

## Combined and Joint War during World War II: The Anglo-American Story<sup>1</sup>

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The combined efforts of the Anglo-American Allies at the strategic level of war explain much about the effectiveness of their military efforts in eventually destroying their Axis opponents in the Second World War.<sup>2</sup> Likewise the developing of joint capabilities in their military forces contributed significantly to Allied victory in the war. Admittedly, in the beginning there were considerable difficulties in forging at the beginning an effective Anglo-American response to the complex and difficult strategic and joint issues raised by the war. In effect, the political and military leaders of the alliance had to develop a true combined approach to their strategy and conduct of operations. Similarly the services had to develop concepts and organizational structures to make joint warfare effective. Both took time and effort.

In the first years of the conflict, Allied air, sea, and ground forces found it difficult to cooperate in a fashion that maximized their military potential. Indeed, too many military historians have focused on the difficulties and quarrels that marked the development of Anglo-American combined strategy as well as the joint military operations their forces conducted.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the performance of the Anglo-American powers in both spheres of military endeavor stand in stark contrast to the performance of the three Axis powers at both the combined and joint levels throughout the terrible conflict.

Before we turn to the Anglo-American picture, it might be useful to make a few comments about the Axis powers. First of all, one can certainly not speak of any efforts at a combined strategy that would have furthered the efforts of those three powers to overthrow the world order.<sup>4</sup> In June of 1940, when Benito Mussolini's Fascist Italy declared war on Britain and France, it did so while playing minimal attention to German desiderata. Instead, the Italian

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<sup>1</sup> This paper will use the American definition of the terms combined and joint warfare. In the case of the former, combined operations refers to military operations launched by two cooperating powers which may or may not be allies. The latter term refers to military operations where air, naval, and ground forces cooperate together in military operations at either the tactical or operational levels of war.

<sup>2</sup> Gerhard Weinberg's *A World at Arms, A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge, 1994) is particularly good on the complex political and strategic interactions between the United States and Great Britain in the conduct of combined operations.

<sup>3</sup> In this regard see David Irving, *The War between the Generals: Inside the Allied High Command* (London, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> Even in terms of combined military strategy, the Axis powers worked much of the time at cross purposes. As the noted military historian, General Sir David notes about German-Italian strategic cooperation: "in the Mediterranean the higher direction—the grand strategy—depended largely on communications between Hitler and Mussolini, each of whom was surrounded by excessively subservient advisers. There was no regular method of cooperation between OKW and Commando Supremo (for instance), no regular exchange of ideas, no regular meeting of minds. There were periodic sessions at which Marshal Cavallero, the head of Commando Supremo, would be exposed to the geopolitical ramblings of the Führer, but those could hardly be dignified by the name of strategic consultations." David Fraser, *Knight's Cross, A Life of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel* (New York, 1993), p. 225.

strategic assumption appears to have been that it was going to be able to wage a “parallel war” against the British with no aid from the Germans. The disasters that quickly followed in fall 1940—defeat in Greece and the Egypt, along with the sinking of much of the Italian battle fleet at Taranto by British torpedo bombers—put paid to such illusions.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the Italians sank back into being second-class citizens in the Axis, whom Hitler informed of major German decisions that he had undertaken with no prior consultations. As Mussolini’s foreign minister and son-in-law, Count Galeazzo Ciano recorded the Duce’s reaction to Hitler’s move into Rumania in fall 1940:

But above all he is indignant at the German occupation of Rumania. He says that this has impressed Italian public opinion very deeply and badly, because... nobody had expected this to happen. ‘Hitler always confronts me with a *fait accompli*. This time I am going to pay him back in his own coin. He will find out from the papers that I have occupied Greece.’<sup>6</sup>

As this audience well knows, strategic coordination was little better between Japan and the Third Reich. Hitler only saw fit to inform his supposed allies in the Far East of Operation BARBAROSSA after the German invasion of the Soviet Union had actually begun. The Japanese government paid their German allies back in full by informing them of the attack on Pearl Harbor only after it had occurred. Thereafter, the two governments waged their grand strategies as if they lived on separate planets.

