conversion training on the Yak-7 fighter. Entering combat on 22 March 1943, they would eventually claim 273 enemy aircraft destroyed.⁵⁴

53. Dup erier, *Equipe*, p. 166 (trans.).

54. The figure of 273 *Luftwaffe* aircraft destroyed by the Normandy-Niemen Squadron is given by Thomas Polak, *Stalin's Falcons: The Aces of the Red Star* (London: Grub Street, 1999), p. 355, and by John D. Clarke, *French Eagles – Soviet Heroes: The 'Normandie-Niemen' Squadrons on the Eastern Front* (Stroud: Sutton, 2005), p. ix. The figures may seem high, even by the standards of the Eastern Front, and there were significant differences in accounting procedures between the different Allied air forces. Revealingly, the number of "probables/damaged" claimed by the Normandy-Niemen Squadron stands at just eighty-two enemy aircraft. The ratio of "kills" to "probables" thus stands at 3.329 (kills) to 1 (probable/damaged) for the squadron. The comparative figure for

At the end of 1942 as the fighting in the Middle East came to an end, *Groupe de Chasse Alsace*, which had rendered sterling service to the Allied cause in the Middle East during the previous two years, was disbanded. "Alsace" was reformed as Squadron 341 RAF at Turnhouse on 21 January 1943 and René Mouchotte was appointed Squadron leader. Determined to forge an effective fighting force, and to guard against any emergence of the disciplinary problems that had dogged 340 Squadron, Mouchotte was careful in his selection of pilots. Using some of the old hands from Alsace's days in the Middle East, such as Bruno Bourges and Raoul Duval, and some veterans like Boudier from 340 Squadron, he handpicked his pilots. As he noted in his diary: "I do not know how many officials I've given my two famous lists to, the golden list of pilots I wanted and the black list of the ones I wouldn't have at any price."⁵⁵ Exercising an RAF Squadron leader's prerogative, 341 Squadron was to fight according to principles laid down by Mouchotte who devised a formation where mutual covering support was the priority. His system, which he was called on to explain by senior officers in Fighter Command, required a high degree of discipline, or as Mouchotte called it, "blind discipline" for aircraft to remain in formation and to complete the mission assigned to them.⁵⁶ Surprised and relieved at the "good name" which 341 Squadron rapidly earned for himself, Mouchotte was ready to deal with any pilot who was not ready to submit himself to "blind discipline." He wrote in his diary on 16 March: "I made no bones about getting rid of three doubtful ones, one for technical reasons, another for reasons of morale, the third for both."⁵⁷ One of those pilots rejected by Mouchotte seems to have been Jean Maridor who was returned to an RAF squadron which was perhaps better able to accommodate an individualist like him.

Under Mouchotte's leadership, "Alsace" 341 Squadron rapidly made a name for itself as a highly disciplined and effective fighting force. The Squadron did not experience the kind of squabbling and in-fighting which had dogged the setting up of the 340 "Ile de France Squadron." Mouchotte impressed senior RAF officers by his personal bearing, self-discipline, and unrelenting determination to press the fight against an enemy that he personally detested: "He was always immaculately

French fighter pilots serving with the RAF comes out at 2.26 (kills) to 1 (probable/damaged). In other words, after an engagement with the enemy, French pilots flying with the RAF were significantly more likely to be credited with a "probable/damaged" rather than a "kill" than their counterparts flying as part of the Soviet Air Force. At the end of the war, Stalin expressed his gratitude by offering the unit's Yak-3 fighters to France. The thirty-seven aircraft delivered to France remained operational until April 1947.

55. Mouchotte Diary, 17 March 1943, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 186.

56. Mouchotte Diary, 18 April 1943, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 187.

57. Mouchotte Diary, 16 March 1943, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 185.

dressed... But René's appearance belied his true worth as a leader and a fighter pilot... A quiet and reserved officer on the ground; an aggressive and purposeful fighter in the air."⁵⁸ His combat reports are models of military precision. Only in his diary did Mouchotte confide his innermost thoughts.

On 15 May 1943 Mouchotte was involved in an engagement which brought to 1,000 the number of enemy aircraft shot down by Biggin Hill-based Squadrons. Mouchotte claimed one aircraft and a Canadian pilot from the same wing a further two. Unable to determine who had shot down which aircraft, Mouchotte and the Canadian pilot were both credited with the thousandth kill. Considerable press attention was given to the event, and to the Alsace Squadron, with coverage by the British Broadcasting Company and the major British newspapers.⁵⁹ The event underlined the perception that the propaganda worth of the Free French Fighter squadrons was vastly larger than their value as combat units.

The formation of the Alsace Squadron was an indication of how the Free French Air Force was changing. The rallyers of 1940-42 were slowly giving way to later arrivals as the fighter war in Western Europe stepped up a gear. There were increasing numbers of escort and diversionary missions to be flown as the bomber offensive progressed. Fighter sweeps into France and Belgium were also increased as the Allied air forces tried to establish the air superiority which would be necessary for the launching of the second front in Europe. The rate of attrition on pilots was considerable. Mouchotte confided in his diary on 9 June 1943:

And the sweeps go on, at a terrible pace. I am at the record figure of 140. I feel a pitiless weariness from them. It is useless for me to go to bed at 9.30 each night; I feel my nerves wearing out, my temper deteriorating... I have not taken a week's leave for two years... Anyway, where can I go?⁶⁰

He would be killed in combat the month after writing this diary entry.

While the old guard were succumbing in this war of attrition (Mouchotte's death would leave just five remaining out of the thirteen pilots who had flown in combat with the RAF in the Battle of Britain), their sustained influence was unmistakable. Promotions ensured that they remained prominent within the ranks of the growing Free French Air Force and men like Mouchotte left a considerable legacy. Alsace would remain the squadron that Mouchotte had built.

At the end of 1943, the Committee of National Defence accepted a

58. Group Captain Alan Deere, *Nine Lives* (New York: Beagle, 1959), p. 230.

59. See Mouchotte Combat report, 15 May 1943, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR 50/132. Operations Record Book, 15-17 May 1943, 341 Squadron, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR 27/1738.

60. Mouchotte Diary, 9 June 1943, in Dezarrois, *Mouchotte*, p. 199.

plan from General Bouscat to radically expand the size of the Air Force. De Gaulle explained in his memoirs that under the plan:

Seven units, four for pursuit and three for bombardment, were to be based in Great Britain, twenty one groups, eight for pursuit, four for bombardment, six for defence of coasts and airfields, one for reconnaissance, two for transport, were to operate in the Mediterranean theatre; two pursuit groups were to operate in Russia.⁶¹

The build up of the air arm would rely on British, American, and Russian goodwill in the supply of aircraft and other equipment. It would also rely on using a substantial number of men who had served Vichy until the Allied liberation of French North Africa. Politically, and practically, this was unavoidable, but it was to set up certain tensions within the French Air Force as the rallyers of 1940-42 found themselves alongside men from Vichy and North Africa who, for various reasons, had obeyed the orders of Vichy. Squadron 329 "Cigones" (*Groupe de Chasse I/2*) formed up on 6 January 1944 and 345 "Berry" (*Groupe de Chasse II/2*) on 5 April 1944. "Cigones" was a well established unit of the French Air Force having made a name for itself in the First World War and again in 1939-40. "Berry" meanwhile was the subject of considerable suspicion. Concerns about the potential loyalties of some of the unit's pilots led to interrogations for squadron personnel as they arrived at Ayr on 12 February. Seven pilots failed the interrogation and were taken to London, and what happened to them subsequently is not clear from squadron records. Frenchmen whose loyalty was in question could expect to receive a somewhat more robust interrogation at French Headquarters in London.⁶² The process of "weeding out" personnel deemed unsatisfactory by either the British or French authorities was continued as late as 5 June. Given that "Berry's" pilots had gone through 53 and 61 Operational Training Units between February and June 1944, it seems likely that it was the political outlook, and potential to compromise impending operations, which led to Squadron Leader Bernard's visit to the Air Ministry on 5 June "with a view to getting some of the unsatisfactory personnel removed from the Squadron."⁶³

The Normandy invasion of June 1944 prompted a desperate desire amongst French pilots to return home in an emotional if not a physical sense. One senior officer observed the moment when on 5 June 340, 341, and 329 Squadrons were informed that they would soon be flying over

61. Charles de Gaulle, *War Memoirs*, Vol. 2, *Unity, 1942-1944* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1956), p. 252.

62. Egremont, *Spears*, p. 199.

63. Operations Record Book, 5 June 1944, 345 Squadron, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR 27/1741.

France in support of the invasion: "The expressions on the faces of the Frenchmen when they heard the glad news was indescribable."⁶⁴ Following the establishment of the first field airstrips in Normandy, several French pilots found excuses to make "emergency" landings. However, the process of homecoming rarely ran smoothly. Pierre Clostermann, for example, flying regular missions over Normandy after 6 June, became one of the first Allied pilots to land in France. On 11 June he touched down at B-11, a temporary airfield that was under construction at Longues-sur-Mer. Ready for the historic moment of the return to France, and attired in his best dress uniform, Clostermann was somewhat perturbed to find himself in the middle of a dump. With sniper activity on the perimeter, Clostermann was informed by one of the Commandos who helped him from his aircraft: "Well, Frenchie, you're welcome to your blasted country."⁶⁵

The homecoming experiences of Marcel Boisot of 340 Squadron similarly fell below expectations after he faked an emergency in order to land at airstrip B.8 near Bayeux.⁶⁶ He rushed anxiously to embrace an old lady that he found weeding her garden only for her to conclude that she was about to be ravished. Her screams brought out most of the village and it took some explaining before his identity and intentions were clearly understood. Imbibing a little too much of the freely-offered celebratory Calvados, he performed some impromptu acrobatics over his airfield on his return to England. It was, perhaps, only the fact that Boisot was able to contribute camembert, Calvados, and butter to the Squadron mess which saved him from disciplinary action.

Amongst the French pilots of the RAF in June and August 1944 there seems to have been an almost universal hope that technical difficulties would provide them with an opportunity to land in France. Jacques Andrieux encountered two French pilots at Tangmere who had been forced to set down at B-II: "They tell me with tears in their eyes, about their visit to Bayeux after their forced landing. But their emotion, strong as it has been, did not prevent them bringing back some prime camembert and calva."⁶⁷

From a human perspective, the desire to reconnect with France and French life was entirely understandable, but from the point of military discipline and efficiency, the impulse of so many of the French fighter pilots of the Royal Air Force threatened considerable complications.

64. Deere, *Nine Lives*, p. 255.

65. Pierre Clostermann, *The Big Show: Some Experiences of a French Fighter Pilot in the RAF* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), p. 130.

66. Marcel Boisot, "Juin 1944 le débarquement," *Icare*, no. 138, 1991, *Les Forces Aériennes Françaises Libres*, tome 4, *Les Chasseurs Français en Angleterre 1942-1944*, p. 94 (trans.).

67. Andrieux, *Le Ciel et l'Enfer*, p. 208.

Emergency landings on half-constructed airstrips, still under fire from the enemy, could be viewed as something other than an amusing bending of the rules. It was with some sense of relief that the French Squadrons were called on to begin operations from forward airstrips in France. For 341 Squadron this happened as early as 13 June with the Squadron Operations Record noting: "Pilots were dirty and tired, but full of excitement after their first contact with France after three or four years."⁶⁸ By August 1944, the French squadrons found themselves operating permanently from forward bases in France, but that in turn raised further problems as pilots sought opportunities to seek out family and friends. For example, in August 1944 within 329 Squadron, Captain Ozanne used a Squadron errand to locate his wife near Caen and two other pilots used a light aircraft assigned to the squadron to fly to Brittany for family reunions.⁶⁹ Jacques Guignard and Martin Prudhomme of 340 Squadron similarly used an Auster light aircraft on 24 August for the purposes of family reunions.⁷⁰

The liberation of Paris on 25 August 1944 was greeted with wild celebrations. As the Operations Record Book for 329 Squadron recorded: "Great news today, Paris has been liberated, and liberated by the French themselves."⁷¹ However, the liberation of France and the impending end of the war increased the tensions between the different groups which now made up the French Air Force. They were a direct reflection of the divisions which would mar French society after 1944. As the pilots of the French fighter squadrons flew ground attack, V-1 intercept, and bomber escort missions over the English Channel and in France and Germany up until the end of 1944, they became increasingly aware of the tensions opening up in French society and politics. The formation of a provisional government saw the first demarcation of the battle lines. In his memoirs, Pierre Clostermann revealed his distaste for the resurgent Air Ministry in Paris "with its incoherence, its senile colonels, its 'members of the resistance,' its counter orders, and all those fishy characters in their shady uniforms who had come to the surface over there, like the scum on boiling jam."⁷²

Within the French fighter force, the tensions of politics and history

68. Operations Record Book, 13 June 1944, 341 Squadron, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR 27/1738.

69. Operations Record Book, 28-30 August 1944, 329 Squadron, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR 27/1720.

70. Jacques Guignard, "La Guerre? Une Partie de Rigolade," *Icare*, no. 138, 1991, *Les Forces Aériennes Françaises Libres*, tome 4, *Les Chasseurs Français en Angleterre 1942-1944*, p. 46 (trans.).

71. Operations Record Book, 25 August 1944, 329 Squadron, National Archives, Kew (NA) AIR 27/1720.

72. Clostermann, *The Big Show*, p. 173.

became very apparent when in March 1945 Alsace and Ile de France were brought together with the two French Spitfire squadrons which had been formed in the run up to D-Day. Brought together as the French Fighter Wing, they were to be commanded by Wing Commander R.W.F. Sampson. The fact that it was commanded by an English man rather than a French man probably owed much to the RAF's determination to keep the four French Squadrons firmly in order. It was also probably a recognition on both sides of the schisms which existed between the men of the different squadrons. Sampson was very quick to recognize the problems:

Whereas the Poles, Czechs and Norwegians eventually had their own wing leaders, Generals de Gaulle and Valin did not press for this point and I can only surmise that it was because the two Squadrons – 340 and 341 – were technically, in the eyes of 345 and 329, military deserters from France.⁷³

Sampson detected considerable mutual antipathy between the squadrons along fault lines determined by the dates at which the men of the different squadrons had joined the Free French cause. The tensions were not helped by nature of the fighting following the Normandy break out. Close air support and ground attack missions against dug in targets constituted unglamorous and dangerous work that sapped morale and the lives of pilots. Aerial targets dwindled as the *Luftwaffe* edged towards defeat. Sampson addressed this problem of the different squadrons looking "somewhat sideways" at each other by cross-promoting between the squadrons. Sampson and the RAF had done their best by war's end to minimize the schisms between the different French units, but the divisions remained apparent.

In November 1945, the men of the four French fighter squadrons left RAF control as they either disbanded or were formally transferred to the control of the *Armée de l'Air*.⁷⁴ Although most of the rallyers of 1940-41 had fallen in the aerial war of attrition, their influence remained. Demozay, Valin, and others would continue their careers in the Air Force after the defeat of Germany. Jacques Andrieux would not leave the Air Force until 1970. Other former pilots such as Clostermann and Charles Duperier would go into politics. Such men had the very clearest conception of the France they had fought for and which their friends had died to see reborn in 1944. They would continue to fight for their conception of France, in a country beset by the divisions of 1940, amidst the disap-

73. Wing Commander R.W.F. Sampson, *Spitfire Offensive* (London: Grub Street, 1994), p. 143.

74. 340 and 345 Squadrons were transferred to the control of the *Armée de l'Air* on 25 and 21 November respectively. 329 Squadron disbanded in the UK on 17 November.

pointments of a post-war period punctuated by the decolonization problems of Indo-China and North Africa. Some would demonstrate that the loyalties of 1940, and the habit of mistrusting a lawfully-appointed French government, would cast a long shadow over post-war relations between the military and the French Government. The guardians of the honor of France and the *Armée de l'Air* in 1940 would self-consciously remain on guard long after the French squadrons of the Royal Air Force had been stood down.

Appendix A

The following is a chronological list of French aircraft flown to British territory by aircrew seeking to join the Free French forces.

*Main sources of information: <www.cieldegloire.com> (accessed June 2009) and Henry Lafont, *Aviateurs de la Liberté* (Paris: Service Historique de l'Armée de l'Air, 2002).

Date	Aircraft Type	Departure >> Arrival
17 June 1940	RAF Bristol Bombay (abandoned)	Château-Bougon >> Sutton Bridge (UK)
Known names of crew (hereafter KNC): Demozay, and sixteen GB ground crew. The obsolete aircraft had to be repaired before it could fly. Demozay was not a trained pilot: he had "picked up" the skill from watching others and had never flown a twin-engined aircraft before.		
17 June 1940	Caudron Simoun	Royan >> Yeovil (UK)
KNC: Ezanno, Preziosi		
17 June 1940	Caudron Simoun	Royan >> Yeovil (UK)
KNC: Gaillet, Moizan, Soufflet		
17 June 1940	Caudron Simoun	Royan >> near Exeter (UK)
KNC: Roché, Bausardo, Bideau. This aircraft appears to have been flown by three mechanics relying on knowledge they had acquired while flying with, and observing, trained pilots.		
17 June 1940	RAF aircraft	Bordeaux-Merignac >> Hendon (UK)
Passengers included: Hahn, Malbranque, Ottensooser, and approximately seven others. Ottensooser negotiated with the RAF pilot to provide aviation fuel for the aircraft in exchange for transport for the party wishing to escape to the UK.		
18 June 1940	Potez 63-11	Cognac >> Lypmne (UK)
KNC: Goujon de Thuisy		
19 June 1940	Caudron Simoun	Cazeaux >> Exeter (UK)
KNC: Robert Grasset, Georges Grasset		
20 June 1940	Farman 222 (four-engine aircraft)	St Jean d'Angély >> UK
KNC: J. Denis, Tazzer, Ferrant, Speich, Goumin, Cantès, Robinet, Drouet, Perbost, and perhaps 10-11 others. Many of the passengers were radio specialists.		
20 June 1940	Amiot 354	Cazeaux >> UK
KNC: Jabin, Bost		
20? June 1940	Morane Saulnier 406	Rayack (Lebanon) >> Alexandria (Egypt)
KNC: Péronne		
20? June 1940	Morane Saulnier 406	Rayack (Lebanon) >> Alexandria (Egypt)
KNC: Ballatore		
20? June 1940	Morane Saulnier 406	Rayack (Lebanon) >> Alexandria (Egypt)
KNC: Coudray		

These three Morane Saulnier 406 fighter aircraft were ordered by the French AF in Lebanon to fly to Egypt to assist in the air defense of Alexandria. The precise date of that transfer is uncertain. Immediately upon arrival, the French command ordered them back to Lebanon, but on the way they landed at Ismailia to refuel. There they met Captain Jacquier, who persuaded them to stay in Egypt and continue the fight.

- 22 June 1940 Caudron Goéland Toulouse >> UK
KNC: Béguin, R. Cordingley, Roques, Schloesing, Casparius
- 24 June 1940 Amiot 354 (No. 21) France >> Southampton (UK)
KNC: Devin, and others?
- 24 June 1940 Potez 63-11(No. 838) Bergerac >> UK
KNC: Jacob, Neumann, Morel
- 25 June 1940 Potez 540 Cazeaux >> Exeter (UK)
KNC: Pétain, Deport, Jean
- 26 June 1940 Dewoitine 520 Toulouse-Francazals >>
KNC: Littolf Boscombe Down (UK)
- 26 June 1940 Dewoitine 520 Toulouse-Francazals >>
KNC: Feuillerat Boscombe Down (UK)
- 26 June 1940 Dewoitine 520 Toulouse-Francazals >>
KNC: Moulènes Boscombe Down (UK)
- 26 June 1940 Caudron Simoun – FAILED Nouvion >> Gibraltar
KNC: Risso and two others. The aircraft was forced by Spanish flak to land on a beach in Spain. The crew were imprisoned, but Risso managed eventually to reach Gibraltar on forged papers supplied by a friend in the Vichy Embassy in Madrid.
- 28 June 1940 Glenn Martin 167 Oran >> Gibraltar
KNC: Becquart, Antomarchi, Sandré, Hirlemann. Lafont gives three different dates: 28, 30, and 2 July. Lafont says Sandré escaped on this aircraft, but entry for Sandré actually places him on Neumann and Jacobs's aircraft (see 24 June above).
- 29 June 1940 Caudron Simoun Fez (Morocco) >> Gibraltar
KNC: Weil, Despassailles, Lemaitre
- 29 June 1940 Caudron Goéland "Ville de Mascara" Fez (Morocco) >> Gibraltar
KNC: Noël, Gaudard, Duffranc
- 29 June 1940 Morane 230 Alto Rabo >> Gibraltar
KNC: Crouzet
- 30 June 1940 Glenn Martin 167 Ber Rachid >> Gibraltar
KNC: Aubertin, St Pérouse, Lager
- 30 June 1940 Glenn Martin 167 – FAILED Ber Rachid >> Gibraltar
KNC: De Vendevre, Berger, Jochaux du Plessix, Robert Weill. This aircraft was shot down by Spanish flak and crashed in Gibraltar harbor; all aboard were killed.
- 30 June 1940 Caudron Goéland Oran >> Gibraltar
KNC: Mouchotte, Heldt, Guerin, Sorret, Lafont, Duval
- 30 June 1940 Caudron Simoun Oran-La Senia >> Gibraltar
KNC: Fayolle, Stourm
- 30 June 1940 Potez 540 – FAILED Fez (Morocco) >> Gibraltar

KNC: Diacono, Foisset, Frenzer, Jeunehomme, Le Digabel, Raybaudie, Renaud, Sentenac. This aircraft crashed in flames shortly after take-off, possibly because too much haste led to engines not being warmed-up properly. Some accounts suggest it was brought down by French anti-aircraft fire. All aboard were killed.

30 June 1940 Bloch 175 – FAILED Oran >> Gibraltar
KNC: De Geoffre, Gaston, and one other. Attempt to take off at dawn foiled by Vichy loyalists alerted by sound of engines starting up.

1 July 1940 Glenn Martin 167 (No. 102) Youks les Bains >> Egypt
KNC: Dodelier, Trecan, Cunibil

1 July 1940 Glenn Martin 167 (No. 82) Youks les Bains >> Egypt
KNC: Ritoux-Lachaud, Rolland

1-2 July 1940 Caudron Simoun Oran-Tafaroui >> Gibraltar
KNC: Yves Mahé, Hazard, Segineau, Fifre

2 July 1940 Potez 63-11 (No. 799) Damascus >> Ramleh >> Egypt
KNC: Lebois, Vergerio, Djabian. Lafont's entry for Lebois indicates 2 July, but entry for Vergerio indicates 3 July.

2-3 July 1940 Potez 65 Algiers Maison Blanche >> Gibraltar
KNC: Lignon, Michel, Canepa, Lacombe, Chatillon. Two doubtful points: Lafont gives 3 July as date in entry for Lignon and omits mention of Michel, but he gives 2 July in Lacombe's entry and adds Michel.

3 July 1940 Caudron Goéland Meknès >> Gibraltar
KNC: Pierre Blaize, Perrin, Poisat, Donnadiou. They stole the personal aircraft of the commander of the Meknès air base.

4 July 1940 Latécoère 298 (flying boat No. 33) Bizerta-Karouba >> Malta
KNC: Duvauchelle, Méhouas

23 Aug. 1940 Caudron Simoun Nouvion >> ??
KNC: Bulle, Bernard, Crozat

?? Aug 1940 Potez 63 – FAILED Lyon-Bron >> ??
KNC: Nemoz. Undercarriage failed on take-off; pilot sent to Vichy jail for one year. He later joined FAFL on 22 Oct 1942, via Spain.

2 Sept. 1940 Potez 29 Palmyra >> Haifa
KNC: Imbert and four mechanics.

6 Sept. 1940 Potez 29 (No. 106) Djibouti >> Egypt
KNC: Giocanti, Michel

10 Sept. 1940 Potez 25 Gao (Mali) >> Kabina (Nigeria)
KNC: René Weill, Prandi

15 Oct. 1940 Loire 130 (No. 72 seaplane belonging to *Richelieu*) Bizerta-Karouba >> Malta
KNC: Georges Blaize, Gatien, Romanetti

4 Nov. 1940 Caudron Pelican Indo-China >> Malaya
KNC: Jubelin, Arnoux, Ducorps. This was a tourist aircraft with range of only 500km. Escape was carefully planned in stages to allow for refuelling. Jubelin flew solo from Saigon to Trang Bang; there he picked up Arnoux plus fuel, then on to Kompong-Trach; there he picked up Ducorps plus just enough fuel to cross the Gulf of Siam to Malaya.

15 Nov. 1940 Zlin private aircraft Jugon les Lacs (Brittany) >> UK
KNC: Halna du Fretay and one passenger.

5 Dec. 1940 unknown aircraft type Beirut >> Palestine
KNC: Tulasne

?? ?? 1940 Caudron Simoun – FAILED Oran >> Gibraltar
KNC: Charasse. Forced landing after engine failure on take-off. Pilot managed to hide, then move to Morocco to wait for another opportunity (see below).

8 Dec. 1940 North American BT-9 Casablanca >> Gibraltar
KNC: Charasse, Allignol

?? ?? 1940/41 Potez 63 – FAILED France >> ??
KNC: Roger Denis. Unspecified date: attempt to steal aircraft thwarted when one engine refused to start. Denis continued to serve in Vichy Air Force until German occupation of Vichy France. He eventually escaped via Spain and joined the Normandie-Niemen *Groupe*.

21 Jan. 1941 Caudron Simoun – FAILED Fez (Morocco) >> Gibraltar
KNC: Peraux. Attempt failed; pilot arrested ten days later and sent to Vichy jail for ten years. He eventually escaped and hid until the U.S.-British landings in North Africa.

24 Jan. 1941 unknown aircraft type – FAILED Morocco >> Gibraltar
KNC: M. Brunschwig, Daffos, Rey, Maitre, Roos. Attempt to take off failed. Crew and helpers arrested and imprisoned.

1 Feb. 1941 Potez 29 Madagascar >> Mozambique
KNC: Chevalier. Short of fuel, the aircraft went down in the sea off the Mozambique coast. The pilot was rescued.

1 Feb. 1941 Caudron Goéland of the Armistice Commission Vichy >> Brittany >> UK
KNC: Colin. Pilot had to make emergency landing in German-occupied Brittany, but was able to take off again in front of two *gendarmes*.

7 Feb. 1941 Loire 130 flying boat Martinique >> St Lucia >> Trinidad
KNC: Cornec, Milon, Poplimont

11 Feb. 1941 Potez 63 Rayak >> Palestine
KNC: Nevraumont

18 Feb. 1941 Loire 130C No.15 Lebanon >> Cyprus >> Egypt
KNC: Redor, Legris

?? Feb. 1941 Curtiss H-75 Senegal >> Bathurst (Gambia)
KNC: Milan

1 March 1941 Glenn Martin 167 Oran >> Gibraltar
KNC: Claude, Stourm, Pacaud

29 April 1941 Bucker "Jungmann" (German aircraft) Caen >> UK
KNC: Hébert, Boudard

16 June 1941 Air France Caudron Simoun ????? >> Gibraltar
KNC: Antoine Laurent

11 July 1941 Dewoitine 520 Syria >> Turkey
KNC: Mourier. Initially, this may not have been an attempt to join the Free French. It seems more like an aircraft of the Vichy Air Force in Syria making a forced landing in Turkey after engine failure. The pilot was interned, but escaped in 1943 and joined the Normandie-Niemen *Groupe*.

14 Oct. 1941 KNC: Albert	Dewoitine 520	Oran >> Gibraltar
14 Oct. 1941 KNC: Lefèvre	Dewoitine 520	Oran >> Gibraltar
14 Oct. 1941 KNC: Durand	Dewoitine 520	Oran >> Gibraltar
16 Nov. 1941 KNC: Cabioche, Mariani, Vergeletti.	Glenn Martin 167? – FAILED Aircraft crashed on take-off and all aboard were killed.	Bamako (Mali) >> Free French colony
15 Dec. 1941 KNC: Esnault	aircraft of Saigon Aero Club	Saigon >> ????
2 Oct. 1942 KNC: Pouyade.	Potez 25 The pilot was rescued in China by U.S. airmen. Originally, he and Bernavon (see next entry) were planning to escape together, but Bernavon could not join him on 2 October.	Indo-China >> Yunnan (China)
?? Oct. 1942 KNC: Bernavon.	Potez 25 The aircraft crashed in the jungle. After walking for a week, the pilot managed to reach Chinese troops.	Indo-China >> China

Appendix B

The following is a chronological list of attempts by French aircrew to reach British territory by sea in order to join the Free French Air Force (*Forces Aériennes Françaises Libres*).

*Main sources of information: <www.cieldegloire.com> (accessed June 2009) and Henry Lafont, *Aiateurs de la Liberté* (Paris: Service Historique de l'Armée de l'Air, 2002).

Date	Name and Type of Vessel	Departure >> Arrival
?? ?? 1940 Known names of airmen (hereafter KNA): Robveille	French fishing boat	Roscoff >> UK
?? May 1940 KNA: Balcaen	Unnamed RN destroyer	evacuated Boulogne >> UK
May/June 1940 KNA: Bourdieu, Lang, Roger, Truffert	Vessels ??	evacuated Dunkirk >> UK
?? June 1940 KNA: Grellier	Unnamed French torpedo boat	Brest >> UK
?? June 1940 KNA: Mingan	Small French fishing boat	Lampaul >> Ushant >> UK on Belgian vessel
16 June 1940 KNA: Debacq	Unnamed UK collier	Morlaix >> Cardiff
18 June 1940 KNA: Jacquinot	Unnamed French fishing vessel	Ushant >> RN ship >> UK
18 June 1940 KNA: Beaulieu	Unnamed vessel	St Nazaire >> UK
18 June 1940 KNA: Devos	Unnamed boat	Brest >> UK
19 June 1940 KNA: Rosa	Unnamed boat	Erquy >> Jersey >> Portsmouth on another vessel

- 19 June 1940 *Trébouliste* (French fishing vessel) Douarnenez >> Penzance >>
Falmouth
KNA: Autret, Berthier, Besacier, Bette, Bizien, Joubert des Ouches, Laurent, Le Bris, Lecointre, Le-couté, Borrossi, Bouguen, Le Dilasser, Bourdin, Le Goff, Bourges, Le Métayer, Brun, Le Poulenec, Brunot, Le Prou, Joire, Caron, Le Tessier, Cravoisier, Massé, Debec, Mattel, De Blignières, Moine, De Nuchèze, Moreux, Desgrès, Nioloux, De Signalony, Oléon, Drabier, Ollivier, Durand, Orabona, Échivard, Oury, Gaignot, Pabiot, Godard, Pinot, Godin, Poulain, Guernon, Reeve, Guillermin, Renaud, Guilloux, Royer, Guinamad, Signeux, Hauchemaille, Simon, Hénaux, Théâtre, Houdin, Vaillant, Houriez, Vergès, Jaffré, Vilboux
- 20 June 1940 Unnamed British collier Brest >> UK
KNA: Degail
- ?? June 1940 *Madura* (identity unknown) Bordeaux >> Falmouth
KNA: Boyer. The vessel may have been the 9,400-ton Dutch cargo-passenger line *Madoera*. It arrived on 21 June, so it must have sailed 2-3 days earlier.
- ?? June 1940 *Nettle* or *Nettie* (Dutch cargo vessel) Verdon (Gironde) >> Falmouth
KNA: De Pelleport, Raoul Duval. The vessel arrived on 22-23 June.
- ?? June 1940 *President Houdouce* (French vessel) Bayonne >> Gibraltar
KNA: Philippe De Scitivaux. In some sources, this vessel is described as a collier and in others as a fishing vessel. De Scitivaux and others highjacked it en route to Casablanca when they realized France was not going to continue the war from her African colonies. The vessel eventually took more Free French volunteers from Gibraltar to the United Kingdom.
- ?? June 1940 Unnamed vessel Bayonne or St Jean de Luz >> UK
KNA: Bergeret. No known details of date, vessel, or exact port of departure.
- 21? June 1940 *Taberg* (cargo vessel) Bayonne >> Casablanca
KNA: Castelain, Huin, Daoulas, Hubidos, De Honington, Magrot, Mallet, De Labouchère, Massart, De Montbrun, Matillon**, Dubourgel, Michelin, Gouby, Monier, Hélie, Van Wymeersch. This group of escapers came from No. 3 Fighter Training School at Avord, which had been withdrawn to escape the advancing Germans. They boarded the ship and travelled to Morocco in the expectation that France would fight on from her African empire. Details conflict in various sources. The vessel's name is usually given as *Taberg* (but sometimes *Talberg*). The ship's nationality is usually omitted, but sometimes listed as Norwegian or Swedish. It is usually stated that the ship was evacuating Polish troops, but one reference refers to evacuating Jews. The port of departure is usually given as Bayonne, but one reference gives Bordeaux. The date of sailing is not usually specified. All seem to agree that they reached Casablanca on 29 June. At Casablanca, they found that, if they wished to fight on, they would have to get to the UK. The British vice-consul advised them that two ships were evacuating Polish troops, with whom they mingled to get aboard (see *Anadyr* below).
- 21? June 1940 *Anadyr* (British cargo vessel) Casablanca >> Gibraltar >>
Greenock
The ship departed Casablanca on or about 3 July and arrived at Greenock on 17 July. Most sources read as though the whole voyage was on the *Anadyr*, but Lafont's entries for Castelain and Gouby imply their transfer from another ship to that vessel was arranged by Scitivaux at Gibraltar (where he was then ADC to Admiral Muselier). Some men, such as Hazard and Yves Mahé, who had flown to Gibraltar, also went on to the UK in this ship. Some sources mention men being in London as early as 1 July, but that would not have been possible. The 17 July arrival at Greenock is credible, as a slow cargo ship, forced to make a wide detour into the Atlantic and entering through the North Channel, would have needed ten or twelve days from Gibraltar. **For Matillon, see also June/July 1940 (*Djebel Derra*).
- 22 June 1940 Unnamed naval vessel Bayonne >> UK
KNA: Balère-Ducos. The ship arrived in the UK on 24 June.
- 24 June 1940 Unnamed fishing vessel Diben (Finistère) >> Guernsey >>
KNA: Jouniaux Plymouth on the *Astoria*

- 24 June 1940 *Apapa* (cargo vessel) Port Vendres >> Gibraltar >> UK
KNA: Choron, De Tedesco, Brayer, Gérard, De Bordas, Poznanski, Le Guyader, Reilhac. The vessel's name is spelled with a double "p" in some French sources and described as Greek. It is possible, however, that it could have been the 9,300-ton British vessel *Apapa* owned by Elder Dempster. Lafont gives the sailing date for Choron as 20 June, but most others agree that it was the 24th, except for Poznanski's date, given as 27 June. Arrival in the UK is given as early July or 6 July. Brayer's sailing date is given as 10 July, which must be an error, and is more likely his date of enlistment in the FAFL.
- 24 June 1940 Unspecified vessel (probably *Apapa*) Port Vendres >> Gibraltar >> UK
KNA: De Mezillis, Le Calvez, Bourgeois, Pijeaud
- ?? June 1940 Unnamed British naval vessel Port Vendres >> ??
KNA: Grillet, who swam out to the ship. (probably Gibraltar)
- 24? June 1940 *Batory* (Polish 14,600-ton passenger vessel) St Jean de Luz >> UK
KNA: Le Gall, Thiriez. Some sources state that Thiriez boarded the vessel on 22 June, but it probably did not sail on that day.
- 24 June 1940 *Arandora Star* St Jean de Luz >> Liverpool
(British 15,500-ton passenger vessel)
KNA: Béasse, Léon, Lepage, Béraud, Blitz, Leplang, Brisset, Mailfert, Buiron, Maridor, De Saxcé, Traisnel, Larat, Vidal, Laurent (P.), Waillier, Le Bian, Winther, Leblond. This vessel belonged to the Blue Star Line. Three other FAFL men are mentioned in some sources as being on board: Boudier (see under *Etrick* below), De Montbrun (also, more credibly, said to have travelled Casablanca >> UK), and Prud'homme (also said to have travelled via USA).
- 24 June 1940 *Sobieski* (Polish passenger vessel) St Jean de Luz >> Plymouth
KNA: André (Max), De Pange, Bundervoet, d'Hautcourt, Claron, De la Poype, Clayeux, Fuchs-Valleani, Delange, Scamaroni, Roquère, Schick. *Sobieski's* sailing date is given in some sources as 23 or even 21 June, but these seem more likely to have been boarding (rather than sailing) dates.
- 24 June 1940 *Etrick* (British 11,279-ton passenger vessel) St Jean de Luz >> Plymouth
KNA: Bécourt-Foch, Ingold, Boudier**, Leguie, De Marmier, Moynet, Taconet, De Molenes, Demas. This vessel belonged to the P&O shipping company. It arrived in Plymouth on 26 June. **Boudier also mentioned as sailing in the *Arandora Star*.
- 24 June 1940 *Kelso* (British 3,956-ton cargo vessel) St Jean de Luz >> UK
KNA: Gaine, Lux, Laureys, Thibaud. This vessel belonged to Ellerman's Wilson Line.
- ?? June 1940 Unnamed Belgian vessel St Jean de Luz >> UK
KNA: Moureaux
- 24 June 1940 Unspecified vessels St Jean de Luz >> UK
KNA: Cramoux, Hussar, Danielo, Jacquolot de B, Darbins, Laffoux, Deleuze (Régis), Derville, Laurent (Yves), De Scitivaux (Xavier), Drès, Le Petreuc. It is probable that most of these men would have been transported in one of the vessels listed above.
- ?? June 1940 Unnamed Polish vessel Departure not stated >> UK
KNA: Tremel, who probably sailed on the *Sobieski* or *Batory* (see above).
- June/July 1940 Unnamed British vessel Sète >> Gibraltar >> Liverpool
KNA: Lepel-Cointet, who flew his aircraft and landed on the beach near Sète; then, disguised in a Czech uniform, boarded the vessel to Gibraltar, arriving in Liverpool on 13 July.
- June/July 1940 *Djebel Derra* (identity unknown) Casablanca >> Gibraltar >>
UK on the *Neuralia*
KNA: Finance, Matillon**. This ship was probably the 2,800-ton French cargo vessel *Djebel Derra*. The *Neuralia*, which arrived in the UK toward the end of June/early July, was a British troopship of 9,200 tons belonging to the British-India Steam Navigation Company. **For Matillon, see also 21

June (*Taberg*).

June/July 1940 Unnamed British vessel Casablanca >> Gibraltar,
then fly >> UK
KNA: Chauvin. This vessel could have been the *Anadyr*, *Djebel Derra* (see above), or *Oak Crest*
(see below), or some other.

June/July 1940 Means not stated (boat??) St Malo >> UK
KNA: Leduc, with his brother.

?? July 1940 *Oak Crest* (British 5,407-ton cargo vessel) Casablanca >> Gibraltar >>
Glasgow
KNA: Brière, Bouquillard, Forsans, Gary, Daligot, Wainstein. The ship's name might possibly be all
one word; it belonged to the Crest Shipping Company. The arrival date in Glasgow is given as 17
July.

2 July 1940 Unnamed vessel Casablanca >> Gibraltar >>
KNA: Millet (possibly *Oak Crest* above) UK on *Capo Olmo*

03 July 1940 Small British vessel Rabat >> Gibraltar >>
KNA: Pougin UK on *Cape Olmo*

?? August 1940 Unnamed British tanker Turkey >> Egypt
KNA: Zevaco, who left Turkey, where he had been instructing Turkish pilots to fly French aircraft,
and made his way to Egypt on a British ship so that he could continue the war.

16 Sept. 1940 *Aska* (8,323-ton British cargo vessel) Gambia >> UK
KNA: Almeyrac, Conrad, Dace, Mauricet. The ship was attacked by air and sank in the Irish Sea,
15.15N 05.55W. Recruits for FAFL were men who had made their way by land from French African
colonies to British possessions and were en route to the UK by ship. Almeyrac died in hospital on
25 September.

?? Sept. 1940 *Limerick* (British 8,700-ton cargo vessel) Tahiti >> Canada
KNA: Battaglia. The ship belonged to the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand.

20 Sept. 1940 *Lulu* Tangier >> Gibraltar
KNA: De Montal, who escaped overland from Morocco to Tangier, where he boarded the *Lulu*.

29 Sept. 1940 *Meknès* (boat) Brest >> UK
KNA: Colcanap

05 Oct. 1940 Unnamed vessel Tangier >> Gibraltar
KNA: Bastet

20 Oct. 1940 *Petite Anna* (French fishing vessel) Douarnenez >> Milford Haven
KNA: Scheidhauer. They were picked up off the South Wales coast by the 394-ton British coaster
Cairngorm.

11 Nov. 1940 *Saint Pierre* (French boat) Algiers >> Gibraltar – FAILED
KNA: Martell, Feldzer, and other men. Boat got into difficulties near Balearics and the men were in-
terned in a Spanish prison for a time. Some reports place this in June 1940, but the November date
is more likely.

16 Dec. 1940 *Emigrant* (French fishing vessel) Camaret >> Newlyn
KNA: Andrieux

?? ?? 1940 Vichy French vessel France >> Madagascar
KNA: Soubabère, who was taken from the ship when it was intercepted by the Royal Navy in South
African waters.

- ?? 1940/?? 1941 French banana boat France >> Martinique
KNA: Bergerot. Some time between demobilization in August 1940 and early 1941, he boarded a ship going to Martinique. Off the coast of British Guyana, he jumped overboard and swam to shore in the British colony. From there he joined FAFL in C. Africa, via Brazil and the Gold Coast.
- 1940/1941?? *Winnipeg* (French cargo vessel) Marseilles >> ??
KNA: Cornement. After escaping from a German POW camp in December, he stowed away on board the *Winnipeg* at Marseilles. Route thereafter is not stated. Is this linked to case below?
- ?? 1941 *Winnipeg* (French cargo vessel) France >> Antilles
KNA: Desprès, who seems to have been on a Vichy French cargo ship which was intercepted by the Royal Navy. Linked to case above?
- 04 Feb 1941 *Wyoming* (French cargo vessel) France >> West Indies
KNA: Gibert, who was a merchant seaman who deserted when his ship called at St. Thomas, a U.S. possession. He reached the UK via USA and Canada.
- ?? ?? 1941 Unnamed Vichy French vessel Casablanca >> USA
KNA: Roos, who stowed away, and after internment in the USA, travelled to the UK via Canada.
- Feb. 1941 *Buhara* (French cutter) La Fresnaye Bay (near St Cast) >>
UK – FAILED
KNA: Aubry, Blangy, Dorange, Laruelle, Cauvel (Canvel?), Mathiot, Delabruyère, Ménétray, Devouassoud, Zalewski. Their boat broke down and began to sink when they were west of Guernsey. They were intercepted by a German air-sea rescue vessel and eventually put on trial. Dorange and Devouassoud were executed; Canvel and Zalewski died in prison; the rest remained in prison until the end of the war.
- Feb./March 1941 Stolen French fishing boat Diden á Primel (Brittany) >>
Plymouth
KNA: Tummers and two others. They stole a harbor launch commandeered by the Germans, could not start the motor, so stole a fishing boat with sails and an engine. They broke down off the English coast, but were towed into Plymouth by a boat from the HMS *Hood*.
- ?? March 1941 Unnamed British vessel Tangier >> Gibraltar >> UK
KNA: Brunschwig (François), who escaped overland from Morocco to Tangier and swam out to board a British ship in the harbor.
- ?? Sept. 1941 Unnamed French vessel France >> Beirut
KNA: Fry, who got a job on a ship sent to repatriate troops from Syria. Disguised as a woman, he deserted the ship in Beirut to join the FAFL. See similar case below.
- ?? Sept. (?) 1941 *Koutoubia* Marseilles >> Beirut
(French 8,800-ton passenger vessel)
KNA: Armfield. Employed as a steward on a vessel sent to repatriate Vichy troops after the British occupation of Syria, he deserted the ship in Beirut to enlist in FAFL.
- 8/9 Oct. 1941 *Morgane* (30-foot pleasure boat) Poulafret (near Paimpol) >> UK
KNA: Delery and one passenger.
- ?? Feb. 1942 Fast motorboat France >> UK
KNA: Chanal across English Channel
- 06 March 1943 *S'îls te mordent* (small French cutter) Carentec >> UK
KNA: Fourcet (Fourquet?), Du Pouget. The boat was picked up at sea by a British convoy.

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Air Power, Ethics, and Civilian Immunity during the First World War and its Aftermath

JOEL HAYWARD

ABSTRACT

Little has been published on the ethical and legal basis of air attacks on non-combatants during the First World War. Existing works have focused mainly on the injustice of the German Zeppelin and Gotha raids on British towns. They present British air campaigns on German towns and the formation of the Royal Air Force as a reasoned self-defensive response. This article breaks new ground as it attempts to paint a richer picture by explaining the influence of retributive passions – vengeance – on British thinking about how best to respond to the villainy of German air raids. By using unpublished primary sources to uncover the moral and legal rationale used by British decision-makers, it shows that they (as their German counterparts had) exploited ambiguities or "loopholes" in the ethical and legal prohibitions on the bombardment of non-combatants and explained away their own air attacks on civilian towns and villages as legitimate acts of reprisal. It ends by demonstrating that, far from feeling grave concerns about the inhumanity of targeting civilians and their environs, the most influential air power thinkers after the war were relatively uninterested in moral concepts of proportionality and discrimination. They saw air power's ability to punish the strong and culpable by attacking the weak and vulnerable as a way of making wars shorter and therefore less expensive.

KEYWORDS

Airpower; First World War; Zeppelin; Gotha; Royal Air Force (RAF); civilian immunity; ethics; morality; international law; legal; law; bombing; attacks; raids; Trenchard, Air Marshal Sir Hugh; Douhet, Giulio; Mitchell, General William "Billy"

Introduction

The Second World War serves as a grim and grotesque centerpiece among the seemingly endless wars that blighted humanity throughout history's bloodiest century: the twentieth. With excesses often attributed to and equally often excused by its claimed nature as a "total war," the Second World War remains unparalleled in the catalog of human violence. Two especially dreadful air power events within that war remind us that the warring nations either found it difficult to protect civilian populations or easy to brutalize them. Those two unglamorous events are the area bombing of civilians by the key protagonists (and done "best" by western air forces) and the atomic bombing of two Japanese civilian population centers. The devastation caused to German and Japanese civilians by air power has also been contentious ever since it occurred and controversy surrounding it has increased, not decreased.

Today's so-called "wars of choice" are very different from that great existential clash of 1939 to 1945. Superficially, aside from accidents and aberrations such as Mai Lai and Abu Ghraib, today's wars seem far more humane, clean and "precise." Discrimination, like proportionality, is held aloft by western warriors as a crucial paradigmatic quality (although not yet by all non-western nations). During NATO's 1999 air war against Yugoslavia, for instance, the Alliance waged its ostensibly humanitarian war with a highly commendable, almost obsessive desire to ensure the totally accurate placement of ordnance so as to minimize civilian deaths. The death toll of 500 Serbians during the seventy-eight days of bombing represented tremendous success at minimizing what we now euphemistically call "collateral damage."¹ Yet even this level of inflicted mortality, and the infrastructural and environmental harm that accompanied it, caused widespread public dissatisfaction in several NATO nations.²

Likewise, in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon more recently, air strikes that have inadvertently caused civilian deaths on a relatively small scale have resulted in such significant political consequences – flowing from the moral assumptions and expectations of our own civilian populations – that there is no longer anything to be gained, but much to be lost, by causing harm to non-combatants. While speaking to a group of senior NATO commanders after a 2009 air strike on an Afghan compound, Lieutenant General Stanley McChrystal highlighted this realization. He remarked:

1. According to the *Final Report to the Prosecutor by the Committee Established to Review the NATO Bombing Campaign Against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, NATO's campaign killed 495 civilians and wounded a further 820 (§ V (53)).

2. See my own articles, "Air Power and the Environment: The Ecological Implications of Modern Air Warfare." *Air Power Review*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Autumn 2009), pp. 15-41, and "NATO's War in the Balkans: A Preliminary Analysis," *New Zealand Army Journal*, no. 21 (July 1999), pp. 1-17.

Gentlemen, we need to understand the implications of what we are doing. Air power contains the seeds of our own destruction. A [Taliban] guy with a long-barrel rifle runs into a compound, and we drop a 500-pound bomb on it? Civilian casualties are not just some reality with the Washington press. They are a reality for the Afghan people. If we use airpower irresponsibly, we can lose this fight.³

McChrystal was drawing attention to the balance that must always be struck between the two seemingly contradictory imperatives that make warfighting both effective and just: the need to do legitimate military things that bring definite military advantage as well as the need to minimize harm to those people who are not morally appropriate recipients of violence. Especially since the early modern period, philosophers of war have evolved a position, now firmly codified in international humanitarian law, which makes sense of the balancing function between military and humanitarian requirements. We now know that judicious and sometimes difficult-to-achieve balance as proportionality.

This article explores these ideas using a different example from a different period; with a broad focus of the first three decades of the twentieth century. It steps back in time to the genesis of modern air power during the Great War of 1914 to 1918. Regarding this conflict, our imaginations tend to conjure up images of flimsy fighter aircraft dog-fighting above trenches or of Zeppelins dropping bombs on increasingly frantic English civilians. This article is interested primarily in the latter, and especially in the moral milieu in which the first air campaigns against cities and towns far away from war's usual habitat, the battlefield, occurred between 1914 and 1918. To create context for its central questions, the article briefly sketches the development of western moral thinking on the innocence of civilians. It then lays out the foundations of international law as it existed in 1914 to demonstrate that when a consensus on a moral position emerges, its champions push for its passage into law. The article then explains the motives, events, and consequences of the first aerial campaigns against cities, towns, and villages. It aims to address the ethics of those campaigns, not the effects (covered adequately by other scholars). It concludes with some observations on the lessons taken away from the conflict by those individuals who had the strongest influence on what occurred in subsequent decades.

Throughout the *longue durée* of recorded history, the concepts of proportionality and discrimination evolved apace with other humanitarian

3. Dexter Filkins, "Stanley McChrystal's Long War," *The New York Times*, 14 October 2009.

concepts, with their most rapid periods of development occurring in the Middle Ages and then especially in the wake of the Enlightenment. Throughout the Middle Ages, wanton military violence against non-military members of society continued to occur. Yet a consensus slowly emerged that some people and things – women and children and the dwellings, lands, produce, and animals of the peasantry – were to be protected from military violence because they were essentially harmless. The Latin word used to signify the distinction of those people from the potentially harm-causing members of society (today's "combatants") was *innocens*. This comes from the adjective *nocens*, which means harmful or injurious. Thus, those who were to be considered morally inappropriate "innocent" targets of attack gained that status because they were themselves not harming or not capable of harming.⁴ Illustrating this emerging logic, Francisco Suárez, an influential sixteenth-century Spanish Jesuit theologian, advocated limitations on his nation's violence during its war against the Ottoman Empire by arguing that "no-one may be deprived of his life save for reason of his own guilt. ... As Christians, you must apply the same principles to the inoffensive farmers and to all the peaceful civil population because they are presumed innocent unless the contrary is proved."⁵

In 1625, the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius developed these ideas further and laid the foundation of our modern understanding in his seminal work, *De Iure Belli ac Pacis* (The Rights of War and Peace). With this masterful work, Grotius became the first person to codify the notion of rights-based constraints in war into an international law of nations. He argued in *De Iure Belli*, Book II, Chapter I, § iv that it was permissible for troops to kill innocents if they inadvertently impeded the troops' self-preservation and if the deaths were not their intention.⁶ Yet he also stressed in Book III, Chapter XI, § viii that every precaution must be taken not to involve the innocent during the punishment of the guilty, "except for some extraordinary reasons" (such as self-protection) and that, if the death of the innocent seemed likely, troops should even refrain from attacking the guilty at that particular place and time.⁷

It would be wrong to suggest that these ideas, and the increasingly important Just War framework that surrounded them, were adhered to rigidly by all belligerents at all times during the European dynastic wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet the belligerents – relat-

4. Hugo Slim, *Killing Civilians: Method, Madness and Morality in War* (London: Hurst, 2007), p. 13.

5. Quoted in Larry May, "Killing Naked Soldiers: Distinguishing between Combatants and Noncombatants," *Ethics and International Affairs*, vol. 19, no. 3 (Fall 2005), p. 41.

6. Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, Edited and with an Introduction by Richard Tuck (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), Book II, p. 398.

7. *Ibid.*, Book III, p. 1439.

ively small, well disciplined armies commanded by aristocrats – generally understood that their quarrels were with each other and they therefore restrained their violence against those who wanted or played no part in the fighting. With the advent of industrialization, the greatly enlarged conscript armies of the Revolutionary, Napoleonic, and followings eras, and the re-emergence of ideological and national hatreds in warfare, the boundaries between combatants and non-combatants became increasingly blurred. The need of marching armies for vast quantities of food, supplies, and fodder, exacerbated by the deliberate minimization of baggage trains in order to maximize their speed of movement, routinely resulted in the widespread devastation of rural areas through requisition, foraging, and often outright theft as well as the maltreatment of the citizenry (and especially the peasantry) through occasional atrocities, random violence, and routine indifference.

The competing sides in the American Civil War of 1861 to 1865 possessed equally powerful passions, complicated and moderated only occasionally by the fact that, ultimately, they were brethren. It was not a clean and gentlemanly affair; it was a brutal and callous war involving carnage and pain for non-combatants, some of whom (in General William Tecumseh Sherman's Savannah Campaign of 1864, for instance)⁸ suffered direct victimization, deliberate industrial and infrastructural wreckage, and even the burning or bombing of their homes. For them, war was hell, as Sherman himself proclaimed in a famous speech in April 1880.⁹

Yet, the American Civil War also produced the first written recital of the customary laws of war – the so-called Lieber Code of 1863¹⁰ – which encapsulated the most widely accepted laws and customs of war and served as the precursor to the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. At Abraham Lincoln's request, Dr. Francis Lieber, a jurist and political philosopher at Columbia University, drafted instructions intended to guide Union forces in their war against the South. Lieber's starting position was unequivocal:

Men who take up arms against one another in public war do not

8. Mark Grimsley's *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy towards Southern Civilians 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. First published in 1995), represents an alternative school of thought that the destruction of southern property was not based on murderous intent, but was a calculated, measured attempt to demoralize the Confederate population by striking at chosen areas in order to obtain their capitulation.

9. From *Ohio State Journal*, 12 August 1880, in Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* (First ed. 1932. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993 ed.), p. 637.

10. Formally titled "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field, 24 April 1863." The full text is available on the website of the International Committee of the Red Cross: <<http://www.icrc.org/IHL.NSF/FULL/110?OpenDocument>>.

cease on this account to be moral beings, responsible to one another and to God. ... The principle has been more and more acknowledged that the unarmed citizen is to be spared in person, property, and honor as much as the exigencies of war will admit.¹¹

Wanton violence, unnecessary destruction, pillage, arson, murder, and rape of unarmed citizens were "crimes" deserving of severe punishment. Yet Lieber also articulated a hard-headed realism that tilted the balance slightly away from non-combatant protection towards "military necessity." This concept of necessity never permitted cruelty or perfidy, but it did permit incidental deaths and hardship among the unarmed population if those things were unintended, unavoidable, but militarily necessary.¹² Even the starvation or forced displacement of unarmed civilians and the confiscation or destruction of their property was permitted if it directly caused the enemy's speedier defeat.

The Lieber Code formed the basis of an international convention on the laws of war presented to the Brussels Conference in 1874 and it then stimulated the adoption of the Hague Convention on the Laws and Customs of War on Land in 1899,¹³ which was revised in 1907 as Hague Convention IV.¹⁴ Parties to the 1899 Convention even took the remarkable step of prohibiting, "for a term of five years, the launching of projectiles and explosives from balloons, or *by other new methods of a similar nature*."¹⁵ In 1907 this prohibition against aerial bombardment gained formal extension until such time as a third Hague Convention could be convened (it never was before the Great War commenced).¹⁶

For the purposes of this essay, the two most important statements in Convention IV are Articles 22 and 25. The former explains that "the right of belligerents to adopt means of injuring the enemy is not unlimited." Article 25's statement of constraint explicitly prohibits "attack or bombardment, *by whatever means*, of towns, villages, dwellings, or

11. *Ibid.*, Articles 15 and 22.

12. *Ibid.*, Articles 15 and 16.

13. Convention (II) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, 29 July 1899. Available at: <<http://www.icrc.org/IHL.NSF/FULL/150?OpenDocument>>.

14. Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, 18 October 1907. Available at: <<http://www.icrc.org/IHL.NSF/FULL/195?OpenDocument>>.

15. Declaration (IV,1), to Prohibit, for the Term of Five Years, the Launching of Projectiles and Explosives from Balloons, and Other Methods of Similar Nature. The Hague, 29 July 1899. Emphasis added. Available at: <<http://www.icrc.org/IHL.NSF/FULL/160?OpenDocument>>.

16. Declaration (XIV) Prohibiting the Discharge of Projectiles and Explosives from Balloons. The Hague, 18 October 1907. Available at: <<http://www.icrc.org/IHL.NSF/FULL/245?OpenDocument>>.

buildings which are undefended" and a prohibition on the destruction or seizure of property except when it is "imperatively demanded by the necessities of war."¹⁷ The authors inserted the phrase "by whatever means" specifically to include air attacks (which were already prohibited),¹⁸ against which, at that time, no defense could be mounted. Less helpfully, as noted by some legal commentators, the authors of Convention IV did not specify what constituted an "undefended" town or village;¹⁹ an ambiguity that later caused significant problems of interpretation and a "loop-hole" during wartime. The authors of Hague Convention IV clearly anticipated that the so-called Martens Clause in the preamble would infuse the wording with the right spirit to adopt and maintain during conflict. According to the Martens Clause:

[The Convention] has been inspired by the desire to diminish the evils of war, as far as military requirements permit ... [and as such] ... the inhabitants and the belligerents remain under the protection and the rule of the principles of the law of nations, as they result from the usages established among civilized peoples, from the laws of humanity, and the dictates of the public conscience.

Despite what would later emerge as the weakness of its ambiguity, which allowed both its spirit and letter to be treated in a cavalier fashion, Convention IV encapsulated not only the best aspects of the Lieber Code, but also of the St. Petersburg Declaration of 1868. All the leading European states and empires had signed that important declaration (including Great Britain, France, Italy, the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, and the German states). Affirming that "the progress of civilization should have the effect of alleviating as much as possible the calamities of war," the declaration emphatically upheld the concepts of discrimination and proportionality by stating that "the only legitimate object which States should endeavour to accomplish during war is to weaken the military forces of the enemy."²⁰

The excitement about powered heavier-than-air flight in general and

17. *Ibid.*, §II Chapter I, Articles 25 and 22(g). Emphasis added.

18. War Office, *Manual of Military Law* (London: HMSO, 1914), p. 252; Professor T.E. Holland, letter, *The Times*, 27 April 1914; National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey [Hereafter NA] CAB/24/44 Air Raids on Open Towns. Memorandum prepared in the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence in Accordance with War Cabinet 358, Minute 9 (12 March 1918). See also the discussion on Convention IV in J.M. Spaight, *Aircraft in War* (London: Macmillan, 1914), pp. 12-16, 30.

19. Cf. James W. Garner, "Some Questions of International Law in the European War," *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 9 (1915), p. 96.

