Naval War College Review

Volume 63
Number 1 *Winter*

Article 17

2010

Churchill and the Norway Campaign

Jeff Shaw

Huchthausen and Sheldon-Duplaix also examine a number of counterintelligence issues, such as the 1961 Christine Keeler affair in Britain and, more important, the treason of John Walker, who spied for the Soviets from 1967 to the mid-1980s and whom the authors describe as "one of the greatest espionage successes in history."

Two concluding chapters introduce orthogonal themes, such as the 1980s Soviet operations that culminated in the "Whiskey on the Rocks" (a euphemism for the grounding of a Soviet submarine in Swedish territorial waters) and a bizarre account of how UFOs might have altered the strategic balance during the Cold War.

Huchthausen and Sheldon-Duplaix offer an interesting and entertaining read, one that shows that U.S. naval attachés at times work in difficult and dangerous circumstances. However, because of its excessive use of anecdotes, this book does not add much to the body of knowledge about naval espionage—neither that of the United States, of the Soviets, or of anyone else.

JEROME J. BURKE
Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Washington, D.C.

Rhys-Jones, Graham. *Churchill and the Norway Campaign.* South Yorkshire, U.K.: Pen and Sword, 2008. 223pp. $33

"The principle of aiming everything at the enemy's center of gravity admits of only one exception—that is, when secondary operations look exceptionally rewarding." This classic dictum, given to us by the great military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, provides the impetus behind this book. Originally conceived as a case study for inclusion in the Strategy and Policy curriculum at the U.S. Naval War College, this historical work covers the operations in Norway during the spring of 1940, one of the most overlooked campaigns of the Second World War. The reader is presented with a complete account, in a fast-moving and easy format, of the strategic decision making that eventually led both Great Britain and France, on the one side, and Germany, on the other, to conclude that opening a new theater in Norway could in fact be "exceptionally rewarding."

While Churchill figures prominently in the book's title, the reader will find examined not only his policy decisions and strategic ideas discussed at length but also the actions and decisions of numerous other participants in the governments of the major belligerents. Most studies concerning the war in the West in 1940 focus on the French military's epic defeat, but Rhys-Jones offers an account of French participation in the war as Great Britain's strategic partner. The strategic partnership between the Neville Chamberlain and Édouard Daladier governments in the spring of 1940 is a subject that usually does not get much attention, but an interesting account of that short-lived alliance can be found in this book.

Rhys-Jones, a former member of the Naval War College faculty, presents his analysis in a manner that both students and faculty at the college will find familiar. He begins at the policy level, focusing on the benefits and drawbacks that each major participant concludes are relevant to undertaking operations in what was considered a secondary theater. He then outlines each belligerent's

strategy before presenting a thorough examination of operations and tactical considerations for both land and maritime forces involved in the campaign. The outcome in Norway was never a foregone conclusion. Germany's tactical prowess and brilliant leadership at the small-unit level are conveyed nicely, leaving the reader to actually wonder throughout the narrative whether the Germans can pull off such a bold and daring feat of arms.

It is a tribute to Rhys-Jones's authoritative approach to the subject matter and his fine writing style that he has created such a useful study of the elements—the matching of strategy and policy, the conduct of joint operations, and the wisdom of opening a new theater—while at the same time telling a riveting story.

Any student of grand strategy, as well as the casual reader, will find plenty of value in this well written historical narrative. If there is a waiting list of books to be included into the curriculum at the Naval War College, this book should top the list.

JEFF SHAW
Naval War College

Kuehn, John T. *Agents of Innovation: The General Board and the Design of the Fleet That Defeated the Japanese Navy*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2008. 296pp. $32.95

Skeptics of disarmament treaties, such as Richard Pearl, have long argued that these treaties make a nation weaker by depriving it of the means of self-defense. John Kuehn, former naval aviator and presently professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, is far more subtle in this excellent book. He shows how the Washington Naval Treaty of 1921 froze battleship construction and yet made the U.S. Navy stronger by 1941. While it is never easy to prove something so counterintuitive, Kuehn does it hands down.

How did this happen? First, by freezing the building of battleships the treaty drove the Navy to invest more time, money, and imagination into other projects, particularly submarines and aircraft carriers. These ships had greater potential than the battleship, which had just about reached its maximum technology by the end of World War I. In addition, by preventing the United States from enhancing its base fortifications west of Hawaii, the treaty drove the Navy to design new vessels of much greater operational radius, build floating dry docks, and enhance its total transport capabilities. By World War II, the U.S. Navy could do the seemingly impossible: beat a peer competitor in the western Pacific without permanent bases in the area of operations.

One wonders why the Japanese did not take advantage of the constraints imposed by U.S. arms limitations. Kuehn offers a convincing explanation, by focusing on the General Board of the U.S. Navy. Whereas the Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy were hierarchal and faction ridden, the U.S. General Board was collegial, collaborative, and remarkably open to new ideas from all branches of the service, virtually irrespective of rank. Both the British and the Japanese fell far behind in antisubmarine warfare. The Japanese stuck to their Mahanian dogma of decisive naval battle conducted by large battleships.