

2017

Book Reviews

Patrick Bratton

Thomas F. Creely

Charles Edel

Nicholas Murray

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Bratton, Patrick; Creely, Thomas F.; Edel, Charles; and Murray, Nicholas (2017) "Book Reviews," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 70 : No. 3 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol70/iss3/11>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

BOOK REVIEWS

PLUS ÇA CHANGE, PLUS C'EST LA MÊME CHOSE

TORCH: North Africa and the Allied Path to Victory, by Vincent P. O'Hara. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015. 384 pages. \$49.95.

In the literary mountain of scholarship, research, and writing devoted to World War II, the story of Operation TORCH, the Allied landings in North Africa in November of 1942, is presented often as something of an overture to the massive amphibious symphonies that followed. Accounts may include some discussion of Eisenhower's growing facility for strategic leadership, the byzantine nature of Vichy and Free French politics, and the gradual emergence of Charles de Gaulle as the leader of Free France. The landings themselves all too often have been presented as hinting of a Kabuki production, if not of opéra bouffe, with a few desultory shots fired to assuage Gallic honor, followed by capitulation. Then, it seems, the real war begins, moving down dusty roads to Kasserine, the initial blooding of the U.S. Army, the rise of Patton and Bradley, and the inexorable sweep of operations to Sicily, the Italian mainland, and eventually the beaches and hedgerows of Normandy.

Vincent O'Hara has done much to correct this impression and to give TORCH the attention it deserves. Readers will come away with a much

better understanding of the difficulties faced by both the French defenders and the Allied invaders and the political currents that swirled about the operation from the very beginning—and with an appreciation for how the results could have been very different.

As O'Hara points out, 1942 was a parlous time for the Allies. Axis armies were cutting deep into the Soviet Union, and fear that it would drop out of the war was palpable. U.S. leaders, particularly George Marshall, eschewed what might be considered military sideshows and argued for a rapid buildup of force in Great Britain, followed by a cross-channel invasion at the earliest opportunity. The British, led by Churchill and scarred by their experience in World War I, preferred less direct approaches, avoiding the U.S.-favored direct attack until victory was assured. TORCH represented a victory for British planners and a setback for Marshall. This is among the better-known elements of the North African campaign, and O'Hara does it justice without dwelling overlong on the topic.

In contrast, French politics usually are, for the most part, underexamined, and O'Hara provides a valuable understanding of French actors and motives. His examination of Marshal Pétain's efforts to end the German occupation and restore France to something approaching its former status is both convincing and useful. So too is O'Hara's meticulous description of French forces, plans, and readiness in North Africa on the eve of invasion.

O'Hara's discussion of invasion planning and preparation and the movement to the various landing beaches is excellent. Although dwarfed by later invasions, TORCH required a major effort at a time when Allied amphibious resources were extremely limited. Scheduling convoys, arranging for carrier-based air support, and coping with potentially lethal surf conditions all foreshadowed difficulties that would have to be overcome in later amphibious operations. The plan was audacious. Allied forces were to carry out five simultaneous and geographically separated landings on the Atlantic and Mediterranean shores of North Africa, then race to Tunis to trap German forces in Africa and deny those forces additional support from Europe. Accomplishing this would bring the Mediterranean under much greater Allied control, and the Axis might have to take some pressure off the Soviet Union to deal with the new threat to the south.

As O'Hara makes clear, French resistance, while affected by conflicting orders on whether to take Allied troops under fire, was not a token effort, although the loss of only 1,700 Allied wounded and killed may have contributed to this impression. Although

ill equipped and often outnumbered, French forces, including colonial auxiliaries and units of the Foreign Legion, fought well. While some French units offered no resistance, they did so in obedience to orders from their commanders. O'Hara details the action on each of the five invasion beaches in detail.

The naval battle of Casablanca was, as O'Hara describes it, "the largest surface, air, and subsurface naval action fought in the Atlantic Ocean during World War II." The battle, which lasted six hours, featured naval gunfire duels between USS *Massachusetts* and the disabled French battleship *Jean Bart*. French shore batteries engaged U.S. warships and French combatants shelled Allied landing craft en route to the invasion beaches. French officers handled their ships with courage and daring, and they came close to engaging the Allied troop transports. Maps are provided, greatly aiding the reader's understanding of how the battle was conducted. There was also a naval engagement off Oran, and Italian and German aircraft and submarines conducted significant antishipping actions as the campaign wore on. O'Hara illustrates that, far from being an Allied walkover, the possibility of TORCH resulting in a disaster at sea was much more likely than is normally acknowledged.

A greater appreciation of TORCH by students of amphibious warfare is warranted. Many of the problems associated with projecting power from the sea were identified during this campaign. The role of beachmasters, the timing and coordination of shore bombardment, and the logistical difficulties associated with landing supplies on an open beach in high surf all were factors. At

times the lessons learned were small, such as the discovery that landing net rungs spaced too far apart posed a significant danger to debarking troops.

Some elements of the TORCH landings touch on current questions. For example, although the Saint-Nazaire and Dieppe raids had demonstrated previously the inherent difficulty in conducting an amphibious assault on built-up areas, TORCH would feature several efforts along these lines. The most dramatic of these was an attempt to land U.S. troops from HMS *Walney* and HMS *Hartland* (the former U.S. Coast Guard cutters *Sebago* and *Pontchartrain*, respectively) directly onto the moles of Oran Harbor. Both vessels quickly were identified as hostile and ran an intense gauntlet of French fire until sunk. In contrast, an attempt was made to sail USS *Dallas*, a vintage destroyer carrying seventy-five specially trained assault troops, six miles up Port Lyautey's Wadi Sebou waterway to carry out an attack on a critically important all-weather airfield. The effort, despite experiencing significant delays, succeeded. In an ever-urbanizing world, the viability of direct amphibious assaults may be open to debate once again.

O'Hara rightfully points out that TORCH, in the main, failed to deliver hoped-for results. It would take five months to achieve victory in North Africa, not the three weeks anticipated. The operation did nothing to ease the plight of the Soviet Union and the Mediterranean remained contested waters. The African campaign drew men, matériel, and shipping away from efforts to support a direct invasion of Europe. TORCH resulted in the total occupation of France by Germany and the intentional scuttling of the French fleet at Toulon.