In the joint arena, matters were not much better. The Italian Air Force participated in the naval battle off Calabria in July 1940 by bombing the two opposing fleets with abandon. After the collapse of late 1940, only in naval-air cooperation in attacking British efforts to relieve Malta in 1942 was there some glimmering of cooperation between the *Regina Aeuronautica* and the navy. Not surprisingly given their emphasis on the tactical, immediate battlefield, the Germans did considerably better in joint operations.

Nevertheless, the invasion of Norway in April 1940 represented the high point in German joint operations, where the three services displayed a modicum of cooperative behavior. In terms of tactical support for ground forces, the *Luftwaffe* proved far superior to what the *Wehrmacht*’s opponents in the air could perform in supporting ground forces, at least until summer 1942. Nevertheless, the cooperation of the *Luftwaffe* and the *Kriegsmarine* in the Battle of the Atlantic was almost non-existent. As for the cooperation between the two Japanese services in the Pacific in forming a strategic and operational approach to the strategic and operational problems the American counterattacks raised, there was none, as most of those in this audience surely recognize. Instead the two services remained suspicious of their colleagues in other uniforms, unwilling to share intelligence, and concentrated on courses of

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<sup>5</sup> For the Italian-German approach to combined war, see particularly MacGregor Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed, Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy’s Last War* (Cambridge, 1982). For the military incompetence that contributed so much to those disasters, see MacGregor Knox, *Hitler’s Italian Allies: Royal Armed Forces, Fascist Regime, and the War of 1940-1943* (Cambridge, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Galeazzo Ciano, *The Ciano Diaries* (New York, 1946). P. 300.

war that suggested they were fighting entirely different wars.

### **Combined War: the Anglo-American Experience**

Let me now turn to combined warfare as practiced by the Allies. I will not include the Soviet Union in my discussion, because one simply cannot talk about combined warfare in terms of Soviet cooperation with the Western Powers.<sup>7</sup> There was none: this in spite of the massive amounts of military and economic aid that the British and Americans provided the Russians from the first days of the German invasion on 22 June 1941 through to the end of the conflict. Instead the Soviets continually complained about the failure of the Anglo-American powers to launch a second front, a front they had stood by and watched the Germans destroy in May 1940 without lifting a finger. Thus, in discussing combined warfare waged by major allies one finds oneself limited to a discussion of the complex and difficult operations conducted by the British and Americans.<sup>8</sup>

To begin with, both powers had had the experience of working together in the great coalition that brought Germany to defeat in the First World War. Admittedly, it had taken four long years and then the desperate threat posed by the Ludendorff offensive of spring 1918 to force Britain, France, and the United States to establish a workable military alliance under the guidance of the French Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the leaders of Britain and the United States throughout the Second World War had held senior positions in their respective governments during the previous conflict: Winston S. Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty and then Minister of Munitions; Franklin D. Roosevelt, as the Under Secretary of the Navy. Thus, both leaders were in a position to observe how not to conduct combined operations in wartime and how best to work with allies under the pressures of war and the difficulties raised by differing war aims.

One might well date the origins of Anglo-American combined operations in the Second World War with the collapse of France in May and June 1940. Confronting an increasingly desperate situation on the battlefield in France, Churchill reached out to the Americans. In retrospect, the strategic situation was not as dangerous as it appeared at the time. Nevertheless, most military observers in the United States did not believe that the British would be able to stand up the *Wehrmacht's* and the *Luftwaffe's* assault, while for his part Churchill confronted a significant number of the Conservative MP's who believed that Britain should make a deal

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<sup>7</sup> About the only instance of such cooperative efforts between the Soviets and the Americans came in August 1944, when after immensely long negotiations with the Soviets, Eighth Air Force was allowed to fly a shuttle mission of B-17s across Germany and having dropped their bombs to continue the flight and land on Soviet held territory. However, the *Luftwaffe* had picked up the American intentions and destroyed most of the B-17s on the ground before they could make their return trip to their bases in the United Kingdom.