20. Declaration Renouncing the Use, in Time of War, of Explosive Projectiles under 400 Grammes Weight. Saint Petersburg, 29 November / 11 December 1868. Available at: <<http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/FULL/130?OpenDocument>>.

the potential for aerial warfare in particular that characterized the decade following the Wright Brothers' first flight in 1903 also gave rise to grave concerns about the harm that might befall innocent civilians. At its meeting in Madrid in April 1911, the Institute of International Law debated air power's potential impact on war and reached an uneasy agreement that its benefit in scouting, reconnaissance, and dog-fighting should not be ignored or prohibited.²¹ Military air power should not be banned *in toto* unless it could be shown that aircraft in war were inevitably "unnecessarily cruel." Yet air power's likelihood of causing harm to innocent civilians should be minimized through the issuance of a prohibition. The Institute therefore passed the following resolution:

*La guerre aérienne est permise, mais à la condition de ne pas présenter pour les personnes ou les propriétés de la population pacifique de plus grands dangers que la guerre terrestre ou maritime. (Aerial warfare is permitted, but only on the condition that it does not present for the persons or property of the peaceful population greater dangers than land or sea warfare.)*²²

Despite its prestige and influence, the Institute was a non-governmental body whose resolution would have needed official ratification from most key governments for it to become part of international law. It nonetheless embodied, as a British jurist wrote in *Flight* magazine in 1918, "an enlightened principle of morality for the guidance of belligerents."²³

During the final decade of peace before the guns of August roared in 1914, several prominent jurists advanced new concepts about the sovereignty of airspace and issued draft codes governing the jurisdiction, laws, rights, responsibilities, and activities of civil and military aviators during both peace and war that they hoped would eventually form the basis of new international laws.²⁴ The most influential of these codes was that written by eminent French lawyer Paul Auguste Joseph Fauchille, whose very thorough and intricate code covered almost every imaginable scenario and held firm to the prohibition contained within Hague Convention IV.²⁵ Article 6 of Fauchille's code explicitly banned

21. Blewett Lee, "Sovereignty of the Air," *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 7 (1913), p. 479.

22. Ibid.; José Luis Fernández Flores, *Conferencia sobre derecho de la guerra aérea* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios de Derecho Internacional Humanitaria, 1911). Non-Spanish readers can find a complete English translation as Appendix V in Spaight, *Aircraft in War*, p. 145.

23. Dr. Harold D. Hazeltine, "The Recent and Future Growth of Aerial Law," *Flight*, 28 March 1918, p. 352.

24. Cf. Denys P. Myers, "The Freedom of the Air," *Green Bag*, vol. 24 (1912), pp. 430-35; Amos S. Hershey, "The International Law of Aerial Space," *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 6 (1912), pp. 381-88.

25. Published in Vol. 23 of the *Annuaire de l'Institut de Droit International* (Paris: S.

attacks on civilians and their property: "The bombardment by aircraft of towns, villages, habitations or buildings which are not defended is forbidden."²⁶

Unfortunately, repeating the ambiguity left in Hague Convention IV because he doubtless assumed, like the Convention's drafters, that common assumptions and the spirit of the prohibition would result in compliance, Fauchille never defined what actually constituted an undefended town. Would only a town in which there were no fortifications, no garrison, and no defensive resistance by the population qualify as "undefended"? What about a port town with no walls and no garrison, but warships and their stores? What about a town which, although not defended, had troops marching through it or supplies stored in it or transported through it? What about capital cities which housed the government ministries that coordinated and directed national (and therefore presumably local) resistance? In any event, war commenced in 1914 before these prescriptive issues could be clarified and any code could be embraced by governments and codified in international law. Even the politicians and strategists in those states which had military aviation capabilities had not devoted as much attention to moral and legal issues as philosophers and lawyers had. Technical considerations, as opposed to moral questioning, seemed to preoccupy their thoughts on the potential of air power.²⁷

The common picture of the Great War of 1914 to 1918 as a clash between physically muddy but morally clean combatant forces is not altogether inaccurate. In terms of explicit deliberate military violence by combatants against non-combatants, the war generally accorded with the St. Petersburg Declaration and the Hague and Geneva Conventions. The worst exceptions are notable. The German brutalization of Belgian civilians in 1914 was sufficiently bad that Allied propagandists had their work cut out for them. Both sides in Europe tried to weaken enemy resistance through maritime blockades, which caused such significant food shortages that the civilian populations of each had to resort to severe rationing. The Germans intensified their blockade with an illegal campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare. The Germans also later used the blockade as justification for launching what they called permissible retaliatory Zeppelin airship raids on British shipping, ports, and coastal towns.²⁸ Both sides also rained bombs down on each other's towns and

Karger, 1911).

26. Cf. V. Le Moyne's masterful 1913 unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: "Le Droit Futur de la Guerre Aérienne" (Université de Nancy – Faculté de Droit), p. 141.

27. Lee Kennett, *The First Air War, 1914-1918* (New York: Free Press, 1991), pp. 1-22.

28. James F. Willis, *Prologue to Nuremberg: The Politics and Diplomacy of Punishing War Criminals of the First World War* (London: Greenwood, 1982), p. 16; Matthew Lippman, "Aerial Attacks and the Humanitarian Law of War," *California Western International Law Journal*, vol. 33, no. 1 (Fall 2002), p. 9.

cities from aircraft (after apparent "successes" for the Germans with the Zeppelins), with very few people paying much attention to the fact that bombing cities and towns from the air ignored the Madrid resolution and, far more seriously, violated the spirit and almost certainly the letter of the Hague Convention IV in precisely the same way that shelling them with artillery did.

The villainy of the Zeppelin raids of 1915 onwards and the Gotha bomber raids of 1917 and 1918 resulted as much from the rudimentary and ineffective nature of early navigation and aiming as it did from any murderous intent.²⁹ Yet to watching ethicists and lawyers this did not absolve the pilots and crews of culpability. In 1915 James Garner, a leading American international lawyer, analyzed the issue at length. He argued that, even if Zeppelins were dropping bombs on towns and villages supposedly containing military objects in accordance with the Hague Conventions, it does not follow that they were acting "in conformity with the rules of humane and civilized warfare." What the letter of the Conventions may permit, he observed, "the spirit may forbid."³⁰ He explained that, while newspaper accusations of savagery and deliberate murder were unnecessary, it was "quite within the bounds of truth" to conclude that, because German aviators were dropping bombs that for practical reasons they could not possibly place accurately upon morally reasonable targets, but were dropping bombs regardless and thereby causing the deaths of innocent civilians, their actions were "contrary to the generally accepted notions of civilized warfare."³¹

The Zeppelin and Gotha raids did not cause British political and public demands for restraint and superior moral behavior. Instead, the raids created a paroxysm of popular hatred³² and, as one influential civil servant had predicted before the war,³³ caused widespread British demands for retribution in kind (politely described in official contemporary documents as "reprisals"³⁴). The same thing happened in France, where the public clamored for vengeance on Germany for the death of civilians and

29. A thorough, primary source-based and objective analysis of initial German air power motives and aspirations is decades overdue, but a useful starting point can be found in Barry D. Powers, *Strategy without Slide-Rule: British Air Strategy 1914-1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1976).

30. Garner, "Some Questions . . .," p. 100.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

32. Willis, *Prologue*, op cit., p. 28.

33. Spaight, *Aircraft in War*, p. 24.

34. Cf. NA CAB/24/44 Air Raids on Open Towns. Memorandum prepared in the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence in Accordance with War Cabinet 358, Minute 9 (12 March 1918); CAB/23/3 Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W., on Monday, July 9, 1917, at 11.30 a.m.; and CAB/23/4 Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, September 5, 1917, at 11.15 a.m.

the destruction of homes caused by German airships and aircraft.³⁵

The creation of the Royal Air Force in April 1918 flowed of course directly from the British Government's need to show its increasingly angry people that it could protect them, as well as from an emerging highly speculative argument, typified by General Smuts in his famous report of August 1917, "that the day may not be far off when aerial operations with their devastation of enemy lands and destruction of industrial and populous centres on a vast scale may become the principal operations of war."³⁶ The creation of the RAF also undoubtedly flowed from a public desire – with a fervor whipped up by what the War Cabinet described as the media's "strong agitation" and creation of "something like a panic" – for retributive power to punish Germany for attacks on British civilian centers.³⁷ Newspapers throughout 1917 carried numerous editorials and letters demanding vengeance. Some even published "reprisal maps" indicating which German civilian population centers should be struck. *Flight* magazine pointed out how recent German air raids added "another chapter of infamy" to the "already heavy amount of the brutalised Hun" and then reported what it called the public's "insistent demand for reprisals." Echoing public sentiment, *Flight* expressed its own hope "that we shall at long last really begin to hit the enemy where it will hurt him most."³⁸ Similarly, the Town Clerk in Cardiff wrote to the War Office to inform it that his Council had passed a resolution wanting an assurance that punitive reprisals against German towns "would leave little doubt that German civilians shall suffer to as great an extent as the civilians of England have suffered."³⁹

Public expectations of vengeance and punishment put the British Government, like the French, into an awkward legal and moral position. Although the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions contained no direct references to reprisals, probably out of concern that doing so would be seen as condoning their use,⁴⁰ Article 50 of Hague Convention IV of 1907 had

35. Kennett, *The First Air War*, p. 55.

36. NA CAB/24/22 War Cabinet. Committee on Air Organisation and Home Defence against Air-Raids, Second Report, 17 August 1917.

37. NA CAB/23/13: War Cabinet 242 A: Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. on Monday, October 1st, 1917 at 11.30 p.m.; Tami Davis Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The Evolution of British and American Ideas about Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 30-31.

38. *Flight*, 27 December 1917, p. 1359.

39. NA CAB/24/20 War Cabinet. Air Raid Reprisals. Letter from the Town Clerk, Cardiff, to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. City Hall, Cardiff, 12 July 1917.

40. Frits Kalshoven, *Belligerent Reprisals* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1971), p. 67; Andrew D. Mitchell, "Does One Illegality Merit Another? The Law of Belligerent Reprisals in International Law," *Military Law Review*, vol. 170 (December 2001), p. 161. Shane Darcy, "The Evolution of the Law of Belligerent Reprisals," *Military Law Review*, vol. 175

prohibited any punitive measures based on non-specific and unproven collective responsibility. No harm, the Article stated, "shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which they cannot be regarded as jointly and severally responsible." In other words, it would be wrong and illegal to punish one group of people for something that another group had done unless it could be reasonably demonstrated that the first group had directly contributed to the original grievance. Just being German citizens at a time when German airships and aircraft were committing unjust acts did not remove their right, as innocent non-combatants, to immunity from harm.

Article 50 did not, however, prohibit legitimate reprisals for illegal acts, which even the Lieber Code of 1863 had considered permissible under certain carefully managed circumstances.⁴¹ According to the Code, reprisals were often the only means available to protect a force "against the repetition of barbarous outrage."⁴² They should never be resorted to as "mere revenge," but only "cautiously and unavoidable" as a means of "protective retribution." The influential 1880 *Manuel des lois de la guerre sur terre*, or *Oxford Manual*, laid out the limits of reprisals, stipulating that they must stay proportionate to (that is, "never exceed") the original grievances and "must conform in all cases to the laws of humanity and morality."⁴³ By the First World War, to qualify as morally and legally permissible, such a reprisal was not to be undertaken as a spontaneous lashing-out following an outrage, but as a carefully conducted act in accordance with "the principle that you 'punish' the State or the armies because it and they are responsible for the acts of the individual delinquents whom you have been unable to reach and over whom they possess authority."⁴⁴ A reprisal was not intended "to punish an offence but to prevent its repetition."⁴⁵

According to the 1914 edition of the *British Manual of Military Law*, reprisals should only be conducted in response to the types of illegal acts that were becoming uncommon anyway because of "the advance of civilization and the high state of discipline" within modern armed forces.⁴⁶ Reprisals were to be undertaken in only the most extraordinary circum-

(March 2003), p. 197.

41. Henry Wager Halleck, "Retaliation in War," *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 6 (1912), p. 108.

42. Articles 27 and 28, cited above in footnote 10.

43. The Laws of War on Land. Oxford, 9 September 1880. Available at: <<http://www.icrc.org/IHL.nsf/FULL/140?OpenDocument>>.

44. NA CAB/24/72, Interim Reports of the Committee of Enquiry into Breaches of the Laws of War, with Appendices. Presented to the Right Honourable the Attorney General, 16th January 1919, (p. 49). For the "rules" as they evolved, and as they stood in 1914, see Kalshoven's fabulous, *Belligerent Reprisals*.

45. First source in footnote 41.

46. *Manual of Military Law*, op cit., p. 304.

stances because "in most cases they inflict suffering upon innocent individuals."⁴⁷ They could occur to deter the repeat of an act of illegality, but certainly not as "a means of punishment, or of arbitrary vengeance."⁴⁸ They were permissible only so long as "every effort" had first been made to identify and punish the state authorities or the armed force who carried out the original violation, occurred as a "last recourse" after formal notice of the planned reprisal had been given, remained proportionate to (and "must not exceed") the original violation, and aimed only at persuading the original violator henceforth to comply with legally accepted behavior.⁴⁹ Interestingly, the *Manual of Military Law* encouraged any decision-maker considering the undertaking of such an "extreme" measure as a reprisal first to reflect on whether "a steady adherence to the laws of war" might work better than a reprisal at persuading the wrong-doers to desist from their misbehavior.

A clear example of an attempt to employ this logic occurred in 1916. The German Navy threatened to put to death Captain James Blaikie, skipper of the steamship *Caledonia*, which had rammed a U-boat in the Mediterranean.⁵⁰ On 13 December, the British War Cabinet accepted the Admiralty's recommendation that, should the Germans execute the captain, the Foreign Secretary and the First Sea Lord should explain in writing to the German Government (through the U.S. Ambassador) that the execution would be considered "cold-blooded murder and a crime against humanity" from which immediate reprisals would follow. Any reprisal would probably take the form of an air raid on an open (that is, an undefended and civilian) town, although this was not decided and certainly not communicated to Germany. The German Foreign Office duly issued an assurance that Captain Blaikie would not be executed, but would remain a prisoner of war.⁵¹ The only unusual aspect of this case was the recommendation of bombardment from the air of an open town, which threatened to punish the innocent for the crimes of the guilty.

Air attacks as reprisals for German maritime, land, and air offenses overseas occurred regularly. Perhaps because of the same problem of not being able to punish the guilty individuals and groups in specific cases of injustice, the reprisals generally resulted in the punishment of the innocent instead. For example, in 1917 the War Cabinet concluded that "the only practicable form of reprisals" for German naval attacks on hospital ships, "and the one that had proved most effective in the past," was

47. *Ibid.*, p. 304.

48. *Ibid.*

49. First source in footnote 41; *Manual of Military Law*, pp. 304-06.

50. NA CAB/23/1 Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street on Wednesday, December 13, 1916, at 6 p.m.

51. "Captain Blaikie Not to die: Germans decide Attempt to Ram U-Boat was Justified," *The New York Times*, 16 December 1920.

the bombardment of an open German town by the Royal Naval Air Service.⁵² The War Cabinet expressed regret that, although it felt "most reluctant to embark upon a policy which might involve the killing of women and children," there was "no other alternative." Lest anyone think that only the British found themselves in this awkward situation, it is worth noting that French air attacks on innocent inhabitants of open German towns also often occurred as reprisals. In June 1916, for instance, French aviators bombed Karlsruhe and Mannheim in retaliation for German attacks on Bar-le-Duc and Luneville, even though, as even British observers pointed out, both those French towns housed military objects and thus constituted legitimate targets.⁵³

Some calls for punitive retribution for German Zeppelin and then Gotha attacks on British towns contained unusual moral reasoning, but much imagination. Sir Alfred Mond of His Majesty's Office of Works even proposed that aircraft should attempt to burn down the Black Forest with incendiaries, which would be a "reprisal of real military value" and at the same time would destroy a valuable German asset and "create a very great impression in Germany, as well as satisfying public opinion here."⁵⁴ The RAF did indeed attack the Black Forest with incendiaries and tins of petrol in August 1918, causing seven "very large" localized fires. The "immense conflagration"⁵⁵ was discussed at the highest levels, with General Smuts informing the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet that the fires were reportedly visible from forty miles away.⁵⁶ There was apparently no discussion of the morality of bombing an aspect of nature which, whilst it may have provided timber used in the war effort, was clearly a non-martial, non-industrial, but typically "innocent" feature of the German countryside that supported agrarian existence.⁵⁷

52. NA CAB/23/40 Minutes of a Meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet held in London at 10 Downing Street, S.W., on Thursday, April 12, 1917, at 11.30 a.m.

53. NA CAB/24/44 Air Raids on Open Towns. Memorandum prepared in the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence in Accordance with War Cabinet 358, Minute 9 (12 March 1918).

54. NA CAB/24/18 War Cabinet. Air Reprisals. Suggestion to Fire the Black Forest. 22 June 1917. Memorandum by Sir A. Mond.

55. NA CAB/24/62 Air Ministry. Report No. 5. For the Fortnight ending 24th August 1918.

56. NA CAB/24/63 Major General H. Trenchard 1st September 1918. Operations of Independent Force, Royal Air Force. Report during August 1918. Cf. NA CAB/23/42 Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet and Imperial War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, August 20, 1918, at 11.30 a.m.; CAB/23/7 Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, September 4, 1918, at 12 noon.

57. This is morally very different, for example, to earlier RFC plans to burn down German forests right behind the front and in which the Germans had supposedly stored weapons and supplies. Cf. AIR 1/2151/209/3/251 Proposal to burn forest of Houthulst, June 1915.

Even Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief British Armies in France, supported retributive air attacks on civilian populations. He hated the diversion of any effort away from the battlefield and questioned the "advisability, from the point of view of morality and public opinion" of attempting the type of devastating independent air campaigns that Smuts foresaw and seemed to advocate. Yet Haig supported the idea of retributive air attacks against German cities and towns because they would "punish" Germany for its own raids on British civilian areas and hopefully discourage any further such attacks.⁵⁸ Haig did urge caution, advising the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that, if spiralling tit-for-tat independent air campaigns occurred, "we must be prepared morally and materially to outdo the enemy."⁵⁹

In 1918, the new RAF gained an "Independent Force" of bombers (appropriately named, given that it would operate independently of war's traditional home, the battlefield⁶⁰) with which to "satisfy public opinion" by making German civilians pay for their aviators' wicked attacks on innocent British people. Under Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard's command, the Independent Force, which was later expanded and retitled the Inter-Allied Independent Air Force, had three German objects to attack: "her industry; her commerce; her population."⁶¹ In reality, the Force carried out relatively few of these kinds of raids, focusing instead on supporting Allied ground forces during the German 1918 spring offensives and the Allied counteroffensives in the late summer and fall. Yet the Force did also strike industrial infrastructure in towns and cities that had been targeted during "reprisals" in previous years as well as some new ones, including Frankfurt, Mannheim, and Cologne, bombed when weather permitted during the war's remaining months.⁶² The raids were ostensibly undertaken to destroy factories and logistical infrastructure,⁶³ but were in reality undertaken additionally with the political aim of conveying vengeance and to "undermine [German] civilian morale" so as to "destroy the war spirit" of the German population.⁶⁴ The Air Ministry ac-

58. NA CAB/24/26 Haig to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 15 September 1919.

59. *Ibid.*

60. NA CAB/24/68 Air Ministry, Establishment of the Inter-Allied Independent Air Force, 26 October 1918.

61. *Ibid.*

62. NA CAB/24/63 Major General H. Trenchard 1st September 1918. Operations of Independent Force, Royal Air Force. Report during August 1918; NA CAB/24/69 Major General H. Trenchard 1st October 1918. Operations of Independent Force, Royal Air Force. Report during September 1918.

63. NA CAB/24/70 Major General H. Trenchard 15th November 1918. Work of the [Inter-Allied] Independent Force, Royal Air Force. Report for Period 1st to 11th November 1918; CAB/24/69 Major General H. Trenchard 1st November 1918. Operations of [Inter-Allied] Independent Force, Royal Air Force. Report during October 1918.

64. NA CAB/24/68 Air Ministry, Establishment of the Inter-Allied Independent Air

knowledgeed that the British people would feel "deep resentment" if their government did not attack German cities and towns in this fashion.⁶⁵ General Smuts had made the same point in an October 1917 speech, claiming that the British people had developed a bitter anger; "a temper with which any Government will have to reckon seriously in settling its future air policy."⁶⁶ This does not mean, of course, that the airmen involved were unconcerned by civilian deaths. We have no evidence that they deliberately wanted to inflict death on the harmless or took pleasure when this occurred.

Ignoring the fact that reprisals were supposed to be rare and exceptional occurrences, and were never to become the regular strategy or pattern, throughout 1918 the British Government publicized its increasingly routine independent raids as reprisals for German attacks, having decided in January that, "in future the War Office, or other Department concerned, should arrange that official communiqués in regard to [our] air-raids of this nature should mention that they were undertaken as a measure of reprisal."⁶⁷ As it happened, those independent raids – which the British government acknowledged at the time "cannot [by] itself be decisive"⁶⁸ – were no more discriminate or accurate than the German attacks and similarly killed civilians and created bitterness resulting in counter-reprisal reprisals.

That is, a moral slide down a spiral of increasingly serious, damaging, and deadly tit-for-tat air attacks occurred. The Germans themselves apparently conducted additional reprisal raids to punish the British for raids that were themselves reprisals for earlier German raids.⁶⁹ In this way, the war ended with both sides carrying out campaigns of reprisals and counter-reprisals as their ordinary behavior despite the fact that close adherence to the customary international law of belligerent reprisal disallowed anyone subjected to legitimate reprisals to respond by taking counter-reprisals. These would be unlawful because they were in response to activities which, although *prima facie* unlawful, were deemed legitimate because of their sole purpose of persuading the original violator again to comply with legally accepted behavior.⁷⁰ The cycle or spiral

Force, 26 October 1918.

65. Ibid.

66. "Gen Smuts on Air Fighting," *The Times*, 5 October 1917, pp. 9, 10.

67. NA CAB/23/5 Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W., on Tuesday, January 15, 1918, at 1130 a.m.

68. NA CAB/24/68 Air Ministry, Establishment of the Inter-Allied Independent Air Force, 26 October 1918.

69. Cf. NA CAB/23/2 Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10 Downing Street, S.W., on Wednesday, May 30, 1917, at 11.30 a.m.; CAB/24/15 War Cabinet. The Recent Air Raid and British Counter Bombing Raids, 4th June, 1917.

70. Darcy, "The Evolution of the Law ...," p. 191.

of reciprocal reprisals were additionally undertaken against persons not directly engaged as combatants, which violated the "laws of humanity and morality" mentioned in the *Oxford Manual* and the Martens Clause in Hague Convention IV;⁷¹ in other words, the spirit of the law. Of course, war is almost always a time of irrationality and unusual passions and attributing blame to The Other seems inevitable. Whether any particular attack was regarded as "illegal" or "immoral," or reasonable or retaliatory, depended entirely upon whether the claimant was the bomber or the "bombee."⁷²

In April 1918, at about the same time as the RAF's creation, the General Staff presented the War Office a thorough legal opinion on the practice of aerial bombardment.⁷³ It wrestled with technicalities and, apparently placing the letter of the law ahead of its spirit, maintained that the authors and signers of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 had only vague thoughts on the full potential of modern aerial warfare and could not have anticipated air power ever involving more than "projectiles being dropped from dirigible balloons." The legal opinion added that, whilst it was true "that the bombardment of undefended towns from the air [was] forbidden," the prohibition was not "imposed with a full realization of modern conditions." Perhaps recognizing that extant laws are still enforceable laws despite any flaws, the General Staff opinion added this strange piece of argumentation:

[The 1907 explicit Hague prohibition on aerial bombing] was drafted with the object of renewing the 1899 Declaration; but it was only signed by 27 out of the 44 Powers represented, and was ratified by none of the four Central Powers, nor indeed by any of the present belligerents except Great Britain, the United States, Portugal and Belgium. It contains, moreover, an express provision that it shall cease to be binding when, in a war between the Contracting Powers, one of the belligerents is joined by a non-Contracting Power. Accordingly it has no binding force in the present war.⁷⁴

Again, this position contained a technical truth. Yet it made nothing of the fact that, when it signed this agreement in 1907, the British Government had committed itself to a moral position as well as a legal position. Rationalizing why it had abandoned its legal obligation is one thing; explaining why it had abandoned its earlier moral position is quite

71. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

72. W. Hays Parks, "Air War and the Law of War," *Air Force Law Review*, vol. 32 (1990), p. 21.

73. NA CAB/24/48 The Legal Aspects of Bombardment from the Air. General Staff, War Office, 12th April, 1918.

74. *Ibid.*

another. What was it about air power's vastly increased ability to reach and harm civilians and civilian environs between 1907 and, say, 1915, that might have made the British Government think this could be, even in some circumstances, a morally acceptable thing to do? Confining it-self only to legality, and ignoring morality, the General Staff legal opinion offered no reflections on this most serious of issues.

Similarly, in 1918 the Committee for Imperial Defence unconvincingly and at least partially illogically tried to explain British air attacks on German towns by maintaining that Hague Convention IX of 1907 – the Convention concerning Bombardment by Naval Forces in Time of War⁷⁵ – was more relevant and thus applicable to the air environment than Convention IV.⁷⁶ The Committee argued in a memorandum for the War Cabinet that the only logical rule that could flow from Convention IV was "obviously too narrow to be accepted under modern conditions" and the definition of what constituted an "undefended" town was so wide that it would render attempts at compliance "nugatory." Convention IX, on the other hand, was supposedly much more applicable because "the conditions of aerial warfare, owing especially to the range and mobility of aircraft, are much more closely analogous to the conditions of the sea than to those of the land." According to Convention IX, it was permissible to try to destroy such things as naval or military depots, stores and matériel, even in undefended towns, so long as advance warnings and response times were given. If unusual urgency made the issuance of the warning and the wait for response impossible, no attack was permissible.⁷⁷

The interpretation that air power should be utilized in accordance with the Naval Convention rather than the Land Warfare Convention had first been put forward in speeches, articles, and then a book in 1914, before the war kicked off, by civil servant Dr. James Molony Spaight, who later rose to high office in the British Air Ministry and wrote prolifically on air strategy.⁷⁸ Spaight's pre-war logic was that, because warships were permitted, after giving warnings of their intent and a "reasonable time of waiting," to fire upon naval and military stores and ammunition depots within enemy ports, regardless of unintended deaths among the civilians who had been forewarned but had chosen to remain, aircraft should also

75. Convention (IX) concerning Bombardment by Naval Forces in Time of War. The Hague, 18 October 1907. Available at: <<http://www.icrc.org/IHL.NSF/FULL/220?OpenDocument>>.

76. NA CAB/24/44 Air Raids on Open Towns. Memorandum prepared in the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence in Accordance with War Cabinet 358, Minute 9 (12 March 1918). See also CAB/24/48 The Legal Aspects of Bombardment from the Air. General Staff, War Office, 12th April, 1918.

77. Convention IX, Articles 1 and 2.

78. Spaight, *Aircraft in War*, pp. 16-18, 118.

be allowed the same operational liberty in any future wars. Like warships, aircraft had no easy means of inserting personnel into the ports to destroy the *matériel* indiscriminately in the way that a land force could. Spaight brushed away the indispensable but inconvenient legal requirement to provide pre-attack warnings and reasonable response times by pointing out that the limited fuel capacity of aircraft would seriously reduce their loiter time and thus the pilots' ability to give adequate warnings to civilians in enemy cities and towns.⁷⁹

Noting in 1918 that this "wider latitude" for naval bombardment had been accepted and practiced by all navies during the war, the Committee of Imperial Defence also ignored the issue of pre-attack warnings – despite vastly improved loiter capabilities – and accepted the tortured but convenient logic that naval practices should indeed be applied to the air domain, with all incidental civilian deaths caused by British aviators justified by this policy and practice. In fact, by accepting the view that the characteristics of aircraft made them like ships, the Committee should have seen that the logical outworking of their rationale could only have said something about where to attack, not who to attack.

In any event, this was largely a moot point. The Committee concluded that German aviators were to blame for any and all wrongdoing, even that reportedly done or about to be done by British aviators.⁸⁰ The Germans' "persistent and reckless indulgences" in the practice of bombing civilian population centers – including villages where "the agricultural nature of the country[side] was apparent" – forced the British, reluctantly and "under protest," to act according to the German view of what was legitimate and for them thus to bomb German objects "in or near centres of population." Thus, the Committee argued in essence that, because the enemy had done something very wrong, it was therefore compelled, permissible, and no longer wrong for them also to do it (and now to do so as regular practice instead of as one-off deterrent reprisals).

This "they made us do it" logic was held by several key decision-makers, notably General Smuts himself. At an October 1917 meeting hosted by the Association of Chambers of Commerce, Smuts publicly condemned the immorality of the Germans who were, in "impotent rage, striking more and more at us through our non-combatants, our women and our children. Aerial warfare against the defenceless is now the new weapon."⁸¹ Smuts maintained that German aviators were conducting "a campaign of ruthless, pitiless terrorism against undefen-

79. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

80. NA CAB/24/44 Air Raids on Open Towns. Memorandum prepared in the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence in Accordance with War Cabinet 358, Minute 9 (12 March 1918).

81. "Gen Smuts on Air Fighting," *op. cit.*, p. 10.

ded towns and populous centres which have no direct military value." He predicted that the German campaign would not only fail to break British morale, but would prove to be "a terrible boomerang against the enemy." Explaining that British aircraft would be increasingly attacking German centers, Smuts stated that Britain was "most reluctantly forced to apply to him [the enemy] the bombing policy which he has applied to us. ... [Thus,] the blame must rest on an enemy who recognizes no laws, human or Divine."⁸² Smuts insisted that Britain, now "forced" to bomb, would do its best to target only military objects and not civilians directly, but he did not explain how Britain's equally (that is, highly) inaccurate bombers could avoid inflicting widespread violence upon civilians given that military and industrial centers were located in or next to civilian concentrations. He merely expressed his "deepest regret" that, although he saw all these developments as "utterly bad and immoral," only Germany could be judged as wicked because it had bombed civilians first and (although he never addressed the issue of whether German bombers were equally inaccurate) had apparently done so with the very type of evil motives that the British lacked.⁸³ Smuts' logic is perfectly understandable, given the tremendous passions of the period ("a very bitter temper is growing up in this country," he said) and the rightfulness of Britain's hope for victory over a cruel and often unjust enemy, but ultimately it is inadequate. Smuts' logic fails to satisfy the criteria for justice in the same way that the rape of the wife of a rapist would fail it.

The Committee of Imperial Defence went further than Smuts in its 1918 report by simply denying that British aircraft had ever knowingly attacked undefended towns or towns lacking military objectives of importance according to the meaning of the Naval Convention (they had in fact done both). "The Germans on the other hand did so persistently during the whole period of their Zeppelin raids," the Committee insisted, contradicting their own concession that it was impossible to rebut entirely the German contention that even London was a defended town containing military objects and was thus a legitimate target.⁸⁴

One year later, in 1919, the Air Sub-Committee of the Attorney-General's Committee of Enquiry into Breaches of the Laws of War reported that it was of the view "that a *prima facie* case exists against enemy airmen of indiscriminate bombardment by them of undefended towns and places in Great Britain, without any military objective."⁸⁵ The Sub-Com-

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

84. NA CAB/24/44 Air Raids on Open Towns. Memorandum prepared in the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence in Accordance with War Cabinet 358, Minute 9 (12 March 1918).

85. NA CAB 24/85 First and Second Interim Reports from the Committee of Enquiry into Breaches of the Laws of War, with Appendices, Presented to the Right Honourable

mittee even recommended that Britain should

take at the earliest possible moment the necessary steps to secure the arrest or preventive detention and surrender of the persons named or designated ... with a view to proceedings being taken against them for breaches of the laws and customs of war and of the laws of humanity.⁸⁶

However, aware of what they had themselves done to German cities and towns, the Royal Air Force representatives on the Sub-Committee took a very different position, noting: "It should be remembered also that to bring German airmen within the scope of war criminality for bombing London would *ipso facto* place in the same category many of our own pilots and observers."

In 1920, with a general cooling of temper towards Germany, the Sub-Committee ceased to press the issue, and, while still seeing culpability in a few individual airmen in cases pertaining to specific raids, it no longer saw merit in arguing for the guilt of the German High Command.⁸⁷ Perhaps one of the reasons why nothing ever came of the Sub-Committee's initial desire to see German airmen prosecuted for war crimes was that Trenchard himself (with the full support of the Air Council) pointed out to the War Cabinet that, if any German aviators were indicted for war crimes on the basis of trying to set fire to London with incendiaries, he was prepared to testify before the tribunal that his Independent Air Force had also deliberately tried to cause these types of conflagrations in German cities with the use of incendiaries.⁸⁸ Trenchard was not, of course, excusing the deaths of civilians, but merely pointing out that foreseen but unwanted civilian deaths as part of missions that supported strategic imperatives, based on the ideas of the time, happened on both sides.

It is ironic that, although they were soldiers or former soldiers, some prominent airmen during the first years after the Great War overlooked the significant integrated contribution made by aircraft to joint battle (at sea and on land), ignored the fantastic potential in this area, and focused their attention on the independent missions which had been morally and strategically unusual and relatively unimportant militarily. The First World War had not demonstrated that, contrary to five thousand years of

Sir Frederick E. Smith, Bart., K.C., M.P., His Majesty's Attorney-General, 13th January, 1919.

86. *Ibid.*

87. NA CAB/24/111 Third Interim Report from the Committee of Enquiry into Breaches of the Laws of War, with Appendices, Presented to the Right Honourable Sir Gordon Hew Art, K.C., M.P., His Majesty's Attorney-General, 26th February, 1920.

88. NA CAB/24/89 War Cabinet. Breaches of the Laws of War by the Enemy. Observations of the Air Council upon the Recommendations of the Attorney-General's Committee. Air Ministry. 26 September 1919.

thinking, strategic decision would occur away from battlefields and battles. French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau had reminded the British Government in September 1918 that, as the British Government had itself formally acknowledged, independent bombing could not be decisive by itself and that nations "must therefore seek the decision where it is to be found, and this decision is only to be determined by battle."⁸⁹ Moreover, nothing had shown that, even in the age of industrialization, whole national populations were so culpable of criminality that they had forfeited their rights to be considered morally inappropriate targets. There was also very little evidence that air power could (and no new moral reasoning that it should) severely damage either industrial production or the national will to resist. Yet these ideas, and especially those about production and national will, seemed strangely compelling to some thinkers.

Theorists and practitioners who nowadays look at this period tend to focus their attention on three air power advocates and call them such things as "the classical theorists" or even "prophets of air power."⁹⁰ These three were Giulio Douhet, an Italian; Hugh Trenchard, a Briton; and William Mitchell, an American. They also ascribe to them influential "theories," which implies that the "prophets" expressed logical and self-consistent models of action based on empirical observation; certainly something stronger than speculation or conjecture. Closer examination reveals that this was not entirely the case.

With his 1921 book, *The Command of the Air*, Douhet came closest of the three to expressing a comprehensive framework for understanding and optimally applying air power during warfare. Douhet's views may indeed have originated in part from his revulsion at the carnage of the First World War, but they were nonetheless regressive in terms of ethics in general and civilian immunity in particular. He believed that the Great War was paradigmatic, not aberrational, and that future wars would be as "total."⁹¹ Consequently, with industrial states mobilizing their entire populations during future wars (the character of which he described as "national totality"⁹²), those populations were collectively responsible for the continuance of state resistance. The civilians' vulnerability to air attack logically made them far easier and, in his view, more directly strategic, targets than battle-hardened soldiers in defensive positions.⁹³ Air-

89. NA CAB/24/68 Air Ministry, Establishment of the Inter-Allied Independent Air Force, 26 October 1918.

90. David R. Mets, *The Air Campaign: John Warden and the Classical Airpower Theorists* (Air University, AL: Air University Press, 1999).

91. Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, trans. Dino Ferrari (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983), p. 26.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6.

93. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23, 188.

craft should strike civilian populations and destroy them and their civil organization, key transport infrastructure, and production means so that survivors as well as observers in other centers would, in terror and anger, create ungovernable civil circumstances or even pressure governments to surrender.⁹⁴

Ignoring the traditional concept of innocence that had generally protected civilians, yet exaggeratingly echoing one conclusion contained within the Lieber Code, Douhet insisted that winning wars quickly by killing or terrorizing concentrations of weak and vulnerable civilians, who were anyway collectively culpable of state resistance because of their labor, was more efficient than allowing armies to slaughter each other in protracted industrialized competitions.⁹⁵ Recognizing that he was advocating "inhuman" and "atrocious" violence against non-combatants (including their poison gassing), he showed a total disregard for the Hague Conventions and other treaties.⁹⁶ Forces must use "all means without hesitation, whether on not they are forbidden by treaties," he wrote.⁹⁷ Compared to the tragedy of squandered opportunities, treaties were "but scraps of paper" and "international demagogic hypocrisies."⁹⁸

Published initially only in Italian, Douhet's views were not easily accessible or widely known, let alone generally palatable, to most of his contemporaries in other army air corps and emerging air forces until the 1930s. In Britain, Trenchard adopted similar ideas about the bombing of non-combatants, albeit for his own reasons and with a different rationale. He increasingly argued in speeches, memoranda, and reports the need for air forces (the RAF anyway) to remain independent of the armies and navies to which military aircraft had earlier belonged, and free of their land and sea battles to which he had earlier insisted they were ideally suited to contributing.⁹⁹

Trenchard began passionately to advocate various novel roles independent of battles primarily because he could not contemplate the loss of the RAF's newly acquired independence. He despaired at the rapid shrinking of squadron numbers (the RAF halved in 1919¹⁰⁰) and he felt he needed to counter some mooted high-level suggestions to save money and reduce duplication by re-absorbing air assets into armies and navies. Not all the independent air roles he identified and championed were con-

94. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

95. *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 188, 189, 196.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-85.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 181, 189.

99. Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, p. 33. Robert Blake, ed., *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig 1914-1919* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1952), p. 252.

100. Memorandum by the Chief of the Air Staff, Capacity of the Royal Air Force to assist the Civil Power in Industrial Disturbances, 14 January 1920 (NA CAB/24/96).

ceptually consistent, proven during war, or morally conventional. Among his unorthodox recommendations were the punishment of misbehaving indigenous communities in some parts of the Empire (even with poison gas if they remained recalcitrant) and the suppression of workers during industrial disturbances in certain parts of the Empire and even in Britain.¹⁰¹ His belief that air units could patrol and police some parts of the Empire more easily and cheaply than army units¹⁰² – an idea that again placed aircraft into conventional army roles, this time by what he called "substitution" – actually worked rather well on some occasions and did save money and effort. Yet this type of operation, and Trenchard's increasingly vocal argument that the RAF might one day have to wage an inevitably-total war against France or another peer-competitor, and fight it by dealing what he called "a paralysing blow at some vital nerve centre,"¹⁰³ also shows that he no longer believed that civilians, particularly those in or forming a "nerve centre," were innocents and therefore morally inappropriate targets.

In 1928 he "emphatically" denied ever advocating "indiscriminate" attacks, and argued that production and morale targeting would produce fewer casualties than "when military formations are hurled against the enemies' strongest points protected by barbed wire and covered by mass artillery and machine guns." This is certainly an understandable position given the horrors he had seen between 1914 and 1918. Yet he saw no hesitation in conducting air campaigns which would use "fear" to "terrorise munitions workers (men and women) into absenting themselves from work."¹⁰⁴ The incompleteness of Trenchard's logic is obvious. Unless one sees no moral difference between combatants and non-combatants – and the fact that Trenchard claimed to dislike indiscrimination would only have meaning if in fact he recognized a moral difference – how can one see overall casualty numbers as the important issue? How in the 1920s, or the foreseeable future for that matter, could aircraft bomb accurately enough to avoid indiscrimination? More importantly, how could aircraft inflict sufficient fear to terrorize civilians without actually killing them in such sufficient numbers that survivors and others would experience acute enough anxiety about their own survival that they would flee before attacks?

101. Stephen Budiansky, *Air Power: The Men, Machines, and Ideas that Revolutionized War, from Kitty Hawk to Iraq* (London and New York: Penguin, 2005), p. 146.

102. Cf. Trenchard's note of 18 February 1921, attached to the Report by Lieutenant-General Sir A. Haldane, K.C.B., General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force (NA CAB/24/120).

103. NA CAB/24/71 Memorandum of the Chief of the Air Staff on Air Power Requirements of the Empire. Air Ministry. 9th December 1918.

104. AIR 9/8 Memorandum by the Chief of the Air Staff for the Chiefs of Staff Subcommittee on The War Object of an Air Force, 2nd May 1928.

Trenchard's views were consistent in many ways with Douhet's and those of William "Billy" Mitchell, who had commanded American air combat units during the Great War and became a public advocate of air power's efficacy in the first years of peace. Like Trenchard (with whom he "hit it off"¹⁰⁵ and maintained regular contact), Mitchell had earlier believed that aircraft should be used to best effect on an integrated battle-field but later, as Trenchard did, he revised his position to argue that aircraft could and should perform independent roles that would by themselves prove strategically decisive. Mitchell claimed that aircraft could protect American coasts from enemy warships at a fraction of the cost of maintaining huge and dreadfully expensive fleets, and that air attacks with high explosives and poison gas could cause chaos and evacuations and even break enemy morale by destroying industrial, public service, and agricultural targets.¹⁰⁶ Mitchell was less explicit about the inevitability of civilian deaths than Douhet and Trenchard (who was himself not as emphatic and openly immoral about this as the Italian), and Mitchell seemed naïvely to hope that "the mere threat" of destruction from the air would make civilians – "in any town or hamlet" – evacuate their homes and cease their productive work.¹⁰⁷ Yet he agreed with the others that, in future wars inevitably involving total state mobilization, civilians would be subject to collective responsibility and could save themselves from harm only by refusing to uphold the state and its war effort by denying the state their labor. Interesting, in his 1924 book, *Winged Defense*, Mitchell eulogistically predicted what he called "the amelioration and bettering of conditions in war because it [independent air power] will bring quick and lasting results."¹⁰⁸ Yet he then qualified these improvements not in moral terms, but in financial terms.¹⁰⁹ The nearest he came to expressing a moral position on the targeting of civilians was to write that attacks on civilian things, but "not so much the people themselves," will result "in a diminished loss of life and treasure and will thus be a distinct benefit to civilisation."¹¹⁰

During the interwar years, the views of these "prophets" and their supporters came to dominate thinking on air power, even though aviators in many small and large wars (none of these wars being the "total" affairs

105. Roger G. Miller, *Billy Mitchell: Evangelist of Air Power* (Stockton, NJ: OTTN, 2008), p. 45. Isaac Don Levine, *Flying Crusader: The Story of General William Mitchell, Pioneer of Air Power* (London: Peter Davies, 1943), p. 72.

106. William Mitchell, *Winged Defense: The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power – Economic and Military* (New York and London: Putnam's, 1924), pp. 5, 126, 127.

107. *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 5, 6.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

109. *Ibid.*

110. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

predicted by the prophets) continued to provide close air support and interdiction on and around traditional battlefields. Even airmen in the United States, which intervened in several Central and South American conflicts and used air power most often during them for reconnaissance and as flying artillery, favored the theoretical but unproven potential of independent missions against purportedly strategic objects over these sorts of activities. Wanting separation from the Army, the Army Air Corps sought separate roles and articulated a belief that its increasingly fine bombers, with impressive speed, range, survivability, and load-carrying capability, should be used against enemy nodes far away from, and ideally instead of, battle. Very few of the air power theorists and practitioners ever engaged directly with the issue of whether the innocent civilians who lived at those nodes, or formed them, were morally appropriate targets of attack. That does not mean, on the other hand, that they ever wanted civilian deaths or took pleasure when they occurred. Archives contain no records of any such desired cruelty.

It would be wrong to leave this analysis without highlighting the fact that, while air power theorists after the Great War seemed sure that total war had become the norm and felt relatively uninterested in the concept of civilian immunity, public disquiet was sufficiently powerful to generate attempts to minimize the harm that might be brought to bear on non-combatants in future wars. The Washington Disarmament Conference of 1922 adopted a resolution to appoint a Commission of Jurists and its Military and Naval Advisors to prepare rules relating to air power. With members from six nations, including the United Kingdom, France, and the United States, a Sub-Committee of the Commission met at the Hague from December 1922 to February 1923 and drafted a thorough and potentially far-reaching set of rules to govern the utility of air power.¹¹¹

The Commission's final draft rules did not deny air power a potent role in any future wars. On the contrary, they allowed bombardment practically without restriction in combat theatres and they did not say that bombs must fall exclusively on military forces and objects, only that they must be directed exclusively at them.¹¹² On the other hand, they expressly prohibited air attacks for the purpose of "terrorizing the civil population or destroying or damaging private property not of military character, or of injuring non-combatants."¹¹³ The rules stipulated that air attacks would only be legal "when directed at a military objective, that is

111. W. Hays Parks, "Air War . . . ," pp. 27-28.

112. Elbridge Colby, "Aerial Law and War Targets," *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 19 (1925), p. 714.

113. Article 22 of Rules Concerning the Control of Wireless Telegraphy in Time of War and Air Warfare. Drafted by a Commission of Jurists at the Hague, December 1922 - February 1923. Available at: <<http://www.icrc.org/IHL.nsf/FULL/275?OpenDocument>>.

to say, an object of which the destruction or injury would constitute a distinct military advantage to the belligerent."¹¹⁴ The rules clarified something apparently ambiguous during the Great War: what constituted military objects. The new Hague rules identified these as "military forces, military works, military establishments or depots, manufacturing plants constituting important and well-known centres for the production of arms, ammunition or characterized military supplies, lines of communication or of transport which are used for military purposes."¹¹⁵ In addition, the Committee added this explicit protection of civilian immunity:

Any bombardment of cities, towns, villages, habitations and buildings which are not situated in the immediate vicinity of the operations of the land forces, is forbidden. Should the objectives specified in Paragraph 2 be so situated that they could not be bombed but that an indiscriminating bombardment of the civil population would result therefrom [*sic.*], the aircraft must abstain from bombing.¹¹⁶

The Commission's draft rules did permit air attacks on military forces in the immediate vicinity of cities, towns, villages, habitations, and buildings, but only "provided there is a reasonable presumption that the military concentration is important enough to justify the bombardment, taking into account the danger to which the civil population will thus be exposed."¹¹⁷

Unfortunately, given what we now know about the Second World War, these ethically sophisticated rules never got off the ground. W. Hays Parks points out that, as they were never adopted by any nation, let alone passed into international law, the Hague rules "were an immediate and total failure."¹¹⁸ This failure did not stem from their variance with the *Zeitgeist*. They were ideally in keeping with the spirit of the time. Their non-acceptance stemmed from the fact that the authors were out of step with realist political and military leaders and pundits who – with great excitement about air power's real and forecast technological advances as well as with thrilling new ideas on strategy (particularly the vast potential efficacy of independent bombing) – were unwilling to put the powerful genie back into the bottle.¹¹⁹ Typifying this realist ap-

114. *Ibid.*, Article 24.1.

115. *Ibid.*, Article 24.2.

116. *Ibid.*, Article 24.3.

117. *Ibid.*, Article 24.4.

118. W. Hays Parks, "Air War ...," p. 31.

119. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-36; Paul Whitcomb Williams, "Legitimate Targets in Aerial Bombardment," *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 23 (1929), pp. 570-81; Richard D. Rosen, "Targeting Enemy Forces in the War on Terror: Preserving Civilian Immunity," *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, vol. 42, no. 3 (May 2009), pp. 707-09.

proach, in 1924 James Molony Spaight wrote a book championing independent air power in which he predicted with tragic accuracy: "The bombing of civilian objectives will be a primary operation of war, carried out in an organised manner and with forces which will make the raids of 1914-1918 appear by comparison spasmodic and feeble. ... The attacks on towns will *be* the war."¹²⁰ With wars of national totality supposedly the inevitable nature of future conflict, the genie's omnipotence would one day be needed. Later efforts throughout the 1920s and 1930s to enshrine in law the moral abhorrence of bombing non-combatants proved equally ill-fated. It was not until the horrors of area, terror, and atomic bombing during the Second World War revealed how remarkably difficult it was to keep the genie proportionate and discriminate that the international community moved, with the passing of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977, to make the genie behave.

Conclusion

Getting belligerents during war to adhere to standards of moral behavior is difficult at the best of times, but, as this article has attempted to demonstrate, it becomes highly problematic during conflicts in which very new methods of inflicting harm appear but are not constrainable by a moral consensus of any strength, much less by binding and enforceable international laws. The advent of air power above the trenches raised few new moral questions. It involved combatants fighting combatants in the third dimension, but in essentially the traditional manner. On the other hand, air power's appearance above the homes and workplaces of non-combatants raised important and powerful questions which, in the heat of reciprocal blame and anger, were not adequately addressed. The perceived nature of the First World War had much to do with it. With entire national communities allegedly contributing to war and thus breaking down the traditional demarcation between combatants and non-combatants, and with this type of "total war" supposedly being typical of all that would follow, the great moral questions relating to the new air weapon were easy to brush aside for a time. Perhaps because of their belief that the morale, support, and labor of their own citizens underpinned their national continuance of war-making, the leadership on both sides were consumed by the desire for victory (and the grave fear of defeat) and considered it necessary to do whatever its own population insisted it wanted – even inflicting vengeance – and to hurt the opposing population's confidence and productivity. Of course, we have no evidence of any murderous intent among politicians or airmen and, in any event, air

120. James Molony Spaight, *Air Power and War Rights* (London: Longmans, 1924), p. 12. Italics added for emphasis.

power was by no means the worst cause of harm to civilians during the Great War. Armies sometimes fired guns into each other's towns, including Paris, and the naval blockades of both sides caused far more deaths, deprivation, and suffering than air attacks. Yet independent air power undoubtedly came to cause great harm and moral regression during later wars. It is therefore regretful that the two decades of relative peace after the Great War – a pause before cities and towns broke and burned again under aerial bombardment – did not lead to greater reflection and progress in moral and strategic thinking.

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Recent Approaches to the German Army of World War II: Is the Topic More Accessible after 65 Years?

KEVIN W. FARRELL

ABSTRACT

This article addresses the continued difficulty of assessing objectively the German military experience during World War II. Using five recent works as a framework – *Armageddon: The Battle for Germany, 1944-1945* by Hastings; *Death of the Wehrmacht: The German Campaigns of 1942* by Citino; *Battle for the Ruhr: The German Army's Final Defeat in the West* by Zumbro; *The Korsun Pocket: The Encirclement and Breakout of a German Army in the East, 1944* by Zetterling and Frankson; and *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* by Smelser and Davies – it demonstrates the great difficulty of historical analysis on the topic in English.¹ The article's objective is to highlight why the subject remains extremely difficult despite the distance of several generations and many thousands of historical works. The article clearly demonstrates that although a great deal of serious and effective scholarship has been produced, much historical investigation remains to be conducted. The unparalleled destruction and crimes unleashed by the Third Reich, coupled with the generally superb performance of its military, make the matter both extremely problematic and fascinating.

1. Max Hastings, *Armageddon: The Battle for Germany, 1944-1945* (New York: Knopf, 2004); Robert M. Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht: The German Campaigns of 1942* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007); Derek S. Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr: The German Army's Final Defeat in the West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); Niklas Zetterling and Anders Frankson, *The Korsun Pocket: The Encirclement and Breakout of a German Army in the East, 1944* (Philadelphia: Casemate, 2008); Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

KEYWORDS

World War II; German army; *Wehrmacht*; *Waffen-SS*; National Socialism; Nazi; Eastern Front; Soviet Union; Holocaust; Third Reich; *Blitzkrieg*; Nazi-Soviet War; Hitler, Adolf; German tactical excellence; Combat Power

Introduction

Is there a need for yet more books on the Second World War, particularly works addressing specific campaigns or the European war in general? Recently, the seven-decade mark from the official start date of World War II in Europe passed on 1 September 2009 and the 65th anniversary of its end was reached on 8-9 May 2010. The staggering number of books still in print on the subject and the many new titles added every year resoundingly indicate that publishing firms and the reading public – not to mention students of World War II – overwhelmingly agree that there is still much to be explored.

With the passage of these seven decades since the outbreak of war in Europe, living memory has faded to the point where the war now belongs strictly to the historical realm. This distance in time and space should allow for greater objectivity, perhaps even more so for those outside of Europe, and there does seem to be a difference between works originating in the United States versus those in Europe. While the "Greatest Generation"² gradually passes on and many books in print in the United States recount the exploits and accomplishments of them, works dedicated to the tactical proficiency of the German ground forces in the Second World War that are both objective and scholarly are somewhat of a rarity, especially on the west side of the Atlantic. This article will address several recently published books from both sides of the Atlantic that approach the performance of the German military from a variety of ways, but are bound by the unifying thread of emphasizing aspects of the war insufficiently examined by the vast majority of literature on the topic. The works listed above will be examined below in an attempt to reveal how this challenging topic can be examined from a variety of perspectives. Beginning with a broad international approach, the article will move progressively narrower down to a specific battle and then re-

2. The phrase is used as shorthand to describe the American World War II generation popularized in the bestselling book, Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 1998). Capitalizing on the sentiment that the generation of Americans that lived through the Great Depression and served in World War II – either at home or overseas – Brokaw argues that ordinary Americans made extraordinary sacrifices and became heroes. Although emotionally satisfying for American readers, the sacrifices and suffering experienced by Americans pale in comparison both proportionately and numerically to the European belligerents of World War II.

turn finally to a broad overview of the topic.

Admittedly, it is impossible to explore properly the military history of the war and the thorny topic of the German army – not to mention the *Waffen SS* – without confronting the monstrous crimes committed in the name of Nazi Germany by its armed forces. Serious scholarship on the topic has been moving in this direction for decades. The renowned historian, Gerhard Weinberg, in his definitive overview of the war, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II*, rightfully placed Nazi ideology and Adolf Hitler's *Weltanschauung* squarely in the center of his narrative.³ More recently, Richard J. Evans has completed a masterful trilogy on the history of the Third Reich that is likely to stand as the definitive history of the regime in English for some time to come.⁴ Works such as these correctly emphasize the preeminence of Nazi ideology – belief in the superiority of the "Aryan Race," the struggle between races as the dominant aspect of the human condition, the need for Germany to combat the so-called Jewish-Bolshevik international menace, the ultimate aim of eliminating the "Jewish threat" permanently, and the need for so-called *Lebensraum* to allow the master race to prosper in dominating a new European and world empire – in guiding Hitler's strategic objectives during the war.⁵

Although these works and many like them by necessity take a broad

3. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

4. Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (New York: Penguin, 2003); Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin, 2005); and Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: Penguin, 2009). The trilogy is especially strong in its political, social, economic, and diplomatic coverage. Its military analysis is also sound, but understandably broad. Unfortunately, Evans makes some errors in his coverage of World War II, condensing the notorious mass murder in France of innocent villagers at Oradour-sur-Glane on 10 June 1944 into the broader genocidal policies of the Nazis, or a more common error of referring to Friedrich Paulus incorrectly as "Field Marshal Friedrich von Paulus," *Idem.*, *The Third Reich at War*, pp. 398, 421. Though some two decades old, an excellent concise account in English on the person of Paulus is provided in Martin Middlebrook, "Paulus: Field-Marshal Friedrich Paulus," in Correlli Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals* (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1989), pp. 360-73. Overall, Evans' trilogy represents a tremendous contribution of historical scholarship. A recent release, Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), has proved to be an important addition to the field and focuses on the geographical area where Stalin and Hitler perpetrated mass murder and the ideology undergirding it. Interestingly, the book coincides with a running feud between Evans and Snyder over aspects of the genocidal war in the east.

5. The historiography on the topic is huge, but an excellent synthesis is provided by the Evans trilogy, *Idem.* For the specifics of the personal views of Adolf Hitler, see the definitive two-volume biography, Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998) and Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000).

historical view of the war from the national and grand strategy level, they also address at times operational and occasionally tactical concerns. Nonetheless, magnificent works such as these are by inevitability synthetic narratives. Between these two superb works, there have been numerous others that run the range from awful to excellent, but such an overview is beyond the scope of this article. What the better works share and the reason they are mentioned here, however, is the central role of Adolf Hitler and the preeminence to which Nazi ideology influenced German foreign policy, strategic thinking, and the very conduct of the war. The works by Weinberg and Evans demonstrate this conclusively.⁶

While books dealing with the war as a whole, a history of Nazi Germany, or the war against the Soviet Union are obligated to address the centrality of Nazi ideology, this essential but problematic topic is frequently absent from accounts focused on the campaigns against the western allies in North Africa, the Mediterranean, and western Europe. Such an imbalance almost mirrors the earlier blame for war crimes falling solely on the shoulders of the SS to the exclusion of the army. Regardless of the correct mix, the difficulty of addressing Nazi ideology while focusing on German battlefield performance becomes greater as histories focus on the operation, campaign, or battle. When writing operational histories and below, it proves understandably more difficult to assess complicity in the crimes of the Third Reich with the conduct and outcome of battles and campaigns.⁷

6. The number of works on World War II is truly enormous and even the list of capable historians who have addressed it comprehensively would consume much of the focus of this essay and are therefore excluded; however, prolific British historian, Sir Martin Gilbert, has written a number of important surveys addressing both world wars, biographies of key leaders, and the Holocaust. See Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War: A Complete History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989).

7. The role of ideology and performance in combat has been investigated in relation to the tactical performance of the *Waffen-SS* since the war itself. Although decades old, the definitive works regarding combat effectiveness, unit cohesion, greater propensity to commit war crimes, and an analysis of overall effectiveness are Charles W. Sydnor, *Soldiers of Destruction: The SS Death's Head Division* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); and George H. Stein, *The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966). The role of ideology and its influence on the conduct of regular army formations began to be addressed seriously only some decades after the end of the war. The volume of literature on the topic is large and growing. A seminal, but flawed source investigating the conduct of army units (including *Grossdeutschland*) is Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front 1941-45: German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (London: Macmillan, 1985). See also by the same author, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1991). Bartov investigates the effectiveness of Nazi indoctrination on the German soldier in both works. He argues that the indoctrination was quite successful and accounted not only for the German soldier's fanatical resistance, but also the large number of war crimes committed by Army troops, especially on the Eastern Front. For a solid account of the current state of the field regarding ideological motivation, see Stephen G.

As far as addressing the military history of the Third Reich, the definitive and exhaustive work, *Germany and the Second World War*, is almost completely available in English.⁸ Simply put, this work represents the apotheosis of the difficult topic of German military history during World War II. Well written and impeccably researched, the series serves as the unofficial "official" German military history of World War II. Begun in Freiburg, West Germany, in the 1970s, the *Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt* (Research Institute for Military History, or MGFA) assembled leading historians to address the massive topic as thoroughly as possible. The original outcome, *Das Deutsch Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg* (The German Reich and the Second World War), took twenty-nine years to complete and consists of thirteen books organized into ten volumes and totaling over 12,000 pages.⁹ In addition to the magnitude, depth, and quality of the research, the work benefits from a deliberate "multi-perspective approach."¹⁰ Apart from its somewhat unconventional structure and excessive size, it would be difficult to overstate the quality and importance of this work to the field of military history in general and the German military effort during World War II in particular.

For the typical reader – and maybe even the typical historian – such a massive series represents an excellent resource, but even for the most committed, it requires a substantial commitment of effort. For a narrower focus on specific campaigns of the Second World War, the volume of works is again large and its quality also correspondingly varies from superb to abysmal. Overwhelmingly, however, the majority of works on the west side of the Atlantic tend to focus either on the early spectacular victories of the *Wehrmacht* in Poland – especially the defeat of France and the Low Countries in the spring of 1940 – or even more so on the dramatic American operations in western Europe, especially the allied landings at Normandy, the airborne assault geared toward Arnhem, or

Fritz, "'We are trying...to change the face of the world' – Ideology and Motivation in the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front: The View from Below," *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 60 (October 1996): pp. 683-710. Fritz effectively challenges many of Bartov's conclusions; see also by the same author, *Frontsoldaten* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995). See also Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

8. Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Germany and the Second World War*, 10 vols. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990-2008). Of the ten-volume set (that actually consists of thirteen books), four books are yet to be published in English.

9. Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Das Deutsch Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, 10 vols. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1979-2008).

10. Jörg Echternkamp, ed., *German Wartime Society 1939-1945: Politicization, Disintegration, and the Struggle for Survival*, vol. IX/I in *Germany and the Second World War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 84. Rather curiously, the overall layout and concept for the series is not addressed until this page in the chapter entitled, "IV. Principles for and Structure of the Volumes," *Ibid.*, pp. 84-101.

the largest battle in American history, the Battle of the Bulge.

Clearly, many competent books address the 1940 campaign, although a German historian has composed the benchmark work, *Blitzkrieg Legend: The 1940 Campaign in the West*.¹¹ The battles at Arnhem and in the Ardennes are well known to British and American students of military history.¹² Certainly the campaigns in North Africa and the Mediterranean are as well.¹³ Since the end of the war, American readers and historians have steadily consumed standard narratives focused on U.S. Army operations in the European Theater of Operations during World War II. The latest of this long line of works is Rick Atkinson's *Liberation Trilogy*.¹⁴

11. Karl-Heinz Frieser, *The Blitzkrieg Legend: The 1940 Campaign in the West* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005). This version is a translation of the German original, Karl-Heinz Frieser, *Blitzkrieg-Legende: Der Westfeldzug 1940* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996). For a seminal work on the same topic by an American historian, but one which focuses strictly on the decisive battle for Sedan, see Robert A. Doughty, *The Breaking Point: Sedan and the Fall of France, 1940* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1990).