None of these results, according to O'Hara, inflicted real loss on Italy and Germany. However, in the opportunity to identify and resolve amphibious challenges and as a beginning to the development of a truly combined strategic command, TORCH was of value. If, as O'Hara claims, TORCH also ensured that France would not become a true ally of Germany, the strategic benefit may have been significant.

TORCH sheds some welcome light on a campaign that too often is passed over. Scholars and lay readers alike will find the book useful. While O'Hara has performed yeoman service in providing this detailed account of the amphibious portion of the campaign, perhaps his greatest contribution is to restore the reputation of naval forces that, far from offering token resistance, fought with courage and tenacity, often against superior odds.

RICHARD J. NORTON



How the War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II, by Phillips Payson O'Brien. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015. 640 pages. \$35.

This book provides a detailed reexamination of the main contributory factors leading to Allied victory in World War II. In many ways the book's argument is not so much new as it is a revision of the revisionists. During the Cold War the narrative was largely that the Western Allies had triumphed over Germany and Japan with some help from the Soviet Union. That narrative was challenged at the time, and with more success after the end of the Cold

War by revisionist historians who placed an increased emphasis on the role of Soviet ground and air forces in the defeat of Germany. The Russian front, it was argued, was where the bulk of Germany's forces was engaged and, as far as the revisionist narrative went, defeated by the Soviet Union. Dr. O'Brien, a reader at the University of Glasgow, challenges that argument with a wealth of data and looks at the war in more global terms. He argues that the air and sea forces of the United States and the British Empire played the decisive role by preventing "the Germans and Japanese from moving" (p. 16).

How the War Was Won provides a broad array of detailed information discussing the enormous industrial contribution of all sides. Indeed, the author's analysis of all this information makes a compelling case for his argument. Yet there is something missing: it is difficult to see the link between cause and effect. One can see such a link better regarding the war against Japan, but in the case of the war in Europe the author does not show clearly the link he claims between air and sea power causing immense damage to Germany's war economy and Soviet troops wandering around Berlin in 1945. I suspect that the Soviet forces' killing and wounding of millions of German combat troops might have something to do with this, for without the physical removal of German soldiers from the Soviet Union's route to Berlin Hitler might not have felt the need to commit suicide.

Now, there is no denying that Allied air and sea power contributed to Allied victory in Europe; the argument seems to be to what extent they did so. Thus, this book is welcome for the depth of detail it provides as fodder for such a

debate. That this reviewer is not entirely convinced of the author's arguments does not make this a bad book; it is in fact a very good book, and an extremely welcome addition to the literature on World War II. It provides an enormous amount of information and analysis about the role of air and sea power, which furthers our understanding of the reasons for Allied success. That it causes the questioning of the current orthodoxy is to be applauded, as greater understanding often results from challenges to the status quo.

This book should prove of great benefit to advanced students of World War II, and it is particularly pertinent for specialists interested in current U.S. national security needs. Given the friction that exists among the United States, China, and Russia, the book provides an opportunity to think about how the U.S. armed services should structure their forces for any future conflict with these potential adversaries. Dr. O'Brien's book should be read by any sailor, marine, or airman invested in a budget fight, because "the only way to 'win' a war is to stop your enemy from moving" (p. 488). That argument seems a particularly pertinent one when looking at the problems of Southeast Asia or the Baltic or Black Sea regions.

NICHOLAS MURRAY



A Military History of Japan: From the Age of the Samurai to the 21st Century, by John T. Kuehn. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2014. 299 pages. \$75.

Japan is at an inflection point. Depending on how particular peoples and nations view this enigmatic country, it

now either is turning away from rightly enforced demilitarization and back toward the more martial and expansionist policies of its past, or is working to become a security provider concomitant with its economic power. *A Military History of Japan* is therefore a timely work that will add studied moderation and critical analysis to the argument regarding the path on which the country is located now and down which it is likely to progress in the future.

This book goes well beyond a traditional historical narrative. The author follows Japan from its origin myths up to the present time, adding elements of geographic determinism and cultural anthropology as well as his own experiences. The military and warfare aspects obviously receive the most focus, but they are not, and perhaps cannot be, separated from the overall history of the country and culture.

In the first chapter, "From Sun Goddess to Samurai," the author helps explain Japan's nature by telling its creation story and examining how landscape, climate, outside influences, and internal competition shaped Japanese development and societal worldview. Around the eighth century CE, when that first chapter concludes, the seminal samurai culture, and an overall Japanese culture distinct from those of neighboring Korea and China, is in place, one the author argues still manifests itself in Japanese society. The following chapters chronicle the subsequent maturation of Japan's political and military power structure. The many accounts of royal machinations and specific battles may confuse or lose those not well versed in Japanese geography or language, but those the author includes do add to the story of

how and why Japan's military evolved as it did. These middle chapters also shed light on the Japanese military's actions during the first half of the twentieth century, and on the still-tense relationship between Japan and its neighbors, much of that distrust predating World War II. The Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars get ample attention and analysis, as does the very calculated, top-down manner in which Japan's post-samurai military attempted to imitate the best militaries of contemporary Europe.

The "Great East Asian War" chapter may not cover much new ground for those readers with more-than-standard knowledge of World War II. But in "After the Samurai," the book's final pages tie in themes present in Japan for at least 1,200 years. They provide an excellent argument that Japan's future will be determined by the same geographic, cultural, and geostrategic influences that have shaped its past.

The author is a retired naval aviator and a professor at the Army Command and General Staff College. He spent time living in Japan both as a dependent child in the mid-twentieth century and later as a Navy officer. These experiences give him insights different from those expected from either a pure academic analyst or a strategist viewing the country simply as an unsinkable aircraft carrier. He effectively intersperses personal and family recollections with more-standard history to give better descriptions of cultural norms and practices, as when he writes about Japanese rioters sending teams ahead to warn citizens, including his parents, to stay indoors for their own safety.

For the casual reader, *A Military History of Japan* functions as a needed update

to Ruth Benedict's much-maligned yet still-influential 1946 work *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, a general primer on the seemingly contradictory forces driving this global power. For those with a professional interest in the country and its region, this book is a must-read, an enlightening facilitator in the current debate over Japan's place in Asia and the world.

