

1977

World War II: An Account of its Documents

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Recommended Citation

Miles, David; O'Neill, James F.; and Krauskopf, Robert W. (1977) "World War II: An Account of its Documents," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 30 : No. 2 , Article 22.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol30/iss2/22>

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120 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

that a monarchy, having no stake in trying to regain Napoleon's conquests, was the only form of government capable of bringing stability to France and Europe? Or did he betray Napoleon because he had hopes of obtaining power and influence from the new regime? The author also fails to discuss the Tsar's scheme to place Bernadotte on the French throne and his reason for giving up his plan. Finally, the author says almost nothing about Austrian and English policies and their impact upon the fate of France.

What the author has done is to provide a well-written, well-researched narrative account of an important aspect of Napoleon's downfall. She has also described the important role that Talleyrand played in deciding the future of France.

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O'Neill, James E. and Krauskopf, Robert W. eds. *World War II: An Account of its Documents*. Washington: Howard University Press, 1976. 269pp.

In June 1971, the National Archives and Records Service sponsored a well-received conference in Washington, which was designed to establish a dialogue between archivists and historians in the use and location of the primary historical sources of World War II. Topics discussed included wartime diplomacy, military biography, and access to archival sources. Virtually everyone who attended the meeting felt it was a success, but to transform a conference into a published volume is a difficult, if not overwhelming, task.

Everything said in such a gathering may not be worth publishing. Papers delivered by promising young scholars may not measure up to professional expectations and may lack publishable quality. The old sage may reproduce a paper delivered at an earlier military

history symposium, or the last chapter of his latest book, or even a discarded lesson plan from last fall's graduate seminar. At the National Archives and Records Service conference such was not the case. The leading archivists and historians of World War II were invited to be the participants. Among the established scholars presenting papers were Louis Morton, Henri Michel, Barbara W. Tuchman, Selig Adler, Albert Blum, and Noble Franklin. Their papers are good—in fact very good. They provide an excellent dialogue between the archivists and historians of the Second World War. By themselves these papers are a valuable contribution to scholarship. But the editors of *World War II: An Account of its Documents* were not content with simply collecting 18 well-written essays into a book. In addition, they compiled biographies of the contributors, a bibliography of the finding aids to materials on the Second World War, a thorough and exhaustive index, and a brief yet complete summary of the discussion that accompanied the papers during the conference. The photographs, most of them from the National Archives files, are informative and seldom found in other books. The editors' efforts produced a solid piece of work designed to serve the needs of both the academician and savant of World War II.

Of the papers delivered, several are particularly noteworthy. The late Louis Morton's essay on the different historical interpretations of the events that led to Pearl Harbor is most perceptive and interesting. After reading his cogent article, one has a better understanding of why Japan attacked America's mighty fortress in the Pacific. Also fascinating and informative was the essay by Henri Michel, the secretary-general of the *Comité d' Histoire de la 2^{ème} guerre*, entitled the "Archives of the French Resistance: Methods of Collection and Results." A clandestine organization by its very nature does not

PROFESSIONAL READING 121

keep records, documents, or even a list of members. How the French are recounting the lost facts of the Resistance and chronicling the past from records that at first seem not to exist is an excellent example of ingenuity in historical research. Finally, Pulitzer Prize winner Barbara W. Tuchman, while discussing the problems in writing her biography of General Stilwell, found that the need to gain access to the Pentagon's classified material was overrated. In all cases but one, documents were declassified for her; and quite often she was able to establish the facts by simply going to a private source.

The most pertinent feature of this book, however, is the assistance it offers researchers in mining the wealth of material pertaining to the Second World War. The U.S. military heritage of World War II is richly documented, and this overabundance can be a problem for the researcher. For example, the National Archives has 164,000 cubic feet of military records from the years 1940-1945, which translate into some 670 million pages. Then the depositories of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force have their own holdings. Add the files found in the Presidential libraries and all the microfilms on the subject of World War II and we have about 14,000 tons of military records. Needless to say the scholar can be overwhelmed; research on even a narrow topic is often mind-boggling. The archivists attempt to establish some semblance of order out of this chaos by describing where the records can be found, how to gain access to them, and how to use them. With this book at hand the researcher need no longer be intimidated by this vast supply of information.

Anyone who is entertaining thoughts of studying the primary sources of World War II should read this book. No doubt the war colleges and professional service schools will have a copy for their libraries. It is an indispensable source

for the academician and the primary researcher of World War II.

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Palmer, Alan. *Bismarck*. New York: Scribner, 1976. 271 pp.

Few individuals have been so extensively examined by biographers as Bismarck. Vilified by some, almost deified by others, Bismarck has been exhaustively and brilliantly portrayed by the likes of Eyck, Ludwig, and Pflanze. That after all this, a prominent author should still choose this subject for his latest study at first appears to be an exercise in superfluous repetition. And yet, Alan Palmer has produced a generally interesting and thoroughly solid biography. As the publisher's fly-cover proclaims with only slight exaggeration, this is genuinely a comprehensive biography of a formidably complex personality. In a remarkably compact account, Palmer has presented a factual synopsis, clear and accurate, of Bismarck's political and diplomatic career. Cleverly interwoven into this matrix is an attempt to give an account of Bismarck the man: "to dissect the myth and find the man behind the mask." Although new and dramatic revelations are not forthcoming, the combination spun by Palmer has resulted in a lucid and stimulating biography.

The book, however, is not without shortcomings. Because of the brevity of this account, it is impossible to get a good, appreciative feel for the guile and shrewdness with which Bismarck handled foreign policy. A sense of the finesse and precision in day-to-day maneuvers, dispatches and negotiations is missing, as is manifestation of the remarkable flexibility (often called opportunism) which characterized Bismarckian diplomacy in the face of each new development in a crisis. Obviously