12. Perhaps the best known volume on Arnhem is Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far* (New York: Touchstone, 1974). See also Cornelius Bauer, *The Battle of Arnhem* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966); Christopher Hibbert, *The Battle of Arnhem* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1962); Martin Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944: The Airborne Battle, 17-26 September* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994). As for the Battle of the Bulge, the number of works on the topic is large and growing. Among many others, see Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1994); Charles B. MacDonald, *A Time For Trumpets* (New York: Bantam Books, 1984); Gerald Astor, *A Blood-Dimmed Tide: The Battle of the Bulge by the Men Who Fought it* (New York: Donald Fine, 1992); John Eisenhower, *The Bitter Woods* (New York: Putnam, 1969); Charles Whiting, *The Last Assault: The Battle of the Bulge Reassessed* (New York: Sarpedon, 1994).

13. The well-written and well-researched *Liberation Trilogy* by Rick Atkinson continues in a competent manner a longstanding American tradition of emphasizing the American contribution to victory in Europe during the Second World War. The first two volumes completed are Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa 1942-1943* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002); and Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944* (New York: Henry Holt, 2007).

14. Atkinson's work follows squarely in an American tradition dating back decades that focuses on the major campaigns in Western Europe during World War II and how these American-led enterprises led directly to victory for the allies. Stephen Ambrose, Carlo D'Este, John Eisenhower, and John Toland are among the most highly-regarded and well-published authors in whose historical footsteps Atkinson now follows. See, in particular, Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany* (New York: Touchstone, 1997); and Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II* (New York: Touchstone, 1995). For examples from D'Este, see Carlo D'Este, *Decision in Normandy: The Unwritten Story of Montgomery and the Allied Campaign* (New York: Dutton, 1983); and Carlo D'Este, *Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily, 1943* (New York: Dutton, 1988). For Eisenhower's work on the Battle of the Bulge first published in 1969, see John S.D. Eisenhower, *The Bitter Woods: The Battle of the Bulge* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995). Among many others, see also John Toland, *Battle: The Story of the Bulge* (New

Although it is understandable that English language works would focus heavily on the European campaigns in which British and especially American forces participated, the disproportion remains striking. Considering that the number of troops engaged and the number of casualties suffered on the Eastern Front in World War II exceeded all other theaters of war combined – to include the Pacific Theater – the relative paucity of works on the Eastern Front in English remains puzzling.¹⁵ This is not to say that there is not a substantial volume of work on the Eastern Front and some of it is very good.¹⁶ Other factors also explain why much of the war in the east remains relatively obscure to western readers. The war there was so massive in scale and duration that it is scarcely an understatement that to comprehend it in sufficient depth and breadth represents a huge challenge. Access to archival material and unbiased sources further complicates the issue.¹⁷

Of course, the volume of books focused strictly on the tactical excellence and the bravery of soldiers of the German army and the *Waffen-SS* is quite high, and most of these in turn focus their attention on actions on the Eastern Front since this is what consumed 80% of the *Wehrmacht's* effort during the war. In fact, a number of publishers – Schiffer Books and J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing are two well known purveyors – are dedicated to producing works geared toward military enthusiasts, history buffs, and collectors.¹⁸

York: Random House, 1959).

15. Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, p. 214; Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, p. 264.

16. For a good, but dated work on the Soviet Union's war against Germany, see John Erickson's two-volumes: *The Road to Stalingrad: Stalin's War with Germany* (Harper & Row: New York, 1975); and *The Road to Berlin: Continuing the History of Stalin's War with Germany* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983). See also Earl F. Ziemke, *Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1987); Albert Seaton, *The Russo-German War 1941-45* (London: Greenhill, 1971); and Alan Clark, *Barbarossa: The Russian-German Conflict, 1941-1945* (New York: William Morrow, 1965).

17. The majority of histories published in English were based upon German sources, many of which in turn were based upon captured Soviet sources. Access to Soviet archives and unbiased analysis of the Soviet performance was nonexistent during the life of the Soviet Union, but a period of liberalization and unfettered access to the Russian archives in the 1990s allowed greater objectivity on the topic. Sadly, such access to former Soviet archival material is once again severely limited. The best known pioneer writing in English on the subject is David M. Glantz. See among many other works, David M. Glantz and Jonathan House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

18. Schiffer Publishing, based in Atglen, Pennsylvania, with a listed catalog of more than 3,000 titles encompassing military history, antiques, and art currently has more than 220 books in print dedicated to aspects of the German army and *Waffen-SS* during World War II as well as related biographies, battles, equipment, and organization. Representative titles include Mark C. Yerger, *Waffen-SS Commanders: The Army, Corps and Division Leaders of a Legend: Augsberger to Kreutz* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 1997); Jeremy Dixon,

The shortcoming of such books and the genre as a whole is not that they are inaccurate, although often they are, or openly supportive of National Socialism, but rather that they usually investigate the general topic in an ethical vacuum. A standard theme in such works is the use of euphemisms or code words that mask or minimize the Nazi ideology that was steadily and increasingly fused into all military formations as the war progressed. Rather than describe some brave officers who were also in fact fanatical Nazis, they are described more delicately as determined leaders who were politically committed leading formations bravely and successfully. In this field, mention is rarely – if ever – explicitly made of direct complicity in the mass murder of European Jewry or other declared enemies of the Third Reich. A common approach is to distinguish the "armed" SS, the *Waffen-SS*, from the overall SS organization. Although such a view might be emotionally satisfying for enthusiasts (and some actual SS veterans) because it furthers the comforting fiction spoken by the highest ranking SS officer, army group commander (*Oberstgruppenführer*) Paul Hauser, that soldiers of the *Waffen-SS* "were soldiers like any other," it remains patently false.¹⁹ Although it is over half a century old, the definitive work by Gerald Reitlinger, *The SS: Alibi of a Nation 1922-1945*, demonstrates conclusively the degree to which all branches of the SS – and the German Reich overall – were both connected and competitive in carrying out the policies of the regime.²⁰

Commanders of Auschwitz: The SS Officers Who Ran the Largest Nazi Concentration Camp 1941-1945 (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 2005); Werner Haupt, *Army Group Center: The Wehrmacht in Russia 1941-1945* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 1997). J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, based in Winnipeg, Canada, is overwhelmingly focused on aspects of the German military during World War II. Representative titles include Friedrich Husemann, *In Good Faith: The History of the 4. SS-Polizei-Panzer-Grenadier-Division*, volume 2, 1943-1945 (Winnipeg: J.J. Fedorowicz, 2009), a five-volume history of the 1st SS Panzer Division, *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler*, and numerous other similar works. Osprey Publishing, based in Oxford, England, is another publisher that focuses exclusively on military history, but it covers all periods of warfare throughout world history attracting leading military historians in the process. It is not disproportionately geared toward a specific army or period.

19. After the war, Hauser became the leading spokesman and defendant of the *Waffen-SS* whose veteran's benefits were denied by the West German government until 1972. Hauser published several books in the years after the war until his death at the age of 92 in 1972. His book exemplifying the military and professional virtues of the *Waffen-SS* was of the same name that he made famous, Paul Hauser, *Soldaten wie andere auch. Der Weg der Waffen-SS* (Osnabrück: Munin-Verlag, 1966).

20. Gerald Reitlinger, *SS: Alibi of a Nation 1922-1945* (New York: The Viking Press, 1957). See also Sydnor, *Soldiers of Destruction*, and Stein, *The Waffen SS*. Numerous works in addition to these standard references have demonstrated conclusively that any officer in the *Waffen-SS* would have received extensive indoctrination in National Socialist ideology and long-serving officers would have had knowledge of the workings of concentration camps. Individual knowledge and culpability would certainly vary, but as an

Typical of the genre is *The Waffen-SS: The Encyclopedia*.²¹ This work is like many dozens of others geared toward aficionados of the Third Reich in general and the *Waffen-SS* in particular. It serves as a telling example of the pitfalls of treating the topic in isolation and out of context of the larger ethical and historical issues involved. After informing the reader in the introduction that the author "indulges his passion for European Heavy Metal music," the book goes on to chronicle as much as possible about the *Waffen-SS*.²² Concise, but detailed descriptions of every division raised are listed along with the role played by each contributing nationality. Organization, weapons, and biographies of key leaders are also recounted. Overall, it provides a solid military and organization overview of the *Waffen-SS*. Incredibly, however, there is no mention of the National Socialist ideology underpinning the entire organization. In the book's description of Theodore Eicke, division commander of the 3rd SS Panzer Division, *Totenkopf* (Death's Head), it is only mentioned in passing that he commanded the concentration camp at Dachau and became inspector general of associated guard units.²³ His career progression, heroism, and leadership in battle until his death in a plane crash in February 1943 comprise the remainder of the entry.²⁴ This book, typical of so many in the field, ignores completely the role of ideology and the direct complicity in genocide for which the *Waffen-SS* became infamous.

Furthermore, it was not strictly the *Waffen-SS* that was the only German military organization complicit in the murderous activities of Nazi Germany. As Reitlinger's book title made so eloquently clear, in the post-war decades the SS as a whole became the guilty party responsible for the crimes committed by the Nazi regime, while the branches of the *Wehrmacht* were simply regarded as having done their patriotic duty for the Fatherland. Clearly this is a broad and overly simple generalization to describe the consensus in postwar Germany, but it accurately describes the situation within Germany and throughout much of the western world as well.

A traveling exhibition in Germany from 1995 to 1999, *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944* (War of Annihilation. Crimes of the *Wehrmacht* 1941 to 1944) shattered permanently the wide-

institution, the *Waffen-SS* must be directly linked to the criminal and genocidal actions of the Third Reich.

21. Marc J. Rikmenspoel, *The Waffen-SS: The Encyclopedia* (Garden City, New York: The Military Book Club, 2002).

22. *Ibid.*, p. i.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 206-10. Other notorious leaders are treated similarly: Felix Steiner, whose "service life was marked by strong opinions and an acceptance of new ideas," p. 199; Sepp Dietrich, and Oskar Dirlwanger receive only partial coverage.

spread fiction that the *Wehrmacht* had little to do with carrying out the genocidal policies of the Third Reich.²⁵ Sponsored by the *Hamburger Institute für Sozialforschung* (Hamburg Institute for Social Research), the exhibit – popularly known as the *Wehrmachtausstellung* (*Wehrmacht* Exhibition) – traveled throughout Germany and was shut down for two years prior to being re-released in a revised form, *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Dimensionen des Vernichtungskrieges 1941-1944* (*Crimes of the Wehrmacht. Dimensions of the War of Annihilation 1941-1944*).²⁶ The exhibit created a significant controversy not only for its content, but also for questionable scholarship and documentation, especially in its first iteration. Despite its shortcomings, though, the exhibit removed the illusion that only the *Waffen-SS* committed the most heinous acts during the war.

The complicity of the *Wehrmacht* and even the *Waffen-SS* is beyond the scope of this article as the topic itself is enormous. Obviously, serious scholarship antedated the international sensation created by the *Wehrmachtausstellung*, nevertheless the exhibit undoubtedly fostered further research and awakened additional interest in the topic.²⁷ A concise and impressive example is the scholarly and readable essay about a regular army formation committing mass murder by Waitman W. Beorn, "Negotiating Murder: A Panzer Signal Company and the Destruction of the Jews of Peregruznoe, 1942."²⁸

Compounding the difficulty of assessing culpability of the German armed forces of World War II in the crimes committed for and by the Nazi regime is the awkward but incontrovertible fact of the fighting excellence of the German military during virtually every campaign of the war.²⁹ Even before the war was over, the western allies in particular at-

25. The exhibit shut down permanently at the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute for Social Research) in Hamburg, Germany on 29 March 2004. Hundreds of thousands of Germans have seen the exhibit. According to the Institute's website, between November 2001 and March 2004 more than 420,000 visitors viewed the exhibit throughout Germany, Vienna, and Luxembourg.

26. *Ibid.*

27. For some of the more recent and significant scholarship on the topic of the complicity of the *Wehrmacht* in the war crimes of Nazi Germany, see Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Hannes Heer, *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II, 1941-1944* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000); Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941-1944* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); and Theo J. Schulte, *The German Army and Nazi Policies in Occupied Russia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

28. Waitman W. Beorn, "Negotiating Murder: A Panzer Signal Company and the Destruction of the Jews of Peregruznoe, 1942," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2009), pp. 185-213.

29. Among many others, see Kevin W. Farrell, "Culture of Confidence: The Tactical Excellence of the German Army of the Second World War," in Christopher Kolenda, ed.,

tempted to discern why and how the German armed forces proved so capable and resilient.³⁰ Somewhat curiously, these two realities are rarely addressed concurrently in books that deal with the actual campaigns of the *Wehrmacht*. As a rule, the focus of the work is either on the crimes committed by the Nazis – be it the Holocaust, murder of Soviet prisoners of war, the destruction of Poland – or the excellence of German military formations. Rarely is there a work that comprehensively tackles both.

A recent bizarre, controversial, and bestselling work that is also a work of historical fiction, *The Kindly Ones*, might indicate that the future of the field might be changing considerably.³¹ Even though it more properly falls into the category of contemporary literature, the copious amount of historical information within it reveals a genuine mastery of historical scholarship related to its chosen topic. A fabricated autobiography recounting the career of an SS officer in one of the notorious killing squads of the SS, the *Einsatzgruppen*, this book has created quite an uproar in the field of modern literature. In his stated attempt to humanize the perpetrators of the mass murder of European Jewry, the author, Jonathan Littell, created a repulsive and highly dysfunctional char-

Leadership: The Warrior's Art (Carlisle, PA: The Army War College Foundation Press, 2001), pp. 177-203. Immediately after World War II, German tactical effectiveness was examined thoroughly in Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. XII (Summer 1948), pp. 280-315. A more recent and highly regarded (though flawed) critique can be found in the works of Omer Bartov. See Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, and *The Eastern Front, 1941-45: German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare*, 2d ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). See also Fritz, "Ideology and Motivation in the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front." For a superb examination of German defensive doctrine, see Timothy A. Wray, *Standing Fast: German Defensive Doctrine on the Russian Front During World War II, Prewar to 1943* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Combat Studies Institute, 1986). See also, Martin van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939-1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982); and Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff 1807-1945* (Fairfax, VA: Hero Books, 1977); John F. Antal, "The Wehrmacht Approach to Maneuver Warfare Command and Control," in Richard D. Hooker, Jr., ed., *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1993), pp. 347-59; and M.P. Grant, "Fighting Power: The German Army of World War II and the British Army of Today: An Analysis of the Conceptual and Moral Components of German Tactical Effectiveness in World War II and the Lessons for the British Army Today," *British Army Review* (December 1996), pp. 59-72.

30. The British and the Americans produced numerous information pamphlets and extensive reports on the topic. One of the most comprehensive was published in the early spring of 1945, U.S. War Department, *War Department Technical Manual TM-E 30-451: Handbook On German Military Forces* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1945).

31. Jonathan Littell, *The Kindly Ones*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: HarperCollins, 2009). This book was originally published in French, Jonathan Littell, *Les Bienveillantes* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2006).

acter to do it.³² Regardless of the merits of this contentious and best-selling book – it is overwrought and at times blatantly pornographic, while its author displays his erudition self-consciously – it is also perhaps a sign that the war itself has faded to the point that mainstream publishing houses can take license with the subject, just as mainstream Hollywood now seems willing to do.³³

With such a broad range of approaches addressing the general topic of the German military during World War II, it would seem to be a difficult task to find areas which have not been addressed adequately, especially regarding the war in Europe. Thus it is the exception that proves the rule. For non-American historians writing in English, Cornelius Ryan and Antony Beevor have proved to be publishing successes and also solid historians. Irish-born Ryan's most celebrated work became a movie by the same name, *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944*.³⁴ Yet in this work and another of his great successes that also became a movie as well as an expression commonly used to describe overreaching, *A Bridge Too Far*, Ryan addressed not only the allied perspective, but also presented the actions and conduct of the German defenders quite capably.³⁵ In between these two famous works, Ryan also wrote a solid account on the Battle for Berlin published in 1966.³⁶ More recently, former British army officer, Antony Beevor, has published two important and commercially successful books on the largest battles fought by the Soviet Union in World War II: Stalingrad and the Battle for Berlin.³⁷ Another British mil-

32. In addition to being a committed National Socialist dedicated to genocide, the lead character of the novel, Dr. Maximilian Aue, is a promiscuous homosexual who also happens to have an incestuous love affair with his identical-twin sister.

33. A recent film by Quentin Tarantino portrays a mythical group of Jewish-American soldiers in Nazi-occupied France during World War II spreading fear through the Third Reich by brutally killing Nazis. *Inglorious Basterds* (sic), Universal Pictures, Universal City, CA, 2009. In February 2010, the film received eight Academy Award nominations and Austrian actor Christoph Waltz received the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of an SS officer in the film.

34. Cornelius Ryan, *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959). Born in Dublin in 1920, Ryan moved to the United States after serving as a war correspondent in Europe during the Second World War. His book became a very popular and award-winning film of the same name released in 1962 and starring John Wayne and other leading actors of the day, *The Longest Day*, 20th Century Fox, Los Angeles, 1962.

35. Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974). A film by the same name was released in 1977, starring leading actors of the day, *A Bridge Too Far*, United Artists, Century City, CA, 1977.

36. Cornelius Ryan, *The Last Battle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966). In conducting research, Ryan had the rare distinction of being able to access Soviet archives and interview Soviet veterans of the battle. Due to his portrayal of the conduct of Russian soldiers in Berlin, the Soviet government subsequently denounced the work.

37. Antony Beevor, *Stalingrad: The Fateful Siege, 1942-1943* (New York: Viking, 1998); and Antony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945* (New York: Viking, 2002). Though both works are superb, *Stalingrad* will likely stand as his seminal work, and it has signi-

itary historian, Christopher Duffy, published widely on German military history, attempted a similar work on the final year of the war culminating in the Battle for Berlin.³⁸ A solid work, it is more narrowly focused on the final Soviet conquest of Germany in 1945 and lacks the historical rigor that Beevor demonstrated in *The Fall of Berlin 1945*, while proving much less successful both in terms of sales and acclaim.³⁹

Broad Synthesis

It is against this very brief background sketch of some of the historiography concerning the German military in World War II that one should examine the recent book by Max Hastings investigating the final campaigns in Europe during World War II, *Armageddon: The Battle for Germany 1944-1945*. One of the few bestselling historians writing in English who covers all theaters of the war – a more recent release and virtual companion of *Armageddon* is *Retribution: The Battle for Japan, 1944-45*⁴⁰ – Hastings accomplishes the relatively rare feat of writing to a broad reading audience while conducting sound and pioneering historical research. In addition to his scholarship, he will also be familiar to readers of *Global War Studies* for a recent interview with him featured in it.⁴¹ Despite being primarily a journalist for most of his career, Hastings has been a seminal and popular military historian for three decades. Two of his most significant works, *Bomber Command* and *Das Reich: The March of the 2nd SS Panzer Division through France*, continue to be both influential and controversial despite the fact that both were published well over a quarter century ago.⁴²

Arguably the most masterful of his type, Max Hastings is technically not even an historian by trade. Gearing his works toward a broader reading public and not simply an academic audience, Hastings proves consistently controversial primarily because of his willingness to challenge established orthodoxies. *Bomber Command* was a contentious work because of its willingness to challenge the overall contribution of allied strategic bombing in general and British strategic bombing in particular to the allied victory. Similarly in *Das Reich*, he challenged the degree of

ificantly changed current understanding of the battle.

38. Christopher Duffy, *Red Storm on the Reich: The Soviet March on Germany, 1945* (New York: Atheneum, 1991).

39. Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945*.

40. Max Hastings, *Retribution: The Battle for Japan, 1944-45* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007).

41. Robert von Maier and Richard R. Muller, "Questions and Answers: Max Hastings," *World War II Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 4 (2008), pp. 43-51. *World War II Quarterly* was re-titled and is now *Global War Studies*.

42. Max Hastings, *Bomber Command* (London: Michael Joseph, 1979); and Max Hastings, *Das Reich: The March of the 2nd SS Panzer Division through France* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981).

the contribution of the French resistance – the *maquisards* – to the defeat of the Germans at Normandy and painfully admitted the effectiveness of the German massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane in quelling further resistance.⁴³ For many years, his has been a lonely but accurate voice that highlights certain truths often overlooked when discussing the proficiency of the *Wehrmacht*. His work on the battle for Germany followed a fifteen-year break from serious historical writing, but the wait was well worth it.

It is important to remember, yet often neglected, that two thirds of German soldiers killed during World War II died in 1944 and 1945 and 50% of all *Wehrmacht* casualties occurred in the final ten months of the war.⁴⁴ These statistics become even more staggering when added against the losses that preceded them on the Eastern Front: from June 1941 to May 1944 the German armed forces lost an average of 60,000 men killed per month as well as a total of hundreds of thousands more wounded, captured, and incapacitated by illness.⁴⁵ In this sweeping yet readable work, Hastings manages to address the unspeakable crimes committed by the Germans during World War II and the murderous ideology justifying them, the astonishing resilience of the German armed forces against overwhelming odds, the strengths and weaknesses of the invading armies and their leaders, as well as genuine compassion for the civilians of all nationalities caught up in the conflagration.

One of Hastings' great strengths as a writer and historian is his ability to focus on small details that illuminate larger points. Equally adept at describing the plans of Zhukov or Eisenhower, he also clearly understands the perspective of the average soldier or common man. Furthermore, he is perceptive in his capacity to understand and portray a wide array of outlooks from Soviet to American to German points of view. Consider one of his many pithy but apt commentaries, this one a brief discussion of political commissars in the Soviet army, "Political officers inspired the same mixed feelings as chaplains in the Western armies – some were very good, and notably brave; others were hated and despised for their hypocrisy, inciting men to do their duty...while remaining at the safest distance possible from the front."⁴⁶ He manages to examine the magnitude of the struggle – citing, for example, twenty-five million active participants in the struggle for Germany – while also being able to recount the struggles of ordinary soldiers and civilians taking part.⁴⁷

43. See, for example, Hastings, *Das Reich*, Chapter 10, "Excess of Zeal," pp. 182-88, for a realistic appraisal.

44. Echternkamp, *German Wartime Society*, p. 680.

45. Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, p. 350; Rüdiger Overmans, *Deutsche militärisches Verluste im Zweiten Weltkriege* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999), pp. 238-39.

46. Hastings, *Armageddon*, pp. 125-26.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 381. See, for example, the entire chapter from which this cited number

While surveys recounting the war as a whole or its various phases are numerous, the novel contribution of *Armageddon* is its ability to condemn the murderous behavior of the forces acting on behalf of Nazi Germany, to apportion blame in a reasoned manner, to assess the strengths and remarkable abilities of the *Wehrmacht* even at this late stage of the war, and also to assess the strengths and weakness of all major allied powers – not just the Russians – in such a way that it is a coherent narrative. This is all done in a lively style that makes the almost-600-page volume an informative and enjoyable read. Simply put, the work must be considered standard reading for anyone interested in how the war was fought to its conclusion in Europe. If there is any shortcoming to the work, it would be its relative lack of endnotes and documentation and the absence of a bibliography.

Operational Analysis

A noted expert on the operational abilities of the German army, Robert Citino provides another novel approach to the German army during World War II with his *Death of the Wehrmacht*. As opposed to an examination of the dramatic end of the war from a multinational perspective, he tackles an inadequately investigated aspect of the war: the period preceding its "turning point," widely seen as the Battle of Stalingrad. Early on Citino makes it clear that 1942 was the year that turned the tide against the Axis powers.⁴⁸ As its author makes clear in his conclusion, the very concept of a turning point in the war is problematic.⁴⁹ Whether or not one agrees with the concept of Stalingrad serving as the decisive point of the war, however, is not fundamental to the importance of the book. It is not really an examination of the decisive battles of Stalingrad and El Alamein, but rather the operational events that led to them.

A great strength of this magnificent work is that it sets out exactly what it aims to do, and its aims are lofty. Focusing strictly on the operational art for which he is an internationally renowned authority, Citino strives to overturn widely-held consensuses that the height of German operational art culminated in 1941. Instead, he makes a convincing argument that 1942 was actually the German high tide of operational excellence building upon many decades of previous experience and practice.

comes, Chapter Thirteen, "Prisoners of the Reich," pp. 381-417. Hastings skillfully recounts the actions of the imprisoned along with their captors.

48. Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, p. 2.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 304. The issue of a turning point becomes moot if the war was one which was unwinnable from the start. As Citino points out, see Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, vol. 6, *Die Ausweitung zum Weltkrieg und der Wechsel der Initiative, 1941-1943* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1990), pt. 6, "Der Krieg gegen Die Sowjetunion, 1942-43," by Bernd Wegner, pp. 1100-02.

More impressive still is Citino's ability to tie the summer offensives in Russia in 1942 with the campaign in North Africa. Virtually alone in the field of military historians, Citino makes a convincing argument that the campaigns should be considered in concert. Normally, analyses of the crucial campaigns of the fateful year of 1942 focus on one region or the other, or perhaps a broader picture of the war overall. What makes this work unique is that it ties them together and demonstrates that they represented a logical continuation of the larger flow of German military history, brilliant at the operational level, but deeply flawed strategically.

Impeccably researched and beautifully written, Citino's book stands as one that most students of history wish they could write. As for why it fits into the point of this article, it approaches a crucial aspect of the war and the German military from a position insufficiently examined and arrives at a convincing and entirely new position on the war and what he argues was its most decisive year. Arguing for a distinct "German Way of War," the Prussian, and subsequently German, tradition was to fight a *Bewegungskrieg* ("war of movement") to compensate for a weak strategic position in Europe due to geography.⁵⁰ This work is a logical successor to the author's earlier work in which he makes the case for a unique and evolving German Way of War lasting from the Thirty Years' War to the end of Nazi Germany in 1945.⁵¹

Early on, the book makes its case that German campaigns in the summer of 1942 were consistent with the German tradition of fighting a *Bewegungskrieg* to defeat an enemy superior in strength. The genocidal designs of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi *Weltanschauung* are acknowledged at the outset and not dismissed or ignored, but they are also not central to the work.⁵² For Citino, this is a book about how the German operational art was carried out in the Soviet Union and North Africa in 1942. The significant contribution of this volume is that it demonstrates not only what went wrong in 1942 – flawed strategic decisions by Hitler, inadequacies in logistics – but also how close the campaigns in both theaters came to victory. Certainly not written as a "What if..?," *Death of the Wehrmacht* stands as a fresh way to examine German operational art from a position usually overlooked. It is not that the book dismisses the crucial defeats at Stalingrad and El Alamein, but rather it reveals opera-

50. Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, pp. 3-8.

51. Robert Citino, *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005). See also by the same author reinforcing arguments in *The Evolution of Blitzkrieg Tactics: Germany Defends Itself against Poland* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1987); *The Path to Blitzkrieg: Doctrine and Training in the German Army, 1920-1939* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999); *Quest for Decisive Victory: From Stalemate to Blitzkrieg in Europe, 1899-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).

52. Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, p. 8.

tional brilliance that preceded them. Treating nothing about 1942 as pre-ordained, Citino observes:

In the end, the most shocking aspect of 1942 is not Hitler's own foolishness in splitting his armies or the obvious inadvisability of *exzentrisch* operations. It is how absurdly close the *Wehrmacht* came to taking not one, but all of its objectives for 1942: splitting the British empire in two at Suez and paving the way for a drive into the Middle East, seizing the Soviet Union's principal oil fields, its most productive farmland, and a major share of its industries.⁵³

The endnotes are copious, informative, detailed, and at times even humorous and witty (e.g., "30. See Klaus Schmider, *Partisanenkrieg in Jugoslawien, 1941-1944* (Hamburg: E.S. Mittler, 2002), a fascinating portrait of a tail, in this case the Croatian Ustasha movement, wagging the dog of German strategic policy.")⁵⁴ As is the case with other books strongly criticized earlier in this article for a focus on the German military during the war, this book also largely overlooks the ideology and murderous conduct of the Germans. However, in this case it is not a relevant flaw since the crimes of the Third Reich are not ignored. In the opening pages, Citino acknowledges "Hitler's vast plans for European and world empire, his racialism and eagerness to commit genocide, and the willing participation of the *Wehrmacht* itself in the crimes of the regime."⁵⁵ The author's point is that at the operational level, as abhorrent as the conduct of its armies was in carrying out the racial and rapacious policies of the Nazis, its military commanders and general staff officers sought to fight and win using the Prussian tradition of *Bewegungskrieg*.

A work of this type is of more use for the student of German military history and the continuity of the operational art over time. The only shortcoming to the book is perhaps the dust jacket illustration that depicts pre-war German soldiers juxtaposed with a lower photograph of a large column of German POWs in American captivity near the end of the war – a choice that was more than likely the decision of an editor and not the author.

Campaign from Above and Below

The climactic end of the war and its destructive consequences have been addressed in a number of ways. Previous works dedicated to the advancing allies have invariably focused on the inevitable military triumph of the allies, while some others have addressed the suffering of the civilians

53. *Ibid.*, p. 306.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 322.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

caught in the final months of war in Germany. Derek Zumbro provides another unique view previously little examined in *Battle for the Ruhr*. This is a fascinating and well written account of one of the last campaigns of the Second World War, one which would see the destruction of Germany Army Group B and the last organized German resistance in western Europe.

Although the subject is relatively well known to the student of World War II, Zumbro provides fresh insight into a battle that was much harder fought than generally realized. Weaving a balanced perspective from attacker, defender, civilian, and even prisoners, he brings an astonishingly new look at a battle largely overlooked by serious scholars. Also, he brings a wealth of new perspective from the German veterans. Most importantly, this book is a version of the final months in the west from the German point of view.

Weaving details and episodes as diverse as the surrender of unwilling boys pressed into service when the Americans captured the Ludendorff Bridge spanning the Rhine River at Remagen to the final moments of the commanding general of Army Group B, Field Marshal Walter Model, before he committed suicide, Zumbro has balanced the demands of operational developments as well as "history from below," the view of the ordinary soldier or civilian.

As with any good work of history, the author weaves narrative and context. With heavy emphasis on individual accounts from ordinary soldiers and civilians, Zumbro has written a book that will be read eagerly by anyone interested in the campaigns of the Second World War. Although it is deliberate, the focus of this book is above all on the German perspective of the campaign, both civilian and military.

Unfortunately, this work is not without its flaws and its overall scholarship is not on par with the standards of the two preceding books addressed in this article. The sources consulted are relatively few for a work of such scope and documentation throughout the work is thin overall.⁵⁶ Additionally, basic errors are committed in a book which is explicitly focused on the German army's final defeat in the west. For example, the Sixth SS Army is incorrectly labeled the "Sixth SS Panzer Army" in December 1944, a naming convention it did not receive until January 1945.⁵⁷ More puzzling still, however, is the treatment afforded to one of the key personal accounts recounted. An individual introduced early in the book, Ludwig Bauer, cited as a veteran of the campaign, is

56. For sources, only sixteen personal interviews, twenty-six published primary sources, and two pages of listed secondary sources comprise the bibliography for a book of more than 400 pages. Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, pp. 427-31. Furthermore, each of the fourteen chapters and the epilogue average less than two dozen endnotes per chapter.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

mentioned only once.⁵⁸ Later in the book, another veteran of the campaign – also a Panzer officer serving in the 9th Panzer Division like Ludwig Bauer – is indentified as Heinz Bauer.⁵⁹ The difficulty is that the experiences attributed to Heinz Bauer are exactly the same as those that Ludwig Bauer related to the author of this article in 2003.⁶⁰ His wounding, escaping capture, and numerous details identified mirror those that Ludwig Bauer experienced. Unfortunately, Zumbro does not use endnotes to cite his interview of either Ludwig or Heinz Bauer, although the two men are listed separately in the index, while only the interview for Ludwig is mentioned in the bibliography – no source material is provided for Heinz. Most likely it is simply an error in the use of the first name, but it is also a missed opportunity. Ludwig Bauer, a German defender and participant in the famous battle for Remagen, site of the seizure of the first intact bridge across the Rhine river, described the American artillery barrage preceding its capture as more devastating than anything he had ever experienced on the Eastern Front. In his words, "*Es war Hölle, absolut Hölle*" (It was Hell, absolutely Hell).⁶¹

Overall, however, it would be incorrect not to recognize the importance of this book or its significant contribution to the field. It has taken a new approach – the German perspective – on a well-known and well-researched topic. Although much of what is covered has been previously addressed in previous works on the topic, there are significant new contributions. For example, Zumbro presents a very competent account of the death of Major General Maurice Rose, the commanding general of the 3rd Armored Division.⁶² Rose was the highest ranking Jewish American to serve during World War II and also the highest ranking officer to fall in close combat during the war. Zumbro recounts how it was that Rose was leading his division from the front, was cut off by tanks from Heavy Panzer Battalion 507, and killed by a German soldier who thought General Rose was reaching for a weapon when he was in fact unfastening his belt. The death of the general much admired by his soldiers and the rumor that he had been killed because he was Jewish led to retaliations by American soldiers who shot Germans attempting to sur-

58. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-74, 405-06.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 6. Unfortunately, Zumbro presents little background on Ludwig Bauer (or Heinz Bauer, for that matter). Ludwig served on virtually every variant of German main battle tanks from 1941 onward, commanded an assault gun company during the Ardennes offensive, and ultimately received the highest award for bravery, the Knight's Cross. Interview with Ludwig Bauer, Künzelsau, Germany, 11 July 2003. Taped transcript in the possession of the author.

61. Ludwig Bauer interview.

62. Zumbro, *Battle for the Ruhr*, pp. 219-27.

render.⁶³ Zumbro's account is thorough and definitive on the death and its consequences of this famous officer.

While much of the material covered is indeed familiar to students of U.S. and British military history, the insight gained by examining this crucial campaign primarily from the German perspective will be useful to anyone interested in the final campaign in the west.

Battle in Detail

The period following the German failure at Kursk in July of 1943 and preceding the final Soviet offensive on the Third Reich beginning with the greatest German defeat in the war, the collapse of Army Group Center in June of 1944, is often seen as the forgotten year of the war. The vast majority of historical scholarship in English addressing this time-frame is devoted to the Air War, the war in the Mediterranean, or even the Battle of the Atlantic, while the climactic struggle still raging on the Eastern Front is often overlooked.⁶⁴

It is understandable that events between the climactic battles of 1943 and 1944 – Stalingrad, on the one hand, and D-Day and "Bagration," on the other – would be overlooked. As mentioned above, Stalingrad is commonly regarded as the decisive point of the war while 1944 also witnessed critical events of historic proportions. In fact, the greatest military defeat in all of German history occurred during the summer of 1944 when the Soviets launched their offensive, "Bagration," against Army Group Center, destroying approximately thirty German divisions and killing as many as 300,000 German soldiers.⁶⁵ On the Western Front, the

63. Zumbro demonstrates that a subsequent official investigation into the death of General Rose proved conclusively that the German soldiers on the scene had no idea that they had captured and killed a general officer. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

64. A case in point is demonstrated by one of the timeless and most highly regarded histories of the Second World War written by Britain's wartime leader, Winston S. Churchill. This magnificent study comprises six volumes covering the war in its entirety until July 1945. However, the year preceding the dramatic allied success of World War II largely overlooks events on the Eastern Front during this period. See Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 5, *Closing the Ring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951). The book is almost 600 pages in length and it focuses on the period between the summer of 1943 until the spring of 1944, yet no single chapter and only a few pages are dedicated to the events on the Eastern Front. Obviously, this aspect of the war has not been completely ignored, but in comparison with the other aspects of the war, the contrast is striking.

65. A readable account is provided in Paul Adair, *Hitler's Greatest Defeat: The Collapse of Army Group Centre, June 1944* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1994). The total number of German casualties is likely to remain uncertain due to the scale of the defeat as entire divisions were obliterated, but official OKW reports cite 300,000 men lost, while Soviet records record 158,000 Germans captured and 381,000 killed along with more than 2,000 tanks, 10,000 guns, and 57,000 motor vehicles destroyed or captured. See R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 4th

allies broke free from the Normandy *bocage* at the end of July, and by 19 August the U.S. First and Third Armies had eliminated the Falaise-Argentan, capturing 50,000 German troops after killing at least 10,000.⁶⁶ In the Italian theater, the allies had entered Rome on 4 June and by 26 August had crossed the Arno River. As Germany suffered disastrous defeats on the front lines, partisan activity in all of the occupied territories increased dramatically in 1944. Strategically, apart from the exceptions of the Ardennes Offensive and perhaps the offensive at Lake Balaton, the German occupiers were continually on the defensive, despite repeated local offensive operations aimed at eliminating partisan activity.⁶⁷ From 1944, it was clear that Hitler's Germany was on its last legs and it was only a question of when the final defeat would occur.

This, of course, is hindsight even if it is accurate hindsight. Often overlooked are desperate battles that occurred despite the apparent inevitability of the final outcome. For the military historian interested in the German army of World War II, this aspect of the war remains one of continuing interest. The reasons as to how and why German proficiency and motivation remained so stalwart until the final months of the war have been addressed repeatedly, most famously perhaps in the works of Omer Bartov.⁶⁸ While historians will continue to disagree as to why the

ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), pp. 1220-21. Ziemke, *Stalingrad to Berlin*, lists German losses as twenty-five divisions, p. 325.

66. Dupuy and Dupuy, *Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, p. 1212. Although Operation COBRA assured the survival of the allied invasion force, it is important to remember that a large number of German troops, and more importantly, German armor, escaped eastward.

67. German estimates of mid-August 1944 listed Tito's forces as forty-two divisions and 120,000 men, while the Chetniks were estimated to possess an additional 60-70,000 men. Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944)*, German Report Series (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1954), pp. 66-67 (Map 6). The situation on the Eastern Front was desperate also as Soviet partisans numbered some 200,000 by 1944. Often re-supplied and supported by the Red Army, German rear operations were in constant danger of partisan attack from late 1943 until the end of the war. During operation Bagration, Belorussian partisans set off 10,500 explosions and claimed to have derailed 147 trains in a three-day period. From Earl F. Ziemke et al., *The Soviet Juggernaut* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1980), p. 129. One authoritative estimate lists 1,933,000 partisans as being active in the Soviet Union throughout the war, Jörgen Hästrup, *European Resistance Movements, 1939-1945: A Complete History* (Westport, CT: Meckler Publishing, 1981), pp. 471-72. See also, Matthew Cooper, *The Nazi War against Soviet Partisans, 1941-1944* (New York: Stein & Day, 1979).

68. The groundbreaking work seeking to analyze German tactical effectiveness, as mentioned above, is Shils and Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II," Though the article is still quite useful, the work of Omer Bartov has questioned many of the conclusions in it. For an excellent and brief investigation of the motivation of the German soldier, see Fritz, "Ideology and Motivation in the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front." For a superb examination of German defensive doctrine, see Wray,

Germans continued to fight so well, there is little doubt that they did. However, few works in English address successful German operations in the final years of the war. Partly because of the overall strategic progress of the allies, partly because of the lack of detailed memoirs and surviving accounts from this period due to the desperate condition of the *Wehrmacht*, and also because of the climactic battles that occurred on either end, this period is again not examined sufficiently. One of these overlooked events represented a significant German success, known to students of the campaign in the east as the Battle of the Cherkassy Pocket, but more accurately as the Battle of the Korsun Pocket.

The best work to date in English, *The Korsun Pocket*, comes rather surprisingly from two Swedish military historians, Niklas Zetterling and Anders Frankson. Although this is not the first work in English on the topic, it is the most comprehensive and recent look at the largely forgotten battle.⁶⁹ Although it is not necessarily a light read, it is a competent and thoroughly researched account of the battle. After providing a succinct overview of the military flow of the war in the east until 1944, the authors provide a very comprehensive account of the battle with equal emphasis on the Russian and German perspective.

A work such as this, however, is strictly for the military history enthusiast. Mainly a standard narrative of the military conduct of the battle based upon official documents from both armies and augmented with personal recollections, it does not put the battle in the context of the larger aspects of the Second World War in general or the conduct of operations on the Eastern Front in particular. Its appendices addressing the order of battle are superb and a total of more than 1000 endnotes testify to a professionally documented monograph, but in terms of contribution to a broader field of scholarship, the work is significantly lacking.⁷⁰ While the book thoroughly investigates the battle, virtually nothing is said of its consequences. There is no conclusion other than a final paragraph that

Standing Fast. In Colonel Wray's words, "While it did not 'fight outnumbered and win' by achieving final victory, the German Army waged its defensive battles in Russia with sufficient skill, tenacity, and resourcefulness to merit close scrutiny." Wray, *Standing Fast*, p. ix. Indeed, that sentiment can be applied to unit cohesion as well as doctrine. See especially, van Creveld, *Fighting Power*, and Dupuy, *A Genius for War*. Training, tactics, organization, and the German General Staff consistently figure quite high (and rightfully so) in any accounting of German tactical excellence. Two provocative pieces highlight many of the important factors leading to this tactical excellence: Antal, "The Wehrmacht Approach to Maneuver Warfare Command and Control," and Grant, "Fighting Power."

69. A fairly recent publication by an enthusiast of the Eastern Front provides a handsomely illustrated and very detailed look at the battle, see Douglas E. Nash, *Hell's Gate: The Battle of the Cherkassy Pocket January-February 1944* (Stamford, CT: RZM Imports, 2002). In a large, glossy format this 420-page book presents many previously unpublished photographs and a competent overview of the battle.

70. Zetterling and Frankson, *The Korsun Pocket*, pp. 299-369.

states, "In the context of World War II, the battle at Korsun was a minor one...the Soviet position...was stronger after the battle...so Korsun may be viewed as a Soviet victory...bought at a considerably higher price than it ought to have been."⁷¹

Historical analyses of battles and campaigns are certainly valuable to the broader field of military history and such works retain a faithful reading base. However, the best examples of the genre also place the battle, campaign, or theme into the broader context of the war, issues of leadership, military theory, or tactics.⁷² Further weakening *The Korsun Pocket* is no reference whatsoever to matters such as motivation or ideology. Disappointingly, there also is not a bibliography. In short, the book is very useful for anyone interested in learning the details of a significant but neglected battle and it represents a step forward in the investigation of this relatively unknown battle, but it will be up to the reader to put the battle into context of any broader issues.

Right Concept, Wrong Execution

What then, can be made of this difficult and captivating topic, the German military and the Second World War? As addressed above, the works investigating it are numerous and apparently not waning in interest, but books that attempt putting their subject of inquiry into context, providing balance, and maintaining scholarly rigor make what appears at first glance a very broad topic quickly become a very narrow category. The very highly regarded scholarly publisher, Cambridge University Press, recently released a book that openly undertakes the challenge and promises to meet all of these criteria: *The Myth of the Eastern Front*. Again, this is not the first effort of its kind and it follows squarely upon another recent release by another highly regarded publisher, Harvard's *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*.

Extensively documented and coherently organized, *The Myth of the Eastern Front* focuses on American scholarship dedicated to the German military fighting in the east during World War II. The volume of literature consulted is impressive and the authors, Smelser and Davies, extend their analysis to popular war games, websites, and even on-line chat rooms. Organized into seven distinct chapters built on a specific theme as well as an introduction and a conclusion, the authors state their thesis clearly up front and justify it throughout the work:

The thesis of this book is that from the early 1950s on, Americans were uncommonly receptive to a view of World War Two as it was fought in Russia that was remarkably similar to that of

71. Ibid., pp. 297-98.

72. See Frieser, *The Blitzkrieg Legend*, or Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*.

many Germans, particularly leading circles of former German military and even National Socialists. In fact, this view of the war in the East in many respects contained elements of the Nazi worldview as applied to this theater of the war.⁷³

In a logical and deliberate manner, the authors argue that the long-standing American opposition to communism and the experience of the alliance with Stalin during the war made Americans susceptible to anti-Russian views. The emergence of the Cold War combined with a latent American "Lost Cause" mythology explaining the defeat of the Confederacy during the U.S. Civil War made for fertile ground when it came for a restructuring in the American psyche as to how and why the war in the East was fought. The popularity and nature of postwar German memoirs published in English, from field marshals to common soldiers, further skewed the American understanding. Amateur historians, enthusiasts, German veterans, "wargamers," non-scholarly journals, television programs, the internet, and even "reenactors" – divided into categories of "gurus" and "romancers" – created a picture of the war on the Eastern Front that largely ignored German atrocities and presents the German soldier as having fought a "clean" war that was noble and brilliantly executed.

The end result, the authors insist, is that Americans have accepted the German view that the German soldiers and their families suffered more than the Russians they attacked, and that "The German version of the war first promoted in 1946 continues to thrive in the twenty-first century."⁷⁴ The myth is destined to continue and "The 'good German' seems to be destined for an eternal life."⁷⁵

What a disappointment this book represents. Of all aspects of historical investigation waiting to be addressed sufficiently, this is it, and such a respected authority as Cambridge University Press would be an expected source. The authors have clearly accessed a broad array of literature in their attempt, but they have succeeded only in following the same path as Daniel Goldhagen in his bestselling, but deeply flawed work, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*.⁷⁶ Whereas Goldhagen argued that Germans were inherently anti-Semitic and fundamentally predisposed toward elimination of the Jews, Smelser and Davies present a portrayal of the average German soldier on the Eastern Front being a criminal with an American audience blind to this reality.⁷⁷

73. Smelser and Davies, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, p. 2.

74. *Ibid.*, pp. 258-59.

75. *Ibid.*

76. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).

77. Goldhagen is not an historian, but rather a social scientist. Although the book sold

The work is lamentable for its lack of balance or sufficient evidence. A telling sentence in the introduction posits, "Large segments of the American public also harbored certain attitudes, among them cultural, economic, racial, and aesthetic, which bore a disturbing similarity to those of fascism in general and Nazism in particular..."⁷⁸ No evidence is provided to support this claim. Nor is there any genuine proof to support the bizarre assertion that, "When Kevlar helmets were introduced into the U.S. Army, they were very popular among the troops because of their resemblance to the World War Two German helmets."⁷⁹ (The author of this article has been in the U.S. Army for more than twenty-seven years, well before the introduction of the Kevlar helmet, and never once heard this comment from any soldier.) So many outlandish statements of this kind, unsupported or taken out of context, make the book a maddening read. Some of the themes explored include: there is a common linkage and sympathy between Americans who lament the defeat of the Confederacy with those who feel similarly about Nazi Germany; the U.S. military in general and the U.S. Army in particular are deeply enamored of the German army of World War II; and German leaders, civilian and military, wartime and postwar, conspired to mold American popular opinion about the war. Unfortunately, most comments regarding American perspectives lack supporting evidence.

This is not to say that the work is without merit. As noted above, far too many amateur historians and enthusiasts address their topic while being clearly enamored of it and they ignore completely the crimes it committed. The complicity of the German military with crimes committed by the Third Reich is insufficiently examined and it is therefore imperative to get the history right, to present a balanced and complete picture of how the Germans fought, and what they did during the war. The role of German examples in leadership and tactical excellence are indeed part of the story of the growth of the professionalism of the U.S. Army in the wake of the debacle of the Vietnam War. These and many other topics addressed in *The Myth of the Eastern Front* are worthy of investigation.

Conclusion

As the above brief survey has demonstrated, the topic of the German military and its role during the Second World War is large, broad, deep, and complex. For these reasons alone, it will remain a subject of endur-

well and was a popular success, it faced withering criticism from leading historians. For a superb and scathing review, see Fritz Stern, "The Goldhagen Controversy: One Nation, One People, One Theory?", *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 1996).

78. Smelser and Davies, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, p. 2.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 125. The authors attribute this sentiment to Bruce H. Siemon, the Command Historian for U.S. Army Europe. No additional evidence is provided.

ing interest and controversy. Obviously, the horrendous crimes committed by Nazi Germany compound the difficulty of the topic to an extraordinary degree. Any scholarly attempt to examine the German military of the period must take this into account.

However, to label all of those interested in the topic of the German military (unless they are focused explicitly on its crimes) as romancers and gurus while suggesting there is broad sympathy with National Socialism in the military or certain historical circles is also quite inadequate. Clearly, for the military historian, the student of leadership, and the professional soldier, there is indeed much to be learned from the German military and its role during the Second World War. As this article has demonstrated, the subject is a lively and contentious one that will not become stale any time soon. Even though the vast majority of those who experienced or fought the war have now passed on, neither the relevance nor the urgency of the topic will fade in the foreseeable future. Fortunately for students of history, this provides excellent opportunities for additional desperately needed scholarship.

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

ASHLEY JACKSON, ed.

Section Three: Africa

"Speed and dash": The British Commonwealth's Campaign in East Africa, 1940-1941

by Andrew Stewart

Aside from the references in post-conflict official and unit histories, the bibliography for the campaign conducted in East Africa in 1940-41 is small. The titles, however, convey effectively the nature and extent of the military operations that took place. According to Michael Glover, it was "An Improvised War"; W.E. Crosskill, the one-time Minister for Tourism, Forests, Game and Fisheries in pre-independence Kenya, termed it "The Two Thousand Mile War" in a sense echoing the sentiments of the first account published in 1942 by the South African press correspondent Carel Birkby and titled *It's A Long Way to Addis*. Perhaps this often overlooked but extremely significant campaign is best captured though by J.F. MacDonald's still authoritative 1957 account – *Abyssinian Adventure*.¹

Fighting began in early July 1940 and ended in November 1941, during which time a force of British and Commonwealth troops (supported by a small number of British-led Ethiopian irregular forces), never any larger than 70,000 strong, defeated an Italian army of nearly 300,000 men. This numerically superior force had proven almost from the outset to be reluctant to take the offensive restricting itself instead to the seizure of just three small outposts: Kassala and Gallabat in the Sudan, and Moyale in Kenya. There was some more significant success with the capture of British Somaliland in August 1940, but further inactivity then

1. Michael Glover, *An Improvised War: The Ethiopian Campaign, 1940-41* (New York: Hippocrene, 1987); W.E. Crosskill, *The Two Thousand Mile War* (London: Robert Hale, 1980); Carel Birkby, *It's A Long Way to Addis* (London: Frederick Muller, 1942); J.F. MacDonald, *Abyssinian Adventure* (London: Cassell, 1957).

followed. In January 1941, a British counter-offensive began with a force from the Sudan invading Eritrea and northern Ethiopia. Three weeks later, a second front was opened from Kenya with the invasion of Italian Somaliland and southern Ethiopia. On 11 February a force landed from Aden and reoccupied British Somaliland. By the month's end, most of Italian Somaliland had been captured as, on 6 April, was the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. The Duke of Aosta, Viceroy of Italian East Africa and commander of the Italian forces, eventually surrendered at Amba Alagi on 17 May 1941 although troops at the port city of Assab and the stronghold of Gimma did not capitulate until later that summer and a force in Gondar held out for almost seven months. In just eleven months, British-led forces had succeeded in capturing 50,000 prisoners and occupying 360,000 square miles at a cost of only 500 casualties and just 150 killed. In the process, Mussolini's East African Empire had been destroyed.²

The East African campaign was in many respects a classic adventure of the British Empire. Men from the Somaliland Camel Corps, Skinners Horse, the Sudan Defence Force, The Royal West African Frontier Force, and the King's African Rifles fought alongside two divisions of the Indian Army, Rhodesians, and South African volunteers led in some cases by men who had fought British rule less than a generation before. There were numerous soldiers from the Mother Country in this composite force but it was those drawn from the Empire that played the critical role. This truly imperial coalition was an exotic force which relied upon speed and mobility to "dazzle" its Italian opponent. Many different types of military operations were fought ranging from an initial commando raid against El Wak and the assault on the town of Mega – forty miles inside Ethiopia and 7,000 feet up a steep escarpment – through to the battle for Keren during which a large-scale attack was conducted against an apparently impregnable mountain fortress.³ Added to this was an often decisive use of airpower, a triumphal amphibious landing, and a generally incredible feat of logistical planning.

British pre-war strategy for the area broadly encompassing what is today termed as the Horn of Africa was, however, fundamentally flawed from the outset. As with all planning that had taken place for the anticipated wartime situation, it was based on the assumption that France would be in a position to cooperate. Once it became clear that this would not be the case, the remaining resources were stretched extremely thinly. Even before France's surrender in the summer of 1940 it was already clear that the theatre commander faced a considerable challenge. When General Sir Archibald Wavell had assumed command of the Middle East region

2. War Office, *The Abyssinian Campaigns* (London: HMSO, 1942).

3. G.R. Stevens, *Fourth Indian Division* (Toronto: McLaren, 1948), pp. 27-56.

in August 1939 he had taken responsibility for the defense of British Somaliland, Egypt, Palestine, Trans-Jordan, the Sudan, Cyprus, Iraq, East Africa, and the shores of the Persian Gulf. His only armored division was lacking two tank regiments, artillery units were also incomplete and largely obsolete, and the aircraft available to him – twenty-nine squadrons of which all but one were obsolete – had to cover 4½ million square miles. His main effort was the defense of Egypt, though he never lost sight of the importance of the Red Sea lines of communications and, consequently, he viewed victory in East Africa as an essential prerequisite for victory in North Africa. In essence, rather than view the two areas as separate theatres, he viewed the one to the south simply as his left flank, and the Italian forces there as a threat he had to remove.

The disparity of forces in the region precluded an immediate offensive, so early British strategy was aimed at tying down Italian forces that might otherwise be used against Egypt. Key to this was the geographical advantage enjoyed by the British. It allowed Wavell to isolate Italian East Africa from both Italian North Africa and their home base. Whilst the numbers involved on both sides were modest to campaigns that would be conducted elsewhere during the war, the theatre of operations in which the fighting took place was vast comparable in size to France, Holland, and Belgium combined; if the main British headquarters in Nairobi had been in Cherbourg the three principle fronts would have been centered on Marseille, Madrid, and Milan.

During the autumn of 1940, this position changed as Wavell informed his two commanders, Lieutenant General William Platt and Lieutenant General Alan Cunningham, of his plans in North Africa and his scheme for East Africa. Platt, commanding a force of Indian Army, Sudanese, and Free French, was to recapture Kassala in Eastern Sudan, a town of importance that controlled the eastern loop of the Sudanese railway network. Additionally, he was to maintain pressure on the Gallabat region. To the South, Cunningham, commanding African and Dominion troops in Kenya, was to exert pressure in the Moyale area in order to encourage the Patriots. Once he was confident that the Patriots were fully engaged, Cunningham was to move into Italian Somaliland and advance to Kismayu before the rains began.⁴ Wavell also intended to foster relations with the Abyssinian Patriot movement, an irregular insurgency that was disrupting the Italian forces in the country's central highlands. Wavell recorded in his official despatch that "the fomentation of the patriot movement in Abyssinia offered with the resources available the best prospect of making the Italian position impossible and eventually reconquering

4. Robert Woollcombe, *The Campaigns of Wavell 1939-1943* (London: Cassell, 1959), pp. 42-47.

the country."⁵ His initial intention called for two operations – towards Kassala and Kisamayu – to protect his flanks while the main effort was to be devoted to irregular action aimed at supporting the rebellion. In his post-war despatch he described the operations which cleared the Gojjam of large numbers of Italian forces as "a very remarkable achievement," which he put down to the "energy and initiative" of Colonel, later Brigadier, Dan Sandford and Major, later Lieutenant Colonel, Orde Wingate whose Gideon Force proved a particularly effective spearhead for military operations in Gojjam. (Wingate, who had made his name with Wavell whilst organizing night squadrons in Palestine before the war, was to go on to Chindit fame, again with Wavell's sponsorship, in Burma in 1942.)

The ultimate pattern of the British campaign was actually a massive pincer movement through Eritrea and Somaliland converging on the final Italian mountain fortress at Amba Alagi, combined with a direct thrust by irregular forces through western Abyssinia. Wavell described it as "an improvisation after the British fashion rather than a set piece in the German manner."⁶ A more contemporary writer has compared it to a siege describing the crushing defeat of Italian forces that resulted as being similar to that which the British would later suffer in Hong Kong, Malaya, and Singapore.⁷

It was certainly an audacious plan, one which benefitted considerably from the Italians in East Africa not wanting a war for which they were hopelessly unprepared. Detailed plans existed for operations against the British Commonwealth forces, but they were quickly abandoned. The Italian air force did not bomb key targets such as Mombasa because they did not want Addis Ababa or Mogadishu bombed in return. Italian naval forces sat in their ports without venturing to interfere with British shipping in the Red Sea. Attacks were limited to a bombing raid on Alexandria and the previously mentioned border towns. Even the successful capture of British Somaliland only served to demonstrate to the Italians the likely costs of a more aggressive military campaign.⁸ Theoretically, Abyssinia was an easy country to defend against an invader, with its near impossibility of movement except on the very few primitive roads, the almost total lack of communications, and the great distances involved.

5. General Sir Archibald Wavell, "Operations in East Africa, November 1940-July 1941," Supplement to *The London Gazette*, 10 July 1946, p. 3528; see Christopher Sykes, *Orde Wingate* (London: Collins, 1959), pp. 236-320 for a still engaging account of this insurgency and the British role.

6. Wavell, "Operations in East Africa, November 1940-July 1941," p. 3529.

7. James J. Sadkovich, "Understanding Defeat: Reappraising Italy's Role in World War II," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 24, no. 1 (January 1989), p. 39.

8. The British garrison was successfully evacuated through the port of Berbera with casualties restricted to just 250 men; the Italian figure was ten times that number.

The British Commonwealth forces, however, proved far more adept at overcoming the resulting logistical challenges showing themselves time and again to be able to move over poor terrain at great speed and keep their opponent uncertain of their strategy. The Italians' inferior transport meant that they were unable to move quickly making tactical adjustments almost impossible; by February 1941 they only had seventy-one aircraft left, and most of the armored vehicles, as well as 5,300 other motor vehicles, were immobilized due to a lack of spare parts.⁹ Whilst Italian forces often fought bravely at the tactical level, poor decisions, inactivity, and incompetence at the operational and strategic level lost them their East African Empire.¹⁰

In reviewing the campaign after the war, *The Times* concluded that "Lord Wavell had two competent and determined commanders who took to this quick-moving warfare as ducks to water." Platt, on the northern front, had at his disposal the more highly trained troops and was called upon to cover the shorter distance. He encountered a serious setback at the strong mountainous Keren position, which he could not go round but had to capture. Major P. Searight of the British Royal Fusiliers described it as "really a hell especially from the physical point of view. In the nine months I served in western Europe as the commander of my company I assure you that I have never encountered such unendurable and exhausting days like those of Keren."¹¹ Men who were later involved in the assault on the Italian monastery fortress of Monte Cassino said that the fighting was less arduous.¹² Typical of the largely unreported acts of bravery by Commonwealth forces was an action involving Lance Naik Bhaira Ram, 1st Rajputana Rifles. As the Indian Army's official history recorded:

He [Bhaira Ram] was in command of a platoon reduced in strength to seven men . . . Bhaira Ram continued to defend his post with the utmost vigour . . . Not only did he repulse the attack, but with his remaining two men he chased the retiring

9. Sadkovich, "Understanding Defeat," p. 39.

10. Alberto Sbacchi, "Haile Selassie and the Italians 1941-1943," *African Studies Review*, vol. 22, no. 1 (April 1979), p. 26.

11. "Fool's Day of 1941 in Asmara: The Brits Enter, the Italians Exit," *The Eritrean Newsletter*, vol. 34 (April 1979). The complete text of the article can be found at <http://www.nharnet.com/Editorials/TodayinEriHistory/erit1941_033104.htm>. This is a fascinating editorial which is striking for the overwhelmingly negative portrayal it provides of the Eritrean experience of the campaign. As the writer concludes: "Many Eritreans hoped that, with the defeat of the Italians, things would turn to the better but were soon disillusioned when things went otherwise and the British turned to be another colonial force no better than their predecessors."

12. Colonel Fletcher, "Keren – The Breakthrough," The National Archives (London), CAB106/924.

Italians with the bayonet. When all was over eleven Italian soldiers lay dead just outside his post and many more on the hillside.¹³

Wavell considered discontinuing the attack – there were signs of a developing Axis counter-offensive in Cyrenaica – and adopting a defensive position. Platt persuaded him that another attempt would succeed and a final offensive saw the Italian force finally defeated at the end of March. From this point, the Italians made little further effort to defend their oldest colony.