J. OVERTON



Flash Points: The Emerging Crisis in Europe, by George Friedman. New York: Doubleday, 2015. 288 pages. \$28.95.

Flash Points is both an elegant and a disturbing book. Not simply elegant in its writing style, which is direct and clear, but also in its initial discussion of the age of discovery and enlightenment that propelled the European nations into becoming world powers—you rarely find a more cogent and concise explanation of the roots of European social, cultural, political, and economic development. Yet the book is also very disturbing because it details how the factors that allowed Europe to transform the world—faith, individualism, scientific inquiry, ideas of self-determination and legal rights, and nationalism—also contributed to the almost unfathomable destruction of the two world wars that tore it apart. George Friedman details the region's history, current events, and potential future in a way that makes an admonishment from his father, a Hungarian Jewish survivor of both the Nazis and the Soviets, seem very true: "Europe will never change. It will just act as if nothing happened" (p. 23).

Friedman, the well-known founder of Stratfor.com, one of the first private intelligence firms to be a major presence on the web, and an author of prescient books on the future security environment, begins with the personal history of how and why his family escaped Hungary in 1949. Having survived the horrors of World War II and the Communist takeover in a weak, dependent, and occupied nation, Friedman's father wanted his family to go to America and "live in a strong country with weak neighbors and, if possible, no Nazis, communists, or anyone else who believed in anything deeply enough to want to kill him and his family over it" (p. 17). His view—that a humane peace in Europe always would be a mere interlude—sets the scenario for the rest of the book.

This fear is, of course, what spurred the creation of the European Union (EU). Friedman analyzes the weaknesses of the EU and the sources of conflict throughout Europe, particularly in a situation in which NATO's perceived importance has diminished, and concludes that the centripetal forces of geopolitics are just too strong. It is not just the potential collapse of the euro; it is the fact that national identities cannot be supplanted by a European identity without destroying a cultural diversity established over millennia. The fact that the EU appeared to achieve some small success in cultivating a cosmopolitan Europeanness is, in Friedman's view, merely a veneer that a U.S. commitment to defending a cold peace under unique historical circumstances made possible.

Those circumstances have devolved. With the controlling pressures removed, Yugoslavia—perhaps the

greatest attempt at fusing otherwise hostile nationalities—exploded into violence until all sides were exhausted by fighting or concluded that opposing NATO’s wishes was too costly. But that was before a resurgent Russia could intervene on behalf of the Serbs. Friedman’s book tours the other potential flash points of Europe within a background where Russia is back, and the geopolitical question of who will be the hegemonic leader of Europe—France, Germany, or Russia—has returned. It is not ambition that drives; it is fear of the power of the others (as Thucydides described so many centuries ago). By all measures, Germany would remain the dominant power in economics, as it is the economic engine of the EU today. But it also is the power most easily invaded from both east and west. And it is growing impatient with the seeming impossibility of creating an EU that conforms to its view of necessary order. The Germans, according to Friedman, view themselves as the victims of the EU/euro economic crisis. What would it mean to the EU, NATO, and specifically eastern Europe if Germany were to cut a deal with Russia to secure its own “permanent” peace—secure to be the export power it already is beyond Europe?

In Friedman’s view, the question of Germany, Russia, and European peace is one of national culture as well as geopolitics: “For the Germans, success and disaster are intimately linked, so they are simultaneously afraid of what they have achieved and tremendously proud of it. . . . They do not aspire to lead a new Europe. They fear that they cannot escape the role. The rest of Europe harbors suspicions that

Germany’s public fears and modesty are feigned, that in the end the old Germany has never died but has merely been asleep” (p. 153). Add in Russian pressure and the fact that post–Cold War Germany is united, and the European foundation seems a lot less stable.

Even if the European powers never are moved to conflict with each other, Friedman’s conclusion is that the situation can make the continent safe for ethnic breakups, with all the resulting potential for wars—or perhaps hybrid wars and gray-zone conflicts—to occur. Russia will be the first to take advantage of that, prompting others to do the same. He predicts that “Europe’s history of conflict is far from over. . . . [I]n many places Europe’s anger against other Europeans is still there” (p. 251).

Ultimately, Friedman sees the future still controlled by Europe’s “Faustian spirit” that “haunted its greatest moment, the Enlightenment,” defined as “the desire to possess everything even at the cost of their souls,” and today “everything at no cost” (p. 257). By “everything,” he means national sovereignty without the exercise of national sovereignty; wealth distribution without work distribution; a world in which they can feel like the hegemon but not have to be it; a world in which wars would stop without intervention; and, perhaps worst of all, ethnic nationalism without its implications.

What can be done to prevent growing conflicts? Friedman flirts with the fact that America today is still as powerful as it was when it put out “the European fire in 1918 and 1945” and contained it during the Cold War. But can it do so in the future? Should it do so in the future, or do the fires need to burn

themselves out? Friedman is not sure, but he does give us a disturbing prospect about which we need to think deeply.

SAM J. TANGREDI



The End of the Asian Century: War, Stagnation, and the Risks to the World's Most Dynamic Region, by Michael R. Auslin. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2017. 304 pages. \$30.

The signature foreign policy move, and greatest strategic insight, of Barack Obama's presidency was "the pivot"—later renamed "the rebalance"—to the Asia-Pacific region. President Obama's initiative grew out of his conviction that Asia had become the most important region in terms of economic dynamism, explosive demographic growth, and growing military tensions. And if one broadens the geography and semantics to include India—yielding the "Indo-Pacific"—this makes utter sense, since the region claims 60 percent of the world's population, nearly 40 percent of total global economic output, some of the fastest-growing and most capable militaries, and three nuclear states. No surprise, then, that the Obama White House argued in a November 2015 fact sheet that this region "is increasingly the world's political and economic center of gravity." Or, as top Asia expert and diplomat Kurt M. Campbell astutely wrote in *The Pivot: The Future of American Statecraft in Asia*, "[T]he lion's share of the history of the twenty-first century will be written in Asia" (pp. 1, 344).

