

1986

Okinawa 1945: Gateway to Japan

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Recommended Citation

Unsinger, Peter C. and Gow, Ian (1986) "Okinawa 1945: Gateway to Japan," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 39 : No. 4 , Article 26.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol39/iss4/26>

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Gow, Ian. *Okinawa 1945: Gateway to Japan*. New York: Doubleday, 1985. 224pp. \$16.95

More often than not books about World War II battles are little more than rehashes of older books or official histories with little new added. Dr. Gow's book is different. The author, whose doctorate was on Japanese civil-military relations, provides some Japanese perspectives on the battle. Moreover, from the perspective of an Englishman, he provides some insights into how the British viewed the battle from the coalition warfare standpoint. Several works published in Japan about the Okinawa battle are included in the bibliography. So, *Okinawa 1945* is something more than the oft-told tale retold.

Okinawa 1945 describes the contributions made by the Royal Navy to the battle. The ships of TF 57 proved to be a welcome addition to the U.S. Fleet as they gained valuable experience in operations extended both in time and distance. That experience would have been needed desperately had the planned assault of the home islands taken place. It was obvious that all available aircraft would have been needed to suppress the anticipated kamikaze attacks. At times the reader is given the feeling that the British were unwanted in the "American show." Though this may have been true, Dr. Gow devotes little to this clash of allies as it may have detracted from the story. The reviewer questions why he raised the subject if he was not going to address it in any depth.

It is clear that General Mitsuru Ushijima, in command of the island's defenders, did an excellent job in a desperate situation. In those overwhelming situations where defeat is so apparent, there is little one can do except to cause delay and raise the cost to the victor. Ushijima became a master, carefully choosing terrain, preparing it and falling back when required. He was ably assisted by his artillery commander, General Kosuke Wada. Besides the extensive defensive positions, Wada's able use of his weapons frustrated U.S. Army and Marine assaults. Gow does a good job of describing these assaults.

Okinawa 1945 is interesting but, as in many another book, the maps are inadequate. However, there are many excellent photographs not seen before by this reviewer.

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Glover, Michael. *The Fight for the Channel Ports: Calais to Brest—A Study in Confusion*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985. 269pp. \$25

When on 10 May 1940 Hitler invaded the Low Countries, the main fighting elements of the British Expeditionary Force in France advanced into Belgium under the French higher command's Plan D. There, deployed along the River Dyle with the 1st French Army and the Belgian Army, nine 1st-line British divisions held their front without undue difficulty against probing attacks from German Army