<sup>8</sup> Professor Peter Mansoor of the Ohio State University and this author have just completed a major manuscript on the relationship between combined warfare waged by different alliance systems throughout the ages and the conduct of grand strategy. The manuscript is at present under review by Cambridge University Press.

<sup>9</sup> Britain and France were allied powers; the United States was an associated power. In military terms, Foch never was in the position to command the armies of his allies, while the commander of the French Army, Field Marshal Henri Pétain was not always willing to do Foch's bidding.

with the Germans and end the war.<sup>10</sup> It is not entirely clear at what point Churchill believed that he could count on the support of the United States, if Britain were to continue the war, but my best guess is that the British attack on the French fleet at Mers-el-Kabir was not only an effort by Churchill to remove the French Navy from the balance of power, but a clear signal to Roosevelt that Britain was in the war for the duration.

That was certainly how Roosevelt interpreted the British attack on the French fleet. Unlike his military advisors, the president also recognized that Britain represented the first line of defense for the United States. Therefore, the British needed the maximum aid possible, however deeply that aid might bite into the military equipment might detract from the desperate needs of America's own military forces.<sup>11</sup> In over-ruling his military advisors, the president was taking considerable political risks, because he was in the midst of his campaign for reelection to a third term as president of the United States. From that decision emerged the steady American approach toward entering the conflict.

Certainly the pace at which the Americans moved caused deep frustration to the British prime minister. Nevertheless, Roosevelt was a consummate politician, and he knew precisely how far he could take the American people deeply divided as they were between the isolationist and interventionists. The idiocy of the Japanese and German governments ended America's turtle like approach to entering the war in December 1941—the former with the strategically disastrous attack on Pearl Harbor that united a divided American people and the latter with Hitler's declaration of war on the United States four days later.

Great Britain and the United States might have been allies at last, but one must not lose sight of the fact that their strategic aims for the post-war world were quite different. For his part Roosevelt felt quite strongly that it was time for the colonial powers to abandon their subjugation of many of the world's people. However, for the British, the maintenance of the Empire represented a fundamental war aim. As Churchill was to comment in 1942, he had not become prime minister to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire. Nevertheless, for the most part British and American political and military leaders did not allow that division to hinder their willingness to cooperate in the defeat of their Japanese and German opponents.

The initial combined effort came in the Pacific with the Anglo-American effort to hold the Malay–Dutch East Indies Barrier. The force structure was almost completely absent for any possible defense of that barrier against Japanese capabilities; the military command was cobbled together at the last moment; and virtually everyone involved in the planning and conduct of operations underestimated the extraordinary tenacity and skill of their Japanese opponent at sea, on land, and in the air. The result was an unmitigated disaster with Malaya, Singapore, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines all falling before the Japanese *Blitzkrieg*. Within a matter of months the combined effort in Southeast Asia had completely

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<sup>10</sup> There have been several historians who have argued that a deal with Hitler would have saved the British Empire. It is a nonsensical position supported by academics who have little or no knowledge of the Nazi regime.

<sup>11</sup> For an excellent examination of American strategy during the war, see particularly Peter Mansoor, "American Strategy in the second world War," in Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, *Successful Strategies: Triumphant in War and Peace from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, 2014).

collapsed.

From that point on, the Pacific became an American domain with little need for cooperative planning or combined operations. The one area where this was not true was in the China-India-Burma (CBI) theater. Here the British efforts aimed at regaining Burma itself, as the first step toward regaining Malaya and Singapore. The Americans, on the other hand, viewed military operations in the theater as a means to open up a land logistics route to China to improve on the aerial logistical bridge over the Himalayas. They certainly had no interest in regaining Burma for the British Empire.