While the Obama administration made a compelling case for the logic of pivoting to Asia—that is, elevating the time, attention, and resources

given to the region relative to other parts of the world—the results were uneven. Washington reinvigorated its diplomacy in the region, strengthened commitments with U.S. treaty allies, forged relationships with new partners such as Burma, began shifting military assets to the region, and negotiated a far-reaching trade deal intended to deepen economic integration. But it also failed to ratify that trade deal, suffered significant political setbacks with treaty allies Thailand and the Philippines, was unable to counter Pyongyang's rush toward acquiring nuclear weapons capable of reaching the United States, and did little to restrain Chinese maritime assertiveness and economic and political coercion in the region.

How then should one understand and evaluate the myriad factors contributing to Asia's future? And are the risks to the continued growth and stability of the region now eclipsing the region's promise? These are the questions that Michael Auslin, scholar in residence at the American Enterprise Institute, asks in his judicious, sobering, and compelling new book *The End of the Asian Century*. Auslin argues that Asia's future is significantly less assured than is commonly held. As a longtime scholar of, frequent traveler to, and trenchant observer on the geopolitics of Asia, he is positioned well to make such a case. This book is far from a polemic; in fact, Auslin approaches these questions as a skeptic, describing how he in fact originally held the opposite belief—that the twenty-first century inevitably looked to be an Asian century. Yet through repeated trips to the region and multiple meetings with senior policy makers, businessmen, and military

officers, he became convinced that risk rather than opportunity was the most salient feature of the Asian political, economic, and military landscape. He argues that U.S. policy makers have been overly optimistic about opportunities in the region and insufficiently attentive to risks, thereby warping U.S. perception of regional trends and causing the United States to pursue misguided policies.

This book is Auslin's attempt to introduce a framework to assess risks in Asia properly, across five major categories. These include threats to Asia's growth from the end of its economic miracle and the failure to implement structural macroeconomic reforms; demographic pressures that will place increasing strain on rapidly modernizing and urbanizing political and economic systems; unfinished political revolutions that will address these large-scale economic and social dislocations; long-term historical antagonism among various Asian states, the lack of effective regional political community among them, and the dearth of effective institutions to mitigate crises; and, most alarming, the growth of power politics and the increasing potential for war. The book's organization follows these categories, with chapters mapping risk in each thematic domain. A final chapter both summarizes and concludes with a series of policy recommendations.

Auslin posits that as risk increases, prudent investors take out more insurance. This advice is as relevant to nations as to individual investors, and applies across all the categories of risk contained in the earlier sections of the book. In the security realm, he argues for a concentric triangular approach, with an inner core of states—Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Singapore—working

closely with an outer core of the region's liberal-democratic heavyweights, Australia, India, and Japan, to counter an increasingly aggressive China. Economically, he advocates for structural reforms within Asian nations and trade liberalization among them. To alleviate political instability, he pushes a realistic democracy-promotion program. To avoid isolating China, he promotes an agenda for enhancing contact with ordinary Chinese citizens. Linking all these recommendations is a belief that long-term stability in Asia is most likely to flow from increased liberalization and democratization, and that the United States should have an indispensable role as partner and catalyst in that process. Absent American involvement, investment, and leadership, short- and long-term instability are likely to rise.

Auslin issues the caveat that his book is not intended as a comprehensive guide to all the countries in the region or all the issues affecting them. And yet in just 222 pages his book manages to serve not only as an excellent introduction to the region but as an incisive guide to understanding the contemporary risks roiling the most consequential region of the world. Extremely useful for national security professionals, investors, and interested observers alike, this book moves beyond headline news to analysis and advice in navigating the region's shifting geopolitical, demographic, and economic landscape. Some will find his recommendations too aggressive, although his policy prescriptions explore both costs and benefits. Others perhaps will allege that Auslin is too bearish, too gloomy on what many are expecting to be the dawn of the Asian century. But, given the acceleration of tensions in

Asia, the demise of trade liberalization, the erosion of democracy and advance of autocratic rulers, and the doubts the Trump administration has cast on its commitment to alliances, we may find that he was in fact too sanguine.

CHARLES EDEL



Warring Navies: India-Pakistan; Indian Navy's Role in the Indo-Pak Wars, by Ranji Rai and Joseph Chacko. Dombivli West, India: Frontier India Technology, 2014. 320 pages. \$20.

Ranji Rai and Joseph Chacko's book, *Warring Navies*, is a welcome addition to the scant coverage of the naval history of South Asia. The authors are a retired Indian navy commodore and a defense journalist, respectively, and the book draws heavily on Commodore Rai's experiences in the navy. The book itself crosses the boundaries between memoirs and popular history, covering the history of the Indian navy's operations from independence through the end of the Cold War. It also includes several stand-alone essays on various topics related to maritime and regional security by prominent retired Indian military leaders, such as former army chief Ved P. Malik, former navy chief Vishnu Bhagwat, and Lieutenant General C. Satish Nambiar. One of the major strengths of the book is its coverage of the many lesser-known uses of the Indian navy (e.g., the liberation of Goa in 1961 and the interventions in the Maldives, Seychelles, and Sri Lanka in the 1980s). It is particularly useful for both Indian and non-Indian readers to be aware of these past actions today, as both India and its international

partners debate India's role as a security provider in the Indian Ocean region.

The book is pitched toward a general audience interested in military and naval affairs in South Asia. The prose is engaging and humorous, which makes the book a quick read. For example, the title for the chapter on the 1965 war—in which the Indian navy was not particularly active—is “The Navy Does Sweet Fanny Adams in 1965.” One of the more interesting aspects of this book is its use of various Indian, Pakistani, and American autobiographies and memoirs to interject vignettes from people involved in the conflicts, ranging from Indian naval officers to Pakistani leaders and even to Henry Kissinger. These provide insight into the perspectives of participants in the events. The book's main strength is that it gives an insider's view on the challenges of joint operations for the Indian military. There are some excellent examples, ranging from air force and naval aviation in the 1965 war to amphibious operations in 1971 and smaller operations in the 1980s.