In the south Cunningham faced a few positions as strong in terms of the frontal defense offered, but there were none that could not be turned. He operated farther from his railheads, but benefited from his main line of operations being in the first instance along the coast, so that he was able to get seaborne supplies into Kisamayu and later to shift his base up to Mogadishu. He also enjoyed lavish levels of transport, as a result of the intervention of the South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts' intervention to ensure the provision of wheeled vehicles for his troops.¹⁴ This he used to the maximum extent; his speed was little short of fantastic. The downside was that on the political side he bore the heavier burden having to negotiate the safety of the Italian civil population. He also had to deal with the Emperor and future administrative arrangements, not inconsiderable tasks for the military commander.

According to General Wavell, success had been mainly due to the boldness and skill in execution of his two principal commanders, the quality of their subordinates, and to "the dash and endurance of the troops."¹⁵ Correlli Barnett would write later of General Cunningham that "in eight weeks he seemed to have marched half across Africa; his speed and dash delighted the British public." His reward would come with a call from Auchinleck to travel north to take charge of the newly-forming Eighth Army.¹⁶ For the British Empire as a whole, the victory was a huge propaganda and morale boost as it fought on alone in the war against the Axis. For the South African official historian, writing about a campaign which had seen a significant contribution by his countrymen, it was a "military honeymoon" during which largely untrained troops with only "sketchy" equipment were given plenty of opportunity to improve.¹⁷ It

13. Bisheshwar Prasad, ed., *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War 1939-1945: East African Campaign 1940-1941* (New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1963), p. 57.

14. Neil Orpen, *South African Forces World War II*, vol. I, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns* (Cape Town: Purnell, 1968), pp. 38-39.

15. Wavell, *Operations in East Africa, November 1940-July 1941*, p. 3530.

16. Correlli Barnett, *The Desert Generals* (London: Cassell, 1960), p. 83.

17. John Agar-Hamilton to Liddell Hart, 14 February 1959, Sir Basil Liddell Hart Papers, Liddell Hart Archives, King's College London, LH 4/39.

has, however, become a largely forgotten campaign superseded by later victories that gained much more fame in British post-war memory. The British leader was said by his military adviser to have been contemptuous of "the fighting qualities of the Italian Army" and as a result he grumbled ungraciously about the length of time taken to complete the victory and barely recorded the campaign in his post-war account.¹⁸ The fact that the entry into Addis Ababa took place on the same day as the first Allied troops landed in Greece provides a clue as to why this was the case. The result is that while the ultimately triumphant North African campaign – with El Alamein and its deep emotional connections – continues to account for numerous memoirs and military studies, the heroics of the forces that fought and won so decisively in East Africa remain largely overlooked.

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The British Empire and the Second World War: Voices from Below by David Killingray

"It was an ordinary day, a day like to-day," recalled Robert Kakembo writing about Britain's declaration of war against Germany on 3 September 1939.¹⁹ This brief booklet, unusual in that few Africans wrote of their war experiences, is a personal reflection that quite understandably focuses on a British imperial perspective. His periodization of the war

18. John Connell to Ismay, 6 September 1961, Lord Ismay Papers, Liddell Hart Archives, King's College London, ISMAY4/9/38; *ibid.*, Ismay to Connell, 13 September 1961, ISMAY4/9/39; David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), p. 241.

19. Robert Kakembo, *An African Soldier Speaks* (London: Carey Press, 1946). Kakembo wrote his account in 1944, but the book was only published two years later due to a variety of anxieties expressed about it by colonial officials.

follows that of most subsequent conventional texts, from 1939 to 1945. Global wars, however, such as the Second World War cannot be confined merely to the years of major military conflict. There is usually a run-in, and always a long shadow cast by the war. For Africa, the war began in 1935 when fascist Italy invaded Abyssinia.²⁰ The attack against a member of the League of Nations revealed the weakness of that international institution, but more seriously the unwillingness of the European democratic states to confront an aggressive authoritarian neighbor intent on carving out an enlarged empire in Africa. Italy's action galvanized black political consciousness across Africa and throughout the "black Atlantic" world. For many Asians, however, the war began in 1937 with the Japanese attack on China, although the eventual Asian-Pacific war after the disastrous defeats of 1941-42 highlighted the weaknesses and limited strength of European imperialism, and also the ambiguities and splits within anti-colonial nationalists when confronted with Japanese imperial ambitions and racial policies.²¹

The VE and VJ day celebrations in 1945 did not mark the end of belligerence. In Asia, regional wars continued in China and also in the East Indies and Indo-China where nationalists fought against Dutch and French attempts to reassert control over economically valuable colonies. And other imperial powers were drawn into this, for example, the British into Java.²² Serious thought had been given to using African troops to police areas of post-war south-east Asia, a role performed by Indian soldiers, while within a short time French *tirailleurs* were deployed against the Vietnamese. Demobilization of Britain's African troops in Asia was slow, the last West Africans not returning home until early 1947.

For European overseas empires, the war truly marked a watershed; things were never the same again. European imperial power in Asia had been challenged and found wanting. In Africa in 1945, despite a few localized mutters of "moral panic," the imperial rulers confidently if not complacently thought of retaining control for many decades if not centuries to come, although the war had sown seeds of political change. Two new "empires" dominated the world after 1945, the USA and the USSR, and whatever anti-imperial rhetoric they each employed was soon set aside in the strategic global competition of the developing Cold War. The years of belligerency had altered global economies, stimulated new patterns of production and trade, displaced millions of people, and en-

20. Thus, the periodization adopted for the UNESCO History of Africa. See A.A. Mazrui, ed., *Africa Since 1935*, vol. VIII (London: UNESCO and Heinemann, 1993).

21. Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: Britain's Asian Empire & the War with Japan* (London: Allen Lane, 2004).

22. Richard McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia, 1945-1946: Britain, The Netherlands and the Indonesian Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2006).

couraged urban growth. The tentacles of wartime inflation and material shortages extended to the remotest corners of empire, often discounting any advantages brought by the war in expanding wage labor forces and the earnings of primary producers from growing export markets. Post-war inflation had serious post-war social and political effects throughout empires. War also brought the "silent violence" of famine, most seriously to Bengal in 1943 where the death toll was three million, to Indo-China in 1945, and also to northern Nigeria and regions of east and central Africa.

The war gave a fillip to anti-colonial nationalism, most obviously in Asia, which resulted in independence for the Philippines (1946), India and Pakistan (1947), Ceylon and Burma (1948), Indonesia (1949), and also in west Asia for Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq, alongside the enduring problem of a new settler state, Israel. In North Africa nationalism was also encouraged, and in sub-Saharan Africa the limited ambitions of the small urban-based, elite-led "patriot" parties were steadily replaced after 1945 by visions of territorial "national" political parties that aimed to supplant colonial rule and assert direct control over the levers of political and economic power. What appeared to be a long haul, to the surprise of many, turned out to be a fairly short process with large parts of Africa gaining flag independence within fifteen years.

Much of the research on empire and the Second World War has focussed on the military campaigns and individual theatres of conflict. "History from above" has commanded the field, a bias determined not only by the textual sources, but also by a view of historical relevance. In the last four decades or more there has been a growing interest in the voices of ordinary actors, of "subalterns." This has led to research on and writing of "history from below" to present a different view of the war years as provided by rank-and-file soldiers, civilians, housewives, children, refugees, prisoners, the dispossessed, and the uprooted. In Africa, the war resulted in up to a million men, and a few women, being enlisted by various means into the different colonial armies. In addition, thousands of men and women, and also children, were recruited for forced labor in mines, docks, plantations, and farms. In the immediate aftermath of war, little was written on this mass mobilization of military and labor.

Most African veterans were non-literate. Only a handful among the literate wrote accounts of their war service, the best known in English being by the Ugandan Robert Kakembo who has already been mentioned.²³ "History from below" arises out of the personal accounts of in-

23. A few articles were written, e.g. two by Moses Danquah in *West African Review* in 1945. Since then, others have followed: "There Was a soldier: The life of Hama Kim M.M.," compiled and edited by Ronald W. Graham, *Africana Marburgensia*, special is-

dividuals. In the immediate post-war years, anthropologists did not bother to ask what impact the war and military service had on African societies. It was not until the mid-1960s that political scientists began to think critically about the claim that ex-servicemen had played an important role in nationalist politics,²⁴ and it was another decade more before historians began to get in to their stride and to think seriously about the actual course of the war and its impact on Africa and the value of oral evidence from former soldiers.²⁵

Scholars who have worked on the Second World War in Africa – and the list is considerable – invariably have made use of oral evidence. Sixty-five years after the end of the war, that source is clearly a wasting asset. It is also a source that has a growing questionable validity: even thirty years ago some of the oral evidence gathered in Ghana added little to what could be derived from documentary sources, and memories of veterans were fading as to time, place, and purpose. In addition, individual and collective memory had been contaminated by a written nationalist history that claimed for ex-soldiers a prominent place in the "freedom struggle" preceding and after the ex-servicemen's demonstration in Accra in February 1948. So elderly ex-servicemen related what they had come to believe had been their role in the recent history of Ghana. This was clearly oral evidence, but it needed to be handled with great care. Certainly cleverly devised questions can cope with the difficulties that arise in gathering oral evidence. But the question of its intrinsic value still remains. This is not to discourage its collection. Of course, oral evidence can be of great value. However, great circumspection is required in how it is used, ensuring that it is carefully balanced against other sources of evidence.

The same warning applies to all personal accounts which by their very nature position the storyteller in the prime position. Such accounts may be scattered about Africa, "tin trunk" memoirs or diaries waiting to be

sue 10 (1985); Isaac Fadoyebo, *A Stroke of Unbelievable Luck*, edited with an introduction by David Killingray (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999); John E.A. Mandambwe, *Can You Tell Me Why I Went to War? A story of a young King's African Rifle, Reverend Father John E.A. Mandambwe*, as told to Mario Kolk (Zomba: Kachere Series, 2008). An account written in Chibemba, unpublished as far as I know, is by Dixon Konkola, "Ifyo Bamwene Munkondo ya 1939-1945" (What they saw in the Second World War 1939-1945, the story of RSM John Mulenga Mulunda), c.1949.

24. Eugene P.A. Schleh, "Post service careers of African World War II veterans: British East and West Africa with particular reference to Ghana and Uganda," Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 1968.

25. The pioneers are Okete J.E. Shiroya, "The impact of World War II on Kenya: the role of ex-servicemen in Kenyan nationalism," Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State University, 1968; and Rita Headrick, "African soldiers in World War II," *Armed Forces and Society*, vol. 4 (1978), pp. 501-26.

discovered and published.²⁶ In 1989, the BBC Africa Service transmitted four programs to commemorate the outbreak of the war using material gathered by "stringers." In response to the broadcasts, a number of ex-servicemen, or their relatives, wrote to the BBC enclosing letters, brief memoirs, and in some cases artefacts of one kind or another. This material along with oral evidence collected by various researchers and museums, soldiers' letters, verbatim reports of soldiers' activities (e.g. courts martial proceedings), newspaper accounts, and indeed any sources that provided a voice "from below," have been used in a forthcoming book on African soldiers' experiences of the war.²⁷

The inability of researchers to read and particularly to speak a relevant African language or languages has acted as a constraint on collecting and interpreting oral material. Recently, Swahili-speaking scholars have begun to mine the largely neglected wartime vernacular press of East Africa, including newspapers printed for the use of soldiers, which contain rich layers of comment by both soldiers and civilians.²⁸ When soldiers went away to war, heavy burdens fell on women and the elderly, and also children, who had to maintain families, manage rural production, and to secure often contested rights within indigenous family structures.²⁹ Wartime also brought women new opportunities and freedoms that challenged accepted roles and expectations. Some soldier's returned home with their horizons expanded and aspirations for a modern wife in place of the woman they had left years before. War disrupted families and marriages, and it also left many people, not only former soldiers, with deep psychological scars.³⁰

26. On "tin-trunk" texts see, Karin Barber, "Introduction: Hidden innovators in Africa," in Karin Barber, ed., *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 1-24. An early example, an African's account of the siege of Mafeking, first published in 1973, is Sol Plaatje, *Mafeking Diary: A Black Man's View of a White Man's War*, ed. by John Comaroff (Cambridge: Meridour Books, in association with James Currey, 1990).

27. David Killingray, *Fighting for Britain: African Soldiers in the Second World War* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2010). The BBC material will be added to the growing collection of oral material at the Imperial War Museum, London.

28. I am grateful to James Brennan for letting me read a chapter of his forthcoming book. Katrin Bromber, "Do not destroy our honour: Wartime propaganda directed at East African soldiers in Ceylon (1943-44)," unpublished paper, Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin.

29. Mary Ntabeni, "War and society in colonial Lesotho, 1939-1945," Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 1997. Ashley Jackson, *Botswana 1939-1945: An African Country at War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Kenda Mutongi, "'Worries of the heart': widowed mothers, daughters and masculinities in Maragoli, Western Kenya, 1940-60," *Journal of African History*, vol. 40, no. 1 (1999), pp. 67-86.

30. Biyi Bandele, "First Person," *The Guardian* (London), 30 June 2007, Family section, p. 3. Bandele's novel, *Burma Boy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), is based on his father's wartime memories of the Burma campaign.

Modern colonial empires were about race and color. The British Empire was a racial construct with white masters and black subjects.³¹ Colonial armies, and how they were deployed in wartime, reflected this hierarchical order of pigmentation with its white officers and black rank-and-file, a system barely dented in wartime and most rigidly enforced in white settler societies and in South Africa. Thus, the full story of the first African officer, Major Seth Anthony of the Gold Coast Regiment, is an account perhaps now lost forever. Questions of racial discrimination frequently appear in oral evidence and they make for graphic reading, although caution needs to be exercised as post-war nationalist politics which were about race have inevitably colored memories and distant perceptions.

Twenty-five years ago, a conference on Africa and the Second World War was held at SOAS, London, leading to the publication of *Africa and the Second World War* and a special issue of the *Journal of African History*.³² Since then, a good deal has been written on aspects of both Africa and the British Empire during and immediately after the war years.³³ A number of studies have looked at a specific territory at war (Gold Coast, Tanganyika, Nigeria, Botswana, Uganda), yet further studies need to be undertaken. Strategic areas ignored have also been studied, most notably Jackson on the Indian Ocean, and there are important topics that need to be explored further on war and society in wartime Africa. Surprisingly little attention has been given to religious ideas and responses (cf. the First World War years), migration and urban growth, trade union activities, new ideas about dress and leisure, new food stuffs and consumption patterns, the impact of increased literacy (educational provision expanded in British Africa during the 1940s), of medicine, radio broadcasting, films, and photography. The idea that ex-soldiers played a significant role in post-war territorial "nationalist" politics has been discounted in study after study across the continent, but a more significant question, rarely asked, concerns the roles of returning veterans in challenging and disturbing chieftaincy politics in rural areas. There is clearly much more research to be undertaken on Africa in this period of dramatic change.

31. See Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

32. David Killingray and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Africa and the Second World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986); *Journal of African History*, vol. 26, no. 4 (1985).

33. An early brilliant insight is provided by John Gallagher, *The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire: The Ford Lectures and Other Essays*, ed. Anil Seal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Keith Jeffery, "The Second World War," in Judith M. Brown and William Roger Louis, eds., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. IV, *The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 306-28. Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London: Continuum, 2006).

New technologies and methodologies offer opportunities to pursue areas of research once thought beyond access. The administration of colonial armies in peace and war generated a large number of attestation files recording the service of individual soldiers. These records only dealt with part of the expanded wartime wage labor force, but in a systematic and, rare for Africa, a fairly accurate and detailed way. In 1979, the Ghana military records – the country was then under a military regime – were barred to researchers. But given the technology of the time, what could a researcher armed only with pencil and notebook have done confronted with 30,000 such forms? Thirty years on, those records have been digitally indexed, with the support of the Ghana Army, thus making it possible to ask and find answers to a wide range of questions once thought beyond reasonable research.³⁴ Pioneer work on the Ghana material has proved its value for military and social history and comparative anthropometric studies; similar work could be undertaken on other collections of military data in Africa and elsewhere.

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Allied Forces in Iran, 1941-1945

by Ashley Jackson

Winston Churchill considered the oilfields and processing plant of Iran and Iraq more important than the Suez Canal, the British Empire's holy of holies. For a few months in 1942, when things looked bleak for the Allies all over the world – with Russian collapse viewed as imminent and Rommel expected in Cairo – this vast region momentarily assumed top billing in the mind of Britain's Prime Minister and strategist-in-chief. Yet history has had little to say about this theatre of Second World War activity, or the Allied command structures and armies created to service it, protecting essential oil reserves and funnelling Lend-Lease aid to Russia via the Persian Corridor. This, of course, is because history seldom remembers armies that do not fight and has little interest in logistics. But the activity of Allied powers in Iran and Iraq was on a striking scale; the battles for which they prepared were entirely likely; the resources they sought to protect were absolutely essential to the British

34. This work is being carried out by Dr. Alexander Moradi, Department of Economics, University of Sussex.

war effort, just as were the supplies sent overland to sustain the Russian war effort. Likewise, events such as the deposition of the Shah and the dramatic migration of hundreds of thousands of Poles touched Iran deeply, and the occupation of that proud and hitherto independent land – set betwixt imperial powers whose natural disposition was always to snap and snarl across their border regions – had ramifications of great moment.

The current research examines the role of the five nations most intimately involved in this theatre – America, Britain, Iran, Poland, and Russia, all of whom, with Iran's declaration of war in September 1943, were united as allies seeking the defeat of a sixth nation deeply involved in Iranian affairs, Nazi Germany. German influence in Iran, and its strategic position, had caused the Anglo-Russian invasion of August 1941 after the Shah had failed to corral or eject the 3,000 or so German nationals in his country.³⁵ For Britain and Russia, Iran was an old friend and an old problem, a buffer between their respective Asian empires, gateway to India as well as to the southern reaches of Russia's Central Asian domains. For the British and Indian armies, the build-up of forces in Iran and Iraq brought memories of past conflicts, and some who had served as young men in the Mesopotamia campaign in the First World War found themselves again sailing up the Persian Gulf towards Basra and the Shatt el Arab.

This, once again, was to be a test of British power to survive, to organize and labor, in conditions as disheartening as any the world could offer. Here, when the British Commonwealth faced alone the most destructive power in history, when German guns commanded Dover, when the spreading fires of war increased incessantly the need for men and material, an army was to be born, to remain and grow gigantic, hundreds of miles from any major battle . . . The finest in men and material that the Commonwealth could create or discover, was to be poured out in the vast and empty lands between the Caspian and the Persian Gulf. Was this immense expenditure of labor and living wasted?³⁶

The point is well made, for here an entire army and a huge labor organization sprang up out of almost nothing, performed vital but relatively unspectacular work, and then struck camp and disappeared once

35. For an overview of the campaigns in Iran, Iraq, and Syria, see Christopher Buckley, *Five Ventures: Iraq-Syria-Persia-Madagascar-Dodecanese* (London: HMSO, 1954); Clarmont Percival Skrine, *World War in Iran* (London: Constable, 1962); R.A. Stewart, *Sunrise at Abadan: The British and Soviet Invasion of Iran, 1941* (New York: Praeger, 1988); Ali Gheissari, "Persia," in I.C.B. Dear and M.R.D. Foot, eds., *Oxford Companion to the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Ashley Jackson, "Iraq, Iran, and Syria," in Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War*.

36. Central Office of Information, *PAIFORCE: The Official Story of the Persia and Iraq Command, 1941-1946* (London: HMSO, 1948), p. 2.

the war had ended, out of sight, out of mind, and out of popular historical memory. The 30,000 Americans of the wartime U.S. Persian Gulf Command had a self-appellation that summed this up; they called themselves the FBI, the "forgotten bastards of Iran." Unlike the British and the Russians, for America Iran was a new discovery, its sudden significance indicative of the rise of American power so greatly accelerated by war mobilization and the need to support allies and attack enemies in every corner of the globe. As Schubert nicely expresses it, in 1941

the Middle East was an obscure and remote corner of the world to the United States. Intelligence operatives in the War Department knew virtually nothing about the region. In fact, when questions first arose about possible operations in Iran, the best source of information proved to be the Library of Congress, where consultants on Islamic archaeology provided maps and information on roads and other transportation routes.³⁷

To the 115,000 Poles who were taken in by the Iranian government as refugees following their release from Siberian labor camps, where they had been imprisoned since the Nazi-Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, Iran was a promised land. As Ryszard Antolak wrote, "exhausted by hard labour, disease and starvation – barely recognizable as human beings – we disembarked at the port of Pahlavi. There, we knelt down together in our thousands along the sandy shoreline to kiss the soil of Persia. We had escaped Siberia, and were free at last."³⁸ Included among their number were the 41,000 men of the new Polish Army of the East led by General Wladyslaw Anders, himself released from Lubyanka prison in Moscow, now transferred to British command and assigned to General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson's Persia and Iraq Command.

For Iran, the war was a time of great change, bringing invasion and occupation. After the British and Russians had lost patience with the Shah's procrastination over the German presence, a joint invasion was mounted by the British Tenth Army (Operation Countenance) under Lieutenant General Sir Edward Quinan and the Russian 44th, 47th, and 53rd armies under General Dmitri Kozlov, driving overland towards Maku and across the Caspian to the port of Pahlavi. This groundbreaking action divided Iran into two spheres. It ensured the delivery of Lend-Lease to Russia, quashed German activity within the country, and enabled it to be better defended if, as expected, the Germans struck from Russia and the Middle East for the precious oilfields and installations of

37. Frank Schubert, "The Persian Gulf Command: Lifeline to the Soviet Union," in Barry W. Fowle, *Builders and Fighters: U.S. Army Engineers in World War Two* (Fort Belvoir, VA: Office of History, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1992), p. 306.

38. Ryszard Antolak, "Iran and the Polish Exodus from Russia 1942," <www.parstimes.com/history/polish_refugees/exodus_russia.html>, consulted 26 March 2009.

Iran and Iraq. Iran thus became an occupied country, and the presence of so many foreigners, the sight of British and Russian troops marching in opposite directions through central Tehran, stimulated social change and nationalism. War brought its usual ills – food shortages, consumer goods shortages, inflation, and profiteering. Rural people poured into the cities causing unrest. With the enforced abdication of the Shah (he was exiled to Mauritius and then South Africa, where he died of heart failure in 1944), political activity and an expressive press developed after years of dictatorial government, and the first genuinely open *majlis* elections were held. Political activity was particularly notable in northern areas of Russian occupation, where the Communist Tudeh Party waxed strong. Among the political costs of war for the Iranian government, it had to deal on unequal terms with occupying powers seeking oil concessions, the Americans and Russians in particular (Britain already controlled all of Iran's existing oil operations). The Russians were prepared to use underhand tactics, stimulating separatist movements in northern provinces such as Persian Azerbaijan, where the Azerbaijan Democratic Party campaigned on behalf of autonomy and Russian interests, and stimulating anti-Iranian government propaganda. On the plus side, the Allied occupation brought development to Iran's transport infrastructure, as millions of tons of war materiel were delivered to Russian Azerbaijan via what came to be known as the Persian corridor. The Trans-Iranian Railway was the key to delivery, along with the road running from the southern ports to the Caspian and the country's inland waterways.

Before the invasion of Iran, Britain's interests in the region had centered upon its naval presence in the Gulf and the largely Indian Army presence in Iraq, known as British Troops Iraq. This presence had built up once oil around Mosul and Kirkuk was threatened and the short Anglo-Iraqi war of April 1941 became inevitable. Lieutenant General Sir Edward Pellew Quinan, a scion of the Indian Army who had learned his trade in France and Mesopotamia in the First World War and commanded forces fighting the Fakir of Ipi in Waziristan in the 1930s, was appointed commander of the Indian Army Corps in the Persian Gulf, known as British Troops Iraq or Iraqforce and then, from late 1941, as Tenth Army. Orders from GHQ India ordered Quinan "to develop and organize Basra to enable it to maintain such forces as may be required to operate in the Middle East, including Egypt, Turkey, and Iraq." It was to ensure security of all means of communication in Iraq and to develop them, to protect British airbases at Habbaniya and Shu'aiba, British subjects in Baghdad, the Kirkuk oilfields, and the pipeline to Haifa.

General Quinan's Tenth Army came under Middle East Command, though for a time was swapped to India Command. But with escalating British interest in Iran and the Anglo-Russian invasion, a new command structure was conceived. Responsibility for the region was removed

from the commanders-in-chief in Cairo and Delhi, and a new Persia and Iraq Command came into being in August 1942, responsible direct to the War Office. This was on the initiative of the Prime Minister during his seminal visit to Cairo, and it was formed in the light of possible German occupation of the whole of Caucasia and an invasion of Persia. At this moment of the war both the War Office and GHQ Middle East believed that the Germans might reach the River Araxes in North Persia by late October. Immediate steps were therefore necessary for the defense of Persia. General Sir Henry "Jumbo" Maitland Wilson, who had accepted the command after Auchinleck had refused it, opened his General Headquarters in Baghdad on 15 September 1942. He had two primary tasks: 1) "To secure at all costs from land and air attack the oil fields and oil installations of Persia and Iraq" and 2) "to ensure the transport from the Persian Gulf ports of supplies to Russia to the maximum extent possible without prejudicing my primary military task."³⁹ Tenth Army had to be developed into what Wilson termed "a balanced fighting organization" capable of facing the *Wehrmacht*, and to this end significant fighting reinforcements began to arrive soon after the Command's creation.

America's presence in the region began in September 1941 with the U.S. Military Iranian Mission formed to help the British deliver Lend-Lease to Russia before America became a belligerent. It was led by Colonel Raymond A. Wheeler, an engineer who had been governor of the Panama Canal Zone and specialized in railroad and highway construction.⁴⁰ In 1942 the mission began to grow and expand. In June it was redesignated the Iran-Iraq Service Command, subordinate to the Cairo headquarters of U.S. Army Forces in the Middle East. In December 1943, indicating the growth and increasing importance of the theatre and the U.S. effort in it, the organization became the Persian Gulf Command reporting directly to the War Department in Washington. Major-General Donald H. Connolly, who had worked on New Deal relief construction programs in Los Angeles, took command in October 1942, followed by Brigadier General Donald P. Booth in December 1943 (both were engineer officers).

"Even before the Americans arrived, the British understood that the Iranian State Railway held the key to the main supply route."⁴¹ The British hoped to raise the railway's capacity from 200 to 2,000 tons a day. In its

39. See Henry Maitland Wilson, "Despatch on the Persia and Iraq Command Covering the Period 21st August 1942 to 17 February 1943," *The London Gazette* (London: The War Office, 1946); and Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas, 1939-1947* (London: Hutchinson, 1949).

40. The official history is T.H. Vail Motter, *United States Army in World War II, The Middle East Theater, The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1952).

41. Schubert, "Persian Gulf Command," p. 307.

last two years of military operation it was delivering on average 3,397 tons per day; during its peak month, July 1944, it delivered 7,520 tons of equipment every day. Other projects included the expansion of the ports and the construction of vehicle assembly plants at Andimeshk and Khorramshahr where lorries for the Red Army were assembled from parts shipped from America. There were also barracks, hospitals, mess halls, and latrines to construct. By the end of 1943, a total of thirty-six posts, housing nearly 30,000 American troops, and forty-four airstrips dotted the landscape, in addition to the extensive British construction projects that had already been completed. All together about 7,900,000 long tons of Allied ship-borne cargo were delivered into the Corridor, mostly for Russia, but also for Middle East Command and Iran. In addition to this, many thousands of aircraft were transferred to Russia via Iran and several million more tons were delivered as air cargo.

The story of Iran during the war and of the American and British command structures and forces deployed in the region opens up a relatively unexplored area of Second World War endeavor. The ramifications for the Iranian state and its people need to be better understood, and the theatre offers valuable insights in "Big Three" strategic relations and clues to Cold War developments. It reminds us of the great importance of resources and logistics in fighting wars, and of the significance of defensive and pre-emptive military actions. Finally, it reminds us once again of the deeply imperial nature of the British war effort, and of the inexorable rise of American political, military, and economic power.

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Section Four: India and the Indian Army **Training the Indian Army, 1939-1945** by Alan Jeffreys

The Indian Army was the largest volunteer army during the Second World War. Indian Army divisions fought in the Middle East, North Africa, Italy, and South East Asia. In fact, two and a third million per-

sonnel served in the Indian Armed Forces and India provided the base for supplies for the Middle Eastern and South East Asian theatres. The Indian Army's main fighting role was in the Far East, where in just five months, from December 1941 to May 1942, the British Empire suffered the most humiliating series of defeats in its history as Hong Kong, Malaya, Borneo, Singapore, and Burma fell in rapid succession to the seemingly unstoppable Imperial Japanese Army (IJA). Three years later, the Japanese Army suffered its worst defeat at the hands of the Fourteenth Army in Burma. The majority of troops in the Burma Campaign were Indian Army who provided three Indian Corps and eight infantry divisions, along with the two British infantry divisions, two West African and one East African Division. In numerical terms, there were about 340,000 Indian troops, 100,000 British, and 90,000 African troops.

The Indian Army in the interwar period had two main roles of internal security and policing the frontiers. Whilst proficient in these roles by 1939, historians have agreed that it was in no fit state to fight a modern army. With the outbreak of the Second World War, the Indian Army embarked on a massive expansion program to meet the requests for increased manpower. In eighteen months the Indian Army had doubled in size, although it was very short of equipment. To accomplish this meant experienced non-commissioned officers (NCOs), Viceroy-commissioned officers, and officers were "milked" from their units in order to bolster new and raw units. This "milking" of the Indian Army meant that a large number of the new Indian troops had little basic training, in direct contrast to the professional Indian Army of the pre-1939 period. The training structure within India was reorganized, for example, three Officer Training Schools at Bangalore, Belgaum, and Mhow were set up in 1940. These trained both the British and Indian Emergency Commissioned Officers for six months. In contrast to the pre-war situation where British officers underwent eighteen months training at Sandhurst and Indian officers spent thirty months at the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun, both would then spend a year with a British regiment before joining their Indian Army unit. The training schools meant a huge increase in the amount of Indian officers who numbered 15,540 by the end of the war and greatly helped the officer requirements of the post-independence armies of India and Pakistan.⁴²

This essay will briefly look at training Indian Army formations in the Italian and Burma campaigns. The 4th, 8th, and 10th Indian Divisions fought in the Italian campaign where they had more time to train than most formations because they did not fight in Sicily. The campaign on

42. See Alan Jeffreys, "The Officer Corps and the training of the Indian Army 1939-45: with a case study of Lieutenant General Sir Francis Tuker," in Kaushik Roy, *The Indian Army in both World Wars* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2011).

the Italian mainland combined the need for adequate training for mountain warfare, fighting in the towns and villages, and water crossing. The importance of training for mountain warfare seems to have been underestimated by the British High Command in Italy. In fact, the British official historians lament the lack of use of the Indian Divisions for mountain warfare.

4th Indian Division, commanded by the inveterate trainer Major General "Gertie" Toker, produced a training instruction on mountain warfare on 16 January 1943, which consisted of a lecture by the Commandant of Middle East Training Centre who noted that apart from the North West Frontier, the other limited experience during the Second World War was at the Battle of Keren where both the 4th and 5th Indian Divisions had fought.⁴³ In autumn 1943, 4th Indian division was established as a mountain division. 7th Indian Infantry Brigade followed by 11th Brigade underwent training at the Mountain Warfare School in Lebanon. On the eve of 4th Indian Division landing in Italy, Training Instruction No. 40 commented on the division's training for mountain warfare: "For this we have trained and will continue to train, as our recent visit confirms this as the right policy."⁴⁴ Added to this were three extra training requirements such as a motor transport attack on an unguarded position, an attack on a hill position near a main road, and an attack on foot behind the enemy with the following defense against counterattack even by tanks. Observers from 4th Indian Division in Italy also noted a lack of initiative, the importance of the PIAT in "tank hunting," and most importantly the need for all units of all arms to be trained for portage work.⁴⁵ This training instruction and those of the other Indian divisions were distributed to Corps command, the other Indian divisions within theatre, the Director of Military Training India, the reinforcement camps, and affiliated battalions. Thus, all training material and lessons learned was disseminated amongst fellow Indian Army formations.

All three Indian divisions together with the 43rd Lorried Brigade mounted successful operations on the mountainous Gothic Line underpinned by their training in mountain warfare. Mountain warfare continued to be of importance in India. Training teams from 8th and 10th Indian Divisions were sent to the North West Frontier to lecture about fighting with modern equipment in mountainous terrain. The Frontier Warfare Committee was set up in 1944 under the chairmanship of General Toker who thought traditional forms of "frontier warfare" were now out-

43. See 4th Indian Division Training Instruction No. 28, Mountain Warfare, 16 January 1943, National Archives (London) WO 169/14735.

44. 4th Indian Division Training Instruction No. 40, 10 December 1943, National Archives (London) WO 169/14735.

45. Ibid.

dated and lessons from the experience of mountain warfare in the Italian campaign should be instigated. However, the proposals of the Committee were not acted upon due to Partition when responsibility for the region went to Pakistan.⁴⁶

Prior to the Second World War, experience of fighting in the jungle was lacking in both the British and Indian armies as a whole. The knowledge that did exist was largely limited to those officers who had been hunting, also known as *shikar* or jungling, an activity often seen as one of the advantages of service in the Indian Army. This did not, however, amount to a viable doctrine. After the disastrous defeats in Malaya, Burma, and First Arakan, Field Marshal Wavell, Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) India, convened the Infantry Committee in June 1943. The committee's proposed solution was thorough basic training of recruits which would be followed by a period of jungle training for both British and Indian troops. It had become apparent that Regimental Training Centres were unable to deal with all basic training needs. The 13th Frontier Force Rifles, for example, had fourteen active battalions organized, equipped, and armed in six different ways.⁴⁷ The committee accepted the Director of Military Training's proposal that training divisions be set up in order to teach jungle warfare after basic training. All Indian and British reinforcements would now undergo two months jungle training under designated training divisions.⁴⁸

The need for a comprehensive Jungle Warfare doctrine had been highlighted by the Infantry Committee. This came with the publication of the fourth edition of Military Training Pamphlet No. 9 (India), *The Jungle Book*, in September 1943. The new edition had doubled the circulation of the previous editions of the training manual. Its clearly-stated purpose was to help commanding officers train their units in the specialized fighting methods needed to beat the IJA in the jungle, stating: "In principle there is nothing new in jungle warfare, but the environment of the jungle is new to many of our troops. Special training is therefore necessary to accustom them to jungle conditions and to teach them jungle methods."⁴⁹ It gave the examples of the importance of training, jungle craft, physical fitness, good marksmanship, and decentralized control as the necessary attributes that needed addressing in jungle warfare training. The pamphlet was the basis of jungle fighting methods used by the Indian Army for the remainder of the Second World War. Indeed, it later

46. See Alan Jeffreys, "Indian Army training for the Italian campaign and the lessons learnt," in Patrick Rose *et al.*, *Allied Fighting Effectiveness in North Africa & Italy 1942-45* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2011).

47. See Jungle Warfare – Training 11/10/43 – 11/3/44, Summary of the Infantry Committee, p. 7, National Archives (London) WO 106/4708.

48. See *ibid.*, p. 16.

49. Military Training Pamphlet No. 9, *The Jungle Book*, 4th ed., September 1943, p. 1.

formed the basis for two War Office manuals in 1944-45, demonstrating that it was the Indian Army rather than the British Army who pioneered jungle warfare doctrine.

The new C-in-C India, General Sir Claude Auchinleck, ensured that jungle warfare training formed the main focus of all training carried out by units, formations, and at training establishments throughout India. 14th and 39th Indian Divisions were chosen as the training divisions and were withdrawn from front line duty to reorganize. 14th Division, which had served on the North East Frontier during 1942 and in First Arakan, was now based at Chindwara. It was surrounded by jungle and the climate was comparatively mild, which meant that training continued all year round. Not only infantry, but all arms, underwent jungle training as it was such an alien environment to all soldiers. The emphasis was on individual and section training for the infantry, whereas the other arms concentrated on weapons training. Recruits, including officers and NCOs, were trained at section and platoon level by a representative training battalion from their regiment within the two training divisions.⁵⁰

After two months in the training divisions, the recruits were sent to the reinforcement camps, where training was continued until they could join their battalions. The rest and reinforcement camps were reorganized under Colonel Gradige. They had been set up in April 1943 on the example of those in the Middle East and were designed to hold and train 3,000 troops. The instructors were from India, often with little experience of frontline conditions, and ratios of instructors to troops were very low with little direction for training, all resulting in poor morale and cases of ill discipline. After August 1943, each camp was allocated to a particular division and realistic training was undertaken and discipline restored.⁵¹

Formations also underwent jungle training. The 5th Indian Division started training in June 1943 in Bihar, and then moved to Ranchi, where it reorganized and retrained for fighting in the jungles of Burma. The Division was already battle-hardened after its experiences in the Western Desert, but had to adapt to jungle warfare conditions. The amount of motor transport was decreased and animal transport introduced. The 28th Field Regiment was converted to a Jungle Field Regiment with 25-pounders replaced by 3.7-inch howitzers and 3-inch mortars. The Division also acquired jungle-experienced units such as the 27th Mountain Regiment who had spent the last five months in the Arakan and the 123rd Indian Infantry Brigade, that included the 2/1st Punjabis and the

50. See Report 14th Indian Division Jul 1943-Nov 1945, Papers of Major General Arthur Curtis, Imperial War Museum, London, P140.

51. See Brigadier J.H. Gradige, "How the Fourteenth Army was reinforced," *Journal of the United Services Institution of India*, vol. LXXV, no. 321 (October 1945), pp. 452-53.

1/17th Dogras who had both fought in the First Arakan. These veterans of the First Arakan helped train the Division in jungle warfare.⁵²

By December 1943, other Indian Army divisions were also trained in jungle warfare, such as the 19th Indian Division, which had completed its jungle training at Coimbatore, and the 25th Indian Division, which was training at Mysore. Thus, India Command, the training divisions, training within the Fourteenth Army's divisions, and the new doctrine of jungle warfare encapsulated in *The Jungle Book*, provided a basis for uniformly jungle-trained troops ready to defeat the enemy, as well as the terrain, the climate, and the diseases. Both 5th and 7th Indian Divisions fought in the Second Arakan campaign where the Battle of the Admin Box and the defense of similar boxes were successfully defended from repeated Japanese attacks, whilst supplied from the air. This heralded the turning point of the Burma Campaign. This growing ascendancy over the Japanese in the jungle was re-emphasized later in 1944 when the IJA made its main attack, Operation U-GO, whose prime objective was the speedy capture of Imphal by the Japanese 15th Army under General Mutaguchi Renya, to forestall the imminent Allied invasion of Burma. During the Battles for Kohima and Imphal, the Commonwealth Armies inflicted a crushing defeat on the IJA with 53,505 casualties in the 15th Army out of an overall strength of 84,280 in contrast to 16,700 casualties in the Commonwealth Forces.

During the Second World War, the Indian Army had been transformed from an Imperial Policing force in 1939 to a modern professional army in 1945 making an important contribution to the Allied cause. The Indian Army was now a well-trained army capable of dealing with almost any tactical situation and went on to form the foundations of the modern professional armies of India and Pakistan from 1947 onwards.

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India's Home Front

by Yasmin Khan

The role of Indian soldiers and servicemen in the Second World War is gradually becoming better known, but this still leaves many vital questions unanswered about the way in which India's Home Front was deeply

52. See Antony Brett-James, *Ball of Fire: The Fifth Indian Division in the Second World War* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1952), pp. 249-53.

affected and shaped by wartime policies and events. There are many ways in which this is apparent: in 1942, after the fall of Singapore, the fear of Japanese invasion of India was very real; Air Raid Precaution services were greatly expanded, rumors spread easily and with serious consequences. An error of judgement by the Government of Madras, based on erroneous reports of imminent invasion, led to an evacuation of the city which affected at least 120,000 people. Blackouts and curfews affected all the major metropolises, especially Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. By the summer of 1942, Bombay alone had 22,000 Air Raid Wardens, which included hundreds of women. Indians built bomb shelters in factories and private homes and dug slit trenches, evacuated their families to the countryside if they could, and listened anxiously for news. In the end, the invasion was halted in the North East of the country, although the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were occupied and there were approximately 300 civilian air raid casualties in other parts of India.

The Home Front was affected in numerous other ways; the government paraded new machinery and hardware through the cities and troops marched through the Indian countryside. Indians were involved in the construction of airstrips, barracks, bases, hospitals, internee camps, port facilities, roads, and railways. The landscape itself began to be radically transformed. A million Indians labored to build airstrips and installations in Bengal and Assam. Practice exercises covered great swathes of territory; in 1941 a mammoth mock exercise in the North Western Frontier covered over 230,000 square miles. Medical innovations abounded: the number of psychiatrists in India increased tenfold. There was a new emphasis on public health and nutrition. The war shaped the contours of modern India and paved the way for independence and freedom in 1947. As several authors such as B.R. Tomlinson and Benjamin Zachariah have effectively demonstrated, the planning and centralized state economy so characteristic of the Nehruvian era in India had its roots firmly in wartime policies of state interventionism designed to maximize the potential of India's war effort.⁵³ Food requisitioning, rationing, and state control of licenses and tenders proved to be important ways that the economy was altered in favor of the central state.

Simultaneously, there was also a serious battle for public opinion underway. Propaganda broadcasts, leaflet drops, and reconnaissance all became vital to the Allied effort and necessarily involved the work of Indians themselves. German and Japanese propaganda also infiltrated the airwaves. The Indian government was forced to ban commercial wireless

53. B.R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India, 1860-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Benjamin Zachariah, *Developing India: A Social and Intellectual History c. 1930-1950* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

licensees from playing enemy propaganda in hotels, markets, and other public places in 1940. Travelling exhibitions and dramas went from town to town and All India Radio prepared special daily war news bulletins to tell the British viewpoint. Motor cinema vans fitted with projector sets took propaganda films on tour. Cinema houses were forced to show war propaganda films under the Defence of India Rule of May 1943. Bollywood also turned to the war as a subject. Engagement with the Second World War in India introduced seismic processes of economic, cultural, and social change, which decisively shaped both the international war effort itself and India's own political and economic trajectory.

The government had to tread a careful line as extensive popular resistance to some of the wartime measures complicated the war effort; this went beyond the more well-known story of the Indian National Army in South East Asia; Congress dissuaded members of the public from joining ARP and set up its own parallel organization. Propaganda work was extensive, but there was also confusion and uncertainty about the causes of the war and the ideological orientation of the events. Some anti-recruitment parties took to the streets and railways, discouraging men from joining up and it was said that reluctance to join ARP was due to the impression that this would involve being sent to the front. Naturally, men away at war also worried about their relatives, especially when their kin were exposed to terrible famine, cyclones, drought, and grossly inflated food prices. Among soldiers themselves, racial interactions with European soldiers transformed world views and acted as both equalizers and prompts to nationalistic anti-imperial resistance. Different cultural and racial groups came into contact in startling new ways. This resembled contemporary "globalisation" as Tarak Barkawi has argued, as ideas, food, and culture came into contact and blended in new and transformative styles.⁵⁴

The lack of historical research into India's Home Front is, then, striking in comparison to Africa, which has generated a good body of writing. Existing literature about India in the 1940s is overwhelmingly focused on political changes such as the constitutional arrangements and attempts to settle questions of decolonization, rather than histories of ordinary people's experience of wartime. There is a rich, closely-researched body of material available on the devastating Bengal famine of 1942-43. The Indian National Army has generated a lot of scholarly attention such as Peter Fay's *The Forgotten Army*.⁵⁵ There are good studies available of propaganda and scientific developments during wartime, especially Sanjoy Bhattacharya's, *Propaganda and Information in Eastern*

54. Tarak Barkawi, *Globalization and War* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

55. Peter W. Fay, *The Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence, 1942-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

India, 1939-45 and Jagdish Sinha's *Science, War and Imperialism*.⁵⁶ However, few books integrate these stories into a narrative of India's particular experience of war. Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper's book, *Forgotten Armies*, is one of the few books to do so.⁵⁷ Works more explicitly concerned with warfare have tended to emphasize military campaigns and the role of Indian soldiers overseas rather than to discuss the subject of wartime transformations within South Asia itself.⁵⁸ India's Home Front has been a missing link in the literature. The political story of the 1942 Quit India movement takes precedence and social and economic history of the 1940s is not framed in relation to the war.

Even today in South Asia, India's war (taken to mean Bangladesh's and Pakistan's also) is not remembered in popular culture; contemporary Bollywood has paid it little attention and few popular novels and stories (say, in comparison to the stories of the trauma of partition) take the war as their subject.

This is twinned with the lack of state-sponsored commemoration. There were 87,000 Indian casualties of the war, but national amnesia about India and Pakistan's role has been noticeable. Although Euro-centric global war histories are partly to blame, the role of nationalism and the imperatives of nationalist history are also implicated in this memory loss. Once India and Pakistan were constituted as separate nations in 1947 it became difficult to agree on a shared narrative of war-time. With the separation of Muslim and non-Muslim soldiers in many regiments, old *esprit de corps* was broken and both newly-constituted armies faced each other in 1948 in the first war over Kashmir. Some leading officers who had fought alongside each other took each other as prisoners of war in subsequent conflicts. Even separating out the dead and agreeing upon suitable memorials became a difficult task after the Second World War; it took until 1957 for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to arrange a suitable memorial. Twin memorials were unveiled in November 1957 in Karachi and Delhi, which listed the dead in Urdu and Hindi respectively. There was a notable irony to this; many of the soldiers commemorated would have spoken other languages such as Punjabi and Tamil. Parallel monuments to merchant seamen were established at Bombay and Chittagong. The epic migrations of 1947, which had ripped apart the Punjab – the primary recruiting ground

56. Sanjoy Bhattacharya, *Propaganda and Information in Eastern India, 1939-45: A Necessary Weapon of War* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001); Jagdish N. Sinha, *Science, War and Imperialism: India in the Second World War* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

57. Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: Britain's Asian Empire and the War with Japan* (London: Penguin, 2005).

58. See, for example, Kaushik Roy, "Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Indian Army during World War II," *The Journal of Military History*, 73(2), 2009, pp. 497-529.

for the Indian military – overshadowed histories of the war. Today, Pakistani war commemorations and Pakistan Army Day focus on wars with India since 1948 and celebrate the martyrs or *shaheeds* who have died in that cause. Suitably integrating the history of the war of 1939-45 – which often involved close relationships and cooperation between soldiers of different races and religions – into Pakistani commemoration has proved problematic. In India, Congress Party directed school textbooks and public history have necessarily had an ambivalent relationship with the Second World War, too, as the question of supporting the war had nearly ripped the Congress Party in two in the 1940s, many Congressmen had been imprisoned during the war and the Congress had capitalized heavily on the mass popularity of Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army trials in 1946 just before an important general election, which determined the future constitution of the country. Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, acted as defense barrister for the accused in the Red Fort Army trials, which the British Raj used to prosecute INA men and Bose remains a significant member of the nationalist pantheon. Many have ambiguous memories of a coercive colonial state, which built up an army 2.5 million strong, requisitioned properties, and turned over state utilities to wartime production without consulting Indian opinion and negotiating with Indian politicians.

Therefore memories of the Second World War are not state-centric and India and Pakistan's war memories tend to be abstracted from the organization of state governments and institutions like museums and archives. These memories instead are more likely to be localized and dispersed, and memories and commemoration tend to be kept alive by veterans' groups and regimental memorials, plaques, and ceremonies in the locality. The diaspora has been adding interesting pieces to the puzzle, as war veterans based in the UK have been more actively involved in supporting war commemoration and history, for instance supporting Baroness Flather's campaign to establish the memorial gates in Hyde Park in 2002, taking part in remembrance services, and participating in online forums such as the BBC's People's War. In this way, some Indian servicemen are increasingly included in a British culture of remembrance, which has expanded to include them. This can generate some disenchantment with the Indian state and is also tied to calls for recompense from Britain; recently the head of the Ex Services League in Punjab and Chandigarh declared that he was upset that "the Indian government didn't strike a deal with the UK government in 1947 for Indian sacrifices" and made calls for grants, exemption from the UK visa fee, and payments to former prisoners of war.⁵⁹ New memorials are still being

59. "UK Memorial for War Veterans," *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, 20 November 2001.

created and unveiled, which speak of a shared Anglo-Indian past; in 2007, for instance, the Central India Horse built a new memorial at Bathinda in Punjab to remember those who have "sacrificed for the motherland since World War I."

However, arguably, these regimental or veteran-orientated memories are only one small part of a greater story of India's war, which could be expanded to tell the complex stories of civilian men, women, and children, both European and Indian, who had their lives shaped by the war-time events in India. This project, a narrative history of India's Home Front, is intended to look at these complex legacies through the medium of Indian voices and to ask questions about this "peripheral" site of war from the perspective of Indian economic and social history. Avoiding simplistic binaries of "treachery" or "heroism," it aims to understand the war from the bottom-up perspective, as it was seen and experienced through Indian eyes and in the context of contending ideological forces and pressing economic and social needs at the local, national, and international levels.

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Questions and Answers: Victor Davis Hanson

ROBERT VON MAIER
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Victor Davis Hanson is the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow in Residence in Classics and Military History at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and the Wayne and Marcia Buske Distinguished Fellow in History, Hillsdale College, where each fall semester he teaches courses in military history and classical culture. He has been a National Endowment for the Humanities fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California (1992-93); a visiting professor of classics at Stanford University (1991-92); a recipient of the Eric Breindel Award for opinion journalism (2002); an Alexander Onassis Fellow (2001); and was the visiting Shifrin Professor of Military History at the United States Naval Academy (2002-03). In 2004 he received the Manhattan Institute's Wriston Lectureship and in 2006 the Nimitz Lectureship in Military History at the University of California, Berkeley. He was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 and the Bradley Prize in 2008. Dr. Hanson is the author of myriad scholarly articles and numerous books, including *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); *The Other Greeks: The Family Farm and the Agrarian Roots of Western Civilization* (New York: Free Press, 1995); *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks* (London: Cassell, 1999); and *A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Random House, 2005).

Q: Are there any military historians who have been an important influence on you as a scholar?

A: Yes, both those long departed and still alive. Scholars such as John Keegan, Donald Kagan, Martin Gilbert, Cornelius Ryan, and Alistair Horne – the great narrative historians – had an effect on me as a student. Among the former, the ancients such as Thucydides and Polybius, and the great classical historians like Beloch, Momsen, and Grote, who had

such a mastery of primary sources. I try to read military analysts and strategic thinkers (eg, Aianias Tacticus, Vegetius, Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, Clausewitz etc.) as well as the contemporary essayists like Michael Howard, Geoffrey Blainey, and Angelo Codevilla.

Q: If you were asked to recommend six English-language books that should be considered essential reading for anyone interested in military history, what works would you select and what are the specific reasons for your selections?

A: I would recommend the following: Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, which establishes the blueprint for all later military history, and reminds us that human nature is unchanging and thus the elements of war are eternal; W.H. Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* is the most moving military narrative ever written, as engaging as it is often spooky and horrific; John Keegan's *The Face of Battle* is a fascinating juxtaposition of sterling prose, graphic detail, insight, and narrative mastery; E.B. Sledge's *With the Old Breed* is the most humane account of the awful experience of battle to my knowledge; Gerhard Weinberg's *A World at Arms* is a complex portrait of the Second World War in a truly global sense, marked by an understated wit and occasional sarcasm; and Seabury and Codevilla's *War: Ends and Means* is a concise primer that distills in no nonsense fashion the elements of war into basic principles, ideal for undergraduates who are unacquainted with the tragic view of human experience.¹

Q: What were some of the influencing factors in your decision to write *Why the West has Won*, and which aspects of your research for the book were the most difficult?²

A: That is the UK title, I entitled it *Carnage and Culture*, determined to highlight the role of culture in war over environment, morality, and genes.³ I was interested in culture and war for a variety of reasons. One,

1. Originally published in 431 BC, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* is available in a number of English-language editions; William H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, three vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1843); John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo and the Somme* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976); E.B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (New York: Presidio Press, 1981); Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Paul Seabury and Angelo Codevilla, *War: Ends and Means* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

2. Victor Davis Hanson, *Why the West has Won: Carnage and Culture from Salamis to Vietnam* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001).

3. Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western*

the anthropological school had suggested physical environment largely predetermines culture and therefore the West was simply an artifact of geography; the postmodernists had cited colonialism, imperialism etc. as innate to the West and responsible for its success and growth; the orientalists (to use an archaism) had argued that 8-10th century Islam, or China, or the Mongols had created the real preeminent cultures and militaries. But it seemed to me that a recurring theme in military history was the story of how Western militaries were able to trump distance, disease, individual genius, geography, and so often win when the odds were against them – largely due to their cultural approaches to military organization, technology, logistics, and the economy. Trying to select ten representative battles from thousands, in turn to highlight ten themes from dozens more, only leaves one open to the charge of generalization and bias; but I tried to set out criteria of representative selection, and, again, was not interested in relative morality, much less triumphalism, but simply why it is that militaries today emulate Western models, and why it was that the Western model of military organization has been largely the dominant one for centuries, despite periods of relative Western impotence.

Q: Another important addition to the literature is your *The Soul of Battle*.⁴ How did you come to write this particular work, and please discuss a few details of the book that deal with the Second World War?

A: I had been interested in the larger issue of how misfits – even unattractive individuals in general – often serve consensual society in times of need – a theme apparent from Sophocles' *Ajax* to Westerns like *The Searchers* and *Shane*. I was curious to explore what characteristics created both antipathy to men like Epaminondas, Sherman, and Patton, and yet were essential to both bold and idealistic military campaigning. Few appreciated that Sherman was an idealist, or sought to curb casualties, or understood how to shorten wars to save lives. I argued that Patton was a tragic figure, a captive of his own caricature, one that he felt important to mobilizing an unprepared cohort to engage the murderous *Wehrmacht*. He was in fact an intellectual, at times humane, but above all a great genius, who combined erudition and innate talent. Only a Sherman matched his knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of his own army in relationship to those of the enemy. It cost us thousands of lives that Patton sat out the Italian campaign, and was not activated in Normandy until nearly August 1. With the passing of the Bradley and Ike (both

Power (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

4. Victor Davis Hanson, *The Soul of Battle: From Ancient Times to the Present Day, How Three Great Liberators Vanquished Tyranny* (New York: Free Press, 1999).

long-lived) cadres, I think we will begin to see a radical reappraisal of Patton, as no longer the strutting martinet alone, but a sensitive student of military history who saved America a great deal in World War II.

Q: Please tell us about your recently published *The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern*.⁵

A: It is a collection of mostly previously published essays both about the war on terror and Iraq, and the larger notion of understanding the conduct of war in general in a postmodern society. The common theme is that an impatient public does not see war in larger contexts of past conflicts, human frailty, and material limitations, but seems to act as if contemporary wars must progress like the plots of TV shows; and then, when they don't, someone must surely be held culpable. We are a generation fond of rush-to-judgement superlatives like "worst" and "best" ever, odd inasmuch as we are also the most historically ignorant of previous generations and so have little referents by which to support these bombastic adjectives.

Q: During the Second World War, the only major non-Western opponent the Allies fought was Japan. What cultural influences do you detect in the conduct of the following campaigns which validated the superiority of the Western Way of War: a) South Pacific, 1942-44; b) Burma, 1942-45; c) Manchuria, 1945?

A: Two points: since the mid- to late-nineteenth century, Japan almost *in toto* had scrapped much of its prior military legacy (despite the samurai romance) and mastered Western modes of production, military engineering, and infantry and naval organization. All that borrowing and adaptation gave it near parity by 1941, given the somnolence of the allies during the 1930s. In all three of the campaigns you mention, however, Western armies were eventually able to bring more goods and services to the battlefield, and constantly adapt and modify technologies and tactics at a greater rate than the Japanese, who learned that it is difficult in parasitical fashion to emulate the Western Way of War, unless one understands that its evolving nature is deeply embedded in traditions of consensual government, capitalism, and individual freedom. Cherry-picking Western production and science can only go so far in long existential wars of survival.

Q: In the summer of 1944, the Imperial Japanese Army mounted its last

5. Victor Davis Hanson, *The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010).

offensive with the aim of eliminating American B-29 bases in southern China. In spite of spirited resistance from U.S. air power, the Japanese were able to push aside the defending Chinese on the ground and largely met their objectives. Was this marked success so late in the war a reflection of better Japanese adaptation of Western techniques, or a condemnation of Chinese cultural influence on its military?

A: Oh, I think it was mostly a story of Chinese exhaustion. The long Japanese occupation and attrition of Chinese assets by 1944 had taken a great toll on Chinese resistance which started far earlier than our own, at just the time the U.S. emphasis was focusing more on the Pacific. The Japanese defense of Iwo and Okinawa were critical events, since the Japanese demonstrated that defeating an enemy such as themselves would be costly, but annihilating them would prove beyond costly – and thus figured that their resistance to the last man strategy would so demoralize the United States that it might indeed either call off, or perhaps become stalemated in, the upcoming invasions of the mainland. All that was left out of the equation were the fire raids and the bomb. We forget that LeMay by 1946 may well have used Okinawa as a base, brought in additional bombers from the European theater, and ignited Japan in 24/7 multi-thousand plane raids from quite proximate bases.

Q: Was it possible for Western martial spirit to be inculcated into the military formations of non-Western units, viz. the Indian Army of 1939-45 or General Joseph W. Stilwell's Chinese army in northern Burma in 1944?

A: Yes, but, again, not holistically to the extent that such militaries could evolve and produce new weaponry and tactics as effectively as Western models. One can train, drill, and export weaponry, but it is harder to inculcate sophisticated notions of soldier and civilian, or Western notions of jurisprudence among the non-Western – and these details matter in the long run. Note today, however, that both India and China are making enormous progress in the free exchange of knowledge, capitalist modes of production, and in the case of India, ever more transparent democratic governance. At some point, if those trends continue, there is no reason why both militaries, given their demography, would not achieve parity with ours. And if Iraq were to work, its U.S.-trained military, in service to consensual government and powered by free markets, might indeed one day prove far superior to Saddam's monstrous creations, and become the real powerhouse in the Middle East. Conventional wisdom drones on that "Iraq empowered Iran," perhaps, in the short term. But Iran sees that if Iraq should work, it has real problems with a successful, strong, and subversive neighbor next door.

Q: By 1914, given the ascendancy of Western military thought, how effectively was it applied by the three main warring powers, Germany, France, and Great Britain?

A: In terms of military organization, logistics, discipline, and command, the German army that invaded France in 1914 was the most advanced in the history of conflict; but in the larger context of consensual government, the interplay between freedom, rationalism, military technology, and civilian input and audit of military performance, the more democratic countries of France and Britain possessed clear advantages. So in an odd way within this larger Western menu their relative strengths were evenly matched, and questions of manpower, national will, and industrial capacity began to become determinative, especially after the entry of the Americans in 1917 who delivered a million men to the European theater in less than a year, a feat that surely is one of the most remarkable examples of mobilization, training, and transportation in military history.

Q: How can a thorough understanding of ancient military history help scholars better assess the various campaigns and battles of the Second World War?

A: Ancient military history teaches us the age-old relationship between tactics and strategy, and politics – all Greek words; it reminds us that wars are rarely waged over stated material need like natural resources, but more often that these are pretexts for older human passions that provoke us into wars like honor, fear, and perceived self interest (I don't think the Falklands sheep economy was vital to Argentina or twenty-nine-million Taiwanese crucial to the health of one-billion-person China). The idea that wars break out when deterrence is lost through the absence of military preparedness, that wars end only when one side loses, and wars do not reoccur when the defeated is humiliated and forced to change its political assumptions and agendas – all that comes from the texts of Thucydides, Polybius, Xenophon, Livy, and Tacitus.

Q: What purposes, if any, are served by the serious study of ancient military history by professional officers in today's military?

A: It brings humility – and solace that they are not alone in their dilemmas. But without knowledge of the ancients, officers tend to think that they have discovered some new weapon, some innovative strategy, some fresh tactic, when in fact they are simply rediscovering new faces to very old ideas and things. Second, ancient historians were analytical, not mere recorders; Thucydides tells us why things happened, not just how,

so officers are enriched by philosophy as well as historical data when they read ancient history.

We live in an age of vast technological change in which new weaponry, computers, and communication often suggest that the age-old rules of war – what causes conflict, how is it prevented, what ends war, how is the peace kept, what are the goals of grand strategy, how do tactics serve strategy – are now warped and computer-driven. They are not. War remains the same as long as human nature is constant – a hard lesson to remind today's officer who has been told that terrorism, or drones, or computers have changed forever war as we knew it.