The completely unrealistic hope of the Americans was that China could provide the bases for the B-29's aerial assault on the Chinese mainland. By the last year of the war, the Americans had largely lost interest in the CBI because of the gross political and military incompetence of the Chinese Nationalist government as well as the fact that the Central Pacific campaign had brought the Marianas under U.S. control, and control of those islands represented a far more effective basing system for the B-29 assault on the Home Islands. As a result, the brilliant campaign waged by Field Marshal William Slim's Fourteenth Army largely represented a British effort to regain Burma for the Empire.<sup>12</sup>

It was in Europe and the Atlantic where the British and American efforts meshed—and sometimes failed to mesh—in combined operations. But it was the former rather than the latter that was crucial to Allied victory. In the initial meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt in Placentia Bay in Newfoundland, the two leaders and their staffs agreed on a “Germany-first” strategy, once the United States became involved in the conflict.<sup>13</sup> In fact, the “Germany-first” strategy proved much more difficult to implement, because of the desperate need to buttress the Pacific theater.

Much of 1942 was spent in debating the potential courses of operation in Europe for Anglo-America combined operations. Initially, the Americans pushed hard for a great amphibious landing on the coast of northern France in 1943; this line of strategic thought represented a line that aimed at helping the Soviets, who appeared to be in a desperate military situation.<sup>14</sup> The British, on the other hand, had no intention of attacking the Germans at their strongest point, especially given their experience in 1940 and the troubles that they were having in North Africa. The amphibious landing on the beaches of Dieppe in August 1942—

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<sup>12</sup> Slim's memoirs, *Defeat into Victory*, represents one of the great classics in military history not only for its honesty and style, but for its insights into the profession of arms. This author would only rank Ulysses S. Grant's *The Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* more highly.

<sup>13</sup> A number of historians have argued that the Americans failed to follow such a strategy in the first two years of their participation in the war, since more U.S. military power was deployed to the Pacific than to Europe or North Africa in 1942 and that there was equality of force distribution between Europe and the Pacific in 1943. What such arguments miss is the fact that the “Germany-first” strategy rested to a considerable degree on an underestimation of Japan's military capabilities. As a result not only for political reasons, namely American public opinion, but also for military reasons, Roosevelt found himself forced to commit greater forces to the Pacific than had been thought necessary before the war.

<sup>14</sup> They had after all watched as the German Army destroyed the military forces of the West in May and June 1940. Molotov, Stalin's foreign minister, had even gone so far as to congratulate the German ambassador on the Wehrmacht's splendid victory in mid-June 1940. His plaintive explanation on being informed of the German declaration of war one year later—“What have we done to deserve this”—explains all one needs to know about the mendacity of Nazi foreign policy.

a combined as well as a joint operation in every sense of the word since it was planned by the British and executed by the Canadians—was a disaster, the only saving grace of which was the fact that it underlined clearly how unprepared the Western Allies were to execute a successful amphibious landing in an area where the Germans had effective forces stationed close to the beaches.<sup>15</sup>

Churchill eventually had to fly to Moscow in July 1942 to inform the Soviets that there would be no Second Front in 1942 in spite of the American promises made earlier in the year. The question was then, if there were to be no amphibious landing on the coast of France, what actions were the Western Powers going to take to relieve the German pressure on the Soviet Union. After all, the two countries had agreed on a “Germany first strategy.” Roosevelt and Churchill then settled on an amphibious landing in North Africa to relieve the pressure that Erwin Rommel and his *Afrika Korps* were exerting on the British in Egypt. The Americans had already made several significant gestures to aid the British in North Africa and the Mediterranean. General George Marshall had released a significant number of the most modern American tanks to be shipped to Egypt to reinforce the British after their disastrous defeat in the May-June 1942 Gazala battles against Rommel.<sup>16</sup> At approximately the same time, an American carrier supported the British efforts to hold the island of Malta against a massive Italo-German aerial assault by flying off a reinforcement of Spitfire aircraft from its decks. The Americans had also “lent” the Royal Navy’s Home Fleet, the battleship *South Dakota* for a short period from mid-April through July 1943.

