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How the War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II, by Phillips Payson O'Brien

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times the lessons learned were small, such as the discovery that landing net rungs spaced too far apart posed a significant danger to debarking troops.

Some elements of the TORCH landings touch on current questions. For example, although the Saint-Nazaire and Dieppe raids had demonstrated previously the inherent difficulty in conducting an amphibious assault on built-up areas, TORCH would feature several efforts along these lines. The most dramatic of these was an attempt to land U.S. troops from HMS *Walney* and HMS *Hartland* (the former U.S. Coast Guard cutters *Sebago* and *Pontchartrain*, respectively) directly onto the moles of Oran Harbor. Both vessels quickly were identified as hostile and ran an intense gauntlet of French fire until sunk. In contrast, an attempt was made to sail USS *Dallas*, a vintage destroyer carrying seventy-five specially trained assault troops, six miles up Port Lyautey's Wadi Sebou waterway to carry out an attack on a critically important all-weather airfield. The effort, despite experiencing significant delays, succeeded. In an ever-urbanizing world, the viability of direct amphibious assaults may be open to debate once again.

O'Hara rightfully points out that TORCH, in the main, failed to deliver hoped-for results. It would take five months to achieve victory in North Africa, not the three weeks anticipated. The operation did nothing to ease the plight of the Soviet Union and the Mediterranean remained contested waters. The African campaign drew men, matériel, and shipping away from efforts to support a direct invasion of Europe. TORCH resulted in the total occupation of France by Germany and the intentional scuttling of the French fleet at Toulon.

None of these results, according to O'Hara, inflicted real loss on Italy and Germany. However, in the opportunity to identify and resolve amphibious challenges and as a beginning to the development of a truly combined strategic command, TORCH was of value. If, as O'Hara claims, TORCH also ensured that France would not become a true ally of Germany, the strategic benefit may have been significant.

TORCH sheds some welcome light on a campaign that too often is passed over. Scholars and lay readers alike will find the book useful. While O'Hara has performed yeoman service in providing this detailed account of the amphibious portion of the campaign, perhaps his greatest contribution is to restore the reputation of naval forces that, far from offering token resistance, fought with courage and tenacity, often against superior odds.

RICHARD J. NORTON



How the War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II, by Phillips Payson O'Brien. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015. 640 pages. \$35.

This book provides a detailed reexamination of the main contributory factors leading to Allied victory in World War II. In many ways the book's argument is not so much new as it is a revision of the revisionists. During the Cold War the narrative was largely that the Western Allies had triumphed over Germany and Japan with some help from the Soviet Union. That narrative was challenged at the time, and with more success after the end of the Cold

War by revisionist historians who placed an increased emphasis on the role of Soviet ground and air forces in the defeat of Germany. The Russian front, it was argued, was where the bulk of Germany's forces was engaged and, as far as the revisionist narrative went, defeated by the Soviet Union. Dr. O'Brien, a reader at the University of Glasgow, challenges that argument with a wealth of data and looks at the war in more global terms. He argues that the air and sea forces of the United States and the British Empire played the decisive role by preventing "the Germans and Japanese from moving" (p. 16).

How the War Was Won provides a broad array of detailed information discussing the enormous industrial contribution of all sides. Indeed, the author's analysis of all this information makes a compelling case for his argument. Yet there is something missing: it is difficult to see the link between cause and effect. One can see such a link better regarding the war against Japan, but in the case of the war in Europe the author does not show clearly the link he claims between air and sea power causing immense damage to Germany's war economy and Soviet troops wandering around Berlin in 1945. I suspect that the Soviet forces' killing and wounding of millions of German combat troops might have something to do with this, for without the physical removal of German soldiers from the Soviet Union's route to Berlin Hitler might not have felt the need to commit suicide.

Now, there is no denying that Allied air and sea power contributed to Allied victory in Europe; the argument seems to be to what extent they did so. Thus, this book is welcome for the depth of detail it provides as fodder for such a

debate. That this reviewer is not entirely convinced of the author's arguments does not make this a bad book; it is in fact a very good book, and an extremely welcome addition to the literature on World War II. It provides an enormous amount of information and analysis about the role of air and sea power, which furthers our understanding of the reasons for Allied success. That it causes the questioning of the current orthodoxy is to be applauded, as greater understanding often results from challenges to the status quo.

This book should prove of great benefit to advanced students of World War II, and it is particularly pertinent for specialists interested in current U.S. national security needs. Given the friction that exists among the United States, China, and Russia, the book provides an opportunity to think about how the U.S. armed services should structure their forces for any future conflict with these potential adversaries. Dr. O'Brien's book should be read by any sailor, marine, or airman invested in a budget fight, because "the only way to 'win' a war is to stop your enemy from moving" (p. 488). That argument seems a particularly pertinent one when looking at the problems of Southeast Asia or the Baltic or Black Sea regions.

NICHOLAS MURRAY



A Military History of Japan: From the Age of the Samurai to the 21st Century, by John T. Kuehn. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2014. 299 pages. \$75.

Japan is at an inflection point. Depending on how particular peoples and nations view this enigmatic country, it