A couple of minor points detract from the book. Given that it is a popular history based on personal observations and the memoirs of participants, some of the general history of the conflicts does reflect older interpretations and narratives that are now debatable. The book is not academically sourced and does not have citations, so the reader is left wondering whether the book would have been improved if the authors had engaged more with the work of recent historians, such as Srinath Raghavan's excellent work on the 1971 war, or even the classic histories of the Indian navy done by Admirals Singh and Hiranandani. Similarly, the book could

have given greater attention to formatting and editing to improve its structure and eliminate typographical errors that distract the reader. In particular, the intersection of long quotations from other authors sometimes confuses the narrative; perhaps some of these longer passages could have been placed in an appendix so the authors' narrative would not be interrupted. Last, some of the additional essays by other authors do not seem to fit within the theme of the book.

However, these shortcomings need to be taken in context, given the nature of the book and its intended audience. Readers should keep in mind that the work is intended to be neither a definitive history nor an academic book, so they should not expect it to engage with the academic literature or offer extensive footnoting. But for its intended audience and modest ambitions, it does succeed in bringing a valuable perspective with a great deal of personal experience to the reader in an approachable and readable format. It will be of use to readers who want more anecdotal details of the history of naval operations and the naval cultures of India and Pakistan, and those who want a short overview of the naval aspects of the conflicts in question.

PATRICK BRATTON



Vietnam Narratives and the Collective Memory of the Vietnam War, by John A. Wood, War and Society in North America series. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 2016. 200 pages. \$69.95.

More than forty years after the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam in 1973, the conflict looms large in American popular culture and memory. Vivid

depictions of guerrilla warfare, antiwar protests, and psychologically troubled veterans proliferate in print and film. This was not always the case, however. Silence followed in the immediate aftermath of the Vietnam War as veterans and civilians alike grappled to forge meaning from the long, costly intervention and ultimate American defeat. The arrival of veteran-authored memoirs in the late 1970s and the 1980s reignited popular interest in the war and inspired numerous others to follow suit. In subsequent decades, the gritty authenticity of these best-selling narratives, written by "those who were there," profoundly shaped American collective memory and historical discourses about the war. John A. Wood's *Vietnam Narratives and the Collective Memory of the Vietnam War* aims to expose myriad misconceptions that have developed as a result.

Undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the best-known Vietnam veteran memoirs, Wood delineates the accuracies, omissions, and miscues inherent in the genre to ascertain its overall influence on American understanding of the war. His methodology centers on the collective analysis of fifty-eight Vietnam veteran memoirs and oral histories published between 1967 and 2005. He supplements this primary set of texts with films, newspapers, U.S. government studies, historical scholarship, and personal accounts from Vietnamese civilians, African Americans, women veterans, and other less prominent authors. Wood's primary argument is that veteran narratives are subject to the properties and limitations of memory. Based on personal recollection usually written long after the events in question, memoirs necessarily provide a fragmentary and biased perspective.

Seven chapters ranging in topic from author demographics to race, sex, and postwar life illustrate this point. Examining the backgrounds of the most prominent authors, chapter 1 generates a demographic profile for the typical Vietnam-veteran memoirist: a college-educated, white, male officer. Although enlisted personnel tended to be younger and more-diverse working-class men, Wood astutely notes that most veteran-writers were low-ranking officers whose combat experiences were not only similar to but representative of those of the men they commanded. Chapter 2 delves into the authorial ambivalence common to many veteran narratives, which simultaneously disparage the military mission and condemn Vietnamese civilians as duplicitous enemy collaborators and greedy opportunists. Wood attempts to rehabilitate popular perception of the Vietnamese by justifying their behaviors as the desperate actions of the inhabitants of a war-ravaged nation. Observing a conspicuous absence of racial tensions in the best-known Vietnam memoirs, chapter 3 foregrounds the narratives of nonwhite veterans as a race-centric “countermemory” of the Vietnam War. Wood’s analysis reveals two competing paradigms: authors either highlight racial cooperation and pride in the combat performance of their particular ethnic groups or they underscore incidents of white racism and express a separatist racial ideology derived from the Black Power movement. Women and sexuality are the focus of chapter 4, which concedes that male soldiers generally behaved in a sexist manner in their interactions with Asian and American women in Vietnam. Wood attributes the prevailing misogynist attitude of American servicemen to mainstream and

military cultures that emphasized sex and promoted a general hostility toward women. Chapter 5 debunks prevailing myths about veterans’ homecomings and postwar lives: first, that Vietnam veterans suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder at a greater rate than soldiers who survived earlier wars; second, that Vietnam veterans literally were spat on by an ungrateful American public on their return home. Chapter 6 underscores the ambivalent political sentiment common to Vietnam veteran memoirs and concludes that such characterizations accurately reflected the views expressed in U.S. government opinion polls. The final chapter tracks numerous similarities between Vietnam memoirs and narratives produced by veterans of other American wars, arguing that cross narrative parallels reflect a consistent demographic among authors as well as the fact that “combat soldiers’ wartime experiences have not changed in many fundamental ways since at least the 1940s” (p. 109).

Wood’s desire to present a comprehensive analysis of the genre has produced a volume that is both more superficial and more repetitive than necessary. Wood also overlooks the ways that memoirs as a genre guide veterans’ selection of stories to include. Memories are at once distilled to a carefully curated collection, embellished with expository detail and context, and stitched together to form a compelling narrative arc. Vietnam veteran narratives not only inspired and made acceptable “uncensored” accounts but provided a model and template for the types of stories that should be featured. Noncombatant veteran memoirs, for example, represent a potentially rich, untapped vein of information for scholars but almost

certainly lack the high-intensity combat usually considered “worthy” of retelling. Although Wood’s research is voluminous, it relies heavily on published materials. Archival records and Vietnamese-language sources would strengthen an already insightful analysis of American veteran narratives and their imprint on popular perception of the war. Moreover, Wood’s reliance on previous scholars’ works undercuts his oft-repeated claim that the book offers an overdue corrective to existing scholarship. Indeed, this slender volume is directed not only to the casual reader but to the professional historian. According to Wood, Vietnam veteran memoirs have received “inadequate treatment” by literary scholars and historians, who generally consider only a small sample of texts and fail to distinguish fiction from nonfiction narratives. He further charges that few military historians scrutinize veteran-authored texts. Yet Wood’s fundamental premise that this book “is a work of history, but it does not treat veteran memoirs as sources that can be straightforwardly mined for information” belies a naive understanding of professional historical practice (p. 5). Any responsible scholar approaches her sources—archival and secondary—with a professionally critical eye.