Let us not confuse the pump with the water, which is unchanging as much as the former metamorphosizes each generation. I worry that in the sophisticated present age, we are forgetting that wars break out when deterrence is lost; they are won by the side that makes the fewest mistakes and best communicates to its populace why the struggle serves national interest; and they end when leaders understand what the original goals were, and to what degree they were or were not achieved. Sometimes drones, cruise missiles, and computers confuse all that, and become ends in themselves.

Q: How does a vigorous study of military history help or hinder a democracy?

A: I don't think study of anything hinders anything. The more knowledge, the better. That said, democracies must realize that what 51% wish on any given day very often leads to radical changes in military leadership and policy (80% applauded Bush when Saddam's statue fell; about 30% after four years of insurgency). All democracies must contend with the notion that 60% of the people have no strong ideologies, but simply match their views with the perceived pulse of the battlefield, pro-war when things are good, anti-war when they suddenly turn bad. Any political leader who does not grasp that fact will lose a war – unless he understands the time constraints and the need for constant articulation and exegesis. The 24/7 electronic media can lose wars as much as the enemy – unless countered by truthful and sophisticated government explanation. Israel's dilemmas in the Middle East illustrate how a brilliant military can still be outperformed by media-savvy terrorists in the court of world opinion.

Q: How would you describe the present state of military history scholarship?

A: Odd. There is an enormous readership for all things about war, as expressed in DVDs, History Channel-like shows, movies like *Saving*

Private Ryan, and the military history sections at book stores – coupled with very few military history graduate programs. It is almost as if the more the public wishes to study war, the more the university insists on peace studies and conflict resolution programs – or sports medicine and leisure studies. One result of that disconnect is the rise of the autodidact, the journalist, and the independent scholar as military historian, whose volumes more likely sit at Borders than those written by tenured Ph.D.s in universities. This is both good and bad in some ways – good that talented others are promoting the field, bad in the sense that formal scholars are not writing more accessible history that can serve as models of scholarship and of the use of primary and secondary source material. Ultimately, narrative history depends on the unsung who collate letters, publish documents, arrange archives. This unheralded work thankfully goes on of course, but the university surely could support a wider dissemination of military history; now scribes and specialist collectors in universities bring in the material, and generalists outside the university mine it for the riveting story.

Q: Are you presently working on any new book projects, and if so, would you share a few details regarding the work?

A: I am working on *The Savior Generals*, which details the sort of characteristics and circumstances that bring mavericks like Themistocles, Ridgway, and Petraeus to the fore to save what is heretofore seen as an unsavable situation. I chose six case studies, from ancient to modern times.

Questions and Answers: Geoffrey P. Megargee

ROBERT VON MAIER
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Geoffrey P. Megargee received his undergraduate degree in history from St. Lawrence University in 1981. Following stints as an army officer and in the business world, he entered San José State University, where he received a Masters in European history in 1991, and then Ohio State University, from which he graduated with a doctorate in military history in 1998. He is the recipient of, among other honors, a Fulbright grant for research in Germany, upon which he based his book *Inside Hitler's High Command* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), which won the Society for Military History's 2001 Distinguished Book Award. He is also the author of *War of Annihilation: Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front, 1941* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006). Dr. Megargee currently holds the position of Applied Research Scholar at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where he is project director for the multi-volume *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*, the first volume of which was published in 2009 by Indiana University Press. He is also a Presidential Counselor for the National World War II Museum in New Orleans.

Q: Are there any Second World War scholars who have been an important influence on you as an historian?

A: Sure, there are many. Three of my graduate advisors, the late Charles Burdick (San José State University), Williamson Murray and Allan Millett (Ohio State University), as well as my good friend Jürgen Förster, formerly of the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* (MGFA) in Potsdam, Germany, all shaped my early work. Dennis Showalter, Rob Citino, and Gerhard Weinberg have also been reliable sources of advice and support.

Q: What are the goals of the *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*?

A: The *Encyclopedia* has three main purposes. First, it aims to provide basic information about as many individual camps and ghettos as possible. (Almost all the entries deal with individual sites.) To that end, we ask each of our contributors to answer a series of standard questions: When did the camp open and close? How many prisoners were there, and of what kinds? What sort of work did they do? What were conditions like in the camp? Who ran the camp, and what units guarded it? Were any camp personnel tried after the war? And so on.

The second purpose is to help readers understand the structure of the camp and ghetto universe – inasmuch as there was such a structure. We have organized our seven volumes according to the types of sites and their subordination, and we include introductory essays on the different groups of camps or ghettos. In this way the reader, rather than simply learning about one site in isolation, can see how the different sites related to one another.

The third purpose is to provide a starting point for further research, and so each entry includes citations to primary sources as well as information on relevant published works and archival collections.

In addressing those goals, we also have one more: to be as comprehensive as possible. The *Encyclopedia* will cover as many sites of detention, persecution, and murder as possible.

Q: Why is the *Encyclopedia* important?

A: The *Encyclopedia's* scholarly importance derives from the fact that the material it contains is simply not available to the average person. We are uncovering no great secrets; the places we describe are known to specialists. However, the sources on them are scattered through a hundred different archives and written in a score of languages. Very few people have the time and the expertise that it would take to learn about even a few of the lesser-known sites, never mind all of them.

Beyond that point, there is another dimension to the work's significance. For the survivors and their descendents, this work finally documents the thousands of places where they suffered. Everyone has heard of Auschwitz and Buchenwald and the Warsaw Ghetto, but until now, the vast majority of camps and ghettos were virtually unknown. And so the work has special meaning for the survivors. One of them said about volume 1, "This is a holy book." I don't think anyone on our team would ever have made that claim, but it drove home, for all of us, just how important our work is to the people who matter most.

Q: What lessons have you learned thus far from the project?

A: The biggest and most surprising lesson concerned the numbers. When I started on the project in January 2000, I was told that I would probably be dealing with between 5,000 and 7,000 sites. That seemed astonishing enough, at the time. What we discovered, however, was that the real number was several times that. This is a situation in which many different specialists had been working away in their own corners, and no one had ever synthesized their research. We now have a working number of approximately 20,000 camps and ghettos that we will attempt to cover, and in truth, there were many thousands more than that.

For me personally, as for many people, the bewildering array of different kinds of camps has also been an eye-opener. Most people with a modicum of interest in the subject have heard of some of the largest categories – ghettos, concentration camps, and POW camps – even if they are not aware of how many of those places existed. But there were easily another score of smaller categories that are largely unknown, such as *Wehrmacht* brothels; "Germanization" camps for kidnapped Polish children; sites for forced abortion and infanticide, to deal with pregnant forced laborers; so-called euthanasia centers, where German medical personnel killed off people with disabilities and weakened camp inmates; and "work education camps," where German and foreign workers were sent if they violated rules at the workplace.

We have also learned a great deal about conditions in the camps and ghettos, and about the centrality of these places in the National Socialist system. Again, we are not the first to describe these things, but by looking at all the sites together, I believe we have gained some new insights. Perhaps the easiest way to address the topic is by talking about commonalities and differences.

The most important common elements were control, violence, racism, and work. Obviously, the camps gave the authorities the means to control the prisoners. That control was a central element of Nazi ideology, one that the Party could expand to cover society as a whole. Violence was a means of control, and also had a punitive function. Racism was a prism through which the Nazis viewed the world, and it governed their behavior toward prisoners. And work was a nearly universal element of camp life; it had a punitive goal from the start, and also soon began to be of economic importance to the organizations running the camps and to the state as a whole.

Conditions in the camps varied according to type of camp, type of prisoner, and the whims of governing organization and even the individual camp administration. Viewed collectively, some kinds of camps were less harsh than others; this was true, for example, of internment camps for enemy aliens, in comparison with concentration camps. But

even within a category of camps, different kinds of prisoners received different treatment. In the POW camps, for example, American and British prisoners, whom the Germans did not consider subhuman, received relatively good treatment (I emphasize the word "relatively"; these men did not live comfortable lives, and some of them died; a few were even put into concentration camps). At the other end of the spectrum, Soviet POWs died by the millions from starvation, abuse, exposure, disease, and outright murder (that last being the fate of Jews, many so-called asiaties, and Communists). And on a smaller scale, the commandant and even individual guards and overseers at a given camp or work site could make life much easier or much harder for the prisoners.

Q: Please tell us about Volume 1 (Parts A and B) of the *Encyclopedia*, which won the 2009 National Jewish Book Award (Holocaust) and the 2010 Association of Jewish Libraries Judaica Reference Award.

A: The first volume covers three types of camps. First, it describes the 110 so-called early camps, which the Nazis and police set up in the first few months after Hitler came to power in 1933. Within a couple of years, the SS took over those camps, shut most of them down, and began forming a system of centralized concentration camps (*Konzentrationslager* or KZs); that is the second type. These would come to include many of the names that are familiar to most people: Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Mauthausen, Majdanek, among others; eventually there were about twenty-four of them. And as the war got going, and especially from 1943 on, as the Nazis decided to make use of prisoner labor, most of those main camps began sprouting *Aussenlager* or sub-camps; all told, there were about 900 such sites. And finally, the volume covers the three so-called Youth Protection Camps: really concentration camps for juveniles.

The volume puts the different groups of camps together, again so that the reader can learn about the system, rather than just the parts. There is a section for the early camps, with its own introduction. Then a section on the KZs: an introduction, followed by a section for each main camp, with that camp's subcamps listed alphabetically within the section. Finally, there is a section for the youth camps. Place, personal name, and organization indexes offer another way to get at the information.

Q: Would you care to share a few of the details regarding the second volume of the *Encyclopedia*, and when do you expect it to be published?

A: The second volume covers approximately 1,200 ghettos in German-occupied eastern Europe. These ranged from the large ghettos such as Warsaw and Lodz, which remained in existence for years, down to

temporary "open" ghettos – that is, ghettos with no enclosing walls – that existed for only a few weeks before their inhabitants were shot. The entries are organized geographically, by German administrative unit, to highlight the different ways in which ghettos developed in different areas. This volume will be published in 2011.

Just for your readers' information, subsequent volumes will cover: camps under the *Wehrmacht*; camps and ghettos under the control of European countries allied or affiliated with Germany; camps under the control of the SS Reich Security Main Office and the Higher SS and Police Leaders; non-SS forced labor camps; and a catch-all volume to cover those sites that do not fit in any of the other categories.

Q: In addition to the *Encyclopedia*, please recommend six books that should be considered essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the Holocaust, and what are your specific reasons for selecting each title?

A: There are so many, but I would recommend: *Hitler's Shadow War: The Holocaust and World War II* by Donald M. McKale. This book provides a good general history of the Holocaust, in the context of the war. *The Destruction of the European Jews* by Raul Hilberg is simply a classic in the field; it was the first academic history of the Holocaust. At three volumes, it's long, but no book does a better job of documenting the different steps in the genocide, based entirely upon the perpetrators' own records. *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* by Christopher R. Browning, with contributions by Jürgen Matthäus, is, I believe, the finest work on the Nazi decision-making process in this key period, and the events that influenced it. *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System Behind Them* by Eugen Kogon is somewhat old, but it is still an excellent source on the concentration camp system. *Night* by Elie Wiesel, because you cannot really understand the Holocaust through academic histories, no matter how good they are. Where *Night* is an eloquent expression of a victim's point of view, "*The Good Old Days*": *The Holocaust as Seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders*, edited by Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, takes you into the dark hearts of the killers.¹

1. Donald M. McKale, *Hitler's Shadow War: The Holocaust and World War II* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002); Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961); Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System Behind Them* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1946); Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960); Ernst Klee, Willi

Q: A continuing debate among Second World War scholars is whether the Holocaust was an integral part of the war or simply a contemporaneous event. Would you please address this question, and can you recommend any books or scholarly articles that deal with it?

A: The Holocaust was absolutely part of the war, on at least a couple of levels. First, eliminating the Jews was one of the Germans' main war aims, a political goal that ranked right up there with the acquisition of *Lebensraum*. Second, as far as the senior levels of the army were concerned, Jews = Communists = partisans. Destroying the Jews – preemptively – was part of the army's rear area security plan on the Eastern Front, and contrary to the myth that former German officers created after the war, they and their forces were fully involved in the killing.

As far as the literature is concerned, the aforementioned book by McKale addresses this question. So, too, do the contributions by Jürgen Förster in volume IV of *Germany and the Second World War* (edited by the *Militärhistorisches Forschungsamt*, Potsdam): "Hitler's Decision in Favour of War Against the Soviet Union" and "Operation Barbarossa as a War of Conquest and Annihilation."² For a distillation, see my *War of Annihilation*.

Q: What were some influencing factors in your decision to research and write *Inside Hitler's High Command*?

A: There was nothing at all profound about the decision, really. It dates back to my early days as a graduate student. I had made the decision to go to graduate school more or less on the spur of the moment, and when I arrived at San José State University to start my Masters work, I had given no thought to a specialty. One of my professors, Irma Eichhorn, sat me down and asked what kind of history I wanted to study. I had always been interested in military history, so I chose that. Professor Eichhorn then put me in touch with Charles Burdick, who, although he had retired, still guided the work of students who wanted to do military history. Charles sent me a list of possible thesis topics, one of which was the German high command. "What?" I thought, "Nobody has done that?" And so I picked it; it was that simple. The masters thesis turned into a dissertation, which became the book.

Q: In the past two or three decades, scholars have reevaluated Hitler's

Dressen, and Volker Riess, eds., *"The Good Old Days": The Holocaust as Seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

2. Horst Boog, Jürgen Förster et al., *Germany and the Second World War*, vol. IV, *The Attack on the Soviet Union* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

senior officers in terms of German military strategy during World War II and in terms of their relationship with Hitler. How would you characterize these changes and what do you think brought them about?

A: The changes are easily characterized. In the years following the end of the war, former German officers banded together to create a set of myths about their participation in the conflict. According to their twisted version of events, Hitler was an intrusive amateur in the military sphere, who both started the war and then lost it for Germany, and who also, together with the SS, perpetrated monstrous crimes, in which the army played no part. Because the generals' accounts were so convincing, because of increasing Cold War pressures, and because historians needed time to sift through the millions of pages of documentation that the Allies had captured, the myths formed the foundation for most people's understanding of the German army's role in the war. Only in the 1960s did the picture begin to break down (although in fact, the Nuremberg trials had presented a very accurate accounting in the immediate postwar period). Over the course of the last fifty years, historians, most of them German, have whittled away at the myths, until today we know how thoroughly involved the army was in Hitler's rise to power, the onset of the war, the defeat, and the crimes. Unfortunately, there are still many members of the public who hold to the old beliefs, but the correct information is gradually making headway.

As for the reasons behind the changes, I think one can chalk them up to historians' natural tendency to question conventional wisdom, together with a dose of German politics.

Q: Of the many lesser-known *Wehrmacht* officers, whom do you believe is most deserving of a detailed biography, and why?

A: To be honest, I'm not aware of any officer whose biography is going to add much to our understanding of the war or the German officer corps. Johannes Hürter wrote an excellent group biography of the army group and army commanders in the first year of the war in the east; it provides an insightful analysis of their military and political strengths and failings.³

With that said, I would like to see a biography of Friedrich Hossbach, who has gone down in history as a staunch anti-Nazi, but who not only commanded large units through most of the war, but also was directly involved in the killing of thousands of civilians in Belorussia in March 1944.

3. Johannes Hürter, *Hitler's Heerführer. Die deutschen Oberbefehlshaber im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion 1941/42* (München: Oldenbourg, 2006).

Q: One of the more dynamic issues in military historical writing in the past fifteen years has been the *Wehrmacht's* participation in war crimes on the Eastern Front. Do you believe there is consensus today on this issue among scholars? Where do the points of contention still lie?

A: If there is any significant disagreement on this issue, I am not aware of it. I believe that the basic facts are too firmly established to be denied, at least by any responsible scholar. There are still debates over some of the details. For example, we know that millions of Soviet prisoners of war starved to death, or died of hunger-related disease, in German captivity, and that the army was responsible for those deaths. There are some who insist that the deaths were a result of deliberate policy, that is, that the army killed off the prisoners on purpose, as part of the Germans' plan to take food from the Soviet Union for the benefit of the *Wehrmacht* and the home front. Others maintain that the army had an interest in keeping the prisoners alive – in order to use their labor – but that food was short, and the prisoners were at the bottom of the priority list. In other words, the question is one of premeditated murder versus negligent homicide.

Q: The history of intelligence is presently one of the growing fields of study among Second World War historians. In your own work, you have criticized German military intelligence during the war. Fundamentally, why do you believe it was such a failure, particularly on the Eastern Front?

A: There were several problems. One was that the Germans simply had a hard time gathering intelligence beyond the tactical level. They could intercept some radio traffic, capture prisoners, and perform aerial reconnaissance, but those sources rarely yielded solid clues as to Soviet intentions or capabilities on the operational level. The Soviets also became increasingly good at *maskirovka* – deception – as time went on. Beyond those factors, however, the Germans never did completely drop the preconceptions that dominated their view of their opponent. They tended to see the Soviet Union as a colossus with feet of clay, whose army was large but incapable of carrying out modern operations. That view was not far off the mark at first, but the Soviets learned quickly.

There were also deeper, systemic problems. In the *Wehrmacht*, intelligence officers tended to be younger, lower-ranking reserve officers, while the operations officers held higher rank and were members of the General Staff Corps; thus the intel officers had to be aggressive, and the ops officers receptive, if the former were to make their point. Also, there was no special training for intelligence duties; they were just something that staff officers were supposed to be able to do. Staffs were small,

which was great for coordinating operations, but not so good for analyzing large masses of raw intel. And on the most basic level, there was an attitude within the officer corps that the concept of operations was superior to all other considerations. The planning process involved creating the operational concept, then turning to the intel side to provide the enemy's most damaging (not necessarily most likely) reaction, rather than letting the intel picture shape the operation.

Q: The issue of German victimization in World War II has become more contentious as of late, perhaps spurred by Jörg Friedrich's work (among others) on the Allied bombing of Germany. Of course, the issue has been with us since the Nuremberg trials. Do you believe that debates on German victimization have obscured or clarified our understanding of the war?

A: Charles Burdick said to me once that the clearer we make history, the less accurate it becomes. Along those lines, I think that the debate on German victimization has helped to improve our understanding, specifically by highlighting the complexity of the issue and the impossibility of coming to any final, objective answer. The question of victimization is tied to the issue of responsibility (individual and societal), to the nature of the war, and of course to the political and cultural climate in which the question comes up. Certainly there were German victims. Just as certainly, Germany, as a collective entity, was not a victim. Reconciling those two statements is perhaps more a matter for philosophers than historians.

Q: A great deal of scholarship on the German military in World War II has come from the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* (MGFA) in Potsdam, Germany, which is a government institution. Considering that you work for a federally supported, public-private institution, how would you characterize the contribution of government institutions/agencies toward the writing of World War II history, and are there fundamental differences in the ways in which various institutions/agencies approach the craft of history?

A: Regarding the first part of the question, one point that occurs to me is that government institutions are often in a position to take on important projects that individuals or other institutions cannot or will not, simply because the government has resources that other institutions can not often match. Our *Encyclopedia* project is a case in point. Theoretically, a university or even some wealthy person could have undertaken it, but that would have been an unlikely development. Likewise, the U.S. Army Center of Military History's "green book" series would probably never

have come about without government support.

Of course, one hears criticisms of government-sponsored histories: they can take forever to produce, they sometimes reflect the weaknesses of committee work, and occasionally they fall prey to pressure to toe the government line. Speaking personally, I can say confidently that our work here in the Museum has not been subject to those forces; I feel very fortunate in that regard.

Questions and Answers: Christopher Shores

ROBERT VON MAIER
BARRETT TILLMAN

Christopher Shores is one of the leading aviation and air war historians writing today. His works – which span a career of more than four decades – have become essential references for anyone with an interest in the history of aerial combat, particularly the Second World War years. He is the author of numerous books, including *Aces High: The Fighter Aces of the British and Commonwealth Air Forces in World War II*, with Clive Williams (London: Spearman, 1966); *Fighters over the Desert: The Air Battles in the Western Desert, June 1940 to December 1942*, with Hans Ring (London: Spearman, 1969); *Curtiss P-40D-N Warhawk in USAAF, French and Foreign Service* (Reading: Osprey, 1969); *Fighters over Tunisia* (London: Spearman, 1975); *Fighter Aces* (London and New York: Hamlyn, 1975); *Ground Attack Aircraft of World War II* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1977); *History of the Royal Canadian Air Force* (London: Arms and Armour, 1984); *Air War for Yugoslavia, Greece and Crete, 1940-41*, with Brian Cull and Nicola Malizia (London: Grub Street, 1987); *Malta: The Hurricane Years, 1940-41*, with Brian Cull and Nicola Malizia (London: Grub Street, 1987); *Fledgling Eagles: The Complete Account of Air Operations during the 'Phoney War' and Norwegian Campaign, 1940*, with John Foreman et al. (London: Grub Street, 1991); and *100 Years of British Naval Aviation* (Sparkford: Haynes, 2009).

Q: What prompted your interest in military aviation history? Were you inspired by earlier writers or did you realize that few/none of them had taken your approach?

A: Since my interest dates back some fifty-five years or more, I shall answer this question in some detail. As a boy, I had been evacuated from London during the Blitz and lived in Wiltshire in a small town called Malmesbury. In 1944 this proved to be on the main route for British and

American convoys heading for the coast for the Normandy invasion. It was also near the Maintenance Unit at Kemble. By 1943 there was a big U.S. Army camp near my home, and the G.I.s were very kind and generous to us children. Thus, I grew up surrounded by people in uniform, with military vehicles and aircraft constantly around me. I can remember my father coming in, in his Captain's uniform, hanging his Sten gun in the garage and dumping there a large sack of 9mm ammunition (imagine such a thing today!). So my formative years were surrounded by the military and all things military seemed admirable and interesting.

In practice, my greatest interests at this time grew to be small arms and AFVs. By 1952 the war in Korea was raging and I was just old enough to join a cadet unit. Initially, I intended to join the Army Cadets because I was longing to fire a Bren machine gun. However, my friends at school were in the Air Cadets (the Air Training Corps) and persuaded me that I could not possibly become a "brown job." One clever guy produced a manual on the .303 Browning to show me that they dealt with machine guns in the ATC, too. So I joined, although at first my interest was more in the guns carried by the aircraft than in the aircraft themselves. Within a year I had become more interested in the aircraft than the guns, and I began making model aircraft – not plastic ones, which did not exist in those days, but 1/72nd "solids" carved from balsa wood.

Two really formative things then occurred. I went to annual camp and got a number of flights – in Tiger Moths, Ansons, Lincoln bombers, and even in a Coastal Command Neptune – all of which quickly convinced me that I wanted to go into the RAF as a pilot. During a school skiing trip to Switzerland at the age of fifteen, someone loaned me a copy of Pierre Clostermann's *The Big Show*, which was the first of its kind since the war.¹ I was absolutely captivated and felt I must learn more about this. My ambition was now to become a fighter pilot.

After *The Big Show*, more fighter pilot books began to appear, which I avidly purchased and read. *I Flew for the Führer*, *Reach for the Sky*, and *The First and the Last* I recall as being the next three to become available.² I had now become aware of "The Ace" and I wanted my models to be finished in the markings of aces, but there was not much information available about them.

Then came the disappointments. I passed the examinations necessary to get into the RAF, but failed the medical. I have color-defective vision,

1. Pierre Clostermann, *The Big Show: Some Experiences of a French Fighter Pilot in the RAF* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951).

2. Heinz Knoke, *I Flew for the Führer* (London: Transworld, 1956); Paul Brickhill, *Reach for the Sky: The Story of Douglas Bader* (London: Collins, 1957); Adolf Galland, *The First and the Last: The German Fighter Force in World War II* (London: Methuen, 1955).

so it was a "No" from the RAF College at Cranwell. But at that time National Service (conscription) was still in force, and I was called up into the RAF. Not knowing what I was going to do with my life at this stage, I signed on for a short regular engagement to see what life would be like in the service NOT flying. Well, I got to fire No. 4 Lee-Enfield rifles, Bren guns, and Stens, but no flying and most of my time spent behind a desk. So I was glad I did it, but it was not for me in the long term.

During the period that I served – 1956-1959 — many more aviation books and magazines became available. I was based in Germany for most of my service, where I did a lot of reading and model making, and gradually my knowledge increased. In those days, probably the best aviation magazine was *RAF Flying Review*, edited by William Green. Every month there was a fascinating section, "Facts by Request," in which questions were answered. Here my name first appeared in print (in about 1958, I think), asking a question about Brewster Buffalos in Finland – grist for Mr. Green's mill!

When I was demobilized in 1959, I began training for my father's profession, that of a Chartered Surveyor. I also quickly met the girl I would marry, but I still managed to keep my aviation interest going. At the end of 1960 I married and my perceptive new bride decided that my hobby was a lonely one and suggested that I should join "Air-Britain." This I did, and initially it was a huge disappointment to me. At their London meetings they seemed only to be interested in civil and light aircraft. However, at one meeting I complained of this to one of the organizers who advised me that every quarter there was a separate military meeting at the Kronfeld Club in the Victoria area of the city. I started attending there and finally, here were people interested in the same thing as I. By now, I had developed a special interest in the Finnish Air Force as well as in fighter aces, and I was gathering information and photographs from a correspondent in Finland, Eino Ritaranta, who I had contacted via "Air-Britain." I even gave my first-ever illustrated talk on the Finnish Air Force, and wrote a short article for the *Journal*.

Perhaps more importantly, "Air-Britain" had a number of research groups, and I was advised that there was an Air Aces Research Group. The group leader, Pat Cassidy, had recently died, but left considerable material. The group was now led by William N. Hess in the United States. Bill and I became regular correspondents, though in those early days it was mainly me leaching information from him! Then he put another member, Clive Williams, in touch with me. Clive lived in South Wales and we began researching British Commonwealth fighter aces together. This was specifically World War II at this stage, for books on World War I aces had already been published, which seemed to provide all the answers.

In those days there were very few bookshops which stocked aviation

titles – particularly second-hand ones – and we were seeking copies of those written and published during the war. At that time, Jack Beaumont's shop (now the Aviation Bookshop in Tunbridge Wells) opened only on Saturdays; the only other such shop in the London area was Hersants in Archway Road.

So there I was, still studying for my professional examinations and working for the old London County Council. As chance would have it, the LCC were then planning to widen and improve Archway Road and as a trainee I was given the task of "referencing" all the properties on one side of the road. Referencing meant that I had to inspect them, measure them, and then go back to the office and draw plans of them etc. so that the levels of compensation payable to the owners in due course could be calculated. This is not irrelevant, for one of the shops on this road was Hersants. The job was not particularly urgent, but one to be fitted in with my other work. So once a week I would putter up to Archway Road on my Lambretta, "reference" two or three properties, and at the end of the afternoon spend a little time in Hersants, examining their stock. (I had been mail-ordering from them since my RAF days in Germany.)

Eventually, I got to know the manager at Hersants, Pat Quorn, quite well. One afternoon he asked me what I was researching and when I told him, he remarked that I must have amassed a fair amount of information on the subject. I agreed. Clive and I probably did have such information. He asked if I had ever considered writing a book on the subject? I explained that at that time no records had been released to the Public Records Office (and would not be for many years to come). To complete our research, Clive and I felt that we needed access to squadron records. However, one could only obtain authorized access if one had a contract for a book, or was an established writer, and we believed that without the research, we would not be able to get a contract. To date, we had undertaken our research from available books, and from the decoration citations published in *The London Gazette* during the war years.

Not a problem, said Pat. Only a week before he had been visited by a publisher's representative who asked if he was aware of any new manuscripts as they wished to increase their aviation list, which then stood at three books. Should he put them in touch with me? I agreed, though I thought little more about it until a letter arrived from Neville Spearman Ltd. asking if I was preparing a manuscript, and if I would let them consider it. I explained that I had no manuscript, only a card index. They suggested I bring in a sample batch.

They took me out to lunch, looked at my record cards, and asked me if I thought I could write. I explained the problem with the official records. After more discussion, we returned to their office and I walked away with a contract and a £10 advance check!

Clive and I received access to the Air Historical Branch, and as soon as we started on the Operations Record Books, we quickly realized that we had barely scratched the surface of the subject. Eventually we completed the research, delivered the manuscript in 1965, and it was published in 1966 as *Aces High*.

During the following years, I received quite a few commissioned works, plus a lot of magazine work, Osprey etc. Brian Cull and I were working together more frequently and we continued to expand on the various campaigns I had been researching. Brian is very good at searching out people and getting their reminiscences, while I concentrated on the official records. We worked for several years on Malta, the Far East, and the Balkans, to a large extent for our own satisfaction as during the late 1970s/early 1980s the interest seemed to have waned and we were unable to get a suitable publisher for any of the books.

In 1984 John Davies, who had just set up Grub Street, asked me to write *Duel for the Sky* in a great hurry.³ Having done so, he asked if there was anything else "on the shelf." I offered him *Above the Trenches*, which he took, eagerly.⁴ I then introduced him to the campaign series – all of which had still to be written – and he agreed to take the lot. Since then, I have worked mainly with Grub Street.

Q: Which came first, your interest in the First World War or your interest in the Second World War? And what similarities/differences do you see between the two?

A: As indicated above, Second World War by a wide margin. My interest in First World War was at first peripheral. I became much more interested when we began researching *Above the Trenches*, but subsequently realized that my interests were becoming too wide and I gradually faded out of World War I, particularly as my interest in World War II AFVs began to increase.

I find the two wars quite different in many ways, although I have felt that by 1918 aerial tactics were becoming developed to a point where they were not dissimilar to those of World War II. Indeed, ground support was more developed in 1918 and had to be learned all over again in the Desert in 1941-43. However, I also found the main center of action of the Western Front was rather restricting compared with the worldwide operations of the second war.

3. Christopher Shores, *Duel for the Sky* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985).

4. Christopher Shores, Norman Franks, and Russell Guest, *Above the Trenches: A Complete Record of the Fighter Aces and Units of the British Empire Air Forces, 1915-1920* (London: Grub Street, 1990).

Q: If you were asked to recommend six English-language books that should be in the library of anyone interested in World War II aviation/air war, what works would you select and what are the specific reasons for your selections?

A: This is almost unanswerable in a meaningful way to aviation/air war generally, as there are so many important works available, so I will confine my answer to RAF books. Here I think the first three would be the old Macdonald and Jane's *Bomber Squadrons of the RAF*, *Fighter Squadrons of the RAF*, and *Coastal, Support and Special Squadrons of the RAF*.⁵ I would add the Air-Britain *Royal Air Force Flying Training and Support Units*, and Francis Mason's *Battle over Britain*.⁶ Finally – if I may – I would include my own 1994 edition of *Aces High*.⁷ These six, together with "Jeff" Jefford's *RAF Squadrons*, are probably the books which I refer to most frequently.⁸ With these you can pretty well map out the basic course and events of the war. There are many others I could add, such as the original three-volume official history of the war, but it very much depends on which aspects interest the reader.

Q: What were some of the influencing factors in your decision to write the highly acclaimed *Bloody Shambles* series?⁹

A: Firstly, interest in RAF involvement overseas. Secondly, the variety of participants: British, Australian, Dutch, U.S., and Japanese. Here I was always particularly interested in the types of aircraft involved: Buffalos, Curtiss Hawk 75As, CW 21Bs, Seversky P-35s etc. Thirdly, the

5. Richard J.R. Moyes, *Bomber Squadrons of the RAF and their Aircraft* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1974); John D.R. Rawlings, *Fighter Squadrons of the RAF and their Aircraft* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1976); John D.R. Rawlings, *Coastal, Support and Special Squadrons of the RAF and their Aircraft* (London: Jane's, 1982).

6. Ray Sturtivant, John Hamlin, James J. Halley, *Royal Air Force Flying Training and Support Units* (Tunbridge Wells: Air-Britain, 1997); Francis K. Mason, *Battle over Britain: A History of German Air Assaults on Great Britain, 1917-1918 and July-December 1940, and the Development of Britain's Air Defences between the World Wars* (Bourne End: Aston, 1990).

7. Christopher Shores and Clive Williams, *Aces High: A Tribute to the Most Notable Fighter Pilots of the British and Commonwealth Forces in WWII* (London: Grub Street, 1994).

8. C.G. Jefford, *RAF Squadrons: A Comprehensive Record of the Movement and Equipment of all RAF Squadrons and their Antecedents since 1912* (Shrewsbury: Airfile, 1988).

9. Christopher Shores, Brian Cull, Yasuho Izawa, *Bloody Shambles*, volume one, *The Drift to War to the Fall of Singapore* (London: Grub Street, 1992); *Bloody Shambles*, volume two, *The Defence of Sumatra to the Fall of Burma* (London: Grub Street, 1993); Christopher Shores, *Air War for Burma: The Allied Air Forces Fight Back in South-East Asia, 1942-1945* (London: Grub Street, 2005).

fact that there was so little known and a great deal of research to do – and research is a heady drug, believe me! Also, having American, Dutch, and Japanese correspondents available was a big, big help.

Q: Another important contribution is your *Air War for Yugoslavia, Greece and Crete 1940-41*. How did you come to write on this topic?

A: Interest here began with my research on the RAF fighter pilots in Greece, particularly Squadron Leader "Pat" Pattle. Wisdom's wartime book *"Wings over Olympus"* generated the interest, followed by correspondence with Eddie Baker when he was researching Pattle.¹⁰ Again, there was a lot to research and a big variety of aircraft and air forces – Greek, Yugoslav, RAF – and an essentially untold story, which always appeals to me.

Q: How do you try to resolve contradictions of events between Allied and German records?

A: Or Japanese, or Italian etc. In most cases, it becomes surprisingly obvious what actually happened when you have both accounts. If we are really stuck, then we come clean and state that there is an anomaly which we cannot explain. We then set out what each side recorded, make it clear where the accounts do not fit, and then we have to leave it to the readers to reach their own conclusions, or hope that someone will appear from the woodwork and provide us with a clue which has not previously been available, allowing us then to resolve the matter. This happens on occasion, but, of course, always far too late to be included in the book.

Q: Everybody overclaims. But which Allied and German units seemed most scrupulous in making air-to-air claims?

A: It varied tremendously. Take, for example, 74 Squadron in the Battle of Britain. Like many units, their claims could be quite wild at first, but when they returned to action after a rest and with the benefit of experience, they became much more accurate. This was a very common factor. Night fighter units tended to be very much more accurate than day units as they were usually in a one-on-one situation with much less chance of double-claiming. I have become convinced that in the majority of cases, over-claiming was due to double or triple claiming on the same victim by more than one aircraft.

In the *Luftwaffe*, II./JG 51 in North Africa tended to be very accurate,

10. T.H. Wisdom, *"Wings over Olympus": The Story of the Royal Air Force in Libya and Greece* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1942).

while II./JG 2 seemed rather inaccurate. Over Western Europe, JG 26 appears to have been very good until after the Normandy invasion when it became much more difficult to check their claims by the confirming authorities; then the level of claims for which losses cannot be found rises rapidly. In the same period, JG 2 seems to have been more disposed toward over-optimism.

Q: Please share your overall assessment of the *Regia Aeronautica*.

A: The *Regia Aeronautica* aircrews – particularly their fighter pilots and torpedo-bomber crews – seem to have been good, aggressive aircrew. Throughout the war, however, the Italians were plagued by poor armament – not enough guns, and guns of low muzzle velocity. They were also generally deficient in radio equipment, which made control in the air very difficult. Having done very well in World War I and produced some excellent aces, the Italian Air Ministry decided not to pay proper attention to individual claims (much like the RAF's attitude, but perhaps more so). As a result, there was little of the checking and confirming of claims such as were practiced by the *Luftwaffe* and U.S. air forces, leading to apparent overclaiming. Look in depth at the early months of the Desert war, when the *Regia Aeronautica* was on a relatively equal footing with the RAF – CR 42s and G-50s vs. Gladiators and Hurricanes – the Italian pilots sometimes gave the RAF quite a tough time. My assessment in general: often poor equipment and servicing, but usually good quality flying personnel.

Q: Please share your overall assessment of the Imperial Japanese Army Air Force.

A: Good equipment and training, although the aircraft were underarmed. Like the Italians, the IJAAF possessed little facility for the confirming of personal claims. It seems that often the driving off or causing to dive away of an enemy aircraft was claimed as a "victory." Their light fighter aircraft were always very difficult to shoot down, although their bombers fell easily. The fighter pilots were always very dangerous opponents. As the war progressed, like the Japanese Naval Air Force, losses in New Guinea and the Solomons led to a fall in the general experience levels of the pilots being met and they became easier to defeat.

In Burma, the accuracy of claims between the two main fighter units were markedly different – the 64th *Sentai* generally good, while the 50th *Sentai* seem to have overclaimed considerably. In Burma, the Japanese fighters were overcome more because so many units had to be withdrawn to New Guinea than to any gaining of air superiority in aerial combat by the Allied forces there.

Q: You have probably written more on the North African and Mediterranean theatres of operation than any aviation historian. What do you believe are the most underexamined aspects of these two theatres?

A: I think the factors which spring to mind are how well the level of air-ground support was developed here and the degree of experience thereby employed over Western Europe. I think, however, that it is still not fully understood how costly this was. Through much of 1941, the RAF in North Africa remained equipped with Hurricane Is at a time when the Mark II was rapidly being replaced in the UK as obsolescent. All the first Mark IIs to reach the Middle East were retained on Malta. Large quantities of Mark IIs and Tomahawks, which could have made the lives of North African fighter pilots a little easier, were being sent to Russia, where the Soviets complained of their poor performance. Meanwhile, our boys in Africa were having to make do with something less!

The same thing happened in 1942 when it took ages for Fighter Command to release quantities of Spitfires to the Middle East, keeping them in England to face a by-then almost nonexistent threat of a German invasion. Even when they arrived, the inferiority of the tropicalized version of the Spitfire V to the latest Bf 109s was immediately evident. Also, the flow of fighter pilots to the Middle East was comprised mainly of very hastily trained Empire Training Scheme men, who had very little adequate operational training.

The campaign in Tunisia is almost forgotten, but in fact represented a period of sustained aerial action which began to achieve a complete turn around of the situation in the air and had a growing adverse effect upon the *Luftwaffe*, which suffered a sustained defeat there.

Q: There are many obscure, essentially unknown air war-related actions that occurred during the Second World War. Would you discuss one or two of them that you believe deserve further attention?

A: The two subjects which come most readily to mind are the operations of the U.S. 12th and 15th Air Forces. The latter is greatly overshadowed by the larger 8th Air Force, but had an illustrious career. (I hope to do something about this in the future.) Also, I would very much like to know more about the air war over Mongolia and Manchuria between the Soviet Union and Japan in 1945. Just about everything else seems to me to have had reasonable coverage.

Q: Which of the lesser-known World War II-era aircraft – Allied and Axis – do you believe warrant additional research by historians, and why?

A: I find this one very difficult as it seems to me that virtually every Allied aircraft has been "done to death." Much the same goes for the German, Italian, and Japanese types. The one from this group that I feel could do with a bit more detail, at least operationally, is the Me 410.

Q: Are you presently working on any new World War II book projects, and if so, would you share a few details about the work?

A: Yes. I am working on a complete rewrite of *Fighters over the Desert* and *Fighters over Tunisia*. These will be retitled as part of a multi-volume Mediterranean Air War set, of which the Malta and Greek/Yugoslav books will also form a part. I am dealing now not just with fighters, but with operational aviation generally. It is my intention to carry the narrative on to cover Sicily and Italy up to the end of the war, taking in U.S. 15th Air Force operations as well; I shall also cover operations in the Aegean, and over Greece and Yugoslavia by the Balkan Air Force. I estimate that this is likely to run to seven volumes, and I do not guarantee that they will follow in chronological order, as I may wish to do one or two of the later ones first to keep my own interest sharp.

The People's War for Books

ANTOINE CAPET

The British Library has now entered the publishing field, unsurprisingly concentrating on the history of book production in all its aspects. One of its latest offerings, *Book Makers*, covers the whole of the twentieth century,¹ but Second World War scholars now have a state-of-the-art monograph on the subject, covering their particular period of interest, *Print for Victory*.² Even before actually reading the volume – just thumbing through it and looking at the excellent plates (some in full color), the closely-printed text, the copious footnotes full of "TNA,"³ "OUP Archives," "University of Reading Archives,"⁴ and the twenty-four pages of appendices – one senses that one has to do with a great book. And one is not disappointed since it contains a remarkable wealth of information, based on what must have been hours and hours of painstaking research, "reading everything": not a mean feat when one considers the volume of the available sources, all of which Valerie Holman apparently consulted. Like their authors, publishers write a lot: memoranda to the Government, minutes of meetings, press communiqués – not counting their trade journals, full of statistics and technical discussions on the existing and forthcoming legislation. They and their authors also publish memoirs and autobiographies, with sometimes official histories of their firms and trade associations.

The difficulty for the author (currently Associate Research Fellow of the University of Westminster Group for War and Culture Studies) was obviously to master this mass of literature (a lot of it indigestible to outsiders) and build it into a coherent, readable, and eventually convincing whole. It must be said straight away that reading the book is often a heavy-going task, since almost every sentence brings new information:

1. Iain Stevenson, *Book Makers: British Publishing in the Twentieth Century* (London: British Library, 2010). See review on *Cercles*:

<<http://www.cercles.com/review/r41/stevenson.html>>.

2. Valerie Holman, *Print for Victory: Book Publishing in England, 1939-1945* (London: British Library, 2008). Illustrations. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xii + 292.

3. The National Archives, Kew – formerly known as the Public Record Office (PRO).

4. Which hold the records of Allen & Unwin, Heinemann, Longman, the Isotype Institute, and the Publishers Association [p. 274].

names, titles, acronyms, figures, dates – and it is often difficult to memorize all the trade journals, all the associations, and all the names of the many protagonists, which one constantly meets in the narrative. But of course, this is only *embarras de richesses* – who can complain that a book is "too informative"?

The structure adopted avoids a multiplicity of short chapters. Instead, we have four comprehensive chapters: "Britain needs Books (1939-1941)," "Publishing and the State (1942-1943)," "Readers Overseas (1940-1945)," and "Publishing for Peace (1944-1945)." Each is divided into eight or nine unnumbered sub-chapters, which concentrate on particular topics, e.g. "Books for the troops" or "State publishing". Thus, the author effectively combines the chronological and thematic approaches, in spite of the occasional, inevitable overlapping, for instance when we read "Government legislation affecting the book trade continued to pile up" [in 1939-1940] in the first chapter [p. 17], not in "Publishing and the State (1942-1943)."

Broadly speaking, "Britain needs Books (1939-1941)" describes the slow and painful process of adaptation to the new wartime conditions. The first priority was to cope with the "controls" imposed by the Government – how to fight them whenever possible (e.g. on the introduction of Purchase Tax [the predecessor of Value-added tax (VAT)] on books, which the united trade (authors, publishers, and booksellers) successfully fought off with the help of the Archbishop of Canterbury against a Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Kingsley Wood, who – it was deplored – "was not a bookish man" [p. 23], but also how to bow to the inevitable. A case in point was the disastrous effect of the Allies' speedy defeat in Norway and France in May-June 1940 on the main raw material of book production: paper – itself dependent on supplies of raw materials imported from overseas. For those of us who usually read books without thinking of the technical processes involved, Holman provides a fascinating crash course.

The standard "net" selling price of a common "trade" hardback in the late 1930s was 7/6, and Holman quotes the minutes of a June 1940 Publishers Association meeting in which Walter Hutchinson said that "in a 7s.6d. book, the raw material cost 2d." [p. 22]. Few industries must have had such a favorable ratio between the cost of the raw materials and the selling price. Indeed, this was an argument used by the Publishers Association in its special pleading with the Government authorities: British book exports (one third of all sales in the immediate pre-war years) had an infinitely small cost in raw materials. In modern language, the added value of books was almost without parallel. But for this to continue, a steady supply was needed. The loss of Norway closed the pulp trade with Scandinavia, while the fall of France put an end to the importation of esparto grass from French North Africa, an important modern source

for the manufacture of paper [pp. 13-15]. In fact, the imports of esparto grass were reduced from 259,500 tons in 1939 to 200 tons in 1945 [p. 265] – though, actually, North Africa was fully back in Allied control from mid-1943: an oddity which is not explained in the book. A substitute was readily found: straw, a by-product of agriculture – and British farmers were so enthusiastic that there was a surplus by 1942 [p. 63]. What we now call recycling was then called salvage – an age-old practice, of course. After all the first sheets of paper were made from pulped rags and unwanted paper products – and as an advertisement put it, "12 old letters make a cartridge box." Collecting rags was not a problem, and "pulping books" was of course a common expression – but again there was too much enthusiasm in pulping books for the war effort "until it became apparent that some volumes were irreplaceable" [p. 64]. The full rigor of the law applied to the negligent: "Under the Salvage of Waste Materials (no. 2) order, 1942, which came into force in March, it became a punishable offence to waste paper by burning it or throwing it away" [p. 65], but it seems that most of the populace was ready to anticipate the dictates of officialdom anyway – if only by a massive depletion of personal libraries:

The National Book Recovery Appeal had brought in 56 million books by October 1943, and while the peak year for collection of waste paper was 1942, by 1944 it counted for 50 per cent of the nation's raw materials for papermaking [p. 66].

To make matters worse, the Government had increased needs of paper for its own use – including cartridge boxes, as we saw – and it was of course in a position to dictate its will. Or was it? Admittedly, it introduced drastic measures of paper (and metal⁵) rationing in spite of the best efforts of the President of the Publishers Association, Walter Harrap, a recurring figure in Holman's narrative. But much of it excellently discusses the constant tug-of-war between the Government, as represented by its various voracious ministries (and one only has to look at the Appendices in Churchill's war memoirs to realize how many typewritten "memos" circulated among the various departments in Whitehall), and the vast array of pressure groups which pleaded that books were a special case, and the industry an "essential" one. As Geoffrey Faber put it in a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 18 July 1940, "Books are not mere merchandise. Books are a nation thinking aloud" [p. 3]. A useful Appendix gives the standards finally adopted for the Book Production War Economy Agreement, which substantially reduced empty spaces by limiting the size of type and the width of margins; it also pre-

5. Printing was "an industry based on metals [lead, antimony (sic), zinc and copper], and metal was needed for munitions" [p. 80].

scribed the "weight" (thickness) of paper and boards for hardcover books – giving wartime books their peculiar period flavor.

A substantial section of Chapter II is devoted to "Essential books" – a subject discussed by the author in an earlier article.⁶ Not unexpectedly, there could be no agreement on the notion, pace the Controller of HMSO, who wrote that "nothing ought to be written which is not required in the national interest" [p. 129]:

[W]hat constituted an "essential book" proved impossible to define: whether or not a publisher was recommended extra paper depended on how his proposal was viewed at a particular moment, and whether the book seemed suitable for a specific purpose or target readership. Such criteria could never be absolute, and they changed with the progress of the War and shifts in Government priorities [p. 90].

Holman gives fascinating examples of contradictory decisions. No problem for Bibles for the Forces, of course – or for Rowntree's *Poverty and Progress*,⁷ *A Statistical Handbook of the Czech Republic in English and Czech* ("strongly supported by the Czech Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Information"), and *The Royal Navy Today* ("supported by the Admiralty"). Likewise, "two Phaidon art books (*Leonardo da Vinci* and *Velasquez*)" got their extra allocation when "it was noted that three-quarters of every edition was exported, mainly to the United States." A compromise solution was also found for Shirer's *Berlin Diary*⁸ and eventually for Penguin's⁹ *Aircraft Recognition*. In contrast, an extra quota of paper was initially denied to *Aids to Practical Nursing*, and definitively refused for a reissue of Churchill's biography of his glorious ancestor, who had also defeated a Continental tyrant, *Marlborough: His Life and Times*.¹⁰ Inexplicably for the layman, the application for a reprint of *Surgery of Modern Warfare* was also turned

6. Valerie Holman, "Essential Books: The work of the Publishers' Advisory Committee, 1942-49," *Publishing History*, vol. 55 (2004), pp. 69-102.

7. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty and Progress: A Second Social Survey of York* (London: Longmans Green, 1941). The first is, of course, his famous *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (London: Macmillan, 1901).

8. William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934-1941* (New York: Knopf, 1941; London: Hamish Hamilton, 1941).

9. Iain Stevenson insists on Allen Lane's clever tactics: instead of protesting like other publishers, "Lane suavely and quietly charmed his powerful friends in decision-making circles, particularly Brendan Bracken as Minister of Information. [...] He was undoubtedly sincere in his patriotic fervor in producing 'books for the troops', but it also gave him an inestimably valuable business advantage" [*Book Makers*, p. 116].

10. It had to wait until 1947 – a remarkable form of wartime egalitarianism, probably deliberate. One can speculate that the Labour Government did not want to get involved in controversy if it refused an allocation of paper to the Leader of the Opposition.

down: but Holman gives the complex reasons behind that decision [pp. 85-89].

Naturally, propaganda was expected to play a major role during the Second World War, as it had tentatively done during the First and especially during the Appeasement period. Holman has excellent pages on the motives behind the foundation of the British Council (a major purchaser and provider of British books abroad, in full concurrence with the idea that "Books are a nation thinking aloud") in 1935 [pp. 18-20]. The official channel of British Government propaganda was the Ministry of Information,¹¹ but ideally it should shelter behind commercial operators:

Propaganda was most effective when least visible, that is, when it appeared to be produced and distributed by a trade publisher with no connection to the Government. At the same time the Government itself exhibited a hard-headed commercialism which meant that although publishers might be invited discreetly to help win the War, they were often expected to pay for the privilege or to supply paper from their own inadequate quota [p. 102].

One such undertaking was the "Britain in Pictures" series published by Collins from March 1941, with texts by established authors like Graham Greene and John Betjeman. "Although apparently a commercial enterprise," Holman tells us, "in effect the series both originated in and was supported by the MoI, which bought a substantial number of copies and selectively translated those it felt appropriate to distribute as positive propaganda for Britain" [p. 109].

One difficulty, which was never really solved, was the status of HMSO – a constant bone of contention with trade publishers since in fact before the war. The success of *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, popularly known as the Beveridge Report (Command 6404, 1 December 1942), which instantly became a best-seller, with an initial print run of 635,000 immediately bought at 2s. by a public forming long queues outside HMSO shops [p. 194],¹² must have rankled among them. The Government was accused of losing its neutrality, favoring its own publishing

11. Cf. Valerie Holman, "Carefully concealed connections: The Ministry of Information and British publishing, 1939-1946," *Book History*, vol. 8 (2005), pp. 197-226.

12. The only HMSO publication ever to sell better was the official report on the Profumo affair in 1963, *Lord Denning's Report - on the circumstances leading to the resignation of the Secretary of State for War, Mr John Profumo* (Command 2152). Nicholas Timmins, *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State* (London: HarperCollins, 1995, p. 23). Cf. his witty remark, "Much of this 200,000 word excursion through technical exposition and complex appendices is heavy going. Even Beveridge's own section is hard work, and the report may well rank alongside Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* as one of the most bought but least read books ever published in Britain" [Ibid.].

facilities, for instance by Walter Hutchinson in *The Times* on 9 February 1943:

Is a publisher over-charging when a higher price is asked for an equivalent in value to an HMSO volume? No; the difference in price lies in the severely restricted number of copies possible within a publisher's paper ration [p. 128].

It must be said that HMSO was not content with publishing White Papers and other official documents – some of its publications were obviously aimed at the general public, and it produced at least two illustrated best-sellers which could equally well have been published by the commercial sector if it had had the necessary supplies of paper: *The Battle of Britain*, which had sold 4,800,000 copies by the end of 1941 "in the UK alone" [p. 104] and *Bomber Command*, whose sales ran to over six million copies "in 40 editions, 24 of them in foreign languages" [p. 128].

The publishing trade was not only competing with the Government for materials, however – another resource in short supply was manpower. As early as January 1939, a Schedule of Reserved Occupations exempted from military service "individuals engaged on work of national importance", and when revised in November it still excluded publishing [p. 33]. An official table published in 1951 indicates that the "Numbers employed in printing, publishing and bookbinding" declined from 304,300 in 1939 to 173,400 in 1945 [p. 251] – but it does not give the qualitative dimension of the drastic transformation brought about by the war: "It was on this malnourished, overworked and often elderly workforce that the production of books in wartime Britain largely depended" [p. 41].

Another transformation, which seems hard to imagine today, is the enormous amount of time devoted to reading – and contrary to the usual gender stereotypes, men read even more than women if we are to believe a Book Reading Survey of 1942: "The average number of hours per week spent on reading was almost the same for men and women. Men spent an average of 12.7 hours per week on reading, against 12.2 spent on reading by women" [p. 50]. Mass-Observation carried out an extensive survey in the same year, covering the reading habits of ten thousand people over the period March-May 1942, and the ten "best reads" designated by the interviewees make a fascinating list today: *Gone with the Wind* (Margaret Mitchell), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (Ernest Hemingway), *How Green was my Valley* (Richard Llewelyn), *Pride and Prejudice* (Jane Austen), *Scum of the Earth* (Arthur Koestler), *Herries Chronicles* (Hugh Walpole), *Three Musketeers* (Alexandre Dumas), *Finnegan's Wake* (James Joyce),¹³ *The Stars Look Down* (A.J. Cronin), and

13. Holman has a note on this: "The inclusion of this title is extraordinary, but carries no further explanation."

The Grapes of Wrath (John Steinbeck) [p. 53]. At the same time, "Interviews with lathe-operators and fitters revealed that all read books and technical journals about aspects of their jobs, and were often directed to reading-matter by the journal of their trade union" [p. 51]. Then as now, the broadcast media could create instant "best-sellers" – except that in some case the books were simply in short supply: "E.M. Forster had broadcast [in March 1942] an appreciation of Tolstoy's epic (*War and Peace*... "one of the most sought-after novels of the Second World War" [p. 26]), after which not a single copy remained either in the shops or with the publisher" [p. 52]. Likewise, "Churchill's accolade for Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* had been reflected in increased sale of the Everyman edition" [p. 262].

Interestingly, although people would obviously not classify *Mein Kampf* as one of their "best reads," by May 1939 "it had topped the British bestseller list", and Mass-Observation put it in March 1940 as "Best-borrower of non-fiction books in nearly all libraries" [p. 254]. When in September 1939 the War Office asked the National Book Council to give advice on books suitable for the troops, the list included "*Mein Kampf* and *Gone with the Wind*, poetry and political science, technical manuals and thrillers" [p. 42], and indeed "the 8s. 6d. edition [=unabridged translation] of *Mein Kampf* was listed in the *Catalogue of Books for the Services* drawn up by the National Book Council in 1939." An announcement had been made on 14 September 1939 whereby "The Publishers [Hutchinson] have decided to give all author's royalties from the sale of this book, since the commencement of the War, to the British Red Cross Society and St John's Ambulance" [p. 254].¹⁴

The troops and prisoners of war formed a special market. A constant preoccupation was to "direct the Forces towards suitable reading" [p. 189], and Holman devotes two sections to this important aspect of her subject. Readers familiar with the Second World War period will remember the celebrated Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA), set up in 1941 to explain to the troops what they were fighting for – but few probably know the first words of *The ABCA Handbook* for regimental officers: "Morale depends on knowledge" [p. 46]. Providing the Forces and prisoners with reading matter (40% fiction and 60% non-fiction was deemed ideal by the officials in charge) became a patriotic duty: people were asked to donate books after reading them, and voluntary funds were also raised for the purpose, while the Services Departments directly bought new books from the publishers.

Those with the most time for reading were of course the prisoners of

14. To complement the useful Appendix devoted to *Mein Kampf*, cf. Dan Stone, "The 'Mein Kampf ramp': Emily Overend Lorimer and Hitler translations in Britain," *German History*, vol. 26-4 (2008), pp. 504-19.

war¹⁵ – just under 150,000 in Germany and Italy, just over 50,000 in the Far East. The British Red Cross opened a special Book Depot in Geneva, and a large-scale circulating library was gradually organized. Apparently, the prisoners could "order" books on special forms provided by the Red Cross. Holman cites the case of *Oflag VII B*, whose library contained fifteen thousand books by 1945. It had a professional librarian – or at least a prisoner coming from the book trade, who later remarked that the only banned book his library never managed to get was "the English translation of *Mein Kampf*" [p. 157]. All Jewish authors and German emigrants (as defined in Berlin) were banned, and Holman reproduces the list which was published in 1942. Also on the list were "scouting books" and "any chemistry books which included directions for making invisible ink" [p. 161]. However – and contrary to all logic – "a popular escape narrative from the First World War: H.G. Durnford's *The Tunnellers of Holzminden*" does not seem to have been on the black list [p. 159].

The last years of the war saw the considerable development of what Holman calls "Publishing for Peace" in her last chapter: all sorts of pamphlets, booklets, and books – then often called blueprints for Reconstruction. Reconstruction in the literal sense of rebuilding the destroyed cities, but also in the sense of what a sub-chapter calls "Social reconstruction." Besides the well-known names, like Sir William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sir William Beveridge, the author also interestingly dwells on Sir Walter Moberly, "Chairman of the University Grants Council and from the Autumn of 1942 the independent Chairman of the Publishers' Advisory Committee (better known as the Moberly Committee), which was responsible for advising the Board of Trade on allocating paper for essential books" [p. 195]. Moberly was also involved in the social Christian movement, which led to the creation of "The Moot," derived from "his desire to gather 'the best minds' to tackle problems of society in the light of the Christian faith" [p. 196]. Those of us who spent some time reading all these "blueprints" may not have noticed that they were published primarily by three houses: Oxford University Press (e.g. *Our Towns: A Close-up*, 1943),¹⁶ Longman (*The Life of the Church and the Order of Society, Being the Proceedings of the Archbishop of York's Conference – Malvern, 1941*),¹⁷ and Allen & Unwin

15. Cf. Valerie Holman, "Captive readers in the Second World War," *Publishing History*, vol. 52 (2002), pp. 83-94.

16. Women's Group on Public Welfare, *Our Towns: A Close-up* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943. Reprinted in Nicholas Deakin, ed., *Origins of the Welfare State*, vol. 2, London: Routledge, 2000).

17. Curiously, Holman never mentions Sir Richard Acland – a prominent participant in the Malvern Conference and a prolific author of Penguin Specials vigorously calling for social reform (cf. "We have to make a clean break with a whole way of life, and adopt

(*The Pillars of Security*, 1943; *Full Employment in a Free Society*, 1944).¹⁸

This not does mean that "rebuilding Britain" in the literal sense was neglected: on top of a series with that title published by Faber (1941-1945), which offered twelve essays discussing how it should be done (with fascinating contradictions between the architects who pleaded for "a technologically-inspired city, thrusting upwards and accomodating its citizens in flats" and the returning soldiers who "all wanted to live in one-family houses, and preferably semi-detached rather than joined in a terrace" [p. 202]), it was also the name of "an exhibition held in the National Gallery and opened by Sir William Beveridge in February 1943." The "lavishly-illustrated catalogue, published by Lund Humphries" contained a "substantial bibliography," including "the highly-praised *Pelican Town-Planning* by Thomas Sharp, and *Living in Cities* by Ralph Tubbs, also published by Penguin, in 1942" [p. 203]. Naturally, Holman also discusses Patrick Abercrombie and the impact of his published plans for London¹⁹ and Plymouth.²⁰

In a way, one could not hope to "rebuild Britain" without "rebuilding Europe" – evidently, even outside purely humanitarian reasons, one could not envisage a prosperous Britain next to a devastated Continent. Priority went to Britain's faithful allies – notably Poland, whose printing industry had been dismantled by the German occupation. But the problem of the "re-education" of the Germans was seen as an equally pressing one. New textbooks were needed – but this meant sharing the UK's meagre supplies of paper with the Germans: not a popular undertaking in 1945. Victor Gollancz, who pleaded for sharing wheat supplies with the Germans,²¹ was of course in the forefront of the campaign to send books to Germany. Paper rationing only ended in 1949,²² the year in which hopes of a stable peace were somehow dashed by the creation of two

new ways," *Unser Kampf: Our Struggle* (London: Penguin, 1940), p. 142.

18. Both by Beveridge, of course.

19. Patrick Abercrombie, *The Greater London Plan 1944*. A Report prepared on behalf of the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning by Professor Abercrombie at the request of the Minister of Town and Country Planning (London: HMSO, 1945 [Definitive Edition with full illustrations and coloured maps. "A continuation of County of London Plan, prepared for the London County Council by J.H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, 1943"]).