But the American chiefs of staff were strongly opposed to any major assault on French North Africa. In fact, in July they expressed their opinions in a strongly worded memo that they sent to the president urging that the American strategy of ‘Germany first’ be shifted to the Pacific. However, Roosevelt immediately made clear his displeasure in his reply that underlined there would be no shift in U.S. strategy. It represented a reply that for one of the few times in his relations with his military commanders he signed Franklin Roosevelt, Commander-in-Chief. The message was clear: U.S. military forces were to be committed to amphibious landings in North Africa in cooperation with the British. It was an order not a memorandum.

In the largest sense, the move carried with it enormous strategic benefits for the Allied side. The failure to reach Tunisia before the Germans and Italians could move substantial forces across from Sicily and Italy paid considerable dividends in the long run. With increasing air and ground support, Allied forces were able to inflict a major defeat on the Axis in Tunisia in May 1943, with numbers of captured and destroyed material that came close to equaling what the Germans had suffered at Stalingrad. Equally important was the fact that Rommel’s raid at Kasserine Pass in February 1943 underlined for the Americans that they had a long

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<sup>15</sup> It was also important because it underlined for Allied planners that the landing force was not going to be successful in attempting to seize a built-up port or where the terrain would put the attackers at a severe disadvantage. The coast of Normandy came closest to meeting that requirement with only the cliffs that overlooked what was to become the Omaha beaches representing a significant geological impediment.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Roberts, *Masters and Commanders, How Four Titans Won the War in the West* (New York, 2009), p. 200-201.

way to go to catch up to the battlefield effectiveness of German units. The opening up of the Mediterranean that came with the invasion and capture of Sicily in July 1943 freed up nearly four million tons of shipping, which considerably softened the pressure on the Allied world-wide logistical problems.

But the largest gain came in the development of a combined headquarters to run the war in Tunisia and the Mediterranean. The choice of Dwight Eisenhower, a relatively junior officer who had had no combat experience in the First World War, proved to be a stroke of genius. Whatever Eisenhower's weaknesses as an operational commander—and they were never as significant as some military historians have suggested—he proved a genius at establishing and then running a combined headquarters that was able to get the most out of the Allied officers who were assigned to him. Moreover, in commanding a diverse group of subordinate commanders, most of whom one might characterize as egomaniacs, Eisenhower made it clear that they were to *cooperate*. He is reputed to have had sent home an American officer not because he had called another officer a “bastard,” but because he had called the officer a “British bastard.”

As Marshall had argued in the summer of 1942, once involved in the Mediterranean, it was going to prove almost impossible to launch an invasion of Northern Europe in 1943. In fact, at Casablanca in January 1943 Marshall admitted that the U.S. Army would not be ready to support such a landing until 1944. That admission was the result of a major confrontation between leading economists and supply officers in Washington in fall 1942, in which the latter argued strenuously that, if the army attempted to push too hard to prepare a force structure for a landing in 1943, it might not only not be ready in 1943, but might not even be ready in 1944 because of the damage that such an effort would do to the American economy.<sup>17</sup>

The fighting in the Mediterranean underlined that Anglo-American forces had a great deal to learn about how to work together in combined operations as well as in the joint arena. The Americans came in for considerable contempt from senior British generals for the shambles that had characterized their defeat in Kasserine Pass.<sup>18</sup> These British officers would never entirely lose that sense of superiority, even though the Americans proved to be fast learners. In fact, by 1944 had far surpassed their Allies in their capabilities in ground fighting. Of course, the British commanders forgot the ineptitude of their own forces in the early years of World War II.