Even so, this book would be an excellent addition to an undergraduate military history curriculum. Wood’s clear and impressive synthesis of historical and literary scholarship provides a useful introduction to the critical study of Vietnam veteran memoirs. Interested readers will want to supplement Wood’s book with fine-grain examinations such as David Kieran’s *Forever Vietnam: How*

a Divisive War Changed American Public Memory, Thomas Myers’s *Walking Point: American Narratives of Vietnam*, and Jerry Lembcke’s *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam*.

BREANNE ROBERTSON



The Role of the Royal Navy in South America, 1920–1970, by Jon Wise. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. 288 pages. \$122.

Although arguably not a very enticing title for American naval professionals, this small, hardback book is nonetheless well worth their time. The author’s aim is to illustrate the contribution that the maritime service can make to a nation’s foreign policy in peacetime, and in particular to the health of its shipbuilding and defense exports. While the book obviously showcases the fortunes of twentieth-century Great Britain, the points it makes are broadly transferable and increasingly relevant in this era of growing emphasis on seamless inter-governmental cooperation. Besides, the subject matter is refreshing: How often among naval monographs do you find a top-notch scholarly investigation into that most mundane and yet ubiquitous naval mission of “presence” or “showing the flag”? Naval officers are quick to extol the virtues of these activities in conversation, but few actually can substantiate their claims. This book goes some way toward filling that gap.

The book has its origins in a PhD dissertation on the history of the relationship between the Royal Navy and its Chilean counterpart. As such it limits the focus to a manageable analysis of the presence

mission in a particular theater at a given time, while at the same time allowing a useful extension into the broader topic of naval diplomacy throughout the Americas as a backdrop. The work begins with a survey of the extant scholarship on *showing the flag*—a term that the author explains is really too broad to be useful—before moving chronologically through the decades of the last century. By and large the chapters flow logically into one another, although the comparative chapter on U.S. postwar defense plans (chapter 6) seems something of an outlier, particularly in view of the title. The research is excellent and uses a wide variety of contemporary official sources and established scholarly works. The author is an academic researcher and does not appear to have had any naval experience, although he has done his homework in gathering the appropriate naval opinions. The work forms a concise and usable package. (However, from a publishing point of view, the physical ink used in the printing leaves a lot to be desired. In the reviewer's copy, even the action of fingering a page lifted the print right off the paper!)

The book's overall message is that, while the Royal Navy was suffering through a stretch of undeniable decline throughout the period, even in its heyday the service never really enjoyed a position of complete, influential dominance on the South American continent. Furthermore, by being proactive and focusing its efforts on areas where success was more likely, it managed to maintain a surprising level of influence for far longer than one might have imagined in what was, after all, very much a secondary theater for the United Kingdom. To this end, the book

showcases the importance of the attaché in linking naval and diplomatic efforts, as well as the enormous value of offering educational experiences and exchanges to foreign officers, thereby sowing the seed corn for future cooperation.

Interestingly, it also demonstrates that even in the absence of such schemes, the Royal Navy leadership could and did lead the impetus for change, with surprising success—as evidenced by the impact of the 1970s “Group Operating” concept, which enhanced the prestige value of the navy's visits ashore while at the same time sustaining its skills and capabilities at sea. The navy benefited in that its “blue-water” skills were preserved far longer than would have been possible otherwise, and defense sales benefited from the showcasing of those skills. It truly was a “win-win” development. In conclusion, this is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in the broad topic of naval diplomacy overseas or defense sales in particular.

ANGUS ROSS



The Warrior, Military Ethics and Contemporary Warfare: Achilles Goes Asymmetrical, by Pauline M. Kaurin. Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate, 2014. 154 pages. \$149.95.

Pauline Kaurin is associate professor of philosophy at Pacific Lutheran University, specializing in the just war tradition and military ethics. For this volume, Kaurin developed her research during time at the U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Military Academy and in dialogue with academic colleagues in the International Society for Military Ethics. This volume examines the ethical

complexities facing the modern warrior engaged in asymmetrical warfare (AW).

In the introduction, Kaurin begins with a thorough discussion of the term *warrior*, giving it a meaning distinct from *soldier*, *sailor*, *airman*, or any other military operator. To give meaning to the warrior concept, Kaurin reaches back to ancient Greek mythology: she finds Achilles, of Homer's *Iliad*, to be the "touchstone" for the ethical warrior. Kaurin does not see Achilles as the perfect example of a warrior; instead, Achilles exemplifies the military professional's existential essence in war and personifies warrior virtues, resilience, and prowess.

Even though Achilles fought his wars in antiquity, Kaurin sees Achilles as relevant to the AW of the current era. Examined through the lens of *jus in bello*, how do we fight *like* Achilles and how do we fight *against* Achilles? The volume addresses the moral education of the warrior to engage and interpret better the unconventional conflicts that present ethical challenges, as well as ethical impediments that are contrary to *jus in bello*. How do we equip the warrior to engage ethically complex weapons technology and changing asymmetrical conflict?

Kaurin argues for a systematic examination of the ethical challenges posed by autonomous weapons and AW. What are the ethics of the strategies and tactics of each of the two sides in AW? One side may use torture against captives, whether combatants or noncombatants, while the other side chooses not to reciprocate owing to countervailing moral norms, contrary public opinion, and lack of political will. How does the warrior question, think, and respond to such moral dichotomies

faced in AW? Kaurin's premise is that moral education must address AW within the scope of *jus in bello*.

The focus on AW stems from two points. The first is a mind-set fixed on a conventional-war theory that understands asymmetrical conflict as part of conventional warfare. A second point is that AW requires new challenges to ethical thinking that are counter to that associated with conventional war. When will serious ethical thought be given to the changing nature of war, which confronts the norms of traditional war between nations?