20. James Paton Watson and Patrick Abercrombie, *A Plan for Plymouth*. The Report prepared for the City Council by J. Paton Watson and Patrick Abercrombie; with appendices on agriculture and soil by Dudley Stamp and G.W. Robinson (Plymouth: Underhill, 1943).

21. Notably in Victor Gollancz, *Our Threatened Values* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946).

22. Bread was rationed 1946-1948 (some said to feed Germany), sugar and sweets 1940-1953, cheese and meat 1940-1954.

Germanies. But then the "Cold War" in some ways gave the publishing industry fresh opportunities for development.²³

Now, most authors would have rested content with this outstanding panorama of publishing in wartime Britain, but in fact Holman devotes some sixty pages to "Readers Overseas (1940-1945)": the United States, Canada, Australia, India, the Empire in Africa – making her book a veritable *summa bibliographica* for the period 1939-1945. For the United States, in words which must still ring true today in some quarters, the attitude was: "No single misconception about Britain has done her more harm in America than that which represents her as a class-stratified Living Museum" [p. 132]. If a subtle propaganda war had to be fought with very few resources in the United States, the situation was even worse in Canada where a British delegation found in 1943 "that 90 per cent of stock held in the main Canadian bookshops were American." The reasons given are interesting: "not just because supply was increasingly difficult, but because Canadians preferred the flamboyance of American covers" [p. 138]. The peculiar French Canadian market is also discussed. Curiously, the Quebec publishers emerged from the war as net exporters while "British failure to make headway in the Canadian market. . . was indicative of a wider trend: the rise of indigenous publishing in former British strongholds" [p. 143].

This forms the main theme of the rest of the chapter. Australian authorities stepped in to fill – at least partially – the gap in book supplies induced by British publishers' inability to continue to serve their first export market. In India, the notion that "Books are a nation thinking aloud" had a special resonance in its "politically volatile climate." Colonial legislation dating back to 1878 and reinforced in 1940 "empowered officials to seize any material imported from abroad and thought likely to provoke sedition." Thus, "most banned books were left-wing or pacifist" – a prosperous branch of British pre-war and war-time publishing, of course. Holman provides fascinating examples of censorship – but perhaps the main hurdle lay in cultural differences, as indicated by a Heinemann representative in 1946: "The Indian has little understanding or sympathy for our fiction, since it is based on a European conception of love and marriage, so different from his own" [pp. 171-72]. As in Australia – for different reasons, admittedly – a local publishing trade was increasingly competing with British imports. In the African Colonies, the war favored literacy in English and the acquisition of technical skills among the troops, so the problem was primarily one of solvent demand. Holman seizes the opportunity of the African example to devote a sec-

23. For instance, Iain Stevenson argues that Ian Fleming's James Bond novels "were in due course to be one of the mainsprings of [Jonathan] Cape's revival" [*Book Makers*, p. 152].

tion to the introduction of "Basic (British American Scientific International Commercial) English" by Cambridge University Press and Evans Bros. in 1941, and more generally to the development of English as a Foreign Language teaching material.

To the central question posed by Cecil Day Lewis in *Picture Post*²⁴ on 25 March 1944, "We read more books. We buy more books. [...] But does the war mean that we read better books, too?" [p. 233], Holman does not give a direct answer – but her narrative amply confirms all the impressions derived from more general books on wartime British society:²⁵ the aspiration to self-improvement combined with the aspiration to a "Better Britain" to make Britons a more "bookish" people, for the greatest benefit of publishers who were quick to seize the opportunity in spite of all the "controls," which considerably restrained their possibilities for expansion. *Print for Victory* is a remarkably thorough but eminently enjoyable study, an essential read for anybody interested in wartime Britain, and it is likely to remain the standard work on the topic for some time – as such, it should naturally be in all university libraries.

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24. One of the great success stories of wartime magazine publishing, with a definitely "progressive" editorial line. Sean K. Smith's Ph.D. thesis, "*Picture Post, 1938-1945: Social reform and images of Britain at war,*" (Stanford University, Department of History, 1992), does not seem to have been published. Incidentally, Holman has a very useful list of theses in progress on cognate subjects in her Bibliography.

25. Holman's excellent Bibliography naturally includes Angus Calder's admirable classic, *The People's War: Britain, 1939-1945* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969; Pimlico Paperbacks, 1992). Curiously, however, she does not mention the works of Arthur Marwick, notably *Britain in the Century of Total War: War, Peace and Social Change, 1900-1967* (London: The Bodley Head, 1968; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970).

Hitler's War in the East

ALEXANDER HILL

Hitler's War in the East: A Critical Assessment was first published in English translation in 1997 and is now available in a second revised edition.¹ Despite the slightly misleading title, what it then offered, as now, is a wide-ranging bibliography of the literature on the war in the East from 1941-1945, as well as on the diplomatic background to the war, with historiographical commentary. This updated version does not amend the original commentary, but does see the addition of a bibliographical annex that updates the literature for the period from 1994/5 to 2000. The work required to compile a volume such as this should not be underestimated – no other single volume can compete as a bibliographical and indeed historiographical reference source on the war on the Eastern Front. Much of this review, and in particular mention of materials missing from the bibliographies, is included for the benefit of users, even if suggestions might ideally be incorporated into future editions by the authors, along with suggestions on how the book might be made more user friendly.

Part A of *Hitler's War in the East* written by Rolf-Dieter Müller deals with the diplomatic and strategic background to the war in the East, paying more attention to German aims and intentions than Soviet. That from its inception the Nazi regime was preparing for war and that the Nazi-Soviet Pact was a key stage in facilitating Nazi ambitions is duly noted, before the strategic context for the war against the Soviet Union and the nature of Hitler's leadership both prior to and during the war are examined. On matters Soviet, the historiographical essay is a little weaker. The core text of this work was certainly written at a time when the historiography of the Soviet side of the war was in a considerable state of flux, as historians in the former Soviet Union and abroad processed the sporadic release of archival documents made available at the tail-end of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and during the subsequent Yeltsin years.

On Soviet intentions surrounding the Nazi-Soviet Pact, Müller sug-

1. Rolf-Dieter Müller and Gerd R. Ueberschär, trans. Bruce D. Little, *Hitler's War in the East: A Critical Assessment*, second revised edition (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2002). Bibliographies. Bibliographical Annex. Name Index. Paper. Pp. xiii + 442.

gests that "Hitler offered Stalin a dangerous bait, and whether Stalin took it because of his own expansionary desires will likely remain a subject of speculation forever."² Certainly, the aims of Soviet policy were and remain far more difficult to assess than those of Nazi Germany. The question as to whether the Soviet Union was acting on the same principles as other Western powers in the pursuit of "collective security," as an ambitious traditional Great Power, or whether Marxist-Leninist ideology should be considered an important factor or merely one to which the Soviet Union paid lip service is considered as far as the pre-1991 works of Allard, Pietrow, and Sywottek and others are noted.³ Müller seems to implicitly accept the Soviet line that the Soviet pursuit of "collective security" culminating in the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 was more than the "temporary tactical concession" that it was for Hitler, and in fact a reflection of a longer-term and straightforwardly defensive quest for security.⁴ Soviet ideology certainly saw the capitalist world as a threat, with which a showdown was inevitable – and one that had to be delayed if possible until conditions favored the Soviet Union. However, the only guarantee of long-term security remained the export of revolution – be it on the back of the Red Army or otherwise.⁵

For some strange reason, some of the discussion of what has become known as the "Suvorov" debate on Soviet intentions in 1941 that postdates the works of Allard, Pietrow, and Sywottek is left to the penultimate sub-section of this book on "Avoiding and Coming to Terms with the Past" by Gerd Ueberschär. In Part A, Müller is justified in suggesting that "Suvorov" and Toptisch offer little of substance to the debate on Soviet aims in 1939, the former having "failed to produce any new documents or evidence," but not to ignore the fact that their work raised important questions.⁶ Certainly the debate about Soviet intentions is one area where the historiography has subsequently moved beyond the issue of whether Germany could claim, even retrospectively, to have launched a preemptive strike against the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 – which it could not in any immediate sense – and whether Soviet intentions in 1939 were at the time defensive – which they certainly were in the short-term – both discussed by Müller in the first section. The literature has now moved on to consider longer-term Soviet intentions and policy and examine what sort of security over what sort of time-frame

2. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

5. A range of documents on this issue is published in "The Icebreaker Controversy and Soviet Intentions in 1941," Chapter 2 of Alexander Hill, *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945: A Documentary Reader* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2009).

6. Müller and Ueberschär, *Hitler's War in the East*, p. 31.

Stalin might have been seeking with what Müller describes as his "questionable strategy of forward defence" offered by the territorial acquisitions of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, and subsequent forward deployment of much of the Red Army.⁷ Accepting the inevitable German focus of this and other sections due in part to when the historiographical essays were written, then Part A, as all the others, provides a lively discussion of most key issues supported by as comprehensive a bibliography as one could consider feasible in a two-author single-volume work such as this.

Part B goes on to deal with the military campaign, and is, as one would expect, excellent on the German literature and indeed generally on the then much more limited English-language literature, giving a good cross-section of sources from the vast number of relevant Soviet works. Here Ueberschär is perhaps a little over dismissive of the Soviet historiography of the war in the East when he concludes that "The numerous Soviet and Marxist-Leninist publications were ... of little value," having suggested that during the Brezhnev era "little interesting information appeared in most Soviet publications," where Soviet historians were denied access to primary sources.⁸ Whilst Soviet historians were unable to advance broad theses contrary to the Party line, nonetheless on more specific issues much useful material appeared even in Soviet Brezhnev-era publications. Even a cursory examination of articles in *Voennno-istoricheskii zhurnal* – the Soviet military history journal – highlights the wealth of operational analysis based on archival sources, even if what was not said is often as important as what was. This does not negate the value of such material when used with German sources and where Soviet historians were typically concerned to be accurate in what they did write. In fact, much valuable statistical material and even documents were published during the post-Stalin Soviet era, with much material of value appearing, for instance, in circumstances where it was unclear whether the information concerned shed the Soviet Union and the Party in a positive or negative light – and hence it escaped the concern of any "censors." A good example here relating to the Soviet partisan movement, actually covered in Part D, would be the publication of documents during the 1970s in the *V tilu vraga* or *In the Enemy Rear* series of documents published in Leningrad on the Leningrad region partisan movement. Documents highlighting the assassination of collaborators from among the civilian population might have highlighted the efficiency of partisans in dealing with such individuals, but also highlight

7. Ibid., p. 26. Particularly useful here is Evan Mawdsley, "Crossing the Rubicon: Soviet Plans for Offensive War in 1940-1941," in *International History Review*, vol. 25, no. 4 (2003), pp. 818-65.

8. Müller and Ueberschär, *Hitler's War in the East*, p. 81.

the problem of collaboration with German forces.⁹

In the section on the military campaign, it would certainly have been helpful to have provided Russian titles available in English translation in the subsection on "Personal Accounts and Memoirs (1941-45)" in addition to the Soviet translation of Shtemenko's *The Soviet General Staff at War*, examples being the biographies of Soviet military leaders such as Rokossovskii and Konev,¹⁰ for which German-language editions are provided. Under headings in the bibliography dealing with "Logistics, Weapons, Intelligence, Railways and Communications" and "Daily Life of Civilians and Soldiers in the War (Homefront)," relatively limited material on the Soviet wartime economy is a weakness, as indeed limited material on the German war economy broadly defined, where materials relating explicitly to the exploitation of the East are dealt with in later sections. For example, the apparent omission of Voznesenskii's 1948 work on the Soviet war economy is noticeable, as are a number of English-language articles on a range of topics under this broad heading.¹¹ The issue of Allied aid to the Soviet Union might usefully have been dealt with explicitly alongside the Soviet economy in a single subsection, rather than mention of relevant works in the bibliography, concentrated in the material for Part A under "The Anti-Hitler Coalition," being piecemeal.¹² Certainly, the inclusion of "Works on Tactical Military Ex-

9. Specifically, for example, "From a report of the head of the Political Department of the 3rd Leningrad Partisan Brigade to the Headquarters of the North-Western Front on work to disrupt police and volunteer garrisons in the period from October 1942 to 9 July 1943," 9 July 1943, in *V tilu vruga. Bor'ba partizan i podpol'shchikov na okkupirovannoi territorii Leningradskoi oblasti. 1943 g. Sbornik dokumentov* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1983), pp. 122-25.

10. In addition to the heavily edited Soviet-era version of Zhukov's memoirs, examples would be I.S. Konev, *Year of Victory* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1984), and K.K. Rokossovskii, *A Soldier's Duty* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), as well as A.M. Vasilevskii, *A Lifelong Cause* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), and a host of other useful memoirs by figures such as Golovko, Kharlamov, and Maiskii.

11. N. Voznesenskii, *Voennaia ekonomika SSSR v period Otechestvennoi voini* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1948). Examples of the sort of articles that should have found their way into this volume, typically from non-military specific English-language journals, are Robert Stephan, "Smersh: Soviet Military Counter-intelligence during the Second World War," in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 22 (1987), pp. 585-613, and R.L. Dinardo and Austin Bay, "Horse-Drawn Transport in the German Army," in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 23 (1988), pp. 129-42. I may have missed these items, but the lack of a comprehensive index of authors makes double-checking less than straightforward.

12. Müller and Ueberschär, *Hitler's War in the East*, p. 103. Useful works published prior to 2000 and indeed 1996 including J. Beaumont, *Comrades in Arms: British Aid to Russia 1941-1945* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1980), and M. Harrison, *Accounting for War: Soviet Production, Employment and the Defence Burden, 1940-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), which includes a useful chapter on Allied aid. It is inaccurately suggested here that deliveries of war material from Britain and the United

perience of the Soviet-German War" in the same sub-section as the "Suvorov" debate towards the end of the book seems a little odd, and would, perhaps, have fitted in better in this section on the military campaign. A certain integration of text by the two authors would certainly have enhanced the value of some sections to students and other readers keen to find a particular issue discussed in one place, and indeed cut down on a little duplication.

Part C by Ueberschär deals with "The ideologically motivated war in the East," and Part D by Müller with "The Occupation." Both are, as one would expect, fairly comprehensive on the extensive German historiographies of these issues, and consider all the key issues one would expect – ideology and the conduct of the war in the East, the treatment of POWs, German plans for the East, the Holocaust, and course of the war and war crimes trials in Part C, and the nature of the German occupation regime, economic exploitation of the East, and Soviet resistance in Part D. Without trying to engage in direct comparison with the German side, it would certainly have benefited students if the manner in which "both German and Soviet forces escalated the ferocity and bitterness of the struggle in all sectors of the Eastern Front until 1945" and "Soviet leaders were ruthless and brutal in enforcing their internal policies and in their policies towards the Red Army" was elaborated upon in order to add further explanation of the ferocity of the war in the East. The lack of mention of such basic Soviet orders as Order Number 270 of the Supreme High Command of the Red Army of July 1941 and Order Number 227 of the People's Commissar for Defence of July 1942 is a shame, the second of which prompting the widespread use of punishment battalions in the Red Army – as the order notes, along the lines of German practice.¹³

The final section of substance other than a brief conclusion, Part E, deals with "The Results of the War and Coming to Terms with Them" – "The Results of the War" being dealt with by Müller and the above-mentioned section on "Avoiding and Coming to Terms with the Past" by Ueberschär. The first of these sections includes material on such topics as refugees, the fates of POWs, and reparations in the immediate postwar period. Ueberschär spends most of the section on "Avoiding and Coming to Terms with the Past" on refuting the "preventative war" thesis.

Aside from the fact that it is now due for a comprehensive rewrite, there are a few technical changes that might be made in future editions to enhance use value and ease of use. While English transliterations

States began in 1942. Müller and Ueberschär, *Hitler's War in the East*, p. 103.

13. Müller and Ueberschär, *Hitler's War in the East*, pp. 246 and 248. For English translations of these documents, see Hill, *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union*, pp. 55-56 and 100-02.

from Russian are used in the historiographical commentary, they are not used in the bibliography, which would have been helpful, and entries in the bibliography could also have been cross-referenced from the bibliography with the historical commentary. Certainly, time spent on a more comprehensive index, not only of names in the main text, would dramatically increase the value of this book. At times it is unclear whether this is a reference work or supposed to be read from cover to cover. Most items in the bibliographies are not mentioned in the historiographical essays and hence their authors do not appear in the name index, although there are detailed contents pages that provide the bibliographical sub-headings. Future editions might also benefit from the inclusion of a suitable member of the editorial "team" from the English- and Russian-language academic communities – certainly from the former, given the target audience.

There is no doubt that this is an extremely useful reference work for students, academics, and indeed a wider audience with a serious interest in military history. With no serious opposition from an alternative single volume, this book should be on the shelves in any academic library and indeed of any historian of the Eastern Front, and I hope that the authors and publisher will, if having read this review, take much of what I have written above as constructive criticism.

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Recent Scholarship in Military History and the ANZAC Legend: Down Under 2010

PETER J. DEAN

On 25 April every year Australians and New Zealanders pause to remember the anniversary of the landings at Gallipoli in 1915. ANZAC Day¹ is named after the acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps and has developed into Australia's national day. For outsiders, it is a somewhat difficult concept to grasp. We remember a generation of young Australian males that died so as to give "birth" to the nation. This came about during a defeat, not a victory, and it happened not in Australia, but in a country on the other side of the globe – Turkey. It leaves most non-Aussies or non-Kiwis scratching their heads. For instance, in order to provide some cultural signposts to the U.S. Study Abroad students who take my introduction to Australian history course each year I explain that ANZAC Day is akin to 4th of July celebrations mashed together with Veterans Day, but in a uniquely Australian context – we gained "independence" from the British, but not by fighting against them, rather we fought with them, blamed them (largely in an attempt to absolve ourselves and prove we are "better") for the loss at Gallipoli, and came to realize that while culturally we were of British stock, we were not actually British, but rather uniquely different. We did, however, still remain connected to the "mother country" for decades to come and to many Australians the bonds and affinity to Great Britain remain (except, of course, on the sporting field).

The landing at Gallipoli also gave rise to the ANZAC Legend and a

1. "ANZAC" has multiple meanings. It can mean: a soldier – an ANZAC, originally a member of the AIF that had served at Gallipoli, and later any Australian or New Zealand soldier; a place, such as ANZAC Cove, as the site of the landing near Ari Burnu became known; a day of commemoration to remember those who have both died and served the nation at war; a battle and/or campaign, a fighting spirit; a folklore tradition amongst the soldiers; and a legend/myth/spirit that is endorsed by institutions and governments that has come to personify Australian "values."

particular tradition in writing Australian military history. The ANZAC Legend was largely fostered by Australia's first military historian, C.E.W. Bean. Bean had been nominated as the official journalist of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and this soon evolved into official historian. He wrote six volumes of the Australian official history of the war (editing the remainder), and was the driving force behind the Australian War Records Section of the AIF and the Australian War Memorial. Bean's contribution was unique; his work is largely focused on the soldiers rather than the commanders and their staff. With a heavy emphasis on the experiences of the infantry and written from the regimental viewpoint, Bean developed a form of history from below that has been described as "democratic" war history. His legacy has been profound. It has led to a dominance of the amateur/journalist historians who focus on the soldier's experience of war and a fascination with the ANZAC mythology in Australian society, which some commentators argue has become a form of civic religion.

The soldiers and battles of World War II (and subsequent conflicts such as Korea, Vietnam) are seen to reinforce the notions of this legend; however, its focal point remains deeply rooted in World War I and especially the campaign at Gallipoli. With the centenary anniversaries for World War I fast approaching, it will be interesting to see how far the battles and campaigns of this war dwarf the experience of other conflicts such as World War II, Australia's largest military commitment. Evidence already abounds of the anniversary impact. For example, the Australian War Memorial conference of 2010 chose to remember the 95th anniversary of the failed August Offensive at Gallipoli; this followed on from their 2008 conference on 1918. One suspects that the anniversary focus will remain firmly entrenched around Gallipoli, Palestine, and the Western Front. The "Australia Remembers" campaign of 1995 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II seems a long time ago. The hopes for a surge in publications, conferences, and funding for the historians and scholars of this conflict in Australia may well have to be pinned on the anniversaries due to arrive in 2039-2045.

Yet, the centenary anniversaries are supposed to remember the totality of experiences of Australians at war and as such the Australian government has set up a special body to plan commemorative events.² For historians in Australia, one of the most perplexing decisions in recent times has been the decision of the Australian government to set up an ANZAC Centenary Commission, yet not include an historian! Rather, it is being left to two former Prime Ministers, a journalist, a veteran's advocate, the head of the Returned Services League (a retired Admiral), and a former

2. ANZAC Centenary: <<http://www.anzaccentenary.gov.au/>>.

Army officer to guide the direction of the nation's commemoration. As I argued recently,

one only has to touch on any one of the number of debates that surround [Australia's] military history to see how the decisions of this commission can influence the public's interpretation of our past. For instance, will the commission endorse programs that remember the supposed "battle for Australia" and the idea that the United States naval victory at the battle of the Coral Sea and the Australian victory on the Kokoda Trail saved Australia from invasion by the Japanese in 1942 or will it reject any commemorate ideas on this topic on the basis of (amongst others) Dr Peter Stanley's 2008 work *Invading Australia: Japan and the Battle for Australia*?³

The other major development in the national debate around ANZAC in Australia during 2010 was the publication of a controversial book by a number of Australia's leading political, cultural, and feminist historians entitled *What's Wrong with Anzac: The Militarisation of Australian History*.⁴ In it the authors make a range of claims some of which, like the poor state of much of Australian military history that is published, are commendable. As the well-known World War I historian Professor Robin Prior has stated, the authors quite rightly point out that there has been a "plethora of books on military matters [in Australia that are] mostly under-researched[,] badly constructed, huge in size, short on analysis [and] ...add little to a deep understanding of our military past."⁵

Yet most of the arguments in this work are ill-considered and demonstrate a lack of understanding of military history. The most glaring omission is the fact that the text skips over Australia's involvement in World War II. It seems this global conflict does not fit the argument that "Australia has only fought other people's wars." The only major entry of any substance for this war is the rioting between Australian and American troops on the streets of Melbourne in 1942.

The other major text to come out in Australia during 2010 by a collection of academic historians is entitled *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History*.⁶ This collection of chapters by some of the countries lead-

3. Peter Dean, "Assessing and Reassessing Anzac in 2010," *Australian Policy & History*, <<http://www.aph.org.au/files/articles/assessingReassessing.htm>>; Peter Stanley, *Invading Australia: Japan and the Battle for Australia, 1942* (Sydney: Penguin, 2008).

4. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *What's Wrong with Anzac: The Militarisation of Australian History* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).

5. Robin Prior, review of *What's Wrong with Anzac* by Lake and Reynolds, *Australian Book Review*, May 2010, pp. 12-14.

6. Craig Stockings, ed., *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).

ing military historians attempts to put to rest ten persistent myths in Australia's military history. Four chapters are notable to the period of 1919-1945: Craig Stockings, "There is an idea that the Australian is a born Soldier" (largely based on his study of the battle of Bardia in 1941 and the ANZAC Mythology); Peter Dennis, "Out in the midday sun: The loss of HMAS *Sydney II*"; Peter Stanley, "Dramatic myth and dull truth: Invasion by Japan 1942"; and David Stevens, "Australia's Thermopylae? The Kokoda Trail." This work is an excellent collection that puts many of the populist myths in Australian military history to the sword. The authors have done an admirable job, but as the title implies, it is doubtful it will put an end to any of these myths amongst the broader Australian populace. One can only hope.

However, as per the tradition in Australia, the academic historians have not dominated the publishing scene in military history during 2010. The year has seen the continued domination of journalist and populist writers who more often than not produce history that tends to do little to increase our knowledge or further our understanding. One of the most prolific of these has been Patrick Lindsay, a journalist and television presenter who became a full-time author in 2001. He has made a major contribution to the journalist/nationalist type of military history which has become so popular in Australia. His *The Spirit of Kokoda* and *Fromelles: The Story of Australia's Darkest Day* are two of the "classics" of this genre, and now he has turned his attention to *The Coast Watchers*.⁷ This is a valuable and worthwhile topic and while Lindsay may help to raise the profile of their service in the Pacific and make some contribution to oral history in this area, his work lacks depth. This is a topic that deserves a more rigorous and scholarly history.

The other major contributions in this field in 2010 came from the journalist-come historians Peter Thompson, *Anzac Fury: The Bloody Battle of Crete, 1941*, and Mike Carlton, *Cruiser: The Life and Loss of HMAS Perth and Her Crew*.⁸ Thompson's book is both poorly-named, in that it only gets to the Crete campaign after discussing enlistment, the movement of the troops to the Middle East, the operations of the 6th Australian Division in Cyrenaica, and the Greek campaign, and short on research and analysis. It takes a typical populist view of laying blame on senior commanders and politicians without providing a thorough analysis of the strategic and operational conditions, while heaping praise on the

7. Patrick Lindsay, *The Spirit of Kokoda: Then and Now* (South Yarra: Hardie Grant, 2002); *Fromelles: The Story of Australia's Darkest Day* (Pahran: Hardie Grant, 2007); *The Coast Watchers* (Sydney: William Heinemann, 2010).

8. Peter Thompson, *Anzac Fury: The Bloody Battle of Crete, 1941* (Sydney: William Heinemann, 2010); Mike Carlton, *Cruiser: The Life And Loss of HMAS Perth And Her Crew* (Sydney: Random House, 2010).

troops. It does, however, succeed in telling a lively tale and providing some interesting anecdotes. It also serves to highlight the need for a work of serious military history that encompasses the Australian contribution to the Allied cause in the Mediterranean from 1940-43. Mike Carlton's work on HMAS *Perth* also sits comfortably within the confines of the journalist/historian genre in Australia with one reviewer claiming that the work is "sensationalist, breathless, [and written in] schoolgirlish prose."⁹ Nevertheless, Carlton's work has been nominated for a Walkley Award for excellence in journalism.

A much more considered effort in this field is Paul Cleary's *The Men Who Came Out of the Ground*.¹⁰ Cleary, a journalist with *The Australian* newspaper has produced a well-written and well-researched story of the 400-odd Australian troops of the 2/2nd and 2/4th Independent Companies who, along with considerable support from the local population (that is well documented by Cleary), fought against approximately 12,000 Japanese troops for more than ten months in 1942. Cleary has a strong connection with this region and his knowledge shines through in the work and he gives due credit to the local population who suffered heavily from the barbaric Japanese occupation. The work is very personality- and character-driven at the expense of operational analysis, but it makes a valuable contribution to the history of the Pacific War.¹¹

The Bean-inspired small unit-type history such as Paul Cleary's work can also produce first-rate history and 2010 served up another excellent title from Cambridge University Press, Phillip Bradley's *To Salamaua*.¹² Bradley's contribution is an example of how this type of regimental history can and should be written. Largely free of the nationalist-/sentimentalist-type approach of the popular histories, Bradley presents a thoroughly researched, analytical, and engaging story. One of its greatest strengths is the author's extensive investigation of the battlefields and this allows him to give credit to the importance of the terrain in New Guinea to the outcome of both the campaign and its component operations. Bradley's strength is his description and analysis of small unit actions and this work builds on his two previous studies, *On Shaggy Ridge* and *The Battle for Wau*.¹³ These three excellent books and a number of

9. Hal G.P. Colebatch, "At war with clichés," review of *Cruiser: The Life and Loss of HMAS Perth and Her Crew* by Mike Carlton, *The Spectator Australia*, 7 October 2010.

10. Paul Cleary, *The Men Who Came Out of the Ground: A Gripping Account of Australia's First Commando Campaign – Timor 1942* (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2010).

11. This work has also been shortlisted for the Walkley Book Award.

12. Phillip Bradley, *To Salamaua* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

13. Phillip Bradley, *On Shaggy Ridge: The Australian Seventh Division in the Ramu Valley Campaign from Kaiapit to the Finisterres* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2004); *The Battle for Wau: New Guinea's Frontline 1942-1943* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

other important works on the South West Pacific Area in recent years have done much to help fill the "green hole" in Australian military history that Peter Stanley once described as enveloping Australia's contribution to the Pacific War post-1942.

The year 2010 also saw the publication of two works dealing with the military-cultural interface. Maria Hill's, *Diggers and Greeks: The Australian Campaigns in Greece and Crete*, which has derived out of the author's Ph.D. thesis, and Stella Tzobanakis' *Creforce: The ANZACS and the Battle of Crete*.¹⁴ Hill's book makes a solid contribution to World War II history through its use of Greek sources and its analysis of the relationship between the Greek populace and the Australian soldiers. Yet, the work is too much like the Ph.D. thesis on which it derives, it overstates the case for this being a "forgotten" campaign, and it falls well short in its analysis of strategic and operational matters.

Two other texts, published in 2009, are definitely worthy of note here: Brian Farrell and Garth Pratten, *Malaya 1942*,¹⁵ and Craig Stockings, *Bardia: Myth, Reality and the Heirs of Anzac*.¹⁶ Farrell and Pratten's text is part of a series of books produced by the Australian Army with "a focus on leadership, command, strategy, tactics, lessons and personal experiences of war" that are designed to be read by its soldiers and junior leaders, but have also been made available to the public. The series has also produced books on the Western Desert Campaign 1940-41, Crete, and the battle for Wau. The Malaya book is an insightful and sophisticated work that is not afraid to be critical of the conduct of the campaign. This criticism is especially concentrated around the poor leadership that was shown at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of the campaign by British, Indian, and Australian commanders. The authors write with confidence that is born from their expertise in the field, and with excellent maps and a focus on analysis over narrative, this text is a first-rate addition to the field. Craig Stockings' book also makes a major contribution. This anatomy of a battle tackles topics and themes as diverse as culture and mythology as well as the staples of command and training. Stockings is equally at home at the operational or strategic level of analysis and his emphasis on both the Australian and Italian forces makes this a highly commendable text and an excellent addition to the history of the Australian military and of the Western Desert Campaign.

In addition to several major publications, 2010 saw the usual round of

14. Maria Hill, *Diggers and Greeks: The Australian Campaigns in Greece and Crete* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010); Stella Tzobanakis, *Creforce: The ANZACS and the Battle of Crete* (Melbourne: Black Dog Books, 2010).

15. Brian Farrell and Garth Pratten, *Malaya 1942* (Canberra: Army History Unit, 2009).

16. Craig Stockings, *Bardia: Myth, Reality and the Heirs of Anzac* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009).

conferences in Australia. Although there was no particular conference that specifically focused on the period 1919-1945, there were a number of notable individual papers. The Australian Army History Unit's annual international conference in 2010 was focused on "Victory or Defeat? Armies in the Aftermath of Conflict," and it produced a number of excellent papers, including Geoff Megargee's (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) paper on "The German Army after the Great War: a Case Study in Selective Self-Deception." Other papers covering 1919-1945 include: George Peden (University of Stirling), "The British Army after the Victories of 1918 and 1945"; and Graeme Sligo (Australian Army), "Liberating Australian New Guinea and British Borneo: the Directorate of Research and Post-Hostilities Planning 1943-45." The AHU produces refereed conference proceedings which will be published by Big Sky Publishing in the first quarter of 2011. Previous conference proceedings can be accessed online through the AHU's website: <http://www.army.gov.au/ahu/Previous_Conferences.asp>. Of interest to readers of *Global War Studies* would be the 2003 conference, "The Foundations of Victory: The Pacific War 1943-1944," and the 1994 conference, "Australian Army Amphibious Operations in the South-West Pacific: 1942-1945." The Australian Army's professional publication, *Australian Army Journal*, also includes academic refereed military history articles and book reviews. The journal can also be accessed online at: <http://www.army.gov.au/lwsc/Australian_Army_Journal.asp>.

In many ways, 2010 was a "typical" year for the publication of military history titles in Australia: the dominance of popular over analytical history, and of titles concentrated on the army over the navy and air force. Yet 2010 produced some excellent, thought-provoking, and original works. It serves to prove that despite the dominance of the ANZAC Legend and the campaigns of World War I in the contemporary literature, the period 1919-1945 is still a rich and diverse source of military history in Australia.

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Schmider Response to Lemke

I read Dr. Bernd Lemke's piece¹ with great interest and first and foremost would like to thank him for all the effort he has put into producing such a detailed rebuttal to my article.² The arguments he makes are partly of a political, partly scholarly nature. In view of the nature of this controversy, this is unavoidable and is not to be held against him. I will, however, endeavor to keep the two areas of the controversy separate.

Dr. Lemke claims that my argument for the rehabilitation of Werner Mölders is much "too political for such an enterprise."³ He also stresses that in the changed security environment we live in today (nation building requiring plenty of "soft skills," with just a little bit of counter-insurgency on the side), the martial virtues embodied by Mölders are out of step with the times.⁴ Last, but not least, he is under the impression that I hold the opinion that the *Bundeswehr* is struggling with an inferiority complex *vis-à-vis* its allies in all matters pertaining to tradition. That he should follow this up by immediately emphasizing that the armed forces of present-day Germany can develop a tradition of their own only "in close contact with their partner armies"⁵ is as interesting as it is revealing.

By way of an answer, I would like to say that as a military historian I lack Dr. Lemke's confidence that the wars of the future will follow the predictable pattern in which he is putting so much confidence. The Falklands War (1982) as well as the First Gulf War (1990/91), to say nothing of the wars that followed in the wake of the events of September 2001, should offer abundant evidence that even the best prepared armed forces can find themselves wrong-footed fighting the wrong sort of war against the wrong kind of enemy at any point in time.

As regards the vexed issue of a usable military tradition for the German armed forces, I can say with some confidence that I for one do not have a problem with casting a critical eye on any of the constituent parts of the *Bundeswehr's* structure of tradition, Werner Mölders included. What does give me pause, however, is the central role currently played

1. Bernd Lemke, "Moral Micrology vs. Subsumption: A Methodical Perspective on the 'Mölders Case,'" *Global War Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2010), pp. 123-134.

2. Klaus Schmider, "German Military Tradition and the Expert Opinion on Werner Mölders: Opening a Dialogue among Scholars," *Global War Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2010), pp. 6-29.

3. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 134.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-33.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

by the theory of the "Three Pillars," which essentially decrees that German military tradition must only emanate from three sources: the Prussian reform movement of the early 19th century,⁶ the Stauffenberg plot against Hitler (July 1944), and the traditions created by the *Bundeswehr* since its inception in 1955. For openers, such an extremely restrictive interpretation of German military history flies in the face of the spirit and the letter of the ministerial 1982 directive on tradition in the German armed forces.⁷ It might be acceptable for the *Bundeswehr* as a whole mainly on political grounds, but is a questionable foundation for a service tradition in the case of the army, and an utterly ludicrous one for the navy and air force, since neither of them played a role either in the Prussian reform movement or the Stauffenberg plot, to say nothing of the very limited opportunities any of the three services has had to engage in military activity since 1955. Last, but not least, the recent adamant refusal on the part of the defense ministry to allow the reintroduction of the Iron Cross of 1813 (the *Bundeswehr's* official coat of arms to be found on its planes, tanks, and even stationery) as an award for bravery leaves an unbiased observer with a sense that even the future of the Prussian reform movement as a "pillar of tradition" is far from assured.

What with the political aspect out of the way, I would like to address some of the historiographical points raised by my colleague.

First and foremost, I found it quite remarkable that Dr. Lemke should not even attempt to defend the expert opinion of 2004 ("It is not intended

6. As a result of the defeat of Prussia at the hands of Napoleon (1806) and the ensuing punitive peace treaty of Tilsit, the Prussian king had to allow the implementation of a series of reforms aimed at reducing the scope of royal absolutism and increasing the state's effectiveness and accountability. The areas affected were above all, public administration, public schooling, universities, and defense. In the military sphere, some of the most visible changes were the introduction of both conscription and the Iron Cross as the first award for bravery for which all ranks would be eligible. For a recent publication on this complex subject, see Jürgen Kloosterhuis and Sönke Neitzel, eds., *Krisen, Reformen – und Militär. Preussen vor und nach 1806* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblodt, 2009) [Series: Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte, Neue Folge, Beiheft 10].

7. The 1982 directive freely acknowledges the need to give previous German military history as much room as more recent strands of tradition (i.e., which refer to *Bundeswehr* history). It merely urges caution on the subject of World War II and specifically prohibits references to deeds or personnel of the *Waffen-SS*. See "Richtlinien zum Traditionsverständnis und zur Traditionspflege in der Bundeswehr" Gültiger Erlass vom 20. September 1982. Bundesminister der Verteidigung Fü S I 3 – Az 35-08-7 (20.9.1982), as well as G1-Hinweis "Neubenennung von Kasernen" vom 20. September 1982. Bundesminister der Verteidigung Fü S I 3 – Az 35-08-07 (20.9.1982), both in: Loretana de Libero, *Tradition in Zeiten der Transformation: Zum Traditionsverständnis der Bundeswehr im frühen 21. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), pp. 218-26. At a recent conference at the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* in Potsdam (31 May - 2 June 2010), all participants were unanimous in their praise for the basic soundness of the 1982 directive.

to assess the MGFA-Schmidt report in detail, because this would not be appropriate or expedient."⁸), though he does not say why. Instead, he endeavors to establish some sort of moral parity between both sides by pointing out the alleged flaws in the arguments made by the critics. This seems to be his main line of attack.

He accuses the MGFA's critics of overfocusing on a number of key episodes from Mölders' life and thus limiting the scope of their own research. While there is some truth to this allegation with respect to Hermann Hagen⁹ and myself (rather less so in the case of Kurt Braatz¹⁰), the manner in which the MGFA's expert opinion was structured made a debate over these very issues (Mölders' help for victims of the regime, his reluctance to allow himself to be manipulated for reasons of propaganda, his alleged targeting of civilians in Spain) unavoidable. Refuting your adversaries' points in a sequential manner has become something of a standard procedure in academic debate, if Dr. Lemke can think of one which is more effective or less time-consuming, I hope he will share it with us.

He claims that of the MGFA's critics, Braatz in particular enjoyed an unfair advantage because of the privileged access granted by the widow of Werner Mölders to private papers. While true enough, this is of only marginal relevance. As Dr. Lemke knows perfectly well, the quotations used by Kurt Braatz in his book were of interest only insofar as they granted a few insights into Mölders' private life. They had next to no relevance for the issues which were deemed to be of key importance by the author of the 2004 expert opinion. The records which had a direct bearing on the issues raised by that report were all publicly available in German and French archives.

As regards the Spanish Civil War, Dr. Lemke very wisely avoids the pitfall of portraying Mölders as somebody who deliberately targeted civilians – it would appear that this particular canard has been finally laid to rest. He does, however, hold him responsible for all of the Franco regime's misdeeds both at the time and later ("Those deep physical and psychological wounds have scarred Spain to this day."¹¹). First of all, I would like to stress that I am not trying to resurrect the old myth of the Communist conspiracy nipped in the bud by General Francisco Franco's rebellion, nor would it occur to me to equate German military help to his cause with Soviet military shipments for the government for the very

8. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 124.

9. Hermann Hagen, *Jagdflyger Werner Mölders: Die Würde des Menschen reicht über den Tod hinaus* (Aachen: Helios Verlag, 2008).

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

11. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 128.

simple reason that the former was one of the main causes of the latter. I would, however, remind him that the two and a half years prior to the outbreak of the war in July of 1936 were preceded by senior Spanish politicians on both sides of the political divide repeatedly and publicly threatening the termination of democratic intercourse and its substitution by open war.¹² These threats were given substance by both political groups surreptitiously handing out thousands of rifles to their followers and beginning to establish militia-type formations. Furthermore, some parties on the left then allowed a general strike proclaimed by the UGT in October 1934 to escalate into an armed rebellion, which was contained only because it was mainly limited to one province (Asturias). Such a catastrophic deterioration of the democratic process would have made it rather difficult for even the most discerning foreign observer *at the time* to determine on the war's outbreak which side was more deserving of victory. Surviving testimony from Condor Legion airmen, rather unsurprisingly, tends to point towards an attitude which stressed both their bewilderment at finding themselves in the midst of what must still have seemed quite an alien environment at the time, and their youthful anticipation at finally being able to put their training and equipment to the test. Only in a few cases does hatred of or contempt for the enemy shine through.¹³ I would not be surprised if one day e-mails from German servicemen currently deployed in Afghanistan were to reveal a similar pattern.

Prior to my article in *Global War Studies*, I had already contended that in the eyes of the expert opinion's author, Werner Mölders could obviously do no right,¹⁴ and a disturbingly similar pattern emerged in Dr. Lemke's rebuttal to my article. Thus, it hardly comes as a surprise that

12. Arguably the worst perpetrator in this regard was not any leader of the extreme left or right, but the general secretary of the UGT (*Union General de Trabajadores*) syndicate and co-leader of the PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*), Francisco Largo Caballero. As one of the largest parliamentary factions (117 seats in the first Republican parliament), the Socialists would in the normal run of things have been expected to put their weight behind the survival of parliamentary democracy. Caballero, however, had become progressively more radicalized in 1934/35 and during the electoral campaign of January/February 1936 twice threatened his political adversaries with armed insurrection should they emerge with a parliamentary majority. See Manuel Rubio Cabeza, *Diccionario de la Guerra Civil Espanola*, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1987), esp. pp. 219-41, 457-58, 608-09.

13. For these impressions, see Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Krieg und Fliegen: Die Legion Condor im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010), esp. pp. 107-43, 155-76. This excellent book manages to integrate elements of orthodox operational military history into a framework of the new-style military history, which focuses on the cultural and social aspects of warfare. A translation would be most desirable.

14. "The air war over Germany: claims and counter-claims," *Journal of Military History*, vol. 73, no. 3 (July 2009), pp. 925-32, (exchange with Jeremy Black and Kenneth P. Werrell).

even written evidence that the airman shielded a Jewish family from prosecution barely makes a dent in his convictions: after all, all sorts of Germans indulged in such activity and the agenda usually behind it (helping a friend, not a persecuted human being) while worthy, is not quite up to what one would expect from an all-out opponent of the regime. To say that this misses the point gloriously is a truly massive understatement. The only reason the Holocaust was off to such a smooth start in Germany and Austria is due to the ease with which most "Aryan" Germans from 1935 accepted the multitude of laws and regulations which progressively turned former friends and comrades-in-arms into third-class citizens one dared no longer greet in the street.¹⁵ If only every fifth Jewish German had had a friend willing to stand up for him in the visible manner that Mölders did, it is difficult to see how the regime could have seamlessly moved from discrimination to ghettoization and on to mass murder.

In a similar vein, Dr. Lemke raises the issue of the "apolitical" nature of the late *Reichswehr*/early *Wehrmacht* generation to which Mölders undoubtedly belonged. It is undeniable that this attitude throughout the 1920s was little more than a cloak to hide the armed forces' disdain for the Republican constitution; it is also true that this same attitude post-1933 allowed many *Wehrmacht* officers to delude themselves as to the possibilities they had to keep a certain distance between themselves and the Hitler regime. The problem is that this attitude is not easily discernible in the character of Werner Mölders, most probably because he was too young in 1933. To Dr. Lemke, however, even the fact that he showed himself increasingly reluctant in 1940 to socialize with *Gauleiters* and other party functionaries is indicative not of a dislike of the party (which it may have been), simple exhaustion (most likely), or something in between, but instead an espousal of a "bogus morality" based on clinging to "eternal" military values, something obviously out of step with the *Bundeswehr's* thinking on the subject.¹⁶ One hates to think what Dr. Lemke would have to say about a Mölders actually keen to mingle with the high and mighty of the Third Reich!

It would appear that Dr. Lemke's contribution to this debate can be summarized as follows. In one instance, a key point made by the MGFA's critics is admitted to, but also belittled (Mölders' help for his

15. Contrary to a commonly-held belief, German professional soldiers were hardly in a position to withstand this dynamic. As early as 1938, the armed forces had issued directives which unambiguously spelled out the prohibition to socialize with or extend solidarity to Jews, see *Heeresdienstvorschrift (H. Dv.) 22: Politisches Handbuch, Teil I, Pol. H. I* (Berlin, 1938). For the case of an *Oberst* (full colonel) being sacked from his position in 1941 for violating these rules, see Christian Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg: Front und militärisches Hinterland 1941/42* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2009), p. 650.

16. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," pp. 126-27.

Jewish friends). Another contentious issue successfully challenged by the opposing side (the charges connected with his service in Spain) is left unacknowledged by shifting the emphasis to the politics of the Spanish Civil War, while the remaining points are simply ignored (the help for the French civilian Edmond Caron as well as his proven reluctance to allow himself to be manipulated for purposes of propaganda). Otherwise the argument rests on two pillars: first, the fact that Mölders, while chivalrous enough towards the enemy, and popular with his men, is simply a relic from a bygone age, and second, the lack of "constructive" criticism from Hagen, Braatz, and myself. The latter point is tall talk indeed from someone who in the same piece has just accused one of the MGFA's critics as having a writing style usually found in "'dime-a-dozen' war comics."¹⁷ Even so, I will beg his indulgence if I do not take up his suggestion to move on – as very graciously recommended by him – from Werner Mölders to other pilots of the Condor Legion just yet. The reason is as follows. Despite him making clear from the outset that he did not intend to examine the MGFA report in detail, he has described it in terms which seem to suggest that it has fallen well short of expectations ("is open to criticism"; "Both parties, Lieutenant-Colonel Dr. Schmidt as well as Schmider et al., are not able to deliver enough evidence for their case"¹⁸). On 2 June 2010, however, the current head of the MGFA in answering a question put to him by this author during a conference Q&A session, stressed that the *Forschungsamt* stood by the expert opinion in the current form. Dr. Lemke is of course free to claim the protected status of someone expressing only his private opinion, but it will be difficult to see this opinion as anything other than a very public breaking of ranks with the MGFA. At the very least, it certainly is an indication that even the people who are openly dismissive of the idea of rehabilitating Werner Mölders struggle to defend the expert opinion which led to his defenestration in the first place. In his rebuttal, Dr. Lemke accused Werner Mölders of "burying his head in the sand." It seems to me the MGFA has done exactly that for long enough.

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17. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-33.

Hagena Response to Lemke

Every author of a book on a contentious subject offers his ideas for discussion. Clearly, it is a pleasing result if he is able to convince others. But lively and qualified dissent is even more welcome and a necessary element of any serious dispute. In this respect, I appreciate that Bernd Lemke is the first member of the *Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt* (MGFA) in Potsdam to have commented¹ on my book² (thirty months after it appeared in print).

Dr. Lemke is trying to be fair. He generously allows that my book – as well as that of Dr. Kurt Braatz – "present a wealth of details and background facts, freely argued *sometimes* in a controversial manner" (emphasis added). He even admits that I do not "*always* and openly" (emphasis added) express "tendentious and biased" views.³ But he accuses me of tending towards "open polemics" and of firing "one verbal broadside after another against the MGFA-Schmidt report and presenting the wrong conclusion."⁴ Unfortunately, since he rests his case with these sweeping statements, it is difficult to answer his charges as long as he does not specify them.

To illustrate my dilemma: In my book I look at two documents quoted by Wolfgang Schmidt, author of the MGFA expert opinion. Schmidt contends they prove that Mölders violated international law of war by participating in air attacks on the small town of Corbera and its civilian inhabitants on 9 and 13 September 1938 during the Ebro battle.⁵ This is a serious charge, especially in Germany, where the Basic Law stipulates that international law takes precedence over national constitutional law. Many media – not only those on the far left – have made reference to the alleged "criminal" attack of Mölders in Corbera.⁶ It is one of the central arguments for those who considered it necessary to end the Mölders tradition within the *Luftwaffe*.

Unfortunately for Schmidt (and for the MGFA that edited the report),

1. Bernd Lemke, "Moral Micrology vs. Subsumption: A Methodical Perspective on the 'Mölders Case,'" *Global War Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2010), pp. 123-134.

2. Hermann Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders: Die Würde des Menschen reicht über den Tod hinaus* (Aachen: Helios Verlag, 2008).

3. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 129.

4. Ibid.

5. See Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., "[Expert opinion on] Werner Mölders (1913-1941), Colonel," Potsdam, 2004, p. 13 and fn 24. Hereafter, Expert Opinion.

6. See Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders*, fn. 70, for a selection of accusations in the media against Mölders.

my analysis shows that the documents (Situation Reports Nos. 585 and 588 of the Condor Legion) prove conclusively that Mölders is *not* guilty of war crimes as charged. In fact, read in the context of the seminal works on the Spanish Civil War,⁷ these documents show that: 1) On the days in question, Corbera was in the hands of Franco's troops; 2) Corbera had changed hands frequently during the Ebro battle and, in the course of bitter fighting, was almost completely destroyed by artillery; 3) on the days mentioned, bombers of the Condor Legion flew support missions against enemy *artillery positions* near (*im Raum*) Corbera; the fighter squadron commanded by Mölders was engaged over the Ebro river near Flix, where Mölders is credited with having shot down one Rata on both days.⁸

This type of criticism, used throughout my book, is based on the facts of the case and may be annoying and difficult to digest, but is it a "verbal broadside"? Incidentally, Bernd Lemke should accept that the problem with Wolfgang Schmidt is not that he does not present enough "*convincing evidence*" (emphasis added),⁹ but that all too often he erroneously claims that there is no evidence. If all this is nothing but "micrology," a study of trivial matters, then discourse becomes a futile endeavor indeed.

Bernd Lemke has reserved his closing remarks for what he considers the most important and fundamental point. He claims that my perspective as well as that of Schmider and Braatz is too "confined and limited" and that concentrating on single episodes of Mölders' life impedes the proper assessment of the big picture ("not seeing the forest because of all the trees").¹⁰ Lemke believes – and he is not alone and certainly not the most radical in this belief as the Mölders debate has shown – that it is

totally unimportant if any particular units or persons were directly engaged in war crimes or, even worse, in the Holocaust. It is enough to know that the *Luftwaffe* as a major organization helped to protect this totalitarian system in six long years of war and only a few of its members revolted against Hitler.¹¹

It goes without saying that one should always keep the important is-

7. Hugh Thomas, *Der Spanische Bürgerkrieg* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1961), p. 423; and Manuel Tuñón de Lara, Julio Aróstegui, Angel Viñas, Gabriel Cardona, and Josep M. Bricall, *La guerra civil española, 50 años después* (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, 1985); German translation: *Der Spanische Bürgerkrieg: Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), p. 376. Since the Spanish authors have severely criticized the attack on Guernica, they would have commented on the atrocities allegedly committed by the Condor Legion in the Ebro battle.

8. For a detailed analysis, see Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders*, pp. 34-41, with a reproduction of one of the situation reports on p. 37 and a map of the area on p. 38.

9. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 131.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

sues and the historical context in mind. But in judging character, I would also argue that the sum total of seemingly relatively unimportant episodes can become very important and help to answer difficult questions: does it matter how you serve, and that you try to observe standards of humanity and common decency even if you do not have the good fortune of serving in a "just" war and for a worthy cause?¹²

Needless to say, I disagree with Bernd Lemke and would like to explain my own view by relating the effort spent on clarifying an episode that the author of the expert opinion has dismissed as one of the many legends invented after the war.¹³

Mölders was shot down on 5 June 1940 by the young French fighter pilot Lieutenant René Pomier-Layrargues.¹⁴ After parachuting to safety near the village of Grandfrenoy, he was taken prisoner by two French officers and soldiers from the 195th Light Field Artillery Regiment (RALT) accompanied by a posse of local farmers and workers. The crowd that had watched the dogfights overhead was in a foul mood. Mölders was roughed up until the officers intervened. In his account of the capture, Mölders mentioned a "wicked dwarf" (*ein kleiner Giftzwerg*) jumping up and hitting him above his brow, causing a bleeding cut. Thereafter, he was brought to the headquarters of the Command Post of the Artillery Regiment located at Blincourt Castle for questioning. His wound was dressed by a reserve officer who was a medical doctor in civilian life, and he was even offered a glass of wine. This part of the story is based on Mölders' book (*Mölders und seine Männer*) and on two published French sources.¹⁵ But what happened to the Frenchman who had hit Mölders?

Legend – as Wolfgang Schmidt calls it – had it that the Frenchman was sentenced to death by a military court of the *Luftwaffe*, but was set free by Göring after Mölders successfully asked for his pardon. Emmy Göring,¹⁶ in her memoirs first published in 1964, describes the dialogue between Mölders and her husband verbatim ("Mölders, I give you this man as a present!"); and Victor (1914-2010), younger brother of Werner Mölders, again told the story in *Mitteilungen der Freunde Saldria*, a

12. See "Guidelines on Military Tradition" ["Richtlinien zum Traditionsverständnis"], 1982, no. 18 (Hagen, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders*, p. 187).

13. Expert Opinion, p. 24.

14. Jean Hallade, *Dans le ciel de Picardie* (Saint-Quentin: L'Aisne Nouvelle, 1983), chapter VII; see also Jacqueline et Paul Martin, "La chute du capitaine Mölders, Témoignage des militaires du 195^{ème} RALT," <<http://aerostories.free.fr/events/moelders/>> (accessed 12 July 2010).

15. Fritz von Forell, ed., *Mölders und seine Männer* (Graz: Steirische Verlagsanstalt, 1941), pp. 139-42 and the sources quoted in fn 13.

16. Emmy Göring, *An der Seite meines Mannes* [On My Husband's Side] (Coburg: Nation Europa, 1996, fourth edition), pp. 219-20.

publication of former students of the Saldria Gymnasium in Brandenburg where he and Werner went to school.¹⁷ His five-page article deals mainly with Werner's early school years and only briefly touches on the successful military career of his older brother. But in order "to show the character of his brother," he described the episode with the Frenchman and his brother's successful request for a pardon.¹⁸ Clearly, for Victor Mölders, this was not a trivial matter.

Many of the details of the capture of Mölders have been published or otherwise established: the date, the location, and the last names and ranks of the French officers who took part in the capture and interrogation of Mölders are known.¹⁹ But the identity of the French culprit, the court that sentenced him, the date of the sentence, the prison where he served, and the date and circumstances of the pardon and release were not known. There was no documentary record of any involvement of Mölders that could confirm the testimony of his brother or of Emmy Göring, wife of a convicted war criminal. At least none that scholars like Dr. Schmidt (who is presently the senior historian of the *Luftwaffe*) would find convincing.

Therefore, an attempt was made to find the evidence of Mölders' help for a Frenchman who had shown little consideration for him as a prisoner of war. Preferably, we were looking for sources in France that could not be impeached. One obvious problem: why should French authorities help to uncover the circumstances of an act that happened some seventy years ago in which a Frenchman played the role of a rogue?

In June 2006, the "Friends of Mölders" decided to turn first to the French Air Attaché in Berlin, Colonel Jean Michel Meyer, for advice and assistance. It was most fortunate that he was not only a fighter pilot; he had been an exchange pilot in the Mölders Wing in Neuburg as well. I briefed him on the background of the Mölders decision²⁰ and informed him of our intent to try to find official records in French Archives. He promised to assist the "Friends of Mölders" in Bonn as much as he could, but suggested that our best bet would be to contact the *Centre*

17. Victor Mölders, "In memoriam Werner Mölders," in *Mitteilungen der Freunde der Saldria* (Bochum: Privately Published, 1998), pp. 66-70. Victor Mölders, who had become a successful architect after returning from prison camp, passed away quietly in June of 2010.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

19. Captain Giron, a battery commander of the 195th regiment, and Lieutenant Vaux, of the regimental staff, led the search for Mölders and protected him from continued attacks by civilians. Major Bassous, commanding officer of the regiment, was in charge of the interrogation, assisted by his deputy, Captain Drouot.

20. Lemke correctly states that part of the Mölders decision was the "renaming" of streets named after "unsuitable" fighter pilots and soldiers. He does not mention that men like the French poet and pilot Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and General "Hap" Arnold were among those considered "unsuitable." Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 124.

Historique des Archives Nationales in Paris. The person to contact would be Christian Oppetit, head of the 20th Century Division.

As the German MOD still believed – on the basis of the expert opinion of the MGFA – Mölders to be involved in war crimes and a model of the typical Nazi officer, there seemed little sense in going through official channels in order to find the evidence that would rehabilitate Mölders. Therefore, we wrote directly to *Monsieur* Christian Oppetit who informed us, after some time, that intensive research both in the National Archives and Archives of the Ministry of Defense had yielded no results beyond what we already knew. The key to further progress was obviously the name of the Frenchman involved.

Therefore, the next step was a visit to Grandfrenoy, a small town some sixty kilometres north of Paris, where Mölders had been taken prisoner. A letter was sent to the mayor's office, stressing the unofficial status of the Friends of Mölders and asking if there was somebody still alive who remembered the incident in June 1940 and the high price one of their countrymen had to pay for losing his temper momentarily and striking an unarmed prisoner of war. After a suitable date had been found, we met in the *mairie* where the mayor's assistant had arranged for one of the local historians, Alain Bonte, to be present at the meeting. Bonte brought a copy of the regional historical journal of 2005,²¹ the year France celebrated the 60th anniversary of the defeat of Germany, and what a surprise, the feature story written by the director, Pascal Lenoir²² described what happened in the skies over Grandfrenoy on 5 June 1940, complete with photographs of Captain Mölders and the only pilot to bring him down in aerial combat, Lieutenant René Pomier-Layrargues. The first real "paydirt" struck was a footnote on page 3:

Selon un témoignage, recueilli auprès d'un habitant de la région [Albert de Bakker], l'auteur du coup de poing, un habitant de Canly, aurait volé le blouson de Mölders. Le voleur aurait été arrêté, emprisonné puis libéré.

[According to a report received from a local witness [Albert de Bakker], the man who struck Mölders was a resident of Canly who also stole his flight jacket. The thief was arrested, jailed and later released.]

The footnote seemed to confirm important elements of the "legend": the French assailant was arrested, jailed, and later released – but when

21. *La Revue du pays d'Estrées*, Histoire et patrimoine du pays d'Estrées-Saint-Denis Compiègne, no. 14 (Avril 2005).

22. Pascal Lenoir, whom we later met, assisted us, together with Alain Bonte, in evaluating the information we received from various witnesses, and, most importantly, helped to interpret the files from the Departmental Archives.

exactly did this happen? How did the German authorities learn the identity of the Frenchman? The *Luftwaffe* Military courts in France (*Feldgerichte*) needed time to get organized. They began to function only in August/September of 1940.

Suffice it to say that, at this point, for several months progress was slow in finding our man. One of the reasons was that almost a dozen civilians had participated in the capture of Mölders, and most of them had been arrested for interrogation and later released. They had been members of a territorial militia, usually veterans of the "Great War" that the local authorities had organized to look for paratroopers in the rear area who could be spies or saboteurs. None of these "warriors" was still alive.

In June 2009, we reported our findings to the National Archives, including the name of one individual who at first was our chief suspect (Pierre Hochedez). We did mention the role of the local militia, and learned from one of the assistants of Oppetit that in all probability, records of the activities and the fate of members of the territorial militia could be found in the *Archives Départementales of Beauvais* (Oise).

I sent Alain Bonte the letter from Paris, and he immediately travelled from Grandfrenoy to the departmental capital of Beauvais. There, he received all necessary support.

The file we were looking for has the number 33W8242; it was maintained in the office of the prefect of the department. It started with an order of 13 May 1940, sent by telegram to all 702 mayors of the department, asking them to set up a militia to observe and report possible activities of German soldiers descending by parachute; they should be armed with guns or hunting rifles. It describes the activities of the German authorities who began in August 1940 to investigate the actions of members of the militia who were not recognized as legal combatants. In the Mölders case, the Germans started on 16 August with the local *gendarme* and probably pressured him into revealing the names of the other participants, including the main assailant, a man by the name of Edmond Caron, fifty-six years old and only five feet in height. By profession, he was foreman in the regional sugar refinery.

While all participants in the capture of Mölders spent a few days in local prisons for questioning, Caron was brought to Gand (Belgium) where the Military Court of the *Luftwaffe* (*Feldgericht*) for Belgium and Northern France had its seat. On 7 November 1940, he was tried and sentenced to twelve years at hard labor and sent initially to Rheinbach (Germany) and then transferred to the Siegburg jail.

From the file we learned that three months later, Michel Duchène, the owner of the sugar refinery where Caron worked, entered the scene. Duchène had served during the war as a reserve officer in the French Army of the North and was demobilized early in 1941. A graduate of the famous *Ecole Polytechnique* and a captain of industry in control of sugar

production in the department (the refinery even had a railway station of its own), he did not waste his time with underlings. On 7 February 1941, he wrote a letter to "*Monsieur le Maréchal*" Göring asking for the favor of an appointment with a member of his staff to plead the case of his employee, Edmond Caron.

