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## The Battle of the Falaise Gap

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the RAF to this very day, is primarily responsible for a long succession of bad decisions and failures from World War I onward, according to the author. Only the aircrews, who established an "imperishable record of courage and self-sacrifice," consistently fare well in the book.

In the course of his sweeping accusations, Mr. Divine traces the development of military aviation in Britain from its beginning to the present, which would he from beginning to end if he had his way. He finds little justification, past or present, for an independent Air Force and develops that theme with such enthusiasm that he arrives at the conclusion that there is little need for aircraft: "The manned aircraft is today — despite recent elaborations — a primitive and outmoded equipment for exercising these functions [of air warfare]." In his zealotry to discredit the manned bomber he commits the particularly serious error of misrepresenting the effects of the bombing of Germany during World War II. The data that he presents are correct insofar as he reveals them; but only by restricting his presentation to gross and incomplete statistics, thereby omitting many vital and relevant facts, can he possibly draw the dangerous conclusion that the bombings had little or no effect on German arms production. A slightly more thorough study would have revealed to Mr. Divine that the bombings were, in fact, disastrously destructive and resulted in the near-total collapse of the whole German economy. Elaboration is not possible here, but interested readers are referred to the very authoritative 315-volume *United States Strategic Bombing Survey*, (the Summary volume is quite thorough) or the 4-volume *The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany: 1939-1945* by Sir Charles K. Webster and Noble Frankland.

Whether Mr. Divine's omissions and erroneous conclusion on the effects of the bombing of Germany were intentional or inadvertent is beside the point. Regrettably, the naiveté of his shallow assessment casts suspicion on the credibility of other interpretations and conclusions in the book, especially those which are at variance with commonly accepted and documented interpretations.

Just as Mr. Divine's criticisms are considered unduly severe, so too, perhaps, is this review, for on the whole the author has given us a well-written, thought-provoking (albeit unbalanced and biased) analysis of the development and employment of military aviation in Britain. It merits the serious attention of all students of military and naval affairs. His criticisms of the airplane and tabulations of its limitations are valid, though exaggerated in effect and time. Nearly one-third of the book is devoted to an informative, comparative analysis of the development of guided missiles and rockets in Germany, Britain, the U.S.S.R., and the United States before and during World War II, and in the latter three countries since the War. Finally, woven throughout the book is a penetrating, illustrated commentary on the consequences of interservice rivalry, roles and missions, squabbles, and shortsighted, biased plans and decisions. It would seem there are lessons still to be learned in these areas, and *The Broken Wing* is an excellent, interesting primer.

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Florentin, Eddy. *The Battle of the Falaise Gap*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1967. 362 p.

Originally published in 1964 under the title *Stalingrad en Normandie*, this book tells the story of the battle of

the Falaise-Argentan pocket — the battle in which in August 1944 American, British, French, Polish, and Canadian forces surrounded the better part of six Wehrmacht corps, trapping six infantry divisions, part of a seventh, and parts of two panzer divisions. Although a considerable number in eight other panzer divisions managed to escape the trap, they “did so at the cost of a great proportion of their equipment.” A Stalingrad? Perhaps not, but the Wehrmacht suffered staggering losses, forcing the Germans to withdraw to the Vosges. Within 12 days after the last shot had been fired in the Falaise pocket, Montgomery entered Antwerp; within 20 days, Bradley crossed the Siegfried Line before Trier.

This translation from the French reveals Eddy Florentin as an extensive researcher, and, perhaps, an overly ambitious writer. The story of the battle of the Falaise gap is an exciting one, and in telling it the author chooses to adopt the technique of Walter Lord — using the experiences of eyewitnesses and participants in the action. It makes for fascinating reading but also for confusion. In the first place, the battle was fought over about 1,400 square miles in slightly less than 4 weeks. The “front,” or sectors of contact where combat action took place, at one time exceeded 150 miles. Of necessity, the author tells his story by narrating the action at various critical points along this front. He identifies the locale by reference to the route numbers of the myriad roads that crisscross this area of central Normandy, or by reference to towns or terrain features. Unfortunately, of the seven maps contained in the book, not one has route numbers of roads, and less than one-third of the towns or terrain features can be found on the maps. This not only confounds the reader but is exceptionally frustrating

to anyone who is a student of military history. To add somewhat to the confusion, the author, on several occasions, describes quite vividly the actions leading up to the capture of a town or hill and then, without any warning, jumps back in time 5 or 6 days to tell the story of the actions on the enemy side. This chronological shift is not apparent until one has covered two or three pages and suddenly realizes that the town just captured appears to be back in enemy hands. Having identified what the author is doing, the reader then finds himself continually looking back in an attempt to correlate in his own mind the actions taking place on both sides. But to give M. Florentin credit, he is an excellent storyteller. If the reader is not a student of military history, is not particularly interested in the big picture, and likes highly descriptive, blood and thunder war stories, he will really enjoy this book.

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Galbraith, John K. *The New Industrial State*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967. 427 p.

Galbraith's newest best seller is a sustained argument that big corporations do not respond to markets but, instead, replace them by corporate planning of prices, costs, sales, and profits. He postulates that the 500 largest corporations (producing, according to him, almost half the goods and services in the U.S. economy) make up what he calls the “industrial system.” These corporations are run by groups of specialists whom Galbraith labels collectively as the “technostructure.” Unlike the traditional entrepreneur (e.g., Henry Ford), the technostructure contributes brainpower rather than capital to the enterprise, and it is not rewarded out of