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## At the Waters Edge

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Gatchel, Theodore L. *At the Water's Edge*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996. 288pp. \$32.95

The complexity and difficulty of landing forces on a hostile shore are well known, yet in this century remarkably few defenders have succeeded in keeping their opponent from establishing a lodgement ashore. Why? What is it that occurs (or doesn't occur) at the water's edge that makes this most difficult of all operations so consistently successful despite its long odds?

Gatchel is well qualified for the challenge of providing an explanation. A widely experienced practitioner of the amphibious art at virtually every organizational echelon, he finished his thirty years in a Marine uniform as head of the Operations Department at the Naval War College, arguably the birthplace of modern U.S. naval thought concerning landing operations within a naval campaign. His operational experience and academic insight make a combination that few other commentators can match.

This book's purpose is direct yet subtle for those who have struggled to sell the value of amphibious capability. Instead of following the traditional path of amphibious commentators and highlighting the attacker's problems, Gatchel places the amphibious problem in reverse, inviting us to consider the enemy's difficulties and the historical lack of success in stopping an operation that appears to face so many daunting challenges. The result is less a "how to" for the defense than a revealing view of the fundamental features of successful landings and the implications for future amphibious operations.

*At the Water's Edge* has a provocative theme, particularly for U.S. planners in the wake of DESERT STORM. Gatchel maintains that despite the acute challenges facing an amphibious attacker, the attack has consistently proved *stronger* than the anti-landing defense, provided the attacker has grasped the essential naval character of the operation and equipped himself accordingly.

Beginning with a conceptual analysis of the anti-landing problem, he then proceeds through the defender's side of virtually all of the major amphibious operations of the twentieth century, from Gallipoli to the Falklands. In eleven separate case studies, Gatchel highlights specific national variations in the search for solutions to the conceptual problems outlined in the initial chapter. To those who have concluded that amphibious assault is dead, the continuities and differences between Turks, British, Germans, Americans (at Wake and Midway), Japanese, North Koreans, and Argentinians are striking indeed and provide much for modern planners to ponder. The author concludes succinctly, stressing not only the familiar naval aspects of the operation but also the often improvised nature of defense against attack from the sea and the unique problems this entails. In so doing, he shines a fascinating and very different light on the well known amphibious operations of this century.

Each chapter opens with a perspective of the general situation from the defender's vantage point, then outlines the defensive plan, the actual execution of the battle, and both the lessons taken by the defenders at the time and observations on the implications for today.

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The text is easy to follow, the maps are simple but effective, and the endnotes reflect a balanced mix of official and scholarly materials, including a substantial number of primary sources. The bibliography alone makes *At the Water's Edge* a valuable resource to any serious student of amphibious warfare.

While there are few substantive criticisms one can make of this book (the author's first) the lack of commentary on the impact of vertical assault and on the anti-landing defenses in Egypt and Kuwait will strike many readers as a noticeable void. Though the British operations at Suez are mentioned in passing, there is no discussion of either the Egyptian defenses at Port Said or the Iraqi defenses in Kuwait. With vertical assault now central to amphibious doctrine and the Iraqi defenses often cited as evidence of the ebbing future viability of the amphibious assault, this is an unfortunate gap in an otherwise thorough treatment of the subject. Egyptian and Iraqi sources and specific information about the defenses at Port Said and Kuwait are still sharply limited, making it difficult to match the pattern and documentation of the other chapters. Some commentary on each, however, would have fit well into the theme of the book and given it even more value. Perhaps this gap can be closed in a subsequent edition as Iraqi and Egyptian records become more available.

Overall, this is an original and very useful work. Its tidy organization and clear prose make it an enjoyable read; it is substantive enough for experts yet easily handled by novices as well. As such, it should become a standard part of any curriculum covering amphibious

warfare. Gatchel has done a superb job of making the case for amphibious forces and attack across the shoreline, yet he does so indirectly, remaining remarkably unbiased in his tone and the flow of his logic. His subject is one that all operational planners need to think hard about, as access to overseas bases and theaters becomes increasingly challenged in the years ahead. No serious student of warfare "from the sea" should pass this one by.

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Gribkov, Anatoli I., and William Y.

Smith. *Operation Anadyr*. Chlicago: Edition Q, 1994. 252pp. \$24.95

This is the first work to combine the military perspectives of ranking Soviet and American officers who had first-hand knowledge of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis (or what the Soviets called the Caribbean Crisis). General Anatoli Gribkov and General William Smith met in 1992 at one of a series of conferences that brought both sides together to analyze the actions of the superpowers during that critical event, which nearly ended in nuclear war. Motivated by their experiences in Havana, the generals individually developed expanded accounts of their involvement, supported by recently declassified documents. The result is this book, which contains both generals' perceptions and related documents, in two appendices.

General Gribkov served as a representative of the Soviet General Staff to oversee construction of the missile sites and provide situation reports to the