Kaurin's thoughts and observations go beyond AW. She identifies the deeper nuances of moral asymmetry, as defined by Michael Gross and Rob Thorton. The adversary's failure to practice reciprocity undermines the moral norms, strategy, and tactics of the generally stronger opponent. With disproportional impact, the effect represents a symbolic and ideological stance against the stronger opponent.

Of the ethical questions Kaurin poses throughout the book, some are being contemplated already, while others are harder to engage because the moral scope involved cannot be brought into focus yet. She contends that understanding the full scope of the ethical issues requires getting into the hearts and minds of the adversary; yet often it is the adversary who artfully gets into the hearts and minds, and the social fabric, of the opponent.

Kaurin contends that if warriors are to engage in asymmetrical moral conflict, they must have courage. Yet the technological development of weapons means that the physical distance between

opponents is growing, so it takes less courage to go to war. Achilles had the courage to fight face-to-face, taking risks and facing danger directly. For many, distancing oneself from danger—even the risk of danger—by using technology imposes a fundamental weakness on the modern warrior amid the challenges he faces. Kaurin presents a detailed analysis of courage in an asymmetrical context, with a prescription for developing courageous warriors.

Another moral attribute that Kaurin sees as essential to the warrior ethos is loyalty. This loyalty is built on leadership and trust and is a foundation of the profession of arms. Referencing the *Illiad*, she compares the loyalty of Achilles, the traditional warrior, with that of Hector, the contemporary, professional warrior. A strategy for training warriors for loyalty is laid out. In addition to excellent military ethics literature references, Kaurin uses film to illustrate key ethical points.

The combatant/noncombatant distinction must be made clear for the soldier considering *jus in bello*. Kaurin proposes a five-level gradation of power and threat, from highest to lowest:

- uniformed combat personnel
- unconventional belligerents
- those provisionally hostile
- neutral or nonhostile noncombatants
- vulnerable noncombatants

Discerning the appropriate category of combatant/noncombatant would determine the appropriate level of force. Such a moral model of ascertaining the threat level would equip the soldier better in the ethics of *jus in bello*.

Kaurin's thoughts are a contribution to the literature on the higher level of

moral thinking for military leaders. She does not shy away from the conundrums the warrior faces. To maintain an ethical edge in asymmetrical warfare, military ethics must be embedded into the culture of the profession of arms.

THOMAS E. CREELY



The General vs. the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War, by H. W. Brands. New York: Doubleday, 2016. 448 pages. \$30.

The relief of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur by President Harry S. Truman remains one of the most controversial and debated wartime command decisions made in the military history of the United States. By April 1951, Douglas MacArthur was at the peak of his game as a military leader. His public pressing to widen the war in Korea, in direct contradiction to the intent of his president, and his public statements to that end that led to his dismissal still fuel debate today.

H. W. Brands gives depth to the tale of MacArthur versus Truman by including the complexities that existed in the Korean conflict and its Cold War context, when a U.S.-led “free world” was engaged in a global struggle against Soviet-led Communism (and especially Soviet interest in Central Europe). As the fighting in Korea continued, official Washington, and the Pentagon in particular, worried that the war effort was tying down more and more U.S. military resources—worries that fueled further concerns that Moscow might see the United States stretched militarily and unable to defend Central Europe adequately.

Brands highlights another lesser-known aspect of the Korean War: MacArthur's desire to bring Chinese Nationalist forces into the fight. Truman and the Joint Chiefs, knowing how this could antagonize Mao's China and possibly widen the war, did not view the idea favorably. Truman and the Joint Chiefs were not convinced that Chiang Kai-shek's corrupt and recently defeated forces would prove more of an advantage than a burden to the fight in Korea. MacArthur also clearly chafed at what he perceived to be Truman's hesitancy in fighting Communism. Truman, in turn, remained focused on the Communist threat to Central Europe and U.S. commitments to its European allies, all the while trying to balance resisting Communist aggression in Korea against preventing the conflict from widening.

Yet the conflict in Korea did widen when Chinese forces entered the fray in November 1950—an escalation that caught MacArthur off guard. Only a month earlier, in his famous meeting with Truman at Wake Island, he categorically had dismissed Chinese intervention as a concern.

The central element of the MacArthur-Truman controversy proved to be the persona of Douglas MacArthur himself. Having lived and fought in the Pacific since 1937 (and not having returned to the United States until his relief in 1951), MacArthur had a self-described faith in his understanding of the "Asian mind." By 1951 MacArthur, then seventy-one, had lost touch with his country, which had changed considerably in the thirteen years since he had been there last. Believing he could speak for the American people, MacArthur allowed a draft effort to go forward for the 1952 Republican

presidential nomination. Yet, not desiring to campaign and growing ever more shrill in his speeches, MacArthur quickly doomed his potential candidacy to oblivion. His seeming advocacy for the use of nuclear weapons in Korea gave civilian and military leaders further pause, particularly when he suggested "sowing of fields of suitable radio-active material" in theater. Interestingly, it was President-elect Eisenhower who later broke the peace talk deadlock by intimating his openness to using nuclear weapons against the Chinese.

Perhaps the most damning part of the MacArthur story is the general's testimony before the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees upon his relief of command and forced return from Japan. The testimony, which Brands recounts in great detail, makes for some of the best reading. MacArthur tries to live up to his reputation, yet appears to be out of his league before inquisitive senators. He ultimately loses what support he had from Republicans, who, while no fans of Truman, in the end opted not to cast their lots with MacArthur.

A few aspects of the book did prove distracting. Detailed maps of the Korean Peninsula showing the many stages of the Korean War would have added to the reader's understanding of the conflict but are absent. Further, a glitch in binding resulted in the Korean Peninsula map that was included on the inside cover being upside down. The reviewer contacted the publisher via e-mail and, although acknowledged, was not responded to. And on page 329 the author's passage "MacArthur's prediction that by January 1950 the victory would be so complete" is clearly

a misprint, because North Korea did not invade South Korea until June 1950.

These items are minor and easily corrected in a future edition. What remains still is a powerful book that goes into great detail, benefiting from the storytelling ability of H. W. Brands. We hope that a civil-military conflict between a towering figure like MacArthur and a sitting U.S. president is unlikely to reoccur. Yet the story remains a valid one today, with its lessons on the reach of military power in a democracy, the role of the president in setting national policy, and the role of civilian oversight of military power.

