

Hell to Pay: Operation DOWNFALL and the Invasion of Japan, 1945–1947. By D. M. Giangreco. (Annapolis, Md., Naval Institute Press, 2009. xxiii + 363 pp. \$36.95)

Allies against the Rising Sun: The United States, the British Nations, and the Defeat of Imperial Japan. By Nicholas Evan Sarantakes. (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2009. xxi + 458 pp. \$39.95)

These two books deal with the planning for the end of the war in the Pacific. While that of Nicholas Sarantakes covers the internal disputes over British participation in the final assault on Japan and the negotiations over this issue among the Dominions of the British Commonwealth and the United States, the book by D. M. Giangreco concentrates on the details of American planning for the invasion of Japan and the Japanese plans for countering invasion of the home islands.

Although the planned participation of sea, air, and land units from the British Empire in the final assault on Japan has been alluded to before in the literature, the account by Sarantakes is the first full analysis of the arguments over this issue. In a detailed review, the author covers the vehement internal dispute over the basic orientation of the British contribution to the war in the Pacific after the defeat of Germany. The account stresses personalities and the bitter difference between Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the Chiefs of Staff that almost led to a major crisis in the government; Sarantakes shows it as centered on Churchill's emphasis on the reconquest of the British colonies in Southeast Asia, as opposed to the Chiefs of Staffs' insistence that the British effort must be alongside that of the United States in the Pacific Ocean. In the end, Churchill reversed himself several times but finally acquiesced in the preferred approach of the Chiefs of Staff. It is clear that in this, as in many other wartime decisions, the deciding element was not any imaginary concern about a future Cold War with the Soviet Union but the memory of the disruption of the American-British alignment after World War I and fears of a recurrence after World War II.

Sarantakes subsequently reviews the actual participation of the British Pacific Fleet in the fighting off Okinawa and Japan in 1945 and the details for land and air participation in the landings on the Japanese home islands. Unlike Giangreco, who omits the planned participation of French units in the 1946 landing on Honshu (Coronet), Sarantakes at least alludes to it (pp. 268–269). He is, however, clearly unfamiliar with the campaign in the Southwest Pacific, misspelling the key places (p. 276) and overlooking

the key role of the U.S. Air Force there (p. 148). The emphasis on the role of Japanese suicide efforts, the kamikaze, is marred by the absence from the detailed bibliography of *Blossoms in the Wind: Human Legacies of the Kamikaze* (2005) by M. G. Sheftali. Readers will, however, be very well informed by this careful account of the British and Dominion involvement in the final year of the war in the Pacific and will surely be intrigued to learn of the crew of a Canadian cruiser who voted to leave the fighting and go home (p. 300).

The very detailed account of the American plans for the landings on Kyushu (Olympic) and Honshu (Coronet) and the equally careful review of the Japanese plans for meeting precisely these anticipated invasions that Giangreco provides supersedes all prior analyses of these issues. Based on a most careful analysis of records and other materials from both sides, the author shows how both sides knowingly and deliberately headed toward a horrendous confrontation in which the Americans anticipated between half a million and a million casualties and the Japanese expected their side to lose twenty million.

Giangreco shows how the 767,000 Americans who were to land on Kyushu could expect to face over 900,000 Japanese, under circumstances where terrain favored the defenders and proximity fuses and radar were not going to be as effective as these important devices had been earlier. He explains that the Japanese refusal to be enticed into committing their air force against Allied naval forces off the coast of the home islands in the summer of 1945 led American intelligence to underestimate Japanese air strength substantially. The author also shows how the Japanese had fooled American intelligence by hiding stores of fuel for their planes so that the role of the over 10,000 remaining Japanese planes could have been substantially greater than had been anticipated.

While there were enormous problems in the recruitment of sufficient U.S. soldiers, their redeployment from Europe, and the provision of adequate medical facilities, personnel, and blood supplies for the anticipated numbers of wounded, at least the Pentagon could order sufficient quantities of Purple Hearts (they wound up being awarded to soldiers in the Korean and Vietnam wars). A significant point illuminated by the author that has been missed by most who have written on the end of the war with Japan is the impact of the typhoons of October 9, which would have forced a postponement of Olympic, and of March 22–April 7, 1946, which would have affected Coronet. While the author's comment on the possible delivery of a third atomic bomb (p. xx) overlooks the direct order from President Truman and General Marshall not to use

it (since it and all others becoming available were to be employed in tactical support of Olympic), anyone not enthusiastic about hundreds of thousands of U.S. casualties and literally millions of Japanese casualties will hereafter find it hard to fault a President whose extensive familiarity with military affairs Giangreco properly stresses.

These two books greatly illuminate the final portion of World War II. Unfortunately, neither pