

2010

The Great Crusade: A New Complete History of the Second World War

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Recommended Citation

Boston, Brent (2010) "The Great Crusade: A New Complete History of the Second World War," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 63 : No. 1 , Article 20.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol63/iss1/20>

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vision that the best way to avoid war was through strength and readiness, as reflected in SAC's motto: "Peace Is Our Profession." LeMay felt he was one of the few people who understood that the United States was at war with the Soviet Union and that the only way SAC could provide the security that the nation needed was to be prepared to go to nuclear war at a moment's notice. Everything he did was focused on that objective.

After relinquishing command at SAC, LeMay served as the U.S. Air Force's vice chief of staff and then chief of staff during the Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson administrations. In the later years, LeMay worked for Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who, ironically, had once worked for LeMay as a targeting analyst. The relationship between these two men was often confrontational, but despite their differences McNamara called LeMay "the finest military strategist this nation ever produced."

The last major chapter in LeMay's life is the one probably best remembered and yet least reflective of LeMay's internal values. LeMay's decision to run for vice president on the Independent ticket with Alabama's Governor George Wallace confounded everyone, including his own wife, daughter, and closest associates. Kozak maintains there is no evidence of LeMay being a racist and maintains that the only reason he chose to run was to split the vote, ensuring that Democratic presidential candidate, Hubert Humphrey, would not win the election and so continue the policies of the Johnson administration. By running, LeMay believed, he was taking "one last chance to rise up and do battle" against the "defense intellectuals,"

whom he believed would cut the U.S. deterrent until the Soviets could win a general war.

This book's greatest value might be that it offers an opportunity to consider objectively the impact that Curtis E. LeMay (the youngest general in modern American history and its longest serving) had on the events that shaped this nation for many years to come.

ROGER DUCEY
Naval War College



Willmott, H. P. *The Great Crusade: A New Complete History of the Second World War*. Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books, 2008. 520pp. \$17.60

The Great Crusade is a comprehensive military history of World War II. With a focus on strategic-level military operations and a global perspective, this work provides a particularly complete and nationally balanced account of the war. H. P. Willmott achieves his ambitious goal of providing "a basic reference and guide to the war" that offers balance among the major fronts of the conflict and illuminates "why events unfolded in the manner in which they did."

The Great Crusade discusses conflict between countries and systems, not between leaders or equipment. It is about "how states make war and the basis on which services planned, executed and either won or lost campaigns." Willmott distinguishes between the use of available forces by military commanders to win campaigns and the use of national power to win wars. National and international political factors, beginning in 1931, get the attention they deserve. How and why countries joined and left the conflict (including the

lesser Axis members) is presented in context but without excess sympathy. The ideology and associated atrocities of Germany and Japan strengthened morale at home and intimidated some, but brutality prevented any prospect of willing economic or military support from conquered areas, particularly China and the non-Russian parts of the Soviet Union. The failure of the German and Japanese governments to mobilize their economies effectively when at war contrasts with efforts by the key Allied powers.

Willmott argues convincingly against numerous popular ideas concerning the war. He attacks the “myth of German military excellence,” offering numerous examples of error and failure in military efforts and in related economic and political activities. He highlights the paramount importance of the Russian front, covering the enormous scale of combat and the tremendous improvement in Soviet military strategic and operational skill.

This work is rich with comparisons between campaigns, strategies, and countries, and it covers land, sea, and air operations with good balance. Numerous statistics illustrate key ideas and strengthen the historical narrative. Dozens of maps help illustrate key campaigns. Also, the general index is useful. Corrections to page numbers in the “Campaign Index” planned for the second printing will make this book invaluable. The bibliography organizes suggestions into fourteen categories that reflect regions or themes in a way that may compensate for the absence of citations.

Willmott’s impressive credentials include faculty experience at several universities and at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He has written

nineteen books and coauthored several others. He is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Because this work is “a general overview of military events” with some emphasis on correcting popular misunderstandings, it offers a great deal to readers at every level of expertise. This sweeping history provides the reader with great insights into World War II in particular but also into enduring issues, including relationships between military, political, and economic power.

BRENT BOSTON
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Barritt, M. K. *Eyes of the Admiralty: J. T. Serres—
an Artist in the Channel Fleet, 1799–1800*. London: Hydrographic Office and National Maritime Museum, 2008. 144pp. \$39.95

For centuries, the port of Brest in northwestern France has been the chief naval base and dockyard for French naval operations in the North Atlantic and the Channel. For Britain, during the Napoleonic Wars—as well as in all the maritime wars between Britain and France in 1689 and 1815—the French Brest squadron was a central threat to the Royal Navy. British naval strategy to counter this threat had a number of elements. The Royal Navy’s Channel Squadron had, as a primary duty, the blockade of Brest. These operations served the strategic function of deterring the Brest squadron from leaving port and, thereby, of preventing it from launching an invasion force against Britain or its overseas possessions, attacking the British fleet, or interfering with British warships and merchant convoys that were using the nearby