DAVID L. TESKA



The Pacific War and Contingent Victory: Why Japanese Defeat Was Not Inevitable, by Michael W. Myers. Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2015. 208 pages. \$34.95.

The Pacific War and Contingent Victory is “an exercise in the elucidation of terms”—an exercise necessary to determine whether the Empire of Japan could have avoided defeat at the hands of the United States and its allies. The focus on “terms” is important, as precision and clarity are vital to Professor Michael Myers’s effort to challenge the near-universal acceptance of the idea that Japanese defeat was inevitable. On the contrary, Myers argues that there were several points in the war where the arc of history was subject to change, given a different mix of luck, skill, will, or strategy. Myers’s book takes aim at British historian H. P. Willmott—a leading proponent of the inevitability school—and Willmott’s

assertion that since “the defeat of Japan was assured” no single battle or campaign can be considered “decisive.” *The Pacific War and Contingent Victory* challenges this conventional view that inherent industrial, financial, and demographic shortcomings all but guaranteed Japanese defeat.

Myers is also careful to argue that, while the Japanese could have avoided defeat, this does not mean necessarily that they ultimately could have gained victory. Rather, Japan might have realized outcomes short of actual defeat, such as an armistice preserving some of the gains made early in the war, a return to the *status quo ante bellum*, or even a negotiated surrender that left Japan more intact than it would be when it ultimately did surrender in 1945.

Myers’s challenge to Willmott and the rest of the proponents of inevitable Japanese defeat is built on an insistence on precise terms: as he explains, all that is required is to show that there was the *slightest* chance of a Japanese victory, however long the odds or improbable the required chain of events. If, even under the most remote of conditions, a different outcome *could* have occurred, then the inevitability argument is defeated. Myers then argues that if defeat was not a certainty, then one or more events—be they battles or campaigns or just a moment of good or ill fortune—had to be decisive. It is difficult, perhaps even impossible, to argue with Myers’s logic. His position is somewhat similar to that of a lawyer defending the owners of a carnival who offer a commonly found midway game involving tossing softballs into milk cans for prizes. All the lawyer has to do is show that it is *possible* for the softball to

go into the can, even if the *likelihood* of that happening is as close to zero as one can get, and no one ever wins a prize.

Myers produces ample evidence to prove his point. He notes that even Willmott himself acknowledges that a German victory in Europe could have enabled Japan to achieve something other than defeat in the Pacific. If the avatar of inevitability admits the possibility of an alternative outcome, what else is needed to carry the argument? However, the clarification that Japanese defeat was *nearly* inevitable versus simply inevitable is a distinction without a difference. If this were all there was to Myers's book, it would be scant reward for the cost of purchase or the time spent reading it. Luckily there is more.

The Pacific War and Contingent Victory identifies a number of ways by which

Japan might have avoided defeat. These include a United States willing to settle for a negotiated conclusion in the face of mounting casualties and war weariness. Greater success against Australia, which Myers argues could have been achieved, perhaps combined with a successful invasion and occupation of Hawaii, might have been another means to a different end.

In sum, Myers's book—which has been used in the Naval War College's curricular case on the Pacific theater in the Second World War—by focusing on war's contingent nature, illustrates well the oft-noted maxim that in war the enemy truly does “get a vote.”

RICHARD J. NORTON

OUR REVIEWERS

Patrick Bratton is an associate professor of national security and strategy studies at the U.S. Army War College. He graduated with a BA in history from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, completed graduate studies at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth (U.K.) and the Université de Rennes 2 (France), and received his PhD from the Catholic University of America.

Thomas E. Creely is associate professor of leader development and ethics in the College of Operational and Strategic Leadership at the Naval War College. He received his PhD from Salve Regina University. A retired Navy chaplain, his Navy career included sea, shore, and Marine Corps assignments, as well as service as an enlisted sailor.

Charles Edel is an associate professor of strategy and policy at the Naval War College. He recently served as a strategic adviser to the Secretary of State on northeast Asia, the South China Sea, and the western Pacific region in the State Department's Office of Policy Planning. He received a BA in classics from Yale College and holds a PhD in history from Yale University. An intelligence officer in the Navy Reserve, he is the author of *Nation Builder: John Quincy Adams and the Grand Strategy of the Republic* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2014).

Nicholas Murray teaches in the Strategy and Policy Department of the Naval War College. He received his doctorate in modern history from the University of Oxford. He is the author of *The*

Rocky Road to the Great War (Potomac Books, 2013), and he advises the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on professional military education.

Richard J. Norton is a professor of national security affairs at the Naval War College. He is a retired naval officer and holds a PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. His most recent publications include articles in the *Naval War College Review* and the *Marine Corps University Journal*.

J. Overton is the writer/editor for the Naval Undersea Warfare Center, Division Keyport. He was previously an adjunct instructor in the Naval War College Fleet Seminar Program and the Marine Corps Command and Staff College Distance Education Program. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard, and has worked in other public affairs and historian positions for the Navy and Army.

Breanne Robertson is a historian with the Marine Corps History Division at Marine Corps University. She has published articles on Marine Corps activities in the Dominican Republic between 1916 and 1924 and on U.S. efforts to cultivate Pan-Americanism through the visual arts during World War II. She is currently editing a volume on the history and meaning of the Iwo Jima flag raisings, entitled *Investigating Iwo: The Flag Raisings in Myth, Memory and Esprit de Corps*.

Angus Ross is a retired Royal Navy officer and professor of joint military operations at the Naval War College. He is a graduate of the College, received a second MA from Providence College, and is working on PhD studies, looking at naval transformation prior to the First World War. His recent published works include articles in this journal and others on the dilemma facing both the Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy in the wake of the dreadnought revolution.

Sam J. Tangredi is a professor of national, naval, and maritime strategy at the Center for Naval Warfare Studies, Naval War College. He is the author of *Anti-access Warfare: Countering A2/AD Strategies* (Naval Institute Press, 2013) and two earlier books on the future security environment.

David L. Teska is a retired captain in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve. He is a graduate of Texas Tech and Kansas Universities. He works for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Homeland Security Department.