The squabbling at the Casablanca conference in January 1943 had led to an agreement for limited operations to be aimed at Sicily and perhaps Italy in 1943 with the invasion of France postponed until the spring of 1944. In Operation HUSKY, the invasion and conquest of Sicily, Montgomery provided the general guidance for the ground operations conducted by Anglo-American forces once they came ashore. He took little account of American sensibilities with the result that Patton launched his much publicized, but not particularly militarily effective,

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<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of this, see James G. Lacey, *Keep from All Thoughtful Men: How U.S. Economists Won World War II* (Annapolis, MD, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> The British indeed had short memories for their performance in Norway, France, Greece, Crete, and North Africa hardly indicated that they had any reason to feel superior to the ill-trained American troops who had scarcely spent a year in uniform.

drive to Palermo. Unfortunately, as we shall see, Montgomery had no control over Allied naval and air forces, nor did he prove willing to provide intelligent advice as to how best to assure the destruction of German forces on the island. In other words he thought entirely in terms of ground war. Eisenhower, however, was at his headquarters in Algiers, where he was not in a position to control the larger operations. As a result, the Germans were able to evacuate their troops from Sicily to the Italian boot without significant losses, where they were able to make a considerable contribution to the near Allied disaster at Salerno and the holding up of the Anglo American advance to just north of Naples for the remainder of 1943.

By the time that the Allied advance came to a halt in the mud and rain of the Italian winter, a significant number of British and Americans had been transferred from the Mediterranean to begin preparations for the great landing on the coast of western France. The decision to land in spring 1944 was almost entirely driven by the American political and military leadership. Churchill and Field Marshal Alan Brooke possessed deep doubts about Overlord right through until its launching; not only that but they fought tooth and nail to prevent Operational ANVIL, the landing in southern France in favor of further operations in northern Italy, a dead end if there ever were one. Instead ANVIL proved essential for logistic and force structure issues in handling the Western Front until Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery finally opened up Antwerp and the Scheldt in November 1944.<sup>19</sup>

In the end, OVERLORD was to be the greatest joint and combined operation in history. Eisenhower was the supreme commander; his most important task was to keep the quarrelsome subordinates working on the same page of music.<sup>20</sup> Even before the landing took place Eisenhower, and his outstanding deputy, the RAF Air Marshal Tedder, found themselves in a furious row with the bomber barons, Air Marshal Arthur Harris and General 'Tooey' Spaatz, over the need for the Allied air forces to attack the transportation network of Belgium and Western France. Neither Harris nor Spaatz wanted to cooperate in such an effort, and Eisenhower had to appeal all the way to his political bosses, Churchill and Roosevelt, to force the heavy bomber commanders to support the OVERLORD effort.

Eisenhower's ground force deputy, Montgomery, was a consummate professional, but an officer who found it extremely difficult to get along with others. This was to prove especially true in terms of his relationship with the American ground forces commander, General Omar Bradley. In particular, Montgomery's unwillingness to clarify for his ground subordinates, particularly the Americans, his plans led to increasing annoyance and considerable back-biting. The breakthrough at Avranches in early August assuaged the friction and contention between the Americans and the British for a while, even with the failure to close the pincers at Falaise of British and Polish troops who were advancing from the north.

But the largest difficulty in the conduct of operations came with Eisenhower's decision that the Allies would utilize a broad avenue of advance into Germany. However, Montgomery favored a major offensive toward the north German front in which his British forces would

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<sup>19</sup> The first ships to move through the Scheldt Estuary finally began unloading their cargoes on 28 November 1944.

<sup>20</sup> For the nature of the operation and its difficulties, see Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA, 2000).

receive most of the supplies and emphasis, while the Americans provided flank support. That, of course, made the Americans furious that the British and Montgomery might gain all of the gains and glory, and both Patton and Bradley demanded that the U.S. forces receive the main focus of the drive into Germany.

