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The Phony War 1939-1940

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Joseph C. Goulden has attempted to write a military-political study of the Korean war with mixed success. He has really tried to do too much by including battle studies, diplomacy, and domestic politics in a single volume.

His analysis of military operations is consequently far from complete. For example, he devotes much attention to the Inchon landings and the retreat of the X Corps but virtually ignores the campaigns of 1951. Moreover, he says little about the roles of the Navy and Air Force. At best he provides a general overview of military operations spiced with a few vignettes.

Goulden is much better in describing the political and diplomatic aspects of the war. He gives an excellent detailed description of the Truman-MacArthur controversy. Although extremely hostile to the general, he supplies enough evidence to justify Truman's actions. Goulden also does a good job in discussing the lengthy armistice negotiations. Thus if the military history is weak other aspects are, if not exactly new, competently executed.

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Wilson, Dick. *When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945*. New York: Viking Press, 1982. 269pp. \$16.95

When Americans think about the war against Japan they remember the sea, air, and amphibious operations in the Pacific. The British tend to focus on the operations of General Slim's 14th Army in India and Burma. A few people recall Merrill's marauders and some are familiar with General Stilwell's problems in the China-Burma-India theater. During the entire conflict with Japan, however, the majority of the Imperial Army fought in China where it had been

operating since 1937. At the time of Japan's capitulation there were over 1,200,000 Japanese troops in China and Manchuria. Although scholars have written a good deal about China's social and political problems, relatively little has been done on the military operations on China's mainland.

Mr. Dick Wilson has attempted with some success to fill this gap for in a straightforward narrative, he describes the military operations of the Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945. He notes that Chinese resistance was substantial and often effective. The Japanese army could, it is true, usually capture geographic objectives, but it was never able to destroy China's political or military ability to resist.

Mr. Wilson's book has a number of defects. Order of battle information is minimal as is his data on diplomatic activity. The impact of the war on Chinese society is also treated in a sketchy manner. Still, Wilson's book is very useful. It is accurate as far as it goes and it illuminates a major and largely ignored aspect of the Second World War.

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Shachtman, Tom. *The Phony War 1939-1940*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982. 289pp. \$16.95

Mr. Shachtman's book contains no original research. The story he tells has been told before, and he adds nothing new. His book is mistitled. It does not deal with the "phony war" but rather with the course of World War II from its outbreak to the fall of France. The book is also marred by several minor factual errors. For example, no matter what Mr. Shachtman says, Yugoslavia did not in 1939 (nor does it today) have a common frontier with the USSR.

Yet despite these criticisms, Shachtman's work makes fascinating reading. The author provides a balanced and compelling account of a year that changed the face of European and world politics. It is popular history at its best, and even those thoroughly familiar with the history of the second world conflict, will enjoy reading this account. For those unfamiliar with the period *The Phony War* is a splendid introduction to further study.

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Naval War College

Godson, Susan H. *Viking of Assault: Admiral John Lesslie Hall, Jr., and Amphibious Warfare*. Washington: University Press of America, 1982. 237pp. \$10.50

John L. Hall (1891-1978), stood at 6'2" and weighed 200 pounds while at the US Naval Academy before World War I. He lettered in football, basketball, and baseball, continued in athletics while serving in various ships, and had several tours as the Academy's football coach.

His early professional career gave no indication of the kind of work he would be called upon to do in World War II. Yet if the billets assigned him before that war were unspectacular, his fitness reports mention various sterling qualities; such as his dedication to duty, and his calmness under stress. He was painstaking, forceful, and competent. And he broadened his intellectual horizons while serving from 1937 to 1940 as an instructor and then head of the strategy section of the Naval War College.

Except for studying the disastrous Gallipoli campaign of 1915 and planning for and witnessing Fleet Exercise Seven in February 1941 in the Caribbean, Hall had no amphibious experience. He acquired a little when he served as chief

of staff to the admiral who carried the First Marine Brigade to Iceland in July 1941, and a lot more when in a similar billet he helped Adm. H. Kent Hewitt plan for the landing of American troops in French Morocco as part of Operation Torch in 1942.

Perhaps in the same way that no one could tell whether a non-aviator, Raymond Spruance, would make a good carrier admiral, no one knew what a generalist like Hall could do in amphibious warfare until he was directed to engage in it.

He learned a great deal about amphibious operations by witnessing Torch. He saw the need for pre-invasion training, for maintaining good relations with the other services and with joint commanders, for naval gunfire and aerial support of troops making a landing, for improved landing craft and equipment, and for beach parties to direct traffic and preclude the piling up of stores on a beach.

Mesmerized by the many dramatic assault landings made in the Pacific, American scholars have tended to overlook the important amphibious landings made in the Atlantic and Mediterranean in World War II. Mrs. Godson evaluates Samuel E. Morison's 15-volume *U.S. Naval Operations in World War II* as the standard work on the Mediterranean and European theaters, but she adds that "There are no volumes about amphibious warfare" (p. xi).

She is right. While we have the seminal work of Isely and Crowl and a plethora of specialized works on amphibious warfare in the Pacific, one would have to read far and wide to obtain a history of amphibious operations in the Atlantic in World War II. This is the void the author seeks to fill. And she fills it well, for Hall had a command in all the American naval amphibious operations