

Naval War College Review

Volume 50
Number 4 *Autumn*

Article 24

1997

Operation Anadyr

Paul J. Sanborn

Anatoli I. Gribkov

William Y. Smith

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Sanborn, Paul J.; Gribkov, Anatoli I.; and Smith, William Y. (1997) "Operation Anadyr," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 50 : No. 4 , Article 24.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol50/iss4/24>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

148 Naval War College Review

The text is easy to follow, the maps are simple but effective, and the endnotes reflect a balanced mix of official and scholarly materials, including a substantial number of primary sources. The bibliography alone makes *At the Water's Edge* a valuable resource to any serious student of amphibious warfare.

While there are few substantive criticisms one can make of this book (the author's first) the lack of commentary on the impact of vertical assault and on the anti-landing defenses in Egypt and Kuwait will strike many readers as a noticeable void. Though the British operations at Suez are mentioned in passing, there is no discussion of either the Egyptian defenses at Port Said or the Iraqi defenses in Kuwait. With vertical assault now central to amphibious doctrine and the Iraqi defenses often cited as evidence of the ebbing future viability of the amphibious assault, this is an unfortunate gap in an otherwise thorough treatment of the subject. Egyptian and Iraqi sources and specific information about the defenses at Port Said and Kuwait are still sharply limited, making it difficult to match the pattern and documentation of the other chapters. Some commentary on each, however, would have fit well into the theme of the book and given it even more value. Perhaps this gap can be closed in a subsequent edition as Iraqi and Egyptian records become more available.

Overall, this is an original and very useful work. Its tidy organization and clear prose make it an enjoyable read; it is substantive enough for experts yet easily handled by novices as well. As such, it should become a standard part of any curriculum covering amphibious

warfare. Gatchel has done a superb job of making the case for amphibious forces and attack across the shoreline, yet he does so indirectly, remaining remarkably unbiased in his tone and the flow of his logic. His subject is one that all operational planners need to think hard about, as access to overseas bases and theaters becomes increasingly challenged in the years ahead. No serious student of warfare "from the sea" should pass this one by.

G.P. GARRETT

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

Gribkov, Anatoli I., and William Y. Smith. *Operation Anadyr*. Chlicago: Edition Q, 1994. 252pp. \$24.95

This is the first work to combine the military perspectives of ranking Soviet and American officers who had first-hand knowledge of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis (or what the Soviets called the Caribbean Crisis). General Anatoli Gribkov and General William Smith met in 1992 at one of a series of conferences that brought both sides together to analyze the actions of the superpowers during that critical event, which nearly ended in nuclear war. Motivated by their experiences in Havana, the generals individually developed expanded accounts of their involvement, supported by recently declassified documents. The result is this book, which contains both generals' perceptions and related documents, in two appendices.

General Gribkov served as a representative of the Soviet General Staff to oversee construction of the missile sites and provide situation reports to the

Minister of Defense, Marshal Rodion Malinovsky. From him one learns that this project's codename (the Anadyr is a northeastern Russian river) was part of an intelligence deception to mislead the Americans into thinking that the Cuban operation was linked to the Bering Sea. Soviet troops arrived in Cuba equipped for winter campaigning and were never given a chance to acclimate to the heat and humidity. They had to perform all the heavy labor, because of security concerns about Cuban workers. Lacking heavy construction equipment, they had to dig with shovels; with the climate and shortage of labor, this delayed construction. Nonetheless, by the time the Americans indicated that they had found the sites, all surface-to-air missiles and their radars were operational, and the nuclear warheads were under guard by the KGB.

Gribkov claims that although others had been consulted, the decision to send the missiles to Cuba was Nikita Khrushchev's alone. However, he asserts, it was a mission built entirely upon sand, with command problems that made the subsequent crisis worse. The Americans were bound to find the missiles. What was the alternative plan? There was none.

Reading Gribkov's account, one gets the strong impression that his words have been chosen carefully and that his opinions are focused. The documents provided by the Russian Ministry of Defense have been sanitized, but they have been accurately translated by Catherine Fitzpatrick. Gribkov's writing is lucid, his insights are of importance to the intelligence community, and his narrative reveals much of Soviet

military thought and its perception of world politics.

General Smith's greatest contribution to this work is his lengthy discussion (with documentary evidence, also sanitized) of the difficult relationship between President John F. Kennedy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which had worsened since the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and could have been disastrous to American policy. Also, Kennedy's appointment of General Maxwell Taylor as Chairman did little to relieve the tension. Taylor, who had retired, was viewed by the Chiefs of Staff as Kennedy's puppet. They did not believe that he presented military plans of action forcefully enough to Kennedy and the Executive Committee. They resented Kennedy's rejection of their plans. The Chiefs wanted both the missiles and Castro out of Cuba, using a strong combined operation that would complete the job begun by the Bay of Pigs. Kennedy wished only to get the missiles out. He held his course.

The Director of Central Intelligence, John McCone, comes out well in Smith's account; he alone was concerned over Cuba well before October. Smith admits to a cardinal intelligence sin: that most civilian and some military leaders saw in Cuba what they wanted or expected to see. It was that fixation, plus extremely difficult weather, that masked Soviet construction until mid-October. Smith admits that Senator Kenneth Keating's (R-N.Y.) speeches in the Senate were his wake-up call about Cuba—not military intelligence. In 1962 General Smith was an Air Force major and special aide to General Taylor.

150 Naval War College Review

This book is unique in that both authors were in positions of responsibility during the 1962 crisis. It belongs in the library of anyone seeking to understand better the Cuban Missile Crisis. In it are unique and interesting insights, and lessons learned by both sides of the conflict.

PAUL J. SANBORN
American Military University

Tanaka, Yuki. *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1996. 267pp. (No price given)

It is only in the last two or three years that there has been any indication of Japanese willingness to acknowledge guilt or responsibility for anything that happened in the Pacific during World War II. Therefore, it is a matter of satisfaction to find a work by a Japanese scholar that examines the record and accepts that the Japanese war crimes catalogue is at least as grave as in the European theatre.

One issue was that of the "comfort women." Much has been heard about those women, who were used as sexual playthings for the Japanese forces. They were conscripted and sent as camp followers to whatever theatre in which the Japanese were engaged. While the author devotes a full chapter to "Rape and War: The Japanese Experience," which is critical of Japanese actions, his effort to deflect criticism of the Japanese leaves much to be desired. He argues that since rape occurs in every war, and since many armies establish or supervise brothels for their troops (as the British

did in Egypt during World War II), the criticism of Japan is excessive and misplaced. Tanaka ignores, or does not appreciate, the difference between tolerating brothels (in which women are paid and there of their own accord) and conscripted women (who are there against their will, sent abroad and treated as sex slaves). Nor does he recognize the difference between individual acts of rape and mass rape as a matter of organized policy.

In another discussion, Tanaka provides a very detailed account of cannibalism by Japanese troops, making it quite clear that it was not an isolated practice. His explanation for it is difficult to accept, especially when he concedes that in some instances the cannibals were in fact well disciplined and often well fed. "The widespread occurrence of cannibalism," he argues, "was by Japanese soldiers who had been abandoned by their commanders. Responsibility for these crimes must rest principally with Imperial headquarters and its ill-considered ad-hoc Southwest Pacific strategy," which did not prepare the troops for the stresses and difficulties of jungle warfare. However, the same can be said of the Australian, American, British, and New Zealand commands, and their forces seem not to have been affected in the same way!

As for massacres of civilians and prisoners of war, Tanaka is under the impression that Japanese officers and soldiers were not sufficiently aware of the limitations imposed by international law (were Allied personnel more learned in this area?) and so cannot be much blamed for their actions. In the context of their belief in *gyokusai*