Eisenhower would have none of either idea which would have resulted in the emphasis being on only one portion of Allied forces. Rather he recognized that the *political* attitudes of either the American people or the British people would not agree to having their military forces to receive anything less than full participation in the destruction of Hitler's Third Reich. In retrospect, Eisenhower was entirely correct because, as Clausewitz underlined, war is fought for political purposes and the broad approach may not have made the best operational sense. But it certainly made the best political sense. And one must remember that alliances depend on political support back home.

### **Joint Operations**

Joint operations proved quite dubious in the early years for both the British and the Americans. Unfortunately, the process of adapting to a military environment in joint warfare proved long and difficult. It was made especially difficult because the German and Japanese military organizations were also adapting to the challenges raised by the war and thus were changing their tactical and operational approach to war as well as their technological capabilities.<sup>21</sup> In terms of the fighting in the Pacific, the marine corps and the navy had developed the strategic approach as well as crucial doctrine on amphibious war before the war had even begun.<sup>22</sup> The army would eventually follow. Admittedly, each movement forward of the great American counterattack, beginning with Tarawa, demanded new changes and new tactical decisions.

Similarly Douglas MacArthur from the South Pacific had to adapt new alternatives which were at times quite different from what the Navy and Marines were doing in the Central Pacific. This was largely the result of the geographical features of the area. With greater land area available in New Guinea, MacArthur was able to utilize ground based air. And his Army Air Forces were commanded by one of the great airmen of the Second World War, General George Kenney. But the nature of amphibious war across the great expanses of the Pacific demanded joint cooperation among the air, naval, and ground forces. The fact that the Japanese failed to see this in the first two years of the Pacific war underlines one of the major factors that would lead to their defeat. Here the narrative that suggests that the army and the marine corps failed to cooperate during the Pacific War and instead waged a fierce rivalry is almost entirely false. Instead those two services with only a few exceptions cooperated effectively both on the battlefield and in learning the lessons of each battle.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of the problems raised by adaptation in war as a two-faceted problem, see Williamson Murray, *Military Adaptation in War, For Fear of Change* (Cambridge, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> For the development of U.S. strategy and operational concepts during the interwar period, see particularly Williamson Murray, "U.S. Naval Strategy and Japan," in Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, *Successful Strategies, Triumphant in War and Peace from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> For a thorough re-examination of the relationship between the two services see Sharon Tosi Lacey, *Pacific Blitzkrieg: World War II in the Central Pacific* (Dallas, TX, 2014).

It was a different state of affairs in the European War. When Britain embarked on war in September 1939, the three services had little or no interest in cooperation. The Royal Air Force (RAF) hoped to launch a strategic bombing campaign against Germany; it certainly had no interest in cooperating with the army in the ground battle, while support for the navy's anti-submarine efforts were at the bottom of its priorities. The Royal Navy had nothing but contempt for training in prewar amphibious operations, and the army believed the amphibious operations were a thing of the past. The disastrous course of the Norwegian campaign underlined how completely unprepared the British forces were for joint warfare.

The disastrous course of the campaign in the Low Countries and France, gave the British no choice but to think seriously about inter-service cooperation. But it would prove to be a long, drawn out process. It would not be until 1942 that the RAF would begin to provide the resources that the war against the U-Boats required. And it was not until Montgomery arrived to take over the eighth Army in August 1942 that the RAF and the army managed to cooperate effectively. That cooperation, of course would be a major factor in the British victory at Alamein in October 1942. The Americans would learn quickly in Tunisia about how to use ground-air cooperation, no small debt thanks to the hard-learned lessons of the RAF and British army.

The landings in North Africa the in November 1942 underlined how much the Anglo-American armies had to learn about amphibious operations. It was not until Sicily that the British in particular would understand the full complexities involved in achieving an effective landing against an apposed landing, and what they learned at Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio would pay great dividends in the successful lodgment on Normandy.

