

Naval War College Review

Volume 36
Number 4 *July-August*

Article 14

1983

The Underwater War, 1939-1945

B. A. Needham

Richard Compton-Hall

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Recommended Citation

Needham, B. A. and Compton-Hall, Richard (1983) "The Underwater War, 1939-1945," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 36 : No. 4 , Article 14.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol36/iss4/14>

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to those mentioned above, include those of Jimmy Doolittle, Curt LeMay, Monk Hunter, Possum Hansell, Hugh Knerr, Pete Quesada, Ken Walker, Frank Armstrong [the model for General Savage in *Twelve O'Clock High*], Larry Kuter, Larry Norstad, and Hoyt Vandenberg. The central roles remain those of Andrews, until his accidental death in May 1943; Arnold, throughout the story unquestionably portrayed as the hardest man to work for that anyone could imagine; Spaatz, whom the author looks on as "the U.S. Grant of the strategic bombing offensive"; and Eaker, who, when sent to England early in 1942, became "the point man in an experiment that had been twenty years in the making." In this recounting it is Eaker who shines through as the central hero, constantly buffeted in a two-front war—"one against the enemy and one against 'friends' at home."

Again, as with Morrison, but this time less so, the professional historians will mumble about the sparse documentation and seeming randomness of footnoting. They would do well to be wary in this instance, however, since those who have made this subject a specialty at one time or other will be quick to observe that Copp's extensive use of the documents and wide-ranging interviews invariably leads him as close to the truth as anyone is by this point likely to get. Better than any other published work, this one takes us (to borrow from Walt Rostow in another context) "into the arena of power, vested interest, and person-

ality—where forces quite different from straightforward intellectual argument were at work." It is for this reason that anyone from any service who is headed into the maelstrom of "the Washington planning arena" cannot fail to benefit from a thoughtful perusal of these pages.

The one disappointment for this reviewer is that the book ends too soon. The period from January 1944 to April 1945, the final fifteen months of the air war, is compressed into a concluding 28-page chapter. Given that more than 72 percent of the bombs dropped over Europe fell after 1 July 1944, that the full weight of the offensive was not unleashed on Germany until after the Normandy lodgement was secure, it is regrettable that more space was not available in which to chronicle the full effects, long delayed, of the air offensive. This point, however, is not so much a criticism of what Mr. Copp has achieved as it is a suggestion that a better subtitle was available: *The Struggle to Mount the Air Offensive over Europe, 1940-1943*.

DAVID MacISAAC
Center for Aerospace Doctrine,
Research & Education
The Air University

Compton-Hall, Richard. *The Underwater War, 1939-1945*. New York; Sterling Publishing, 1982. 160pp. \$19.95

The author is a very experienced submariner who has been closely associated with the submarine world, both nuclear and conventional, for over 30 years. He is presently

the director of the submarine museum of the Royal Navy at the submarine school in Gosport, having access to much original material which has not previously been available for publication. The book is extremely well presented, contains many fascinating anecdotes which are generously supported by some 280 black and white photographs, many of which are unique.

A logical layout divides the book conveniently into two parts. The first gives a background of submarine history, how conventional submarines operate, and an insight into how submariners live inside their boats. The second part relates submarine operations during World War II (1939-1945), commencing with the various geographical campaigns. The author then describes some particularly interesting aspects of the war period, including Soviet, midget, and special submarine operations. The final chapter presents some conclusions, based on lessons learned from the past, which also have important relevance today.

In his introduction, the author reminds the reader that there are now about 1,000 submarines in the world's navies. He reviews the submarine history prior to 1939, which is "littered with lack of knowledge, ignorance, dual thinking and wrong reporting." Indeed, he suggests that today's knowledge of technology and human physiology can lead one to seriously question the early history of submarines. It is evident that a combination of myth, overoptimistic assessments, unrealistic simulation,

and lack of communication by the "silent service" led to many submarines being poorly prepared for World War II.

Subsequently, he describes the buildup of the submarine fleets and their readiness, suggesting that rather than the quality of their weapons, equipment, and machinery, it was more often the quality of the officers and enlisted men which decided the effectiveness of the submarines themselves. The Germans' dedication is compared with the caution of some US Navy peacetime COs who found themselves unprepared for war when it came.

The next four chapters explain, in a simple and interesting fashion: the mechanics of the submarine; navigation; communications and life below, giving a particularly fascinating insight into living conditions and the way of life of the submariner. This is followed by consideration of underwater weapons, the fundamentals of the attack problem, and the surface and air forces that opposed the submarine. Included is a description of the shortcomings associated with the torpedo, the early horrifying failure rate and the outrageous claims by COs of tonnage sunk—subsequently disproved in analysis.

In describing the geographical campaigns of the underwater war, consideration is given to the submarines of all the major combatants. However, it was in the Atlantic where the greatest losses took place on both sides: 2,775 merchant ships and 784 U-boats. The author describes some of the realities of wolf

pack tactics which, contrary to popular belief, were not coordinated. He also traces the changing success rate, as maritime patrol aircraft gained the ascendancy, against the earlier types of U-boats. He makes clear how frightening it is to contemplate what might have been the outcome, had the revolutionary German-type XXI (similar to today's Soviet W class) been introduced just a few months earlier.

US Navy submarine operations are addressed primarily in the Pacific campaign, describing the severe problems encountered at the outset. The author is somewhat critical of the US dependence upon intelligence and its predisposition towards naval targets. He suggests that it was not until a policy change in 1944, to attack all Japanese shipping, that the course of events really changed and led to the final success of the submarine force and the rapid ending of the war in the Pacific.

The chapter on Soviet submarines is most interesting and is partly based on the experiences of some British submariners who served with the Russian Navy at that time. The constant presence at sea of the political commissars and the frequent sea riding of divisional commanders are commented upon before concluding that the sum of Soviet submarine achievements was not impressive.

The subjects of midget submarines and Special Operations are covered in two fascinating chapters prior to the final chapter entitled: "An All Round Look." In this the author offers some important conclusions

that can be related to today's submarine operations. From these the following have been extracted as particularly noteworthy:

- Men and morale are more important than machinery and materials.
- Unrealistic peacetime exercises can breed the wrong type of commanding officer.
- Weapons and systems must be realistically tested and evaluated in peacetime.

In summary, a well-written, entertaining and interesting book that is illustrated with some unique photographs and anecdotes. It gives the nonsubmariner a worthwhile insight into the submarine operations of WW II and of the men who died, or lived to tell the tale. For the submarine specialist, this unique book is a "must," both for light relief and for serious reflection upon the direction in which we are heading as well as for the lessons we should learn from the past.

B. A. NEEDHAM
Commander, Royal Navy

Lord, Walter. *The Miracle of Dunkirk*.
New York: Viking Press, 1982.
323pp. \$17.95

In wartime, navies often find themselves doing important things for which they have not prepared themselves. For example for years on end in the Vietnamese War the US Navy, a loud proclaimer of its own mobility, fought an aerial bombing campaign from one spot on the map. Simultaneously the same "blue-water" navy conducted a vigorous