A month later, on 6 March, the requested meeting took place with Hans Jürgen Soehring, legal officer at the *Luftwaffe* Command Headquarters, rue de Faubourg Saint-Honoré, in Paris. Soehring, born in Turkey as son of a German diplomat, who spoke several languages fluently, was a remarkable man in every respect.²³ Not a member of the Nazi party, he had joined the judicial service of the *Luftwaffe* in 1937 and served as legal adviser in the Condor Legion. He most certainly knew the reputation Mölders had in the Legion as a brave pilot and a decent man. He was probably appalled by the harsh sentence of Caron (twelve years for a superficial cut!), but realized that Duchène's request was hardly a routine matter, since Göring would take a dim view indeed of issuing a pardon to a man accused of striking one of his most popular and successful fighter pilots. But in order to have a chance, the request would have to come from someone who could reach out to the commander of the *Luftwaffe*: Werner Mölders.

After Duchène had pleaded his case, Soehring briefed him on his plan and told him that he had contacted Mölders by telephone and that Mölders had agreed to play his part in the operation "clemency for Caron." The first step should be a letter from Duchène to Mölders. Duchène duly reported the results of his meeting with Soehring to the Prefect of the department and included copies of the letters he had written to Göring and, as suggested by Soehring, to Mölders on 8 March 1941. All this ended up in file No. 33W8242 in the archives of Beauvais.

The file does not contain the reply of Mölders to this letter. But answer he did, and his letter is in possession of the Duchène family. A copy was handed over to Alain Bonte by the daughter-in-law of Michel Duchène. Mölders regrets that after he had pleaded for clemency, there was nothing further he could do. The letter is dated 24 March 1941, contains only five type-written lines, and was probably drafted by his staff.

After his talk with Soehring, Duchène must have been disappointed, but he did not give up. On 17 July, he wrote a second letter to *Monsieur l'Oberstleutnant* Werner Mölders, *Kommodore eines Jagdgeschwader*. He first thanks him for his personal answer to the request for clemency,

23. In 1943, Hans Jürgen Söhring was demoted to the rank of corporal and transferred to an airborne battalion because he refused to end a love affair with the French actress Arletty. He took part in the battle of Cassino, distinguished himself, and quickly rose to the rank of *Oberleutnant* again. See Klaus Harpprecht, "Eine Liebe in Zeiten des Krieges," in *Die Zeit*, nr. 32 (30 Juli 2009).

even though it was negative. Then he mentions that he read in the newspaper that Mölders had passed the mark of 100 aerial victories. He uses this opportunity to ask Mölders again to effect the speedy liberation of his unfortunate former employee. "After he has worked for me for many years I know that he deeply regrets what he has done." He continues with an argument that shows his subtle understanding of human nature and his belief in the basic decency of Mölders:

I would not have asked you a second time were I not convinced that you will now ask for, and obtain the immediate release of this miserable man. My conviction rests on the fact that, had I made a similar demand of my classmate GUYNEMER²⁴ in the last war, he would not have turned me down.²⁵

There can be no reasonable doubt that it was this second letter by Duchène that caused Mölders to approach Göring with a request for a pardon. But it is also important to bear in mind the crucial role Soehring and his estimate of the character of Mölders played in the pardoning process.

To be sure, some questions remain. We have no way of knowing whether the account given by Emmy Göring of the arguments used by Mölders is accurate or complete:²⁶ "We do not know what Caron went through in this war. Perhaps he lost members of his family." According to Emmy Göring, Mölders regarded Caron's actions as a minor offense, both understandable and excusable. Why waste another life?

What we do know is that even after Mölders' intervention, the pardoning process took a few more months. One of the last entries in file No. 33W8242 is the report of the local *Gendarmerie* Section in Compiègne, dated 10 February 1942. Caron, after more than a year in two German prisons, had been released. The official report to the provincial Prefect explicitly stated that Caron had returned home on 9 February 1942, "*gracié par le maréchal Göring sur la demande du colonel Mölders avant son décès*" [pardoned by Marshall Göring as demanded by Colonel Mölders before his death].

Knowing dates and places of Caron's imprisonment, the North-Rhine-Westphalia State Archive in Düsseldorf that keeps the old records of all state penal institutions was able to confirm the premature release of Ed-

24. Georges Guynemer (1894-1917), commander of the Cigogne squadron, was credited with fifty-three aerial victories.

25. The author is indebted to Alain Bonte for having made a copy of this remarkable handwritten letter available to him.

26. See fn. 16. Emmy Göring definitely had the time factor wrong as the conversation could not possibly have taken place during Mölders' visit in Karin hall immediately after his return from prison camp.

mond Maurice Caron in February 1942.²⁷

It is true that the Friends of Mölders²⁸ have spent quite a bit of time and effort in trying to find out what happened seventy years ago. They believed, and still believe, that the seemingly small things really matter in the life of a man when his character or integrity are in question. Did Mölders stand up for his Jewish friend, Georg KÜch, and his family, or did he not? Did he intervene on behalf of an unknown Frenchman who was sent to jail far away from his home and family for a minor offense, or did he not? Did he indiscriminately bomb and/or strafe civilians in the Ebro battle, or did he not?

The allegation that all this was made up by his brother and wartime buddies touches the dignity of men like Mölders. To this writer, it is reassuring that people from all walks of life, including Frenchmen who suffered more than others during the war from German occupation, have shown an active interest to find the truth about the life of this remarkable soldier and have supported the campaign for his rehabilitation.

If all this is condemned as being nothing more than an exercise in "moral micrology," so be it.

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27. E-mail message from Bianca Leal, LAV NRW, dated 21 October 2009, File R3K-03-02#2462/09.

28. For an incomplete list, see Hagena, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders*, pp. 169-73, "Ein abschließendes Wort des Dankes."

Braatz Response to Lemke

Independent research is rooted in curiosity. It examines its subject without bias, considers itself bound by critical-rational methodology, is gladly open to expert discussions, and respects the function assigned to it as a subsystem of a pluralistic society. It has to supply such society with the factual basis; that and nothing else. The moral appraisal of its findings, and the discussion about their political, social, and economic relevance takes place – with good reason – in other suitably legitimized subsystems, or in the public domain.¹

During the first decades of its existence, the *Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt* (Military Historical Research Institute, or MGFA) of the German *Bundeswehr* drew strength and authority from these ethics. The institute stood out like a beacon among the scientific community, its work offering guidance and direction far beyond the borders of the subject and the country. But for some years now the status and good name of this formerly-respected institution have been in sad decline. For parts of its staff, prejudice and bias seem to rank as legitimate elements of methodology. Obviously, the strong spicing of some of their publications is intended to hide a certain lack of substance,² and bad-mouthing the competition has become an initial habit in defining and maintaining their own position.

Using the example of current Werner Mölders research, Klaus Schmider was able to point out objectively and conclusively that research outside, rather than inside, the MGFA has been the driving force in filling the white spots of the Mölders picture in science.³ This prompted a rebuttal from the MGFA, whose employee, Bernd Lemke, severely criticizes the scientific standard of the works presented by Schmider on the Mölders case.⁴ We have to be extremely thankful to Bernd Lemke for

1. Refer to the excellent arguments by Walter L. Bühl, *Wissenschaftssoziologie* (Munich: Beck, 1974), spec. Chapters I-VIII.

2. See, for example Bernd Lemke, Dieter Krüger et al., *Die Luftwaffe 1950 bis 1970: Konzeption, Aufbau, Integration* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2006), where the senior official himself already concedes in the preface that the work was only able to be completed "...with great commitment and within limited time" (p. ix). This is somewhat surprising considering the fact that it has been known since the day the *Luftwaffe* was established exactly when its 50th jubilee would occur, and the end result of these efforts reflects the "limited time" spent on them.

3. Klaus Schmider, "German Military Tradition and the Expert Opinion on Werner Mölders: Opening a Dialogue among Scholars," *Global War Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2010), pp. 6-29.

4. Bernd Lemke, "Moral Micrology vs. Subsumption: A Methodical Perspective on the

this contribution. His reply demonstrates in form, contents, and rhetoric why the group he represents now occupies such a peripheral position within the expert public.

Let us begin by examining the method by which Lemke sets up the target of his counter-critique in order that it should fit into his tunnel vision. He arranges – without any rational rhyme or reason – three completely stand-alone and fundamentally different contributions to the discussion on the *Wehrmachts-Offizier* and fighter pilot Werner Mölders so that they coalesce into a single compact opponent. These three – the polemic by Brigadier General (ret.) Hermann Hagen against the MGFA's expert opinion on Mölders, a Mölders biography, and Klaus Schmider's commentary on both works – permeate Lemke's treatise from the very start as "Schmider et al"; their authors stamped without differentiation by Lemke as "Mölders apologists."⁵

Such deliberately false simplification tramples on the rules of scientific discourse. It is politically, not scientifically motivated, for the differentiation between friend and foe is political. Lemke thus fails to open up any chances of gaining a balanced perception, either for himself or for his readers; instead he blocks them.

Lemke is a classic armchair researcher who did not venture from the coziness of his MGFA office to become better acquainted with the subject, for fear of stumbling across facts that might have stood in the way of his lumping everything together. In the spring of 2007, Hermann Hagen offered his treatise against the MGFA's verdict on Mölders to the publishing house *NeunundzwanzigSechs*, for whose program I am responsible. I rejected publication of the Hagen manuscript, however, for up to that point – although Hagen makes an important contribution to the Mölders debate – none of the warring parties had carried out the requisite homework. This would have had to be in the form of an unbiased Mölders biography that satisfied recognized scientific standards. Upon my broaching the subject, Hagen stated that he was unable to undertake such a work, whereupon I embarked upon it myself.

At this juncture, Lemke complains bitterly that a number of primary sources from the life of Werner Mölders had been made available to the biographer alone, and not to the Mölders expert of the MGFA.⁶ The truth of the matter is that the MGFA's Mölders expert had not even troubled to tap these sources before providing his expert opinion. He contacted neither the widow of Mölders nor any of the other contemporaries or

"Mölders Case," *Global War Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2010), pp. 123-34.

5. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," pp. 125, 126, 128, 131. Also, "Schmidt's critics," p. 127.

6. The MGFA's judgement on Mölders can be found verbatim in Hermann Hagen, *Jagdflieger Werner Mölders: Die Würde des Menschen reicht über den Tod hinaus* (Aachen: Helios Verlag, 2008), pp. 190-229.

public institutes, where important parts of the source material used in the biography are accessible to everyone.⁷ He had thereby neglected to carry out his scientific work with the requisite diligence. Perhaps because he, like Lemke, belongs to that species of armchair researcher who considers that anything which can be observed from the vicinity of their offices has to constitute the be all and end all, and are perfectly satisfied with this. Perhaps, too, because he felt himself to be under time pressure from – or the need to conform to the views of – his employers. In either case, he has failed not just as a scientist, but also as an officer.

Be that as it may, let us now turn our attention to Lemke's main assertion. Moral micrology vs. subsumption: Lemke assumes of Messrs. Schmider, Hagena, and Braatz that the common objective of their respective works is the moral justification of Werner Mölders, the fighter pilot and archetype of a Third Reich hero.⁸ He omits to explain how he arrived at this supposition. He offers no evidence of any kind in support of his allegation and he will be unable to find any proof of same – at least not in the Mölders biography criticized by him, for this work is written in accordance with the principles stated by the author in the preface:

The biography in front of you is dedicated to the facts. It does not dictate to its readers what opinion they are to have of Mölders, but is intended rather to be the platform for an objective reflection about the life of this enigmatic man. Tendentious journalism about him is available *ad nauseam*, most of it satisfied with little more than the careful selection and arrangement of facts and suppositions.⁹

However, Lemke is not put off by this, nor by the extensive source material which must, of necessity, form the framework of any Mölders biography. On the contrary: we are amazed to learn from him that, "...there is always the danger that too much detailed research without methodological distance furthers doubt and speculation."¹⁰ An interesting premise: Too much knowledge is not good because it leads to fresh doubts. One vaguely remembers having heard in the tutorial lecture on

7. Thus, for example, the court records in the case of Dr. Wilhelm Sievers, from which Mölders' saving of the Jewish family KÜch can be proven, are kept in the Federal Archives in Koblenz. The estate of the first Mölders biographer, Fritz von Forell, from which Mölders' resistance against instrumentalization by Nazi propaganda becomes apparent, is available to the public at the archives of the *Landesverband Westfalen-Lippe*. For details, refer to Kurt Braatz, *Werner Mölders: Die Biographie* (Moosburg: NeunundzwanzigSechs Verlag, 2008), pp. 264-72 and 289-92.

8. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p.131

9. Braatz, *Werner Mölders*, p. 7.

10. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 131.

Science Theory that it is precisely this which describes the process of critical-rational research – but a paradigm shift is apparently facing us from an armchair in the *Forschungsamt*. So just how much exactitude is to be allowed, Dr. Lemke? We await your operational provisos for future cases with bated breath.

Until these provisos are made known, we consider Lemke's core assertion and all its prerequisites as being without substance. We therefore permit ourselves to continue carrying out biographic research in the good old tradition. It is centered upon a human being and his actions inasmuch as can be inferred by scientific methods. We also attempt to bring to light – again by scientific methods – the reference framework of his actions, the outside influences upon these actions, and their driving forces. And, with a modicum of luck, we can also describe causally the effects of such actions. If we are successful in this, then much will have already been achieved; this is all we actually seek. Our work has been done. Whether the subject of our investigations has been good or bad, whether he deserves to be remembered, or whether it is best that he be forgotten, whether he should serve as an example, or not – these, and all other questions of this kind, boil down to value judgements that cannot be scientifically substantiated. They are therefore taboo for us when we – as scientists – set foot in the public domain.

Apparently, Dr. Lemke does not think much of this: "Braatz' book does not comply with the requirements of a modern biography," is his verdict.¹¹ He does not reveal to us, however, which scientific standards can, in his opinion, be deemed to be "modern," which is why we are inclined to regard this objection, too, as being without substance. But a renewed study of his text permits at least a few conclusions to be drawn regarding Lemke's understanding of a "modern" historic biography.

The Mölders biography under discussion – so Lemke finds right from the start – is based on a dubious knowledge-constituting interest, put more plainly: on an anti-political resentment, by which the alleged Mölders apologists apparently presuppose that all Mölders' critics must be bound to the "left" *Zeitgeist*. He cannot furnish any evidence for his diagnosis; the term "*Zeitgeist*" is not used once in this sense on any of the 400 pages of the biography. Lemke therefore cobbles together the proof himself. From a primary source – one of Mölders' own letters in which he himself complains about the consequences of his popularity with the National-Socialist party and state functionaries – the conclusion regarding Mölders' principle aversion to politics is drawn; and from this back again to the basic attitude of the biographer: "In other words, commentators like these often shared the *Wehrmacht's* officers disgust for ci-

11. Ibid., p. 130.

vilian politicals."¹² That is interpretation, not fact. Indeed, it is more than that: in its deliberate willingness to misunderstand, it is a particularly vicious interpretation.

But Lemke also appears to be able to put forward unbiased objections to *Werner Mölders: Die Biographie*. "[Braatz] is not oriented towards the existing state of international research," he finds, for example, "[he] manages to ignore thirty years of research, especially in socio-psychological and cultural perspectives and in regards to Nazi propaganda."¹³ Here, at least, Lemke cites some references in a footnote. But these examples all prove only one thing: that with this present Mölders biography there began that fundamental work with regard to structures, processes, strategies, and effects of *Wehrmacht* propaganda, for which – despite the excellent reference sources available – one has hitherto been waiting in vain. For more than ten years, the author of the Mölders biography has been undertaking communications research – and lecturing on the subject – at both universities and private-enterprise institutes. He has participated in the development – and empirical testing – of one of the most important socio-psychological theories.¹⁴ Lemke may rest assured that this present Mölders biography reflects the most up-to-date standards in the social sciences, particularly in communications research regarding the manipulation of public opinion in the Third Reich. Furthermore, he can trust the author's judgement concerning the validity of the psychological selection test for flying personnel that was operated by the *Luftwaffe* in the 1930s.¹⁵ There is not space enough here to explain to Lemke the validation methods in the empirical social sciences, but the author would be more than happy to give him private tutorials on the subject before he next confuses the public with a verdict on methods of which he evidently knows nothing.

Drawing an intermediate balance on the Lemke review of *Werner Mölders: Die Biographie*, we come to the conclusion – expressed in sporting terms: nothing but a lot of fluffed passes and cynical fouls. From the perspective of science theory, Lemke's main assertion is nonsense, his opinions regarding the biographic method remain nebulous, his blanket generalizing and psychologizing in respect of the biography's author is without foundation, his detailed criticism of the text is based on specious reasons. In the process, he finally loses the plot completely. Thus he praises "...[the] moderate tone and style" of the work, while

12. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.

14. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion, Our Social Skin* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984). German edition: *Öffentliche Meinung. Die Entdeckung der Schweigespirale* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1991).

15. Cf. Braatz, *Werner Mölders*, p. 39, and Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 130, fn. 20.

only twelve lines later we read: "Its form and style reminds one of the common language of the popular press or the 'dime-a-dozen' war comics and pamphlets of yesteryear."¹⁶ What was it that Friedrich Nietzsche noted some 120 years ago?: Among German scientists, intelligible writing has always been considered as an objection.¹⁷

But these are not the only absurdities. With Dr. Lemke we apparently are also in the presence of a *Shoah* expert who obliges us with some surprising perceptions. Thus he comments on the personal involvement of Werner Mölders in preventing the elimination of a Jewish school friend and his family by the Nazis: "One can simply ask whether this was ... really outstanding. Inside the extremely complex and stratified Nazi society, such entanglements were possible and common."¹⁸ If such helpfulness was so widespread, Lemke will surely be able to tell us the whereabouts of the approximately six million Jews who disappeared without trace in Europe during the Nazi dictatorship.¹⁹ According to Lemke's hypothesis, the assumption would appear to be that they perished one and all in the hideouts of countless German helpers, but this seems to us a trifle far-fetched.

If one nevertheless continues to search for valid objections against *Werner Mölders: Die Biographie* in Lemke's reply to Schmider, you discover only admonitions such as: "[the failure] to discuss properly,"²⁰ in other words, to morally appraise Mölders' participation in the Spanish Civil War; the biography having neglected critically to query Mölders' suitability to be part of the traditions of today's German armed forces, particularly in relation to the concept of the citizen in uniform and of inner leadership. Apparently what was missing was an expressive awareness of the fact that the *Luftwaffe* had been "...a highly effective instrument of war and an integral part of the annihilation machinery of the Third Reich."²¹ On all of that Lemke, of course, expresses clear opinions, which he summarizes in the one sentence: "The Werner Mölders story does not project a sufficient enough example to be transformed into a lasting tradition..." it being necessary, "...to deny the protégé of one of Hitler's most important henchmen a spiritual home within the modern *Bundeswehr*."²²

He may be perfectly entitled to voice this opinion: standing at the bar,

16. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," pp. 129 and 130.

17. See Friedrich Nietzsche, "Die fröhliche Wissenschaft," Aph. 127, in Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds., *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1973), p.161.

18. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 125.

19. See Wolfgang Benz, *Der Holocaust*, 7th edition (Munich: Beck, 2008), p. 96.

20. Lemke, "Moral Micrology," p. 127.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 129.

in the officers' mess, in the sauna, in every one of his social spheres – but not as a scientist. Lemke himself reaches the point where he laments: "The dividing line between tradition, objective argument, and politics has, in the Mölders case, become so blurred that it raises serious qualms over the integrity of the research."²³ His reply, however, unfortunately presents itself merely as a confused and muddled tangle of argumentation, moral challenge, and political evaluation. He demands clean methodology and continuously contravenes his own postulate. He urges objectivity and proves to be incapable of it himself. He calls for constructiveness and clings to defamation.

Regrettably, Lemke is not alone in this. It is symptomatic of the attitudes, ways of thinking, and working methods of certain sections of the *Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt*. The MGFA's premature judgment on Mölders demonstrates this tendency towards subjective arrogance, the unwillingness either to be satisfied with the limits of scientific perception or to trust the recipient's ability to come to an informed opinion, as well as – by the same measure – its own inability to set aside personal role conflicts in favor of objective research.

To many observers, the MGFA's dealing with the Mölders case marks a disruption in its corporate culture and reputation. Like with a soccer team in danger of slipping slowly but surely from the top of the premier league down into the relegation zone, some of its players now trample in sheer paranoid self-assertion everything that is not wearing the same colors as themselves. But fouls do not score points for maintaining a position within the league. That would require self-criticism, respect for the achievements of others, willingness to learn, and a whole new vision of how to play the game. One can only wish that the institute's top brass succeeds in re-implementing such fundamental attitudes, either by itself or with the help of the *Bundeswehr* leadership.

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23. Ibid., p. 125.

O'Hara Response to Sadkovich

In issue 7(1) of *Global War Studies* an essay-review by James Sadkovich was published¹ regarding one of my recent works, *Struggle for the Middle Sea*.² In general, the essay considered the book in terms of how the reviewer believed the topic should have been addressed, without regard to length or breadth. It began with the premise that [O'Hara] believes his book is "a complete history of the five-year naval war in the Mediterranean and Red Sea" that is more "balanced" than "Anglo-centric" or "Italo-centric" interpretations. In fact, the author never stated such a belief. The work defines its theme and scope as "a complete history of the five-year naval war in the Mediterranean and Red Sea, emphasizing the fifty-five surface actions involving major warships.... Other important events, like the carrier strike against Taranto, the deeds of the Italian naval special forces, the coastal force, or the submarine war are related but not in equal depth."³ "Complete" in this context means complete in its period 1940-1945, not 1940-1943; complete in that it gives proportional weight to the French, German, and U.S. navies in its discussion and analysis; and complete in its geographic coverage because it includes the Red Sea campaign. The words "Anglo-centric," "Italo-centric," and "balanced" appear in a footnote on page 267 and are used to categorize some of the literature about the Mediterranean war. As stated, the book is foremost an operational history that focuses on surface naval warfare and as such is a companion volume to two of my previous works, *The German Fleet at War* and *The U.S. Navy Against the Axis*.⁴

The essay proceeds to discuss at great length what the book never attempted to do. For example, it does not analyze "air and submarine operations" or give a "detailed discussion of the political and diplomatic context." The essay faults the book's tables, and says it did not discuss this point or that issue, or that it did not cite this secondary work or that. It

1. James J. Sadkovich, "Naval War in the Mediterranean," *Global War Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2010), pp. 109-15.

2. Vincent O'Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean 1940-1945* (London: Conway, 2009). The work was originally published as Vincent P. O'Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean Theater, 1940-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009).

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

4. Vincent P. O'Hara, *The German Fleet at War, 1939-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004); *The U.S. Navy Against the Axis: Surface Combat 1941-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007).

counts the number of citations by authors' nationality in order to suggest the analysis is biased using as a measure the nationality of the authors quoted instead of the relevance of the source. The essay does not acknowledge the work's extensive use of Italian archival sources nor does it identify any factual errors. It does concede: "In general, Mr. O'Hara's text supports his conclusions, but not in every instance."

For additional assessments of *Struggle for the Middle Sea*, the reader may refer to *Naval Review* (February 2010); *The Mariner's Mirror* (May 2010); *Storia Militare* (October 2009); *Warship International* (Vol. 46, No. 3); *The Washington Times* (July 12, 2009); *Seapower* (March 2010); *Rivista Marittima* (September 2009); or *Choice* (December 2009).

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Book Reviews

Corvettes Canada: Convoy Veterans of World War II Tell Their True Stories. By Mac Johnston. Mississauga: John Wiley & Sons Canada, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Cloth. Pp. 243.

When a submarine war returned to the Atlantic in 1939, Britain and her empire were ill-prepared to wage such a conflict. The Royal Navy embarked upon a crash program to build ocean escorts, and just as importantly, promote the expansion of the Commonwealth navies, particularly Canada's. Both ships and crews had to be produced from next to nothing, and the resulting experiences of the Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) corvette force are the subject of this remarkable book. Originally published in 1994, this second edition has been slightly updated. It is primarily a chronological compilation of the recollections from 250 RCN corvette veterans from fifty of those vessels nearly a half century after the conflict was won. Although replete with first-person "deckplate narratives" expected of such a work, *Corvettes Canada* uses the material to touch upon other topics such as technology, tactical developments, logistics, and tellingly, the RCN's struggle to establish an identity separate from the Royal Navy, a recurrent issue in other military histories of the Commonwealth's efforts in World War II.

Appropriately, the first chapters cover the origins of the corvette design and the challenges the Canadian shipbuilding industry faced in producing dozens of this new warship design at the rate expected by the Admiralty in London. Furthermore, manning was to be accomplished through the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR), comprised of men with a wide range of relevant experience, from qualified merchant navy masters who often commanded the corvettes, to raw youngsters new to the sea. Unlike U.S. practice, officers in the Volunteer Reserve wore insignia distinctly different from their regular navy brethren, a wavy stripe pattern which was naturally called the "Wavy Navy."

This implied classism between the reserves and regulars helped build a wall which may have encouraged a distinct standard of behavior even among senior officers. For example, Johnston relates a tale of a visiting regular RCN officer boarding a corvette seeking the captain, only to find him wielding a paintbrush over the side because he was inadvertently challenged by a rating to do a better job himself. Another instance of

RCNVR irreverence is the production of a prominent caricature sported on the main gunshield of the HMCS *Wetaskiwin* to represent the pun "Wet Ass Queen."

The heart of the book, of course, is the war at sea and Johnston does not spare the reader with accounts of raging seas, desperate depth charge attacks, torpedoings, rescues, and air attacks. Those familiar with Monserrat will recognize the nature of the stories and this non-fiction work curiously serves to validate the famed novels. That the Allies not only persevered but triumphed in the face of such peril in the Atlantic is the more wonderous when seeing the Battle of the Atlantic through the eyes of Johnston's interviewees.

An interesting aspect that emerged from the narrative was the RCN's conscious attempt to define itself apart from its parent service at the other end of the Atlantic. This took form early in the war by way of ambitious building programs calling for more sophisticated ships like Tribal-class destroyers and a dogged determination to do things differently. Unfortunately, this led to RCN corvettes being chronically behind on technical updates, critical in such a technologically-driven campaign. Such mislaid priorities eventually cost the career of the RCN's chief of staff.

Although *Corvettes Canada* is not an exhaustive history of the Battle of the Atlantic, or even of the role of the corvettes (and the author takes pains in the new introduction to acknowledge this), it is a most useful work to supplement the drier and more conventional formal histories. It is a pity more such works covering other aspects of the complex Atlantic conflict are not extant, but Johnston has performed a valuable service in preserving the priceless accounts of so many Canadian corvette men.

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Germany's Last Mission to Japan: The Failed Voyage of U-234. By Joseph Mark Scalia. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Paper. Pp. 251.

The surrender of the *U-234* to the destroyer escort USS *Sutton* (DE-771) on 12 May 1945 provided the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) with a veritable treasure trove of information, even though her commander, Johann Fehler, had jettisoned his acoustic torpedoes. The huge converted XB minelayer had left Kristiansund in Norway on 15 April, bound for Japan with twelve passengers and 500 tons of cargo that included 560 kilos of uranium oxide packed into ten containers; an Me-262 twin-en-

gined jet-fighter packed in eleven crates; an Me-163 rocket plane in two crates; an Me-509 in two crates, together with design drawings; a high-altitude pilot compartment for the Henschel-150; an Isotta Fraschini powerplant; a BMW jet engine; a Junkers jet engine; blueprints for the Me-210 and Ju-88 in four crates; five tons of aircraft turbo-charged injection pumps; three Lorenz 7H2 bombsights; a 1 B/5 and 59 FUG X airborne radar; a Howentwiel naval early-warning radar; *Panzerfaust* anti-tank rockets; twenty-five pounds of infrared proximity fuzes; an automatic pilot mechanism; several airborne fire-control computers; 6,615 pounds of manuals, technical drawings, and photographs of Me-109 and Focke-Wulf components; large quantities of mercury and lead, valued at \$3 million; numerous instruments and gauges; and ammunition and supplies destined for the Far East U-boat bases at Penang and Batavia.

Codenamed ANTON 1, the *U-234's* mission had been the subject of many signals exchanged between Berlin and Tokyo since November 1944, and much of this traffic had been intercepted and read by Allied cryptographers. ANTON 1 was to be the first of a series of submarines intended to break the Allied naval blockade by making the 90-day voyage to Japan largely underwater, previous attempts by the *Marinesonderdienst-Ausland* to send surface ships having failed.

The *U-234's* surviving ten passengers were interviewed by ONI interrogators at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and were identified as Ulrich Kessler, an anti-Nazi *Luftwaffe* general, and his two aides, Fritz von Sandrart and Erich Manzel; Gerhard Falcke, a *Kriegsmarine* engineer; Heinrich Hellendorn, a naval artillery expert; Richard Bulla, a *Kriegsmarine* pilot; Dr. Hans Schlicke, an electronics specialist; two Messerschmitt technicians, August Bringewald and Franz Ruf; and Kay Nieschling, a *Kriegsmarine* lawyer. Two Japanese officers, Tomonaga Hideo and Shoji Genzo, had committed suicide and were buried at sea. Commander Tomonaga was a submarine expert who had travelled to Germany in 1943 on the *I-29*, and his companion was a leading aeronautical engineer who had worked on the Nakajima Type 95 seaplane and had been in Europe since March 1938, concentrating on rocket designs.

Once landed at Portsmouth, the passengers and crew were separated, with the *Kriegsmarine* personnel sent for processing as prisoners of war to Fort George G. Meade in Maryland, and the civilians flown to Fort Hunt in Virginia for detailed interrogation. Meanwhile, the submarine was placed in drydock and unloaded under the supervision of Captain Gerald Phelan of the ONI's Technical Intelligence Center who directed the aeronautical equipment be shipped for study to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio. The entire operation was considered a priority because of the light it shed on Japanese capabilities at a moment when the Allies were planning the invasion of the enemy's homeland. The fact that von

Sandrart was one of the *Luftwaffe's* leading air defense experts, and that Erich Manzel was a radar and communications specialist from the *Luftwaffe's* technical research facility at Wernuchen, near Berlin, suggested that Tokyo was intended to benefit from Germany's experience in resisting Allied air-raids. Under interrogation, Manzel revealed that he was also qualified to train personnel to handle the remote-controlled HS-295, the advanced anti-ship guided missile for which manuals had been found aboard the *U-234*. The HS-295 was a very sophisticated weapon, and had demonstrated its lethal qualities by sinking the sloop HMS *Egret* in August 1943.

When questioned, Nieschling turned out to be an ardent Nazi who had been sent to Japan to conduct an investigation into the espionage network headed by the recently-executed Soviet spy Richard Sorge. Gerhard Falcke was a naval construction expert and he admitted being the custodian of the blueprints for the *Bismarck*, and some newer warships, including the latest U-boats.

Formerly a technician with Telefunken, Dr. Schlicke had been the *Kriegsmarine's* director of communications in Kiel before being appointed deputy to Dr. Küpfmüller, the *Kriegsmarine's* director of naval research. In that post he had concentrated on infra-red equipment, but had been placed in charge of developing counter-measures for Allied anti-submarine weapons, including radar.

Although Bringewald and Ruf eventually were repatriated to Germany in August 1946, they returned to the United States soon afterwards as part of Operation PAPERCLIP to work on advanced American defense projects. So, too, did Schlicke and Manzel who worked for the Office of Naval Research's Special Devices Division at Sands Point, New York, until September 1950 when they joined the Allen-Bradley Company of Milwaukee.

Some mystery surrounded the 560 kilos of uranium oxide destined for the Japanese army, which most likely was sent for processing to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, but the amount was far too little to be used in Tokyo to research fission. ONI analysts therefore concluded that the intended recipients planned to use it for chemical experiments and in the hardening of conventional artillery warheads. As for the *U-234*, the submarine was sunk as a torpedo target in the Atlantic in November 1947.

This remarkable, fascinating book set out to eliminate some popular myths about the *U-234's* mission and the purpose of the consignment of uranium, and Joseph Mark Scalia's research, which included study of declassified ONI records and interviews with some of the submarine's crew and passengers, leaves little room for doubt that part of the Third Reich's legacy was an intention to reinforce Japan's ability to resist aerial bombardment and an Allied invasion. The author, a high school teacher in Texas, has shed important light on a footnote of history and dispelled,

once and for all, the myth of a Japanese atomic bomb. However, in doing so, he may well have inspired numerous other historians interested in Nazi advanced technology to delve into the curious relationship between the Axis powers in the field of information exchange.

NIGEL WEST
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The Last Century of Sea Power, Vol. 2, From Washington to Tokyo, 1922-1945. By H.P. Willmott. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. Maps. Tables. Notes. Appendices. Index. Cloth. Pp. 679.

Power at sea – the ability to use all or a necessary portion of the world's oceans to destroy adversarial fleets of whatever size and complection in order to obtain advantageous positions for direct assaults against an enemy homeland – is not always and at every point synonymous with sea power – the amount of shipping of all sorts one must accumulate and employ in order to achieve power at sea. In the second of his proposed multi-volume naval history of the twentieth century, H.P. Willmott concentrates his considerable intellectual firepower and research talents to the depiction of World War II as essentially a *guerre de course* in both the Atlantic and Pacific with other naval operations assuming subordinate, though often critical, roles. In his view, World War II was essentially a battle of production and attrition in which the destruction of merchant fleets – freighters and oilers in particular – took precedence over the clash of battle lines. His fifteen more or less brief essays and the detailed appendices, charts, tables, and maps that accompany them can, in the end, be reduced to "the simple fact that all forms of German, Italian, and Japanese action, human error, and natural and unknown causes could not begin to equal what American [ship] yards were able to produce." (p. 90)

For Willmott, sea power involves all nations with more or less significant war and/or merchant fleets. Sea power is, from beginning to end, grounded in the balance of ships and planes; warships to fight, merchant ships to carry, and air power as, at times, an essential adjunct. Willmott thus takes into consideration the often melancholy fate of the lesser allied navies and merchant marines between 1939 and 1945 – French, Polish, Dutch, Norwegian, and Danish – who contributed substantially to the survival of Britain in the earliest years of the war or who, in the case of the Vichy French fleet, had to be destroyed, so it was believed, to guarantee that survival.

The range and detail of the author's research is formidable indeed.

There is literally not a *contre-torpilleur*, an auxiliary minelayer, a coastal steamer, or a destroyer escort that escapes his attention either in his text, or far more likely, in one of his many tables. At the same time, he does not mention the battleship USS *Washington* (BB-56) at all despite its critical role in transforming the Guadalcanal campaign in mid-November 1942. (Its companion, though not sister ship, USS *South Dakota* (BB-57) is mentioned in passing but once in the text). Such omissions are deliberate and reflect two aspects of Willmott's approach. First, he assumes a basic literacy about World War II among his readers. Casually mentioning the losses of the *Bismarck*, *Yamato*, or the four Japanese carriers at Midway, for example, is sufficient to remind those conversant with the conflict of their context and importance in the war at sea and the reader can move on to consider further Willmott's main approach. This will serve the author well with British and Continental publics who have at least a rough knowledge of the contours of twentieth century international history in general and the place and pace of the Second World War in particular. The general American reader, however, may be a stiffer sell. Put simply, the average "educated" American's lack of historical knowledge and understanding is appalling. While his appetite for books about World War II remains high, the preference is for dramatic sea battles or stories of individual ships and men, all wrapped in the kind of heroic haze that conjures up the phrase "Greatest Generation." Such inclinations will probably preclude appreciation of what Willmott has attempted and achieved.

This is unfortunate, for Willmott's insistence that the key to maritime victory between 1939 and 1945 in the end lay with the survival and dramatic expansion of the Allied merchant fleets and the obliteration of the Axis merchant marines is a unique and largely persuasive approach to World War II. The importance, dynamics, and outcome of the Battle of the Atlantic have been known and appreciated from the beginning. But that victory in the Pacific was due, in the end, to the "overwhelming of the trade defense system that the Kaigun [Imperial Japanese Navy] sought to put in place in 1943" and the consequent "collapse of the Japanese import trade" (p. 456) is much less appreciated. The importance of the Battle of Leyte Gulf (which Willmott notes, *en passant*, took place everywhere nearby except in the Gulf itself) lay not just in the practical destruction of the remnants of the Imperial Japanese Fleet, important as that surely was, but in the subsequent invasion of the Philippines which permitted American land-based aircraft to finally cut those essential Japanese trade and communication routes between Southeast Asia and the Home Islands already weakened gravely by the U.S. submarine campaign. It was, Willmott argues, the totality of the American effort in the final seventeen months of the war – the great fleet actions; the crunching amphibious offensive across the central Pacific; the unremitting subma-

rine campaign; and land-based air – that assured triumph over an island enemy who had begun the conflict with far too few naval and maritime resources to assure a successful outcome.

Inevitably, Willmott's approach and evidence raises once again the controversies surrounding the end of the Pacific War. "Operation Starvation," the mining of Japanese ports, and later straits, largely by American B-29s operating from Tinian, and later Iwo Jima, which began in late March 1945 appears from all the author's evidence to have been the final blow that rapidly sent Japan into a state of *extremis*. One surmises from all the evidence, though the author is careful not to project a personal conclusion, that no later than June-July 1945, the Home Islands were utterly cut off from all re-supply of any kind. Starvation was certain to follow. If so, the atomic bombings and projected invasions of Kyushu and Honshu were unnecessary. But other evidence (recently declassified intelligence reports released by the Central Intelligence Agency) indicates that at least in terms of troops, the Imperial Government experienced little problem in bringing portions of the Kwantung Army over from the Asian mainland to reinforce the defenses of the Kyushu invasion beaches. Sixty-five years on, the question of Japan's practical defeat and the measures necessary to complete it continue to haunt all who confront the issue.

No work is flawless; the author occasionally indulges in the kind of humor that some might find off-putting such as his declaration that "the highest form of life" in Darwin, Australia "is the kangaroo that lives in trees." (p. 51) The pages devoted to his brief chapter on the 1937 Spithead Naval Review could have been better used in considering both the short- and long-range implications of the Invergordon "mutiny" six years earlier, which really did expose the growing moral rot in Britain's Senior Service. He might have discussed the growing panic in senior British naval circles after 1935 concerning over-commitment of resources with the rise of both Germany and Japan, which led to the disastrous Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935. On the other hand, his discussion of the Japanese naval aerial campaign in China in the late thirties and its implications for the later war years is outstanding. In a variety of ways, then, this second volume of *The Last Century of Sea Power* makes a signal contribution to the vast literature on the Second World War and leads this reader to turn to the earlier volume while eagerly anticipating those to come.

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Beyond Pearl Harbor: The Untold Stories of Japan's Naval Airmen.
By Ron Werneth. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2008. Illustrations.
Maps. Appendices. Index. Cloth. Pp. 288.

Occasionally there are "last minute" contributions to history. Martin Middlebrook's *The First Day on the Somme, 1 July 1916* (London: Allen Lane, 1971) is one example, and *Beyond Pearl Harbor* is another. (Middlebrook began researching *The First Day on the Somme* in 1967.)

When Middlebrook published his classic account of the 1916 debacle, his veterans were fifty-four years removed from their dreadful battle. Considering the attrition throughout the Great War and thereafter, no other author had access to so many survivors of that time and place.

Enter Ron Werneth. His patient, painstaking efforts to interview survivors of the Pearl Harbor task force appeared sixty-seven years after the event. Since only a handful of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) aircrews flying in 1941 survived the next four years, Werneth's accomplishment is all the greater. Lest anyone doubt it, consider that five of his contacts died before the book was published.

Following an initial visit to Japan in 1999, Werneth was determined to interview as many former IJN aviation personnel as possible. Therefore, he made the enormous commitment to move there and pursue his contacts. It turned into a seven-year quest, much of that time spent in Japan, learning the cultural norms and gaining the confidence of World War II veterans plus like-minded historians. The result was worth the wait.

Divided into three parts – dive bombers, torpedo planes, and fighters – the book contains interviews with seventeen veterans of the Pearl Harbor task force, including three engaged in aircraft maintenance. The latter are especially valuable, as so few non-flying personnel have ever been interviewed by Western researchers. Each part begins with a brief description of the pertinent aircraft (Aichi D3A Val, Nakajima B5N Kate, and Mitsubishi A6M Zero) before addressing the veterans themselves.

Some names will be familiar to serious students of the Pacific War: dive-bomber pilot Zenji Abe, who died in 2008; torpedo pilot Taisuke Maruyama; and fighter ace Iyozo Fujita. (Maruyama is credited with torpedoing the USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37) at Pearl Harbor and participated in successful attacks against the *Yorktown* (CV-5) at Midway and *Hornet* (CV-8) at Santa Cruz.)

But most of the individuals are largely unknown, and therein lies a hidden strength to *Beyond Pearl Harbor*. Rather than focusing on individuals known for their wartime service, Werneth traced more obscure and therefore probably more typical subjects.

Each veteran responds to questions about his youth, early naval service, the Pearl Harbor task force, later operations, end of the war, and postwar career. Some mission-specific topics include dive bombing, aer-

ial combat, and shipboard maintenance, among others. But apart from sailing and flying, the culture of the Imperial Navy is reflected in some fascinating commentary. Relations between officers and enlisted men, while clearly defined, apparently were not as rigid as many Westerners would believe. Similarly, the IJN's institutional tolerance for excessive drinking and organized prostitution stand in vivid contrast to the U.S. and Royal Navy.

Perhaps of special interest to many readers is the last subject: Reflections. The veterans' attitudes run the gamut from fierce defense of Tokyo's aggression to a more common gratitude for American efforts to rebuild Japan.

Like most Schiffer Publishing books, Werneth's is lavishly illustrated with scores of photographs, including many of the "then and now" variety. The quality ranges from indifferent to excellent. Portions of the text are superbly illustrated by Jonathan Parshall, coauthor of the masterful *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005).

Numerous appendices include a color photo gallery and profiles of eight Imperial Navy carrier aircraft, mainly from the Pearl Harbor operation. Maps also are provided of the main IJN aviation facilities in the home islands and routes flown over Oahu on 7 December 1941. Also included is an extensive glossary describing many Japanese terms, both technical and generic.

The book's greatest fault is the endnotes. Unlike every other veteran's portion, the notes for Lieutenant Commander Keiichi Arima are not headlined in boldface, which can cause confusion for readers. Far more significant, however, is the omission of the last ninety-five of 269 footnotes, an error that will hopefully be rectified in a subsequent edition.

Meanwhile, Ron Werneth is continuing with a second volume containing additional interviews with IJN veterans of later campaigns. I suspect that because of both efforts, historians will remain in his debt for many years.

BARRETT TILLMAN
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Radioman: An Eyewitness Account of Pearl Harbor and World War II in the Pacific. By Carol Edgemon Hipperson. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2008. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. vii + 284.

Radioman is Hipperson's second World War II biography, the other being *The Belly Gunner* (Brookfield, CT: Twenty-First Century Books,

2001). Written in the first-person, *Radioman* has the feel of an autobiography or memoir. The work is filled with personal accounts that are humorous, surprising, naïve, and gruesome, all of which bring the narrative to life. It is the story of Ray Daves, a typical American sailor. We first meet Daves as a rebellious sixteen-year-old, who gets his parent's permission to leave his home in Little Rock, Arkansas to join a Civilian Conservation Corps project in Idaho in the summer of 1936. The following year, at a Baptist church service, he meets Adeline Bentz, a "pretty cute," seventeen-year-old girl from Spokane, Washington. They carry on a seven-year letter writing campaign, seeing each other only one other time in person, before marrying in 1944. Daves enlists in the Navy in April of 1939, and over the next six years we witness a maturation that mirrors his country's changes in microcosm.

During the first two years of his service, Daves and his peers were mainly concerned with their careers and their girlfriends; the war is too distant to be given any serious thought. It is Ray's parents, naval officers, and the instructors who repeatedly endeavor to convince him that the United States will eventually be drawn into the conflict. His father is apprehensive about the Nazis' reoccupation of the Rhineland demilitarized zone and subsequent acquisitions of Austria and Czechoslovakia; while his mother worries about Japan's invasion of China. In the Navy, combat training and war preparations steadily increase aboard his two first warships, the destroyer USS *Flusser* (DD-368) and the cruiser USS *Richmond* (CL-9), and on his first day in radio school, in May of 1940, his instructor flatly tells him, "you boys better learn this stuff and learn it good; because you're going to need it when we go to war." Nevertheless, it is not until the summer of 1941 that Daves finally considers war a real possibility, and it prompts him to get baptized and attend church services. Talk among his shipmates now is that "Hitler and the war in Europe [are] the beginning of Armageddon." There is recognition of a greater threat from the Japanese, who are upset because "FDR has cut off their oil." In Hawaii, everyone is more concerned about Japanese spies and terrorists. Daves' accounts show that American isolationism did not mean the average citizen was unaware of what was happening in the rest of the world.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, Daves narrowly escapes with his life during the opening exchanges of the battle. Within minutes of the initial explosions, he climbs atop the Submarine Administration Building where he works to supply a .30-caliber machine gun position with ammunition when he looks up and spots a Japanese aircraft heading straight for him. It veers off at the last moment, and he discovers the reason as the plane turns; he can see a stream of blood trickling from the mouth of the dead pilot. The plane is that close.

In the aftermath of the attack, fear of a Japanese invasion grips

Hawaii. Rumors instantly begin about an invasion and continue until after the Battle of Midway. Like the vast majority of Americans, Daves has one thing on his mind, revenge. He immediately requests duty on a warship and is assigned to one of the few combat-ready vessels left, the submarine USS *Dolphin* (SS-169). On Christmas Eve he ships out with orders to engage in unrestricted warfare against any vessel, military or commercial, flying the Japanese flag.

Upon the boat's return in early February of 1942, Daves is immediately reassigned to the carrier USS *Yorktown* (CV-5) and finds himself once again at the forefront of two of the most important battles of the Pacific War: Coral Sea and Midway. In the Battle of Coral Sea, the *Yorktown* is badly damaged by Japanese planes. Returning to Pearl Harbor, the crew is told to stay aboard during repairs to prepare for their next important assignment. In the prelude to the Battle of Midway, Daves and his fellow sailors learn how high the stakes are. A loss will mean the Japanese gain a forward staging point for an invasion of Hawaii, the last territory remaining before the west coast of the United States. The overwhelming American victory in the battle leads Daves to believe the war will be over soon. He quickly discovers that the Japanese are far more formidable than he realized.

The Battle of Midway signals the end of Daves' combat experiences; however, he continues to improve his communication skills throughout the war. In the fall of 1943, he is sent to the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, DC where he spends the next eight months learning to build a "radio shack" from scratch. Upon completion of the course, he goes to Alaska for eighteen months to put his new skills to work. From January of 1945 through the remainder of the war he serves as an instructor in San Diego and Gulf Port, Mississippi. During these final months, Daves hears of the plans for the invasion of Japan in fall of 1945. He also sees the casualty lists for Okinawa and knows the Japanese are fighting harder than ever. "According to the scuttlebutt...the Navy [is] planning to deliver something like a quarter of a million troops to one of the Japanese home islands on the first of November." Daves could not imagine how many ships that would take; he just knew he would be on one of them. He is thrilled at the news of the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For the first time since Midway, he actually believes the war is won. All that "mattered to [him] were all the American soldiers, Marines, and sailors, including [himself], who would not die during the invasion of Japan in November."

Radioman does not set out to contrast the strategic doctrine of Germany, Japan, and the United States, but Daves' military career does highlight one of the key differences. In 1941, leaders in the United States believed it would be a long war and prepared accordingly. In contrast, both the Germans and Japanese planned for and expected a short war. When

the war did not end swiftly, the human losses were a blow to their combat effectiveness they could not overcome, and it epitomizes the foolhardy narrowness of Axis planning.

The Second World War was certainly a global conflict that affected, in many ways, the lives of millions of people. *Radioman: An Eyewitness Account of Pearl Harbor and World War II in the Pacific* adds much to our understanding of how ordinary American citizens responded to its immense challenges.

DAVID D. BARRETT
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Song of the Beauforts: No. 100 Squadron RAAF and Beaufort Bomber Operations, Second Edition. By Colin M. King. Tuggeranong: Air Power Development Centre, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Appendices. Index. Paper. Pp. xv + 456.

The Bristol Type 152 "Beaufort" was designed in the late 1930s to fulfill RAF requirements for a twin-engine aircraft designed to carry either an aerial torpedo or bombs. In 1939, the Australian government became very interested in the Bristol design and undertook to produce the aircraft in Australia under license. No. 100 Squadron was equipped with the aircraft produced in Melbourne and Sydney and the Australian-built Beauforts remained in action with that squadron (and many other squadrons as well) through all of World War II in the Pacific in the bomber, torpedo, and reconnaissance roles. Such was the genesis of *Song of the Beauforts*, the story of the men of the first RAAF squadron to fly the Aussie-produced aircraft.

The author, Colin M. King, flew the Beaufort on eighty-seven strike missions in 100 Squadron. As one might expect, the book is an ode to the valiant Aussie airmen (and the ground crews who supported them) who flew combat missions against a deadly foe for years in the harsh environment of the Southwest Pacific, particularly over and around New Guinea. Much of the author's source material is the RAAF Operational Record Books (Forms A.50) and Unit History Sheets (Forms A.51). Unfortunately, scholars wishing to pursue and investigate these records or other records used from the Australian War Memorial archives will find that the author has not rigorously footnoted their use. Nor has the author rigorously footnoted the many personal anecdotes from the flyers and ground crew used to leaven archival material. The author assures the reader, however, that the anecdotal material is "reported in good faith, having been verified wherever possible."(p. xi)

To be sure, the two primary audiences for this book are first, surviving members of the Beaufort community and/or their descendants and extended families and second, those with an antiquarian bent. For the former, the author includes seventy-two pages of squadron personnel listings and their personal information. For the latter, the author includes forty-eight pages of rather detailed technical information concerning the Beaufort and its peculiarities, ten pages concerning squadron memorials, and a small collection of distinctive aircraft "nose art."

But in spite of the author's hagiographic approach to his subject matter, he has produced a volume that should also be of considerable interest to those not directly or indirectly associated with the Beaufort. The day-to-day stories of squadron operations extracted directly from the operational records leave the reader with a grim appreciation of the endless daily drudgery of war – a universal malady of armed conflict – made infinitely worse in this case by the dismal, fetid, malaria-ridden environment in and around New Guinea where 100 Squadron operated. The desperate struggle on what had once been the far reaches of the Japanese empire continued long after the frontlines and the headlines of the war had moved far to the north. Some Japanese forces were withdrawn from the region, but many thousands were left stranded and expected to fight on till the death – and many did. As a result, what had once been the front line in the Southwest Pacific slowly morphed into a backwater in a grand strategic sense – but never in a personal sense to those on both sides who pursued the bloody struggle to its end.

To the author's great credit, the reader also gains an appreciation for the dangers faced by the Australian airmen both in the air and, when things went wrong, on the ground. That the aircraft were able to fly at all seems almost miraculous given the conditions under which over-worked maintenance crews performed their difficult duties. In the early days, Japanese airmen flying their nimble fighters were the bane of the Beaufort airmen along with withering ground fire encountered on low-level bombing runs. Even after the Japanese fighter threat subsided, the ground fire hazard remained and other problems (e.g., inexperienced replacement pilots, mounting maintenance issues, tired airframes, and weary air and ground crews) all caused problems that took a bloody toll. This important story is told in a lively style that honors the brave men who flew and maintained the rugged Beauforts.

The significant weaknesses of the book are unfortunate. Chief among them is the lack of documentation discussed earlier. A second significant weakness is the lack of high-quality maps throughout the text. Those few maps that are in the text are of regrettably poor quality. Finally, and related somewhat to the map problem, is the fact that the detailed narrative is so tightly focused on 100 Squadron that their story is not well related to the bigger picture of what was happening throughout the Southwest

Pacific theater of operations and, on a grander scale, what was happening in the Pacific War as a whole. Understanding the context is always of critical importance in the analysis of military operations.

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Fire and Fury: The Allied Bombing of Germany, 1942-1945. By Randall Hansen. New York: NAL Caliber, 2009. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 352.

In this fresh look at the Allied bombing campaign against Germany in World War II, Randall Hansen argues that there was a profound moral difference between the American daylight precision bombing approach and the British tactic of nighttime area bombing. The Royal Air Force's Bomber Command, under the zealot-like, stunningly close-minded leadership of Air Marshall Arthur Harris, sought to defeat Germany by intentionally destroying cities, homes, and civilians. By contrast, the Americans attempted to destroy German industry, transportation, and war-making capacity by bombing precision targets. Even so, they killed plenty of civilians and inflicted much destruction upon Germany's cities. All of this is, of course, well known. What is new about Hansen's book is his argument that intentions matter greatly in any discussion of the moral ambiguities of strategic bombing. "There is an important and basic difference...between killing civilians incidentally and killing them deliberately," he writes.

As the bombing campaign unfolded, and thousands of young British and American aviators risked their lives over the dangerous skies of Europe, Allied commanders bitterly argued over the path to aerial victory. The British urged the Americans to adopt area bombing. The Americans tried to persuade their British cousins to hit precision targets. Inevitably, they rubbed off on each other, as when Harris grudgingly raided oil targets in the fall of 1944 (although nowhere near as much as he should have), while the Americans launched terror raids against Munster and Dresden. Hansen spends much time describing the interplay among the decision makers, most notably Hap Arnold, Carl Spaatz, and Ira Eaker for the Americans and Sir Charles Portal, head of the RAF, and Harris for the British. Indeed, the book functions as a sort of mini biography of Harris, who is portrayed, quite accurately, as an unyielding, insubordinate, narrow-minded acolyte of total destruction, almost for its own sake. Beyond Harris' questionable morality, Hansen demonstrates,

quite convincingly, that area bombing failed – spectacularly – to defeat Germany through air power. Yet, by the fall of 1944, when Harris had been discredited to all but his most devoted disciples, he stubbornly claimed that area bombing was working. He used this spurious contention to refrain from full RAF participation in a plan to destroy Germany's oil refineries, as Spaatz and Portal stridently urged him to do. By this time, Harris was presiding over his own fiefdom, seemingly accountable to no one except Churchill whose ambivalence over the bombing campaign was quite profound.

Randall Hansen's book covers more than just the brass. In a series of well written chapters, he describes the reality of bombing raids for the young airmen and, most notably, for the German civilians who crouched fearfully in cellars, bomb shelters, and apartment buildings, listening to their cities die around them. The chapters on the Hamburg fire bombing raid of 1943 are particularly moving, with numerous first-hand accounts from survivors. All of this makes for a compelling read. The book's few flaws are relatively minor. Some of the citations do not attribute source material to specific archives. In one chapter, the American 100th Bomb Group is described as the 100th Bomb Squadron. Hansen did not include General Curtis Lemay on his list of the most significant American strategic bombing thinkers of World War II and that, in my opinion, is a real oversight.

Overall, though, Hansen has penned an important, moving, and well written reexamination of strategic bombing in World War II. As he himself suspects, the book is far from the last word on the topic, but it is a valuable addition to the discussion.

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Whirlwind: The Air War Against Japan, 1942-1945. By Barrett Tillman. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010. Illustrations. Notes. Appendices. Index. Cloth. Pp. 336.

In the historiography of World War II, the bombing of the Japanese Home Islands has received less attention than the operations over Europe. Indeed, it is a campaign that has been defined in historical literature by landmark moments – the Doolittle Raid, the fire bombing of Tokyo, and the dropping of the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To be sure, Barrett Tillman's recent work, *Whirlwind*, covers these landmark events in detail, yet it offers so much more in capturing the

conception and execution of the air campaign from land bases and the flight decks of aircraft carriers.

In his previous books, Tillman has always been at his best when describing air combat and *Whirlwind* is no exception. His skillful weaving of the experiences of individual pilots and aircrewmembers on both sides into the narrative results in some truly riveting stories. This is not to say that he overlooks those senior officers responsible for formulating the doctrine, establishing the logistics pipeline, and developing the tactics for the bombing of Japan. Thus, we learn of the impatience of General Hap Arnold for the B-29 Superfortress – one of the most expensive and technically advanced weapons of the entire war – to succeed, and we gain an appreciation for the pressures felt by the storied General Curtis LeMay to maximize the potential of the airplane. Admiral William F. Halsey, and indeed much of the leadership of the Navy, draw criticism for expending lives on attacks against heavily-defended harbors in the waning weeks of the war in an effort to sink ships that had no hope of ever sailing due to Japan's fuel shortages.

Tillman's discussions of often overlooked factors associated with the air campaign are quite interesting. The sections on the operational difficulties posed by the weather over Japan, as well as along the route taken by the B-29s flying from the Mariana Islands, are enlightening. So, too, is the discussion about the deficiencies in the fire department of Tokyo, which was incapable of responding to the incendiary attacks on the Japanese capital, and the general attitudes of the Japanese when it came to air defense for the homeland and continuing a war with no hope of winning. The sheer magnitude of the construction effort on the airfields that supported the strategic bombing campaign as well as the experiences of escorting P-51 fighters flying from Iwo Jima come alive in *Whirlwind* and point to the immensity of the bombing effort.

There are occasional errors that appear in the text. Rear Admiral Arthur W. Radford is identified as a future Chief of Naval Operations when, in fact, he served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Rear Admiral Matthias Gardner is incorrectly identified as Matthew Gardner. In addition, the book suffers from lack of more detailed notes on sources, and while there are primary sources like the *Strategic Bombing Survey* and some unit action reports cited, there is a sense that more could have been investigated given the wartime propensity for very detailed records being kept by squadrons, groups, and wings.

Yet, in final summation, the book stands as a valuable work in its breadth. While other works portray certain events or people in more detailed fashion, Tillman succeeds in weaving the diverse threads of the story into a meaningful and informative account. And while it will not end the debate over the effects of strategic bombing or the decision to drop the atomic bombs, *Whirlwind* is a stirring tale of the execution of

an epic military campaign like the world has never seen before or since and one that helped define roles and missions of the armed forces in the postwar era.

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Flying for Her Country: The American and Soviet Women Military Pilots of World War II. By Amy Goodpaster Strebe. Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2009. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Paper. Pp. xiii + 109.

This slender volume, first published in 2007 (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International), is a tribute to the American and Soviet women military pilots of World War II, with a reverential focus on two notable leaders, Jacqueline Cochran in the United States and Marina Raskova in Russia. American Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) founders Nancy Harkness Love and Jacqueline Cochran were representative of the considerable number of accomplished women pilots in the United States during the 1930s, contemporaries of Amelia Earhart. Offers reached U.S. officials as early as 1939 to organize women pilots for war service. Despite a growing need for pilots to transfer airplanes from factory to airfields as the production of combat-ready aircraft rose rapidly, the air corps declined such offers, relying instead upon older male civilian pilots. Prospects for women pilots improved as Love and Cochran determinedly moved forward with their separate plans. In England, Cochran proved the value of training women pilots to ferry military aircraft for the Royal Air Force, while Love used her considerable executive and organizational skills to formulate a convincing program for women to ferry planes for the U.S. military. With the acute shortage of American combat pilots following the U.S. declaration of war in December 1941, recruitment of women pilots appeared more acceptable.

The official history of the Air Transport Command, Walter J. Marx, *History of the Air Transport Command: Women Pilots in the Air Transport Command* (Washington, DC: Air Transport Command Historical Branch, 1945), holds a wealth of documents and correspondence relating to establishment and operations of the WASP. There also is an abundance of literature on the WASP, including memoirs and autobiographies of members. The command first approved Love's proposal to hire women pilots for ferrying planes. Her Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAF) went into service in September 1942. The pilots received their first assignments to form ferrying squadrons at New Castle

Army Air Force Base in Delaware, where one contingent served under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Barry Goldwater. Cochran, who had counted on becoming the sole organizer and head of an American women's wartime flying operation, hastily returned to America to simultaneously set up a training program for women pilots, the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD), of which she became director. An astonishing 25,000 women volunteered for flying service, and 1,800 were accepted. More than 1,000 women completed the necessary additional flight training in military aircraft to qualify as air force pilots in Cochran's quasi-military flying unit. For the sake of expediency, they were assigned civil service status pending a military service category designation. The women's detachment initially went to Avenger field in Sweetwater, Texas. As more women qualified, both ferry and training groups spread to other airfields; fifty-two target-towing women pilots went to Camp Davis in eastern North Carolina, where fifteen female pilots were part of a secret training program for pilots qualifying to fly radio-controlled drone planes. In July 1943, the WAF and the WFTD were consolidated into the WASP with Cochran as leader and Love serving as Executive of WASP ferrying operations. The new WASP members were authorized a distinctive designer uniform; Walt Disney created a special patch for them, the Fifinella, in which they took great pride. WASP duties included delivering new planes from factories, flying military planes across the country and abroad, training new pilots, and trailing targets for gunnery practice, occasionally taking live rounds. By the end of the war, WASP pilots had flown upwards of sixty million miles in seventy-eight different types of aircraft, ranging from decrepit cast-off civilian planes to up-to-date military fighters and bombers. Each woman qualified in almost a dozen different planes. Although thirty-eight WASPs were killed on active duty, their losses were fewer than those of male pilots flying comparable hours and missions. In spring 1944, when WASPs began to receive more sophisticated experimental flying assignments, it seemed likely that their program would become a permanent part of the Army Air Force (AAF).

