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Roots of Strategy, Book 4

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The author delights in the pure integrity and patriotism of his protagonists. Nonetheless, Bradley's anecdotal evidence makes a strong case that the principal source of battlefield bravery has little to do with national allegiance—it's your buddies who count. He wrestles with the term "heroes"—a title of honor strenuously rejected by all the flag raisers. There is little doubt, however, where the author places these men who stood atop Suribachi, beneath their flag.

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Jablonsky, David, ed. *Roots of Strategy*, Book 4 (Four Military Classics). Mechanicsburg, Penna.: Stackpole Books, 1999. 533pp. \$19.95

In this useful fourth installment of Stackpole's "Roots of Strategy" series, David Jablonsky of the Army War College presents substantial selections from four classics of strategy: *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, by Alfred Thayer Mahan; *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, by Julian S. Corbett; *The Command of the Air*, by Giulio Douhet; and *Winged Defense*, by William Mitchell. The editor provocatively pairs American authors with non-Americans writing on the same subjects and bonds them with two unifying arguments. Jablonsky contends that all four writers were coping with monumental technological changes in warfare and were struggling to reconcile continuity with change, while peering into the future.

The two naval theorists, Mahan of the United States and Corbett of Great Britain, sought inspiration and guidance for future warfare in the putatively unchanging principles of the age of sail. The airpower innovators, Brigadier General

Mitchell of the U.S. Army and Brigadier General Douhet of Italy, concluded that the heavy bomber rendered the study of past warfare antiquarian and irrelevant to those planning for future combat.

As an American born in 1879 (one year before Douglas MacArthur and eleven years before the "closing of the frontier"), "Billy" Mitchell remained convinced that the vastness of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans gave the United States a security from land invasion unique among great powers. In the editor's opinion, Mitchell consequently was slow to confront Douhet's truly horrifying prescription for mass bombing of cities to pulverize "the material and moral resources of a people" in order to achieve "the final collapse of all social organization." For most of his contentious career, Mitchell envisioned large land-based American bombers primarily as instruments for sinking enemy warships advancing toward the American coastline, with fighter aircraft indispensable for downing long-range bombers headed for inland U.S. cities, which were now "as subject to attack as those along the coast."

Defense also plays a large role in Sir Julian Corbett's 1911 masterwork, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, the distillation of a lifetime of careful reflection upon the age of fighting sail from Drake to Nelson. A lawyer by training and a minor novelist by avocation, Corbett is the only author in this volume who never served in the military. He was, however, an intimate of Admiral Sir John Fisher, who presided over the dawn of the age of the dreadnought.

Some Principles of Maritime Strategy shows a linguist's familiarity with the figure considered today the Zeus of strategic thinkers, Carl von Clausewitz. It contains the best short summary of Clausewitz's

principal ideas currently in print in the United States. Equally riveting to anyone formulating realistic strategy is Corbett's disenchantment with supposedly "decisive" grand battles, his concept of geographically shifting and limited command of the seas, and his praise for interservice cooperation and amphibious operations. He was the first English-speaking writer indissolubly to link the military-naval, diplomatic, and economic elements of strategy.

As Jablonsky notes, Captain A. T. Mahan's scope is narrower than Corbett's. The American naval officer was writing in 1890 to further the technological and strategic revolution unleashed by the recent advent of the steam-driven, heavily gunned, thickly armored battleship. Jablonsky reprints only the first sections of Mahan's opus, those in which Mahan makes his "political-economic argument for sea power." The editor has omitted entirely the great bulk of the book, the thirteen historical chapters concerning both grand strategy and "the art and science of command," as derived from Anglo-French naval battles in the age of square-rigged ships of the line. This is a regrettable exclusion, because Jablonsky has adopted and emphasized the imaginative thesis of Jon Tetsuro Sumida that Mahan was as interested in "teaching command" as in the strategy of sea power. The limited excerpt from *The Influence of Sea Power* is insufficient to permit the reader to judge the validity of Sumida's proposition or to assess the utility of Mahan's ponderous dissections of sea battles, which were fought with a technology that had already disappeared when the naval officer wrote more than a century ago. Half a loaf is nonetheless better than none, and Jablonsky's balanced arrangement of Corbett, Douhet, and Mitchell

alongside Mahan should earn this volume a place on the bookshelves of all students of strategy who are sated with the current deification of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu.

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Smith, Gene A. *Thomas ap Catesby Jones: Commodore of Manifest Destiny*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2000. 223pp. \$34.95

Thomas ap Catesby Jones is best known for his mistaken seizure of Monterey, California, on 20 October 1842, believing that the United States and Mexico had gone to war. The occupation lasted barely overnight before the American flag had to be ceremoniously lowered and the Mexican flag rehoisted. Locally, the event was an occasion for many banquets and dances, but on the national level more serious repercussions caused a crisis in relations between Mexico and the United States.

Living in Monterey, I had often wondered about this incident, which is mentioned only briefly as a footnote in local histories. Now, with this biography of Thomas ap Catesby Jones, I have a much better understanding of a colorful part of Monterey history.

But this book offers much more. It explores the life of a controversial and complicated man whose naval career lasted half a century, from 1805 to 1855. In this period the United States went through a transformation from a young coastal nation on the Atlantic seaboard to a power that spanned the continent, a nation pursuing a "Manifest Destiny," with interests stretching well beyond its borders.