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## **Book Review: Forging the Anglo-American Alliance: The British and American Armies, 1917–1941**

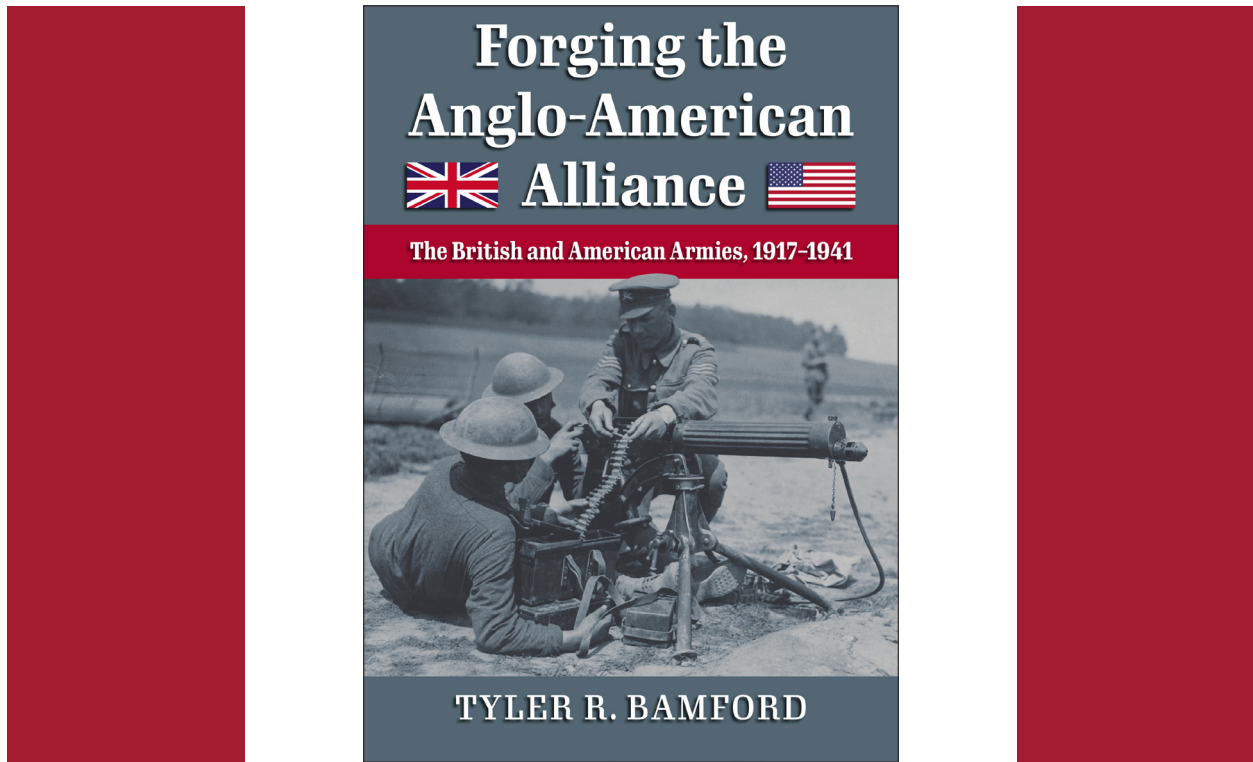
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**T** Tyler R. Bamford, a military historian with the Naval History and Heritage Command, holds a PhD in history from Temple University. His book, *Forging the Anglo-American Alliance: The British and American Armies, 1917-1941*, extends from his dissertation and includes relevant period photographs, principally from the US National Archives. Exhibiting excellence in research, structure, and the thorough notation of primary and secondary sources, Bamford argues that the Anglo-American alliance of World War II emerged from the relationships formed during World War I that were maintained throughout the interwar years by British and American officers.

Previous literature has often focused on the interactions between the British and American navies and between political leaders Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. The significance of Bamford's book, however, comes from its focus on the long-term impact of the interwar relationships between army officers of both nations—relationships that endured despite tensions between the two countries. The author posits that British and American officers shared a common worldview and prejudices rooted in white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant culture and encountered common challenges while adapting to the changing methods of warfare—particularly mechanization—in a time of serious fiscal constraint. This common worldview would be seen as narrow and prejudicial today, but it united British and American officers during a challenging worldwide depression. Despite contentious issues between the United States and Britain (such as naval arms limitation, the repayment of British war debt, and American isolationism), these officers found a common cause in the resistance of the social radicalism and political totalitarianism that marked the interwar years.

Bamford presents his case chronologically, beginning with the Anglo-American relationship as associated armies in World War I. The British provided essential training and equipment, as well as trench warfare expertise to American “doughboys” under German artillery fire and helped US officers reach beyond their limited experience when entering the Western Front. Friendships that began in World War I remained strong throughout the interwar years and thrived through personal visits, athletic and military contests (particularly polo), and military exchanges. Officers viewed each other’s military exercises with keen interest, especially exercises involving mechanization.

The role of military attachés was particularly important, both in the maintenance of ties and in the sharing of intelligence on emerging enemies. When other relationships frayed, intelligence-sharing agreements waned, and mutual exercises became limited, the attachés kept connections alive. Often, when formal ties of communication withered, attachés were able to obtain key information through personal and social relationships exercised through rifle meets and polo matches. This ability was the greatest key to success in the role. For example, Bamford details how Colonel Kenyon Joyce, the American Army attaché to Britain in the early 1920s, successfully arranged an audience with King George V and Queen Mary, and a standing ovation in Parliament for the visit of Charles Lindbergh to London.

With Italy, Germany, and Japan emerging as enemies of the United States and Great Britain in the late 1930s, army officers in both nations grew concerned over the threat. The British depended on American strength in the Pacific to allow them more focus on Europe. Both countries would eventually unite, viewing Germany as the first enemy to defeat. The British mobilization model came under scrutiny by American officers who expected to enter World War II after Germany’s invasion of Poland and France. A key point of the book, the aspects of these army relationships, including intelligence sharing, proceeded despite the absence of guidance and in advance of the political approval that would later lead to the formal alliance.

Bamford outlines the deep origins of this alliance in the granular detail of personal relationships established across different contact forums and helps today’s defense community understand the significance of these relationships, military exchanges, and diplomacy. This book encourages anyone engaged in combined exercises and disparate security cooperation activities by successfully illuminating the range of army activities leading to the war-winning Anglo-American alliance.

Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2022 • 304 pages • \$49.95

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**Keywords: World War I, Great Britain, interwar years, mechanization, military attachés**

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