In spite of the best efforts of Love, who envisioned women aviators in the regular service, and Cochran's advocacy for a separate elite women's flying group, even with the backing of the AAF, the legislation that would give them military status was narrowly defeated by the congress. WASPs were denied veteran status ostensibly to safeguard against "watering down" military or veterans' benefits. In 1949, more than a hundred members accepted commissions in the new U.S. Air Force with rank based on their time as a WASP, but they were not accorded flying privileges. For more than thirty years after deactivation, members of the WASP pushed to attain veteran status, succeeding in 1977, albeit too late for many WASP veterans. In 2009, the congress approved a bill award-

ing a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots.

Just as in America, Russian women flew airplanes as instructors and as civil pilots in the interwar period and a small number of airwomen served in the Red Army. Like Cochran and Love, Marina Raskova, a well-connected pilot who had made her mark in aviation before the war, and also acted on behalf of a sizeable organization of women pilots, pressed for an all-women's aviation group at the beginning of the war. There the similarity ends. Eventually she put into place three women's air regiments in wartime Russia. Unlike the WASP, Russian women's units were not gender designated – they were simply regiments of the armed forces. Airwomen participated in air combat and bombing missions exactly as did airmen and they also flew in combat units comprised of mostly male pilots. They flew the same types of missions, often in faulty aircraft, performing as well as men, and sharing the same harrowing conditions. Raskova was killed in December 1942 in a weather-related crash, but the women's regiments remained "Raskova's units," reflecting the unifying spirit of her leadership.

Women's roles in the Russian armed forces were muted for almost forty years after the war, and many unanswered questions still await more serious inquiry. The indeterminate number of women in the Soviet ranks in the years after Hitler's *Wehrmacht* unleashed Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, and particularly the desperate battle for Stalingrad, represents an untold combat history of military women of epic proportions. The German onslaught quickly drew the entire Soviet population into the Great Patriotic War. Soviet women joined both ground and air forces in far greater numbers than did women in any other belligerent nations. Women in uniform, particularly women pilots, were above all targeted by invading Germans. Yet in the postwar Soviet Union, little mention was made of women's military roles or the medals they had accumulated as combat pilots. Instead, they were forced to leave their military careers. The postwar Soviet Union promoted a heroic, masculine "patriotic war" narrative that belied women's significant activities in the war. Literature on women's roles in the war, particularly English-language works, has emerged slowly. *Flying for Her Country* tells some of this story.

Despite its extensive bibliography, *Flying for Her Country* is not a scholarly work. With few exceptions, Strebe delivers interesting light reading, well organized, clearly written, and obviously not intended as scholarly comparative history. Therefore, it would be unwarranted to examine the narrative too critically. I will take issue with the extraordinary number of "firsts" attributed to Cochran and Raskova. Seeking firsts is the bane of amateur historians, fraught with contradiction, difficult to document conclusively, heedless of similar, better, or lesser achievements, and adding little to a narrative. More serious is Strebe's uncritical

reliance upon Cochran's tendentious autobiographies. Unfortunately, there is not yet a definitive biography of Cochran, even though a surfeit of material exists in her papers at the Eisenhower Presidential Library. Among other things, this leads Strebe to slight Love's role in the WASP. But there is a fine biography of Love and her founding role in the WASP, Sarah Byrn Rickman, *Nancy Love and the WASP Ferry Pilots of World War II* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2008). Had she read it, Strebe might have found Love an effective counterpart to Cochran, whose legend is in part her own making.

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British Liberation Army 1944-45. By Charles Whiting. Stroud: Spellmount, 2008. Illustrations. Index. Cloth. Pp. 191.

Obituaries for Charles Whiting, who died in July 2007, almost seemed not to know what to make of him. In one of the many that was published, he was described as a "Writer of Nazi thrillers" (*The Independent*, 8 October 2007). In another, he was a "Sensational and serious chronicler of the second world war" (*The Guardian*, 23 August 2007). In every case, however, there was an agreement that this one of Britain's most prolific authors. His first book, *The Frat Wagon* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), apparently demonstrated to the former wartime NCO that he had a talent for writing as it proved to be the first of around 350 books, both fiction and non-fiction, and most concerned in some way with Nazi Germany, that he is known to have written, a feat all the more impressive when it is borne in mind that he only opted in the 1970s to become a professional writer. As one of his obituaries comments, he could "if pressed by an importunate editor who might have an unexpected gap in his schedules, produce a full-length paperback of around 70,000 words in less than a month." Based upon this prolific rate of production, it was perhaps inevitable that his fiction, which was seldom reviewed in the mainstream press, was often accused of being too violent. This did not prevent such books from selling millions of copies (cumulative sales of his books reached more than three million copies in the UK alone).

His seventy non-fiction books focused on events and individuals involved in the major global conflict of the twentieth century and this, his last volume, presumably finished shortly before his death, is no different. It inevitably benefits from a richly crafted narrative in which the in-

dividuals expand to fill the pages, a consummate skill entirely in keeping with his great experience of writing character-driven novels. Indeed, the human story is to the fore in what, the grand sweep of time and events it covers notwithstanding, is in fact a relatively slim volume. The dust flap informs the reader that it "details the final efforts of the British infantry to free Europe from the grip of the Nazis at the end of the Second World War" and this is exactly the story the author endeavors to tell. There is no shortage of insight and authority in the writing of such an accomplished military historian. His knowledge of the language of war is clearly beyond reproach, a rich tapestry of regimental names and "military speak" that helps produce a vivid construct for the participants who dominate his story. He had joined the war in 1943 at the age of sixteen and two years later he was a sergeant in the 52nd Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment fighting in northern Germany: these experiences clearly remained with him for the remainder of his life.

This particular story begins in spring 1944 with soldiers of all nationalities assembling in southern England in readiness for the start of the process that would see them released to carry out the great re-invasion of north-west Europe. Operation OVERLORD is of course a key tenet of what follows, but the author quickly presses on from the initial beachhead, through Normandy and the *bocage* country and beyond into the liberated continent. The tempo then abates just as quickly, much as the Allied offensive did, first with the drama of Operation MARKET GARDEN, and then what he describes as "Desperate Winter," "Bleak Christmas" before, slightly confusingly, "A Hard Winter" again. As with much of what is recounted here, the wartime fighting in and around the Dutch city of Arnhem already, of course, has a huge dedicated bibliography; this makes the chapter here all the more impressive in that it has something to add with its large case, including some familiar names and others who the author has now added to the previously known story. At the same time, although the stated aim of this study was to highlight the role played by the British, it is of course impossible not to mention those who fought alongside them and there is something here about most of the Allies who were fighting together at this point. With his deep knowledge of the German military, there is inevitably also plenty of deft reference to the ever-worsening strategic position that it faced as its defensive perimeter became progressively smaller.

It is a great shame that the wonderful tales and anecdotes are not backed by even the most rudimentary of footnotes, which might allow the interested reader to delve deeper into the characters that loom large. A woeful bibliography offers few clues, comprised as it is of a fairly standard set of secondary sources and the vaguest of references to the individuals featured in the text – the "young Signaller" and the "Corporal in Crete" no doubt would have recognized their contributions even if

nobody else can. When Flight Lieutenant John Macadam's experiences of D-Day are recounted, for example, it is to be assumed that these are based upon some form of interview or diary and the same must be true for many of the other characters with their glorious, audacious, sometimes amusing, but also often tragic tales. Would it have been so difficult to have said from where these were drawn? There is also a suggestion that the publication was a little rushed in its production; on some pages there are multiple spelling errors and a more rigorous proof-reading exercise could surely have been undertaken.

The end comes with a rush as British forces enter the German port of Bremen and the final planning meeting of General Ivor Thomas, the commander of the 43rd (Wessex) Division who had difficulty believing that the war was finally at an end. Finally accepting the position, he told one of his senior officers, "the troops have done us 'darn well.'" Much the same can be said of this author, a fine soldier and a prolific teller of hugely entertaining and often informative military tales.

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D-Day: The Battle for Normandy. By Antony Beevor. New York: Viking, 2009. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 592.

In ancient times, tales would be retold again and again. Myth and history intertwined – often indistinguishable. Still, the essence of the story remained – sagas of incredible courage, perseverance: magnificent deeds to teach and inspire. These great oral traditions are a world we have lost. Arguably, the need for them, the reminder that virtue matters, remains. Today, we live in a dangerous world. One we are unlikely to survive without courage and character.

The Normandy campaign is the world's modern *Iliad*. After the outbreak of World War II, Simone Weil wrote, "[a]nyone who is merely incapable of being as brutal, as violent, and as inhuman as someone else, but who does not practice the opposite virtues, is inferior to that person in both inner strength and prestige, and he will not hold out in such a confrontation." There were many at the time who doubted they and their fellow citizens had the makings of the greatest generation – the capacity to stand up to an evil empire. The novelist James Michener recalled, "[m]any observers considered us a lost generation and feared we might collapse if summed to some crucial battlefield." The Allies, however,

proved their mettle many times over – nowhere more dramatically than during the assault on the Normandy beaches and summer campaign that followed. Part of steeling us for the tests of the future is reminding us that we are the prodigy of these great peoples who accomplished great deeds in the face of great adversity. That fact is justification enough for yet another study of the campaign. Retelling, refining, and refreshing the tale is worth doing. Normandy is our *Beowulf*, our *Song of Roland*.

A new history of the Normandy campaign is particularly worthwhile if it adds to and updates the story and tells it particularly well. Antony Beevor's *D-Day: The Battle for Normandy* measures up on all three counts.

Beevor is a distinguished British military historian and visiting professor at the University of London. He has established himself as one of the "grand narrative writers" of World War II history with equally massive books on the battle of Stalingrad and the fall of Berlin.

As with his works of master narrative, *D-Day* is above all a well written and readable book that brings the gritty campaign to life with equal measures of accurate detail, sweeping description, and lucid interpretation. It is also more than just a book about the invasions of the Normandy coast. *D-Day* is an old fashioned operational history that follows the Allied armies from the beaches to the natural conclusion of the campaign at the liberation of Paris. Additionally, the book is an inclusive history that gives equal weight to all the combatants: American, British, Canadian, French, and German. Admirably, the work also does not neglect the civilian face of war, describing the fate of the innocents caught between the battle lines.

D-Day can definitely be considered an important addition to scholarship on the Normandy campaign. First, Beevor provides a fresh and needed perspective. Sir John Keegan's *Six Armies in Normandy: From D-Day to the Liberation of Paris* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982) is well remembered for capturing the cultural character of the different fighting forces. Carlo D'Este, *Decision in Normandy: The Unwritten Story of Montgomery and the Allied Campaign* (London: Collins, 1983) still stands as a classic assessment of Allied generalship during the campaign. It is, however, long past time for an updated overall operational history that focuses on major military operations.

Without question, the story of the long Normandy campaign needed to be retold. Max Hastings, *Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy* (London: Michael Joseph, 1984) and Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981) served well enough for decades though both were flawed. Hastings' treatment of American forces was fairly superficial. Weigley, in contrast, focused almost exclusively on the U.S. troops. Weigley also tried to shoe-horn his assess-

ment of U.S. commanders to fit his own particular interpretation of an American way of war he thought overly focused on battles of attrition. *D-Day* surpasses both books in providing an authoritative and engaging battle history.

Beevor offers the new standard account of the campaign. Importantly, he seems to have managed to integrate well the last quarter century of scholarship on Normandy. For example, for years the story of the breakout (where American forces finally cracked the German lines outside of St. Lô) has been retold again and again without regard to recent studies that have revisited and revised our view of the campaign. A case in point is Russell Hart's otherwise fine book, *Clash of Arms: How the Allies Won in Normandy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), which repeats the error that the "hedgerow cutters" or "rhinos" fixed to U.S. tanks played a decisive role in the operation. Recent studies have shown that they most certainly did not. The U.S. 2d Armored Division, which captured the most real estate during the operation, made most of its headway driving down roads not plowing through hedgerows (a terrain feature that bounded the fields of Normandy and acted as a natural tank obstacle). Conversely, the U.S. 3d Armored Division, which was well-equipped with hedgerow cutters, had a very tough time fighting through improvised German defenses. Beevor avoids the mistake of lionizing a modest American innovation. He did his homework, bringing the best of contemporary scholarship as well as his own original research to the subject.

D-Day, as fine a book as it is, should not be the last word on the campaign. There are still plenty of fine stories from the Allied *Iliad* that have not been fully told. Many of the divisional and corps commanders, for instance deserve fresh assessments of their roles in the campaign. Manton Eddy and J. Lawton Collins should both be reexamined. Collins was overrated and Eddy underappreciated. Keegan's *Six Armies in Normandy* also needs to be rethought. Historians have dug much deeper into the forces that shaped the national character of the competing armies. It is past time for some scholar to weave these stories into a new grand master narrative as well. Likewise, there are many important battles that merit a serious rethink, too. The conquest of Cherbourg comes to mind. It was a hard-fought American victory that has a great deal to say about how the U.S. approached the challenge of urban warfare.

While more books on Normandy need to be written, *D-Day* surely needs to be read. In the difficult times to come, there will be times when the cause of freedom seems an impossible quest. This book is a reminder that great deeds are not beyond our grasp.

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Barbarossa to Berlin: A Chronology of the Campaigns on the Eastern Front 1941 to 1945, Vol. One – The Long Drive East, 22 June 1941 to 18 November 1942, and Vol. Two – The Defeat of Germany, 19 November 1942 to 15 May 1945. By Brian Taylor. Stroud: Spellmount, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Paper. Pp. 326 and 344.

Whilst readers of *Global War Studies* will not fail to recognize the importance of the Eastern Front to the outcome of World War II, in the English-speaking world the general public's perception of the Allied victory is surely contorted by the unrelenting vigor of the post-6 June 1944 fighting on Western Front. Mainstream publishers happily acknowledge that books about "D-Day and after" continue to sell strongly and, as a consequence, will continue to publish them. And why not? We clearly remain fascinated by a campaign conducted by a courageous but fading generation and as it is our history, it is only natural that people embrace it. In such circumstances, historians of the conflict in the East, including the late John Erickson and prolific David Glantz, might be said to have been fighting a guerrilla war against the dominance of Eisenhower's campaign over the last forty-five years. The opening of the former Soviet archives in the early 1990s led to a renewed offensive by a growing band of authors, including Antony Beevor whose bestsellers *Stalingrad* (London: Viking, 1998) and *Berlin: The Downfall 1945* (London: Viking, 2002) brought the war between the Soviet Union and Germany to a whole new audience. Yet whilst the profile of that "Absolute War" has undoubtedly been raised in recent years, there remains a distinct paucity of worthy secondary sources in the English language about a myriad of issues concerning Stalin's war against Hitler.

Lasting more than 1,400 days on a front up to 2000 miles long containing armies of a size never seen before, fighting at an intensity rarely matched in history and, according to Christopher Bellamy, *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War* (London: Macmillan, 2007), leading to an estimated twenty-seven million Soviet and 4.3 million German dead, surely any well-meaning attempt to untangle the knotty skein of events in the East is to be welcomed. But is Brian Taylor's *Barbarossa to Berlin* to be applauded? In at least one regard the two volumes are to be commended as day-by-day chronologies – the first covering the initial seventeen months of fighting and the second, the remaining twenty-nine months – that allow a reader to quickly ascertain where armies and corps were on a specific day and, broadly, what they were doing. To access this information, one simply needs to find the relevant date, locate the pertinent front – North, Central, or South – and then scan for the relevant organization. Dipping in and out of the work, one cannot help but recognize that the building of this immense jigsaw puzzle of events must have been an extremely tedious business and was

surely a labor of love. The basic chronology is done well, but with no means of looking up an individual formation in order to identify its battles and movements, and it contains a distinctly underwhelming index. One wonders for whom the books were written. Whilst a researcher might wish to know where the Soviet 57th Army was on 21 May 1942 and what it was doing, it is unlikely that those with just a passing interest in the Eastern Front would be similarly interested. Yet whilst the researcher would be glad to find that on the date in question Taylor can reveal that "57th Army fought a fierce defensive battle, preventing its isolation by the German armour [in the Izyum salient]," there is no additional detail. Indeed, if a user seeks to discover who the commander of 57th Army was or requires information about its corps' divisions, regiments, and supporting air formations, then these two volumes will be of very limited use.

Any work containing more information than is offered in this chronology would undoubtedly require many more volumes and a depth of research that Taylor does not pretend to have undertaken with his scant references to obvious secondary sources. These books do not make any consideration of the latest studies on the subject and the best that can be said of the author's research is that it is flimsy. As such, *Barbarossa to Berlin* is a peculiar two-volume work that is inadequate in too many areas to attract the researcher and too dry for the casual reader. It seems to be a worthy offering without an obvious audience.

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Corps Commanders of the Bulge: Six American Generals and Victory in the Ardennes. By Harold R. Winton. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 504.

The University Press of Kansas has earned a reputation for the excellence of its military history list. *Corps Commanders of the Bulge* adds significantly to its laurels. Although the Battle of the Bulge is hardly *terra incognita*, most studies of this, the greatest clash for the U.S. Army in World War II, focus either on the top or on the bottom – that is, on the highest levels of command or on the soldiers in the foxholes.

The author of this work, Harold R. Winton, takes a different approach. A professor of military history and theory at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Air University, Winton explains early on,

"While the general population can afford to neglect these middle levels, those who have either a serious desire or a professional obligation to understand warfare as a whole simply cannot. This book is written with such readers in mind." (p. 7)

Six leaders come under Winton's microscope: J. Lawton Collins, Manton Eddy, Leonard Gerow, Troy Middleton, John Millikin, and Matthew Ridgway. Some of these general officers rank large in the American military pantheon (e.g., Collins and Ridgway); others, such as Eddy and Millikin, stand in the shadows. Winton brings them all to life by providing biographical sketches and, at the end of the volume, satisfies the reader's curiosity by examining their postwar careers. The author is expert at etching a telling portrait in a few words. For example, Winton says of Ridgway: "His pugnacious temperament made him loath to cede anything to anybody, particularly the Germans, whose National Socialist ideology he detested with a fiery passion." (p. 251)

In analyzing their performance during the crisis of December 1944, Winton looks first to their pre-war education and experience. Although only two of the commanders (Eddy and Middleton) had seen action in World War I, a more common denominator was their schooling. All six had attended the Command and General Staff School at Leavenworth and five had gone through the Army War College curriculum (Eddy was the exception). Winton demonstrates persuasively how this preparation bore fruit at the Bulge.

In judging the six corps commanders, Winton assesses the challenges that each faced in the Bulge and then employs several yardsticks, among them: determination; appreciation of terrain; willingness to take responsibility; care for subordinates (with Eddy garnering top marks in this category); and ability to endure privation (Ridgway ranks highest here). Unsurprisingly, no corps commander turned in a flawless performance, and Winton points out the rough spots, for example, by faulting Troy Middleton for his imprecision in orders that contributed to the destruction of the green 106th ID.

Problems notwithstanding, Winton concludes that these generals measured up to the test: "With minor exceptions, all six demonstrated keen mental acuity and celerity of action." (p. 342) His capsule analyses are measured and convincing, as in "Middleton performed just as competently in the offensive phase of the Bulge as he had in the defensive phase. And the fact that in breaking out of Bastogne, he had one of the most difficult assignments of the entire campaign has long been underappreciated." (p. 321)

In a broader sense, Winton gives high marks to the structure and role of the U.S. corps itself, saying that it allowed "army and army group commanders to focus the right kinds of combat power in appropriate places, for appropriate periods in response to the ever-evolving require-

ments of a dynamic battlefield." (p. 345) He adds, "In both defense and offense, the modular corps structure proved to be a vital contributor to tactical flexibility in the Bulge." (p. 346)

By giving credit to the U.S. Army's organizational structure and to the six U.S. corps commanders, the author fills in a sizeable gap in the literature. But he does much more. This volume makes a fine contribution to the larger and more contentious issues surrounding the battle. To cite but two examples, Winton points out that "A number of analysts have argued that the Ardennes offensive proves the bankruptcy of the broad front strategy. In fact, it demonstrates exactly the opposite." (p. 74) He also calls Dwight D. Eisenhower "central to Allied victory in the Bulge" (p. 339) for moving to counter the German thrust less than one full day after the *Wehrmacht* began its offensive. Hitler and OKW had counted on a week's delay before the Allies shifted their reserves. (p. 102)

Below the corps level, Winton sketches the key divisional formations and their commanding officers. Of 28th ID general Norman Cota's performance in the Hürtgen Forest, Winton concludes, "One had to suspect at this juncture that Cota might have been promoted one level too far." (p. 148) Winton admires the Jewish major general Maurice Rose of the 3rd AD: he "thrived on risk . . . an ideal armored commander." (p. 180)

Nor does Winton slight individuals farther down the chain of command who made critical contributions to the American performance. Winton highlights Major Arthur C. Parker III's stand at Baraque de Fraiture, now called Parker's Crossroads. With three howitzers and a scratch force against the 2nd SS Panzer Division, "Major Parker provided a shining example of what a single, inspired individual can do to help turn the tide of a large battle." (p. 185)

Throughout the volume, Winton pays tribute to the American GI fighting in thick forests, freezing temperatures, and deep snow. He gives special credit to that often overlooked American arm – the field artillery, which on several occasions proved instrumental in wrecking German drives. Similarly, Winton weighs the contributions of air power, both tactical and strategic, to the successes of the corps commanders and to the eventual Allied victory. The book is laden with solid nuggets of important, but often overlooked, observations (e.g., Allied airpower reduced the effectiveness of German artillery by more than 50%; or RAF Bomber Command, by plastering St. Vith and Houffalize, completely blocked German traffic through those junctions for days).

The reader of *Corps Commanders of the Bulge* benefits as well from the author's mastery of the "other side of the hill." From the movements of *Kampfgruppe* Peiper to the place of the Type XXI U-boat in Hitler's late-war strategy, Winton effectively portrays the German armed forces with their myriad strengths and weaknesses.

From an academic standpoint, this volume proves especially valuable

for its extensive scholarly apparatus. With ninety-six pages of endnotes, its documentation is thorough. Thankfully, the University Press of Kansas has keyed the citations at the end of the work to the pagination of the text, so that the reader can quickly track down sources. The twenty-nine page index is a model of its kind. The bibliography demonstrates that Winton has dug in virtually all the appropriate archival sources from the Eisenhower and Marshall Libraries to the repositories at Carlisle, Benning, Knox, Leavenworth, and Maxwell. Lending an air of immediacy to the author's descriptions is his thorough knowledge of the ground. His "repeated" travels to Luxembourg and Belgium have indeed paid dividends.

In short, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge* should stand as the definitive treatment of its subject. Moreover, it can serve as a model for many of us in the field. As one colleague remarked, "This is the way military history should be written."

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The Battle for Wau: New Guinea's Frontline, 1942-1943. By Phillip Bradley. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 285.

First to emerge from the Australian Army History Series partnership between the Australian Army and Cambridge University Press, this monograph treats a relatively unknown battlefield for Papua New Guinea that did not directly threaten Port Moresby, yet reflected well the perilous nature of the campaign for Japanese, Australian, and Allied forces.

Following the seizure of Rabaul in January 1941, few forces stood between the Japanese army and navy and the various ports and airfields of Papua New Guinea and the island chains extending southward. American and Australian forces later saved Port Moresby from immediate danger by turning back the Japanese navy at the Battle of Coral Sea. But Japanese forces continued to work their way from Buna along the Kokoda Trail toward that objective and also down the Solomons archipelago, while seizing towns along the northern coast of New Guinea that further supported their New Guinea Campaign. Japanese army and navy units took Salamaua and Lae on 8 March.

Phillip Bradley details the Australian defense of the Lae-Salamaua region which took the form initially of a guerrilla war fought from interior

bases at Wau and the Bulolo Valley, the gold mining centers of the 1920s that had spawned the regional ports and air bases. Some 40-100 miles distant from these important Japanese air bases, the Australians could maintain only observation positions and report on Japanese activities. The Japanese commanders, at first leery of testing the Australian dispositions, eventually organized a major effort to eradicate the Wau center of resistance.

Australian defenders in the area initially consisted of a few members of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR). Australian War planning had allocated army troops to Port Moresby and Rabaul alone. The Wau and Salamaua detachments formed a company midway between at Mubo and along with the Lae company, and these ensured that no facilities were left intact for the Japanese. The Wau airfield, eerily constructed at a ten degree slope against a mountainside, would remain intact until later. From inland sanctuaries, more than a hundred militiamen maintained their observation posts as a few furtive Japanese patrols issued forth in April 1942. Supplies reached them from Port Moresby only via canoes and pack trains from the southwest coast, or the growing air supply effort whence U.S. forces began to make their first contributions to the Wau campaign.

Enter the independent companies. Four had been formed by the Australian army at the outbreak of the war, primarily for unconventional warfare or commando missions against the enemy in his own lair. The first three began to deploy in April 1942, with 2/5th Independent Company ferried to Wau after a brief pause at Port Moresby to defend against Japanese forces later turned back from the Coral Sea. In late May, the company airlifted into Wau along with an inexperienced army officer designated as commander, Kanga Force, tasked with harassing the enemy in the region of Wau-Salamaua-Lae. Following two commando raids against Salamaua Airfield and a position near Lae, the Japanese reinforced and pushed outward, causing the commander's hasty order for the demolition of the Wau-Bulolo enclave and withdrawal back down the canoe-pack train lifeline.

A lull ensued when the Australians practiced survival while the Japanese eschewed any approach to the interior enclave, merely outposting Lae and Salamaua to prevent more commando raids. With the Port Moresby Campaign reaching its crisis point in September, no reinforcements came to the plucky Australian militia and commandos who gradually reoccupied Wau and Bulolo, reestablishing their observation of the enemy. Kanga Force then received a second independent company in October with renewed supply efforts to gird the position at Wau. By year's end, both the Australian and Japanese commands had new plans for the region.

Both sides now determined to reinforce. Australian and American

power had grown considerably in ground and air components. The Japanese army, stung by setbacks at Kokoda, Milne Bay, and Guadalcanal, redefined their strategic defensive array as lying north of the Owen Stanley Mountain range, thus requiring them to eradicate the nest of resistance posed by Wau and its outposts. What ensued in early 1943 was a rapid reinforcement of Wau by an infantry brigade, flown in by American and Australian transports. Newly arrived at Lae, a reinforced Japanese regiment prepared to strike south from Salamaua to seize Wau airfield and mop up Australian forces in the region. The decisive battle for Wau fought in January-February 1943 caps Bradley's detailed narrative and analysis.

Bradley presents the reader with fascinating exploits of small units of the militia, independent companies and regular army, with attention to the vital accomplishments of airmen to various facets of the campaign. At times, one may lose the "big picture" among the details, but the author generally provides the key points of Allied and Japanese strategies at appropriate intervals.

The combat actions do not eclipse the equally important detailing of communications and logistics, and Bradley proves equally adept at highlighting these varied activities, along with some frequently pithy analyses. He contrasts the bush-wise militia scouts with the trained commandos and the army troops transferred from the Mediterranean Theater with engaging vignettes. Of great importance are the extensive maps, so essential for combat narrative, and for these both author and publisher merit praise. The photos include many "before and after" views of principal locations.

This work contributes much needed material to a part of the Australian World War II epic not well known in the rest of the world.

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Maginot Line 1940: Battles on the French Frontier. By Marc Romanych and Martin Rupp. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2010. Illustrations. Index. Paper. Pp. 96.

One of the forgotten areas of the Second World War is the role of the Maginot Line during the campaign of 1940. Usually, the Battle for France is told only with reference to the German sweep through the Ardennes and the subsequent drive to the English Channel. The generally accepted impact of the Maginot Line is that rather than take the vaunted French fortifications head-on, the Germans simply chose to go around it.

In reality, there were several instances during the campaign where the Germans attacked the Maginot Line. This Osprey Campaign series title describes these episodes. Since there is very little available in English on these battles, this book is especially valuable. It is well researched and presents new information on the subject, and is clearly among the best titles in the Campaign series.

The book starts out slow as the authors try to fit a series of small battles into the Campaign format. When they begin to describe the Maginot Line itself, the book begins to hit its stride. The brief description of the Maginot Line makes the point that only two sections were capable of defeating a concerted attack. These were located near Metz and in the area of Northern Alsace. The rest of the Maginot Line on the Belgian border, the Sarre Gap between the two well-fortified areas and along the Rhine River were much less developed and not, according to the authors, capable of sustained defense by themselves. The defenses on the Belgian border were particularly austere. To man the line, the French assigned the equivalent of fifteen divisions of fortress troops. A key ingredient to a successful defense was the presence of interval troops to defend the areas between forts. Another twenty-four divisions were assigned in this role. The authors point out that these forces constituted a considerable percentage of France's total field force and undermined the original rationale for the Maginot Line's construction to save troops.

The first test of the Maginot Line was at one of its weakest points, in the key Sedan sector. In a single day on 13 May, the line was penetrated by German armored forces with ultimately fatal consequences for the French. This action has been well described elsewhere, and the authors give it little space and add nothing new. In the wake of the breakthrough at Sedan, the Germans attacked the westernmost fort of the Maginot Line proper at La Ferte. After a three-day fight, two regiments of a German infantry division succeeded in capturing the fort. It was here that the pattern for future attacks against Maginot Line forts was set with heavy artillery providing cover and neutralizing supporting French artillery, followed by assault engineers supported by 88mm guns firing at close range directly into the fortifications.

The hardest fighting was yet to come, even after the fate of France had already been decided following the success of the German attacks in June 1940. The German breakthrough had massive implications for the Maginot Line as it meant that the interval troops were ordered to withdraw. The fortification troops were ordered to stay behind as rear guards. The Maginot Line sector around Metz was quickly encircled, and the Germans decided to mount a hasty attack against the fortress at Fermont. It failed with heavy losses. The Germans followed this with a more deliberate attack into the Sarre Gap to split the Maginot Line on 14 June. Here seven divisions were employed supported by 1,000 artillery pieces,

the largest such concentration in the French campaign. Despite the fact that the Germans possessed overwhelming strength, the attack was largely unsuccessful until the French withdrew that night. In Northern Alsace, the Germans launched another attack on 19 June at Haguenau into one of the most developed and powerful sectors of the Maginot Line. The attack failed. The final episode in the book is the description of the five-division attack across the Rhine River beginning on 15 June. This section of the Maginot Line was comprised of three lines of blockhouses and casemates. Of the seven regiment-sized crossings, only two were seriously opposed. All five German divisions were able to establish bridgeheads across the river and a breakthrough was soon achieved.

The best parts of the book are the thorough accounts of the actual fighting. The tactics are well described and the important role of the 88mm gun employed in a direct fire role is highlighted. Also detailed are the relative ineffectiveness of artillery, even siege artillery, against the forts, and the futility of attacking the relatively small fortifications with dive-bombers, though there was a definite psychological impact of unopposed dive-bombing on the French defenders. Though the account seems to be primarily told from the German perspective, the authors do make efforts to highlight the bravery and stubbornness of the French defenders who fought in almost every case heavily outnumbered and with no or little support. The fighting around the fortifications is greatly assisted by the use of the Osprey-style maps, which detail the action. By the time of the French armistice, ten of the fifty-eight major Maginot Line fortifications had been captured with another three abandoned. This certainly puts to rest the myth, often repeated, that none of the Maginot Line was captured in combat in 1940. However, it is also true that the full defenses of the Maginot Line were never tested by a German attack against fortifications properly supported by interval troops and artillery. Despite being encircled and attacked from the rear, the main fortifications of the Maginot Line remained intact by campaign's end. These defenders did not surrender until early July, a week after the rest of the French Army.

The only disappointing aspect to the book is the weak bibliography. Clearly, such a well-researched account used more than the mere five sources cited. Because the work addresses an important aspect of a key campaign not already adequately covered by sources in English, this book is highly recommended. It is proof that at their best, Osprey titles can be original works of research in their own right.

MARK E. STILLE
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World War II: A Military History. By Alan Warren. Stroud: Tempus, 2008. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. 386.

Alan Warren is an Australian, and the author of the well-received *Singapore, 1942: Britain's Greatest Defeat* (London: Hambledon and London, 2002). He has now tried his hand at that difficult exercise, a one-volume middle-length general history of World War II. In constructing such a book, any author must make choices about what to exclude and what to emphasize, and in this case the key is in his subtitle: this is a military history, meaning a history that concentrates on famous battles. The author's central thesis, briefly mentioned at the start of the book, is that changes in military technology between the two world wars restored to its central importance the decisive battle that had been missing in World War I, and that in World War II success in such decisive battles meant success in the war, either temporary in the case of the Axis, or ultimately decisive in the case of the Allies. Each chapter has at its center a battle or campaign that has traditionally been seen as a turning point in the war: Poland 1939; France 1940; the Battle of Britain; the Battle of the Atlantic; Operation Barbarossa; Pearl Harbor; Midway; El Alamein; Stalingrad; Kursk; the air Battle of Berlin, 1943-44; Normandy; Leyte Gulf; Berlin 1945; and the capitulation of Japan 1945, ending with a chapter summarizing the defeat of the Axis.

As may be seen from this list, the definition of what constitutes a battle is a broad one, and not always comfortable for the author. His attempt to tell the story of the war by way of decisive battles squeezes out many smaller but important military episodes: less than a sentence each is given to Norway and Crete, Gazala and Tobruk, Anzio and Monte Cassino, MARKET-GARDEN and the Battle of the Bulge, or Guadalcanal and Tarawa. More importantly, the author makes little or no reference to some large campaigns which achieved their objectives over years rather than in one battle: most notably Burma and New Guinea, and the entire China theatre, receive almost no mention. Incongruously, but probably necessarily, much of the chapter on the defeat of Japan deals with the development and use of the atomic bombs.

In World War II, the view that success in major battles meant victory in war was characteristic above all of German military thought, and in sharing this view the author almost inevitably comes to see the war through German eyes. He deals fairly with Japan, but writes virtually nothing about Italy or the minor Axis members. He has little to say about the complexities of Allied strategy beyond the relationship between the Big Three, and makes little or no reference to how that strategy was constructed, not even mentioning the Washington "Arcadia" Conference of December 1941. He also has almost nothing to say about recruitment and industry, the role of the home fronts, and the creation of a global trans-

portation system that was the real key to Allied victory. When he does discuss logistics, it is chiefly in the context of the Eastern Front, sharing the German belief that they were overwhelmed by mass Soviet hoards that somehow just came into existence. He sees intelligence and strategic deception as secondary issues, dismissing their role in the Battle of Kursk in a bare sentence. While critical of several Allied commanders, he takes the memoirs of their German opponents, chiefly those of Manstein, Guderian, and Albert Speer, at face value. When the Axis forces are defeated, this is portrayed as something close to an act of fate, rather than an illustration of how the many powerful Allied land, sea, and air formations were created, trained, and sent into battle.

While the author is commendably free from the national biases that sometimes afflicts histories like these (even to the extent of neglecting some famous Australian achievements in the war), his focus on military operations means that he has an uncertain grasp of seapower and its relation to strategy, leading him to argue that the Allied clearance of North Africa was a minor issue, that the U-boat campaign was a distraction of German resources away from the land fronts and the real war, and that Allied strategy in the Mediterranean was an obstacle to the 1944 liberation of Europe, rather than that they were integral parts of the same global plan. He has no interest in the social and cultural issues of the war which have increasingly attracted the attention of historians: the Holocaust gets an extremely brief mention as a consequence of Naziism rather than part of German strategy, ignoring the way in which critical resources were diverted from the German Army on the Eastern Front in order to carry out the Nazi racial extermination program. The author's need to place the defeat of RAF Bomber Command in the 1943-44 Battle of Berlin at the center of his chapter on airpower also means that he fails to consider the wider strategic point that Allied domination of the air over Germany had to be fought for over many years, starting in 1939.

If a history like this cannot cover everything about the war, it needs to bring what it does cover to life for the reader. An important part of this is an author's ability to paint a vivid word picture, explaining the highly complex events of a major battle clearly, reducing them to their military essentials in a bold and sweeping narrative. This is a considerable skill, often depending on good maps being incorporated into the text and used in conjunction with the written description of the battle. Unfortunately, instead of specially commissioned maps, this book has only a diverse collection taken from a variety of sources, placed inconveniently at the back. While sometimes the author achieves the necessary stylistic verve, all too often his writing plods along, sometimes becoming little more than a list of tonnages, calibres, and troop numbers, plus occasional sol-ecisms such as anti-aircraft units that are "manned by women," the use of *Sichelschnitt* as a codeword for *Fall Gelb* in May 1940, or American

"paratroopers" landing by glider on D-Day. While there are few outright inaccuracies in the narrative, readers who know the battles that are his centerpieces well will also find much to disagree with in his understanding and interpretation of several of them.

In other words, this is a very old-fashioned military history, indeed. For those who like to read about wars in this way, several one-volume general histories of the war already exist, and this book may certainly join their ranks as a quite respectable contribution. But World War II, even its military history, was about so much more than this.

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The Split in Stalin's Secretariat, 1939-1948. By Jonathan Harris. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. viii + 183.

In this work, Jonathan Harris informs us of the lack of consensus in Stalin's regime regarding the role of the Communist Party in the economy. The split was between Central Committee secretaries Andrei Zhdanov and Georgi Malenkov, and their protégés. Zhdanov believed that the role of the Party apparatus was to educate Party members to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism so they could do their jobs in government and the economy "correctly." He reasoned that because all the leaders of the economic ministries and the majority of their subordinates were Party members all they needed to make correct decisions was an elevated Marxist-Leninist consciousness. Malenkov believed that the Party apparatus should intervene directly in the economic process, particularly in supervising the fulfillment of the five-year plans. Malenkov did not trust the economic ministries to operate independently of direct Party supervision and therefore wanted Party functionaries at all political levels, from local, to regional, to national, to take a "hands on" role in economic decision-making. The struggle between the two took place in the Party press in the pages of *Pravda*, *Bol'shevik*, *Partiinaiia Zhizn'*, and others, which published articles endorsing one view or the other based on cues from Stalin's latest speeches or pronouncements. When Zhdanov was ascendant, the newspapers called for more intensified instruction of Party members in Marxism-Leninism in special courses and night schools, and he created institutes of higher learning to train more teachers of ideology. Simultaneously, the media would criticize the interference of Party organizations in economic decision-making. When Malenkov was thought to be in favor, then the papers encouraged the Party apparatus to

take responsibility for assisting industrial management and not be diverted by ideological pursuits. Critical to shifts between the two positions was Stalin and the Party's perception of which of the two he favored at the moment. Shifts between the two positions could take place in as few as eight to ten months. Most intriguing, as Harris shows, was Stalin's refusal to take a firm stance on the issue. He knowingly allowed the constant shifts in emphasis. For this, Harris offers no explanation. It stands in contrast to Stalin's almost fanatical drive for Party unity in the 1930s up through the 18th Party Congress. Could he not make up his mind on the proper role of the Party in the economy, or did he see it as beneficial to keep his subordinates divided and dependent? Although Harris cannot be faulted for not answering these questions, it would have been worthwhile to raise them and offer speculations.

The larger question Harris has raised with this book is the dilemma faced by Lenin in the early days after the revolution of what was the role of a revolutionary party after the revolution had succeeded. Was it to govern directly? Was it to provide cadres for government? Was it to directly or indirectly supervise those in the governing process? And, because the state ran all aspects of the economy, what would the Party's relationship to economics and the economic and industrial development of the USSR be? Neither he nor Stalin ever arrived at conclusive answers to these questions. Not until Leonid Brezhnev's term as Party General Secretary, beginning in 1964, did the Party's role as direct participant in the supervision of economic ministries become uncontested. The nine-year struggle between Zhdanov and Malenkov, which ended in 1948 with the death from natural causes of Zhdanov, is but one slice of the larger, complex struggle the Communist Party of the Soviet Union underwent as it sought to achieve a post-revolutionary identity. Mikhail Gorbachev reopened the question and tried to pull the Party out of the economy with disastrous results, which shows that Stalin's willingness to live with ambiguity was perhaps a wise course after all.

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Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943. By Christopher D. O'Sullivan. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xix + 256.

One of the major architects of American official policy with a view to shape the post-war world and avoid a similarly destructive conflict,

Sumner Welles (1892-1961) was thought to be a major U.S. public figure for many years of his life. In spite of his abrupt resignation from the Under-Secretaryship of State at the end of the summer of 1943 (for reasons which remained long misinterpreted, this book argues), his obituaries were able to list many achievements in his life, adequately forgetting his last years, which he spent rather miserably. The promising career prospects of his early years had remained mostly unfulfilled (contrary to many of his colleagues, he was never offered a prominent position in the Truman, Eisenhower, or Kennedy administrations) and his inexorable loss of influence from the middle of the Second World War onwards meant that he quickly fell into oblivion. His often scandalous personal life ultimately cost him professional achievement, and this has been reflected in the limited amount of scholarship dedicated to his role – in spite of President Kennedy's statement that "his career will have an enduring place in the history of American diplomacy and public life." (J.F. Kennedy to Welles' widow, telegram of 25 September 1961. Reproduced in the e-version of O'Sullivan's book: <<http://www.gutenberg-e.org/osc01/images/osc08i.html>>. Accessed 30 September 2010.) Christopher O'Sullivan's research is therefore timely on many accounts. In the first place, it throws light upon a key American policy-maker who, until the middle of the war, was seen by many as a rising figure of the State Department, in spite of his long-running feud with Secretary of State Cordell Hull, a laborious personal battle which was largely compensated by his direct access to President Roosevelt, but which was ultimately lost due to personal eccentricity. Secondly, this biographically-centered study offers an insight into the making of wartime American foreign policy (and the shaping of views on the global role of the U.S.) based on a solid body of unpublished primary sources, including the private papers of Roosevelt, of many State Department officials, and of Welles himself. Thirdly, it showcases what a multimedia piece of scholarship making the most of recent technological developments can look like (and how useful it can be). The book, published in the Gutenberg e-series, which results from creative cooperation between the American Historical Association and Columbia University Press, is only a version of a piece of research that can be consulted for free on the Humanities E-Book website <<http://www.gutenberg-e.org/>> and includes a wealth of digitized images and original archival documents (State Department memoranda, minutes of confidential meetings, personal letters) and maps (twenty-four in total), which usefully complement the text and can become useful teaching material. It can be particularly appealing to undergraduate students who rarely have the opportunity to see real primary sources.

Cut along chronological periods, the book's plan is not exceedingly original, but it is efficient and provides a clear and extremely well-docu-

mented narrative of Welles' career and impact on American policy-making. The first chapter looks at Welles until he reached his mid-forties. Having begun his diplomatic career at the outset of the First World War, the Harvard graduate seemed destined to develop a meteoritic career. Among notable early feats, he steered U.S. policies in South America towards a more aggressive posture, in view of developing American interests there, often at the expense of the British who had been strengthening their position since the nineteenth century. The second chapter follows the development – and ultimate failure – of the "Welles Plan," which was intended to prevent the escalation of world tensions into war through the organization of an international conference seeking to restore "world order," under the aegis of the United States. An ardent defender of a negotiated solution in the run-up to the Second World War, Welles genuinely believed in the possibilities of success of the 1937 American peace plan proposal, failing to realize that it was too late for a diplomatic or political solution. Yet, the four key points in which Welles believed so deeply, and which would be taken again for the planning of the post-war world, were already there: "a set of vaguely Wilsonian 'international standards,' the reduction of global trade barriers, the limitation of armaments, and the regular convening of international conferences." (p. 22)

The book is especially illuminating in the sections describing Welles' deep belief that the failure of Wilson's attempts to reorganize international relations following the First World War had been at the origin of the second conflict. According to O'Sullivan, Welles believed in the American ability to impose its political model to relieve the world of international tensions, and he argues that, inspired by a "neo-Wilsonian" vision (p. 35), the U.S. started to plan the post-war world as soon as fighting erupted in Europe. The book analyses thoroughly Welles' mission to Europe during the "phoney war," which was very much inspired by the precedent of Colonel House under Wilson on the eve of the First World War. Visiting Italy, Germany, France, and Britain, Welles sensed the opportunity to wean Italy away from the Germans, although he ultimately failed to achieve this aim. For a short period, Welles abandoned the idea of post-war planning as the German invasion of Europe became a reality with the fall of Belgium and France; he became preoccupied by the prospect of German control of the Belgian, Dutch, French, and British empires, by Hitler's obvious popularity in Central and South America, and by the risk of seeing America excluded from all these areas, which he believed were key to American power. The book also details Welles' contribution to the Atlantic Charter (August 1941), on the occasion of which he displayed once again a clear tendency to be influenced by Wilsonian principles. Welles' role in designing American plans to replace the League of Nations is analysed conceptually in the fourth

chapter, where tensions between Welles' alleged "regionalism" and Hull's "universalism" reveal the depth of conflicting views within the State Department about the way in which America should shape the post-war world – in spite of general agreement that the U.S. should be a leading force to avoid a similar fiasco to that of the League of Nations. The last three chapters offer thorough insights into the international implications of Welles' views for the post-war world, dealing with almost all powers involved in the conflict (especially Great Britain, Western and Eastern Europe, the USSR, China, and Japan). A recurring theme throughout the chapters is Welles' staunchly anti-colonial views, and his belief that the post-war world he was trying to shape was in large part based on the end of European empires. This led to palpable tensions with the British (to whom American intervention in Indian affairs was unwelcome) and a deep mistrust towards the French, whose empire Welles was even more hostile to. Had he not resigned in the summer of 1943 for personal reasons (stories about Welles' immoral conduct circulated widely in Washington by then, forcing him to offer Roosevelt his resignation), Britain and France may have found post-war American opposition to their imperial agenda far more vocal.

Through their biographical angle, O'Sullivan's book, and the electronic documents that accompany its electronic version, offer a detailed account of the making of American post-war planning, which depict the increasing involvement of the USA in world affairs as they found themselves dragged into the conflict. In itself, this makes it a fascinating piece of scholarship. Yet, one cannot help but wonder whether the author should have pondered more upon how much Welles' beliefs translated into real power of influence. On a domestic level, the "Welles vs Hull faultline" (p. 18) may have diminished the impact of his views on the Roosevelt administration and the president himself. On the international stage, until the American military entered the war, the leverage of the U.S. was perhaps not as significant as was implied by these grand plans, and the discrepancy between Welles' ambitious thinking and the reality of American world power seems blatant throughout the first third of the war. Still, the many documentary and analytical qualities of this book make it a remarkable piece of diplomatic history on the Second World War.

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The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism. By Erez Manela. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Cloth. Pp. xvii + 331.

This is an elegant and important book that sheds new light on a familiar topic: the peace settlement that followed the conclusion of the First World War. It is a model of transnational history, showcasing the role of President Wilson in forging the post-war settlement, whilst giving significant attention to the hopes and actions of political leaders in the non-European world, inspired by Wilson's support for self-determination in their own struggles against colonial rule. The "Wilsonian moment" of the title captures the fact that in this brief post-war period the President became for millions worldwide the icon and major proponent of the vision of an international system based on self-determination.

The author's focus on the perspective of non-Europeans is illuminating. It shows that Europeans were not the only ones who had high hopes for the conference; in the four societies considered – India, China, Egypt, and Korea – there were influential groups of individuals conversant with Western languages pushing for sovereignty. They saw in Wilson and the rising American world power an opportunity to pursue their nationalist claims and enlist powerful support, taking their cause to an international stage. Wilson earned the praise of nationalists such as Egypt's Sa'd Zaghlul, who congratulated him and asked for support in his country's bid for self-determination. Ho Chi Minh was in Paris and petitioned Wilson for his help in ending French rule in Indo-China. Along with Egypt and Indo-China, Manela takes China and Korea as his other examples of states seeking Wilsonian aid as they sought to throw off the colonial yolk. By focusing on the preoccupations of colonial subjects, rather than the usual emphasis on the European settlement thrashed out at Versailles, Manela offers a valuable perspective on international history and contributes to the welcome internationalization of American history. This approach opens up other familiar histories too; showing, for example, Indian nationalism as part of world history, not just Indian or imperial history. It shows how the decolonization of the European empires (and America's too, of course) sprang from the international situation as well as the domestic; how it was related to the emergence of revisionist powers and the establishment of international institutions and norms that allowed anti-colonial nationalists to challenge the colonial powers in an external arena. This meant that they could circumvent and thereby weaken the imperial relationship. The League of Nations, whilst often seen as a broken reed, introduced notions of power and undermined the legitimacy and viability of empire. The anti-colonial movements of 1919, according to Manela, profoundly transcended national

enclosures in their genesis, conduct, and aims.

Rather ruefully, Wilson noted that "it is to America that the whole world turns today, not only with its wrongs, but with its hopes and grievances." The President had only a vague idea of how the principle of self-determination would be implemented even in Europe, and devoted little time to its implications elsewhere. As a man who had supported the American conquest of the Philippines and believed in the "civilizing" effects of trusteeship, he was less disposed to pursue the grievances of colonized peoples than they hoped. But to a great extent, this did not matter. The fact was that the "Wilsonian moment" signaled the transformation of the norms and standards of international relations that established the self-determining nation-state as the only legitimate political form. Thereafter, though colonial powers might deny nationalists' demands, they could not deny their legitimacy; colonial powers could offer no substitute for self-determination as an ordering principle for international society. The resulting problems, however, did not all land at the door of the European colonial powers; anti-Americanism and pro-Americanism linked, the latter feeding on the gap between the promises of America's rhetoric and ideals and the realities of its policies and practices. This excellent book is a must-read for those seeking greater understanding of the post-First World War peace settlements and the profound shifts in the international system that heralded the end of the Age of Empire.

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Thailand and World War II. By Direk Jayanama, translated and edited by Jane Keyes. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2008 (revised edition). Illustrations. Notes. Appendices. Index. Cloth. Pp. xxiv + 566.

Thailand and World War II is a revised edition of the translated memoir of a leading Thai official during World War II, the original version of which was issued in Bangkok in 1978 by the Social Science Research Council of Thailand. That edition, which was a very useful source in my own research on Thailand's role in World War II, has long been out of print and difficult to find. Also, as Keyes explains in the introduction to the revised edition, it was published in some haste. Accordingly, when a proposal came for re-publication, she seized the opportunity to polish the original manuscript. This generally is reflected in alterations in paragraph structure and improved graphics. As in the original, there are ap-

proximately 120 pages of primary documents (some in French) in the appendices, which add to the scholarly value of the book.

The author, Direk Jayanama (Chaiyanam), was uniquely qualified to write an account of Thailand's involvement in World War II because of his diplomatic role in dealing with both the Japanese and the Allies. Entirely educated in Thailand, Direk (Thais are referred to by their given name, rather than their family name), scion of a distinguished family, acquired fluency in English and a law degree. His career took off after 1932 when he joined the People's Party, a group of military and civilian officials that overthrew the absolute monarchy. He became a member of parliament at age twenty-seven, and in 1939 became deputy foreign minister under Thailand's ambitious dictator Phibun Songkhram. As Phibun himself concurrently held the foreign minister's portfolio along with several others, Direk effectively took charge of the day-to-day activities of the Foreign Ministry at the tender age of thirty-four.

These were critical times, as Phibun maneuvered to gain advantage from the shifting international situation. After France's defeat in 1940, Phibun personally pursued secret negotiations with the Japanese through the military and naval attachés in Bangkok, seeking Japanese support for Thai expansion in Indochina at French expense. Direk's account of this period makes clear that he remained unaware of the extent of Phibun's behind-the-scenes machinations.

In the months leading up to the Japanese move into Thailand in December 1941, Phibun relinquished the title of foreign minister to Direk, but did not cease his secret diplomacy. British and American diplomats viewed Direk sympathetically and he portrays the fact that he was demoted and shipped off to Tokyo as Thai ambassador in early 1942 as evidence of the extent to which the Japanese distrusted him. Emphasizing his opposition to the alliance Phibun struck with the Japanese, Direk claims that he agreed to go to Tokyo in part because he hoped for an opportunity to contact the Allies. Although he nonsensically claims in the memoir that he hoped to contact the Nationalist Chinese, any such contact would have had to have been made through the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo, which proved impossible. Direk emphasizes his efforts to uphold Thai sovereignty at a time when the Japanese were under the sway of "victory disease" and were inclined to impose their will on Thailand, its status as an ally notwithstanding.

An attack of phlebitis gave Direk an excuse to return to Bangkok in the fall of 1943, only to have Phibun, who was now having second thoughts about the wisdom of the alliance with Japan and was looking for a way to switch sides, again named him foreign minister. His tenure came to an end when the cabinet resigned in mid-1944. For the duration of the war, Direk participated in the Free Thai underground led by Regent Pridi Phanomyong, Phibun's civilian political rival. Direk, who was

on good terms with the head of the Thai police, General Adun Adun-detcharat, served as a go-between in developing cooperation between Adun and Pridi, despite the latter's mistrust of the former. Direk also embarked on a covert round-trip by sea plane to British headquarters in Kandy, Ceylon in February 1945 as head of a Free Thai delegation.

Direk included in his memoir three chapter-length accounts that provide additional perspectives on the Free Thai enterprise. Thawi Bunyaket, who briefly served as prime minister at the end of the war, wrote about both the events of December 1941 and the internal operations of the Free Thai. Puey Ungpakorn, a student in England in 1941 who later became an esteemed economist, described his experiences as a volunteer with the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) and Phra Phisansukumwit contributed an account of his covert Free Thai mission to the United States in May 1945.

Direk assumed the role of finance minister in the immediate postwar cabinets. Although he was defeated as a candidate for prime minister in a parliamentary vote in early 1946, he soon returned as foreign minister in the Pridi-led cabinet formed in late March and played a leading role in ongoing negotiations with the Allied powers. After his resignation in early 1947, he served one year as ambassador to Great Britain. Although the book ends with his return to Thailand in 1948, Direk subsequently taught law and from 1959 received appointment as Ambassador to Germany. He died in 1967, the year his memoir was published in Thai.

While all memoirs are to one degree or another self-serving, Direk's provides a significant perspective on events largely unknown to non-specialists. Minor points of criticism include the absence of maps from both editions and the mistranslation of the name of British SOE Brigadier Victor Jacques as "General Jex" in the appendix. However, Keyes deserves commendation both for making this valuable source available in English and for her efforts to effect improvements in this revised edition.

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Confronting Captivity: Britain and the United States and Their POWs in Nazi Germany. By Arieh J. Kochavi. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Cloth. Pp. 382.

By the end of the Second World War, Nazi Germany held almost 300,000 British and American prisoners of war. Yet, as the German state

collapsed, these Allied POWs faced malnutrition, disease, and exhaustion from forced retreats away from the advancing Red Army, and represented potential targets for German revenge. Arieh Kochavi examines the respective British and American policies regarding their POWs in German hands and suggests that the survival of the overwhelming majority of these men can be attributed more to National Socialist racial views than to anything the two Allied governments did on their soldiers' behalf.

Kochavi divides the book into four thematic sections. Part I describes the German POW camp system and the treatment provided British and American prisoners during the war. The author treats the two Allied powers separately, illustrating the differing circumstances surrounding the internment of the two nations' prisoners. By June 1940, the Germans already held almost 40,000 British POWs and captured approximately 200,000 British soldiers by the end of the war. American prisoners in German hands, by contrast, numbered slightly less than half that of the British and the overwhelming majority of these were captured in the final year of the war. The author argues that Berlin largely treated the prisoners of both nations according to the Geneva Convention, at least until the German state began collapsing in early 1945.

Part II examines the series of negotiations between the three nations regarding mutual exchanges of sick and severely wounded prisoners. Eventually, four such exchanges took place, occurring in October 1943, April and September 1944, and January 1945. In total, the Western Allies returned about 13,000 German POWs and in turn received about 10,000 British and 800 American prisoners. The British also engaged the Germans in seemingly last-hour negotiations about exchanging prisoners who had been in captivity for as long as five years. These proposals, largely prompted by criticism of the lack of priority Whitehall had given to this issue, never came to fruition, in part because the war ended before any agreement could be concluded. Kochavi also highlights the consistent line of communication maintained between British and American officials on one hand and German officials on the other, as well as the emphasis both sides placed on reciprocity. Even at the height of Allied bombing of German cities, the two sides continued to communicate and take steps to address each other's concerns about their POWs. Moreover, authorities in all three nations apparently believed the key to ensuring acceptable enemy treatment of their own prisoners involved treating their opponent's POWs according to the letter of international law.

Kochavi arrives at the heart of his argument in Part III. This section examines the final period of the war from the fall of 1944 until the German surrender in May 1945. The author describes numerous factors that suggested British and American POWs in Germany might be in grave danger as the war ended. First, the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) and the *Gestapo* assumed responsibility for the German POW camp system in October

1944. Second, statements by Nazi leaders like Himmler and Goebbels, along with a campaign in the German press, portrayed British and American airmen as terrorists, seemingly encouraging German civilians to seek reprisals against any of these men whose planes were shot down in Germany territory. Finally, the execution of fifty RAF prisoners who had escaped from *Stalag Luft III* and the murder of seventy American soldiers at Malmédy by members of the Gestapo and the SS only served to heighten these fears.

Also greatly distressing to Western Allied authorities, in January 1945, German camp personnel began forcing thousands of British and American POWs to march thousands of miles into the interior of Germany to escape the advancing Soviet Red Army. Most of the forced marches were conducted with neither adequate food and water nor necessary medical attention. Authorities in London and Washington were aware of these conditions but decided that continuing their current, successful military operations was the best course for ending the war quickly and, thereby, saving their prisoners of war. Kochavi, however, reaches the "disquieting conclusion" that this was a "calculated risk" on the part of Western Allied officials to assume that Berlin would not subject their prisoners to further deprivation and violence as the German state deteriorated. (p. 5)

The final section of the book analyzes British and American negotiations with the Soviet Union after the war regarding the repatriation of thousands of Western Allied POWs who had been liberated by the Red Army. The author emphasizes that British and American authorities ultimately acquiesced to Soviet demands, which included returning all Soviet "citizens." According to Stalin's definition, these included residents of the Baltic republics as well as Russians who had voluntarily fought with German forces against the Red Army. Yet, Kochavi also suggests that the Russians treated British and American prisoners of war as well or better than they did their own personnel and that all of London's and Washington's prisoners were quickly returned once an agreement with the Soviet Union had been reached.

Confronting Captivity is a well-researched and well-written overview of Western Allied POWs' experiences in the German camp system. Moreover, Kochavi's detailed discussion of British and American policy-making in regard to these men should now be the standard work on the subject. The book's engaging narrative and well-organized presentation will make it of great interest not only to POW scholars, but to anyone with an interest in the policies and diplomacy of the Second World War.

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Conferences - Lectures - Events

Fortifications at Risk

8-9 March 2011 • London, England

National Army Museum

<http://www.fsgfort.com/Symposium.htm>

"The Safe and Timely Arrival of Convoy SC 130"

A Lecture by Dr. Dennis Haslop

10 March 2011 • Milton Keynes, England

Bletchley Park, The Mansion

<http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk>

"Military Transformation: The Japanese Army during the 1920s and 1930s"

A Lecture by Dr. Edward Drea

16 March 2011 • Carlisle, Pennsylvania

U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec/newsarticle.cfm?id=112>

"Churchill and the Empire: Myth and Reality"

A Lecture by Professor Richard Toye

22 March 2011 • London, England

Churchill War Rooms

<http://cwr.iwm.org.uk/server/show/conEvent.3440>

Scholars in Exile and Dictatorships of the 20th Century

24-26 May 2011 • Prague, Czech Republic

Centre for the History of Sciences and Humanities

<http://www.science.usd.cas.cz/en.html>

"The SNCF on Trial: Railroads and the Holocaust in France"

A Lecture by Dr. Ludivine Bloch

14 June 2011 • London, England

Institute of Historical Research, University of London

<http://www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/319>

War and Peace, Barbarism and Civilisation in Modern Europe and its Empires

AAEH XXII Biennial Conference

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