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Oil and War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in World War II Meant Victory or Defeat

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ingly, there are no official reports chronicling the tragedy. *East of Chosin* thoroughly fills this void and is the definitive history of that bleak November on the eastern shore of Chosin Reservoir. I give it my highest personal recommendation as an essential element of your professional library.

ARLEN B. COYLE
Captain, U.S. Naval Reserve

Goralski, Robert and Freeburg, Russell W. *Oil and War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in World War II Meant Victory or Defeat*. New York: William Morrow, 1987. 384pp. \$19.95

Military planners are well aware of the need for calculating adequate fuel resources into any equation of offense and defense. Too often, however, the weight given this factor is not emphasized as much as it should be. If there is one lesson that can be learned from *Oil and War*, it is that under the circumstances of modern warfare, fuel is one of the ultimate arbiters of any conflict. In a highly readable and informative volume, Goralski and Freeburg trace the course of World War II from the perspective of oil supply and consumption. Emphasizing the geographic realities of oil production and its role for the various European powers and Japan, they focus their attention on its chronologic ramifications for the war effort on the part of both the Axis and Allied powers.

The authors set the pre-war stage with a discussion of Germany's oil import requirements and its consequent impetus for the construction of a large synthetic fuels industry. It is remarkable reading: fifty years after the German debate on the merits of synthetic fuels versus imported oil, the United States, once a world treasure house of oil, is pursuing the same debate. Even the Germans' use of methanol and ethanol as additives for motoring fuels during World War II has a thoroughly modern ring to it. Goralski and Freeburg note that in 1936, through conservation and use of fuel additives, per capita use of fuel in Germany was one-third of that used in Britain—and only one-eleventh of that used by the profligate Americans.

The authors trace the role of oil in the various campaigns of World War II beginning with the initial German *blitzkriegs* and the early Japanese successes in locating oil in Southeast Asia to the last days of the war. A final chapter appropriately addresses the impact of oil in future wars. Throughout the book attention is equally divided between oil production and the role of petroleum refining. Each chapter of the book is replete with facts, and the 26 maps, graphs, and charts assist the reader in following the narrative. The word narrative is important, for unlike many other books filled with facts, *Oil and War* remains highly readable and entertaining.

This book would be an excellent addition to a personal library. The chapters can be read separately or

out of sequence if an individual is interested only in a particular campaign of World War II, but they are best read in the context of the entire volume. Indeed, the most important lesson of *Oil and War* is that the fuel oil clock is ticking for the United States right now. America needs to address its own energy future and, in the absence of a national energy policy, decide how best to meet the needs of presently increasing oil demands and dwindling domestic oil resources. Avoiding the debate now may have tragic results later.

SANFORD S. KAPLAN
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Fitzroy, Andre Baptiste. *War, Cooperation, and Conflict: The European Possessions in the Caribbean, 1939-1945*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988. 351pp. \$39.95

Unfortunately, F. A. Baptiste's *War, Cooperation, and Conflict* is largely an account of U.S. policy toward the European colonial possessions in the Caribbean during World War II. While the book is well-researched and sound in its judgments, it adds little that is new to a subject which has been treated many times by a variety of scholars. In comparison to *War, Cooperation, and Conflict*, Langer and Gleason's *The Challenge to Isolation* and *The Undeclared War* and Langer's *Our Vichy Gamble* are still fine books on diplomacy; on the Army's role, Stetson Conn's volumes on

hemispheric defense in the Army's famed Green Book series are better; Goodhart's *Fifty Ships That Saved the World* and Abbazia's *Mr. Roosevelt's Navy* offer better perspectives of the naval aspects of World War II in the Caribbean.

Essentially, the focus of the book is wrong. Instead of trying to produce just another work on U.S. policy toward colonialism in the Caribbean during World War II, the author, a West Indian scholar, should have focused on the ramifications of the increased U.S. presence on the Caribbean people and their islands. It is a truism to state that World War II loosened the hold of all traditional colonial powers on their empires. Although we tended to think of this process mostly in connection with far-off Asia and Africa, much of the same process was taking place in the Caribbean at the same time.

So, precisely how did the increased U.S. presence in the islands work to help undermine traditional colonial rule and stimulate nationalism in the black populations of the Caribbean? It is a pity that the author did not approach this subject from the fresh perspective of the Caribbean islands and their peoples, rather than from the stale perspective of U.S. policy.

There are other flaws in the book. It is not appealing visually, having been reproduced in typescript rather than print, and there are many errors, some embarrassing, which are either typos or reflect the author's limited knowledge of technical naval nomenclature and U.S.