But the British also had the experience of the disastrous lessons of the Dieppe landing. Thus, Montgomery and his naval advisers insured that there was plenty of naval ground fire support for the landings on GOLD, SWORD, and JUNO beaches on the sixth of June 1944. Moreover, that gun power support received nearly a full two hour attention to destroy the close in defenses that the Germans had built along the sea wall and the small towns of the Normandy shores. Unfortunately for the British, their inability to perform combined-arms—infantry, Artillery, and armor—was to prove a severe handicap throughout the war. Even as late as 1944 and 1945 in the fighting in France and Germany, the British Army was having considerable difficulty to making its own combat arms work together as an effective whole.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, the American experience on amphibious operations in Europe was not so successful. The landings that took place in Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio all had the same lessons for the Americans as for the British, but unfortunately those Americans who planned and executed the Normandy came close to botching the landing at the whole operation. The chief culprit was General Omar Bradley who was contemptuous of the navy and had no desire to cooperate in the supporting fires that were to take out the German defensive fires along OMAHA beach. Instead he was satisfied to have a twenty-minute bombardment and a strike by Ninth Air Force medium bombers. As a result, the Americans received only two

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<sup>24</sup> There was one exception to this comment, but it had nothing to do with the fighting in Europe. Rather Slim's Fourteenth Army in Burma, which consisted as many units from the Empire as from the British Isles was the one exception to the rule.

battleships to support their amphibious assault, one for each landing beach at Normandy.

What makes Bradley's disinterest in naval gunfire support so irresponsible was the fact that Marshall had specifically identified Major General Pete Corlett to provide advice on what was happening in the Pacific for the Bradley's planning for the D-Day landings. Corlett had commanded the 7th Infantry Division in the amphibious landings on Kwajalein in January and February 1944. His naval gunfire support for those landings included no less than seven battleships. After Corlett had briefed Marshall on his experiences, the army chief of staff then sent him over to the European Theater of Operations. Corlett took a careful look at the planning that was taking place for the Normandy landing and warned Bradley and his planners that their planning for gunfire support was completely inadequate. Bradley showed no interest in Corlett's recommendations; in fact he commented along the lines of "what do we have to learn from a bush league theater." The result was a near disaster at OMAHA, which, had it failed, might well have led to the failure of the whole OVERLORD operation.

## Conclusion

There are a number of useful and important lessons dealing with combined and joint warfare that the modern world can learn from the Anglo-American experiences in the Second World War. Perhaps we might best draw the most import from the great Chinese philosopher of war, Sun Zu, who noted that if one understands one's own military forces and those of the other, one will be victorious in a hundred battles. Let me add a codicil to that insight. In terms of combined warfare it is essential that one understand one's allies: their aims, their operational concepts, their weaknesses as well as their strengths. Similarly in joint warfare it is essential that those involved in the conduct of joint operations understand and recognize that those whose primary experience has come from another domain will inevitably have a different understanding of the tactical and operational demands of joint warfare.

In the case of both, this is no easy matter. In terms of combined warfare it demands that commanders as well as political leaders possess a considerable understanding not only of the strategic aims of their allies, but of the *Weltanschauung* (world view), history, and strategic framework within which they view the world. Admittedly, the record of the Anglo-American alliance is less than perfect. British and American leaders found the making of a combined strategy messy, uncertain, argumentative, and a battle of conflicting wills and views of the world. Yet, in the end that process of making strategy produced victory in the Second World War. It was particularly important in the making of combined strategy and operations.

Similarly, joint commanders and their staffs as well as the individual service commanders must understand the environment, concepts, and doctrines of those who are conducting joint operations. There are three ways to achieve that one can reach that understanding: either in peacetime through rigorous exercises and professional military education that receives consistent and demanding emphasis on past military history. The third way has been the chosen method of for most military services in war: ignore the first two approaches in peacetime and *learn by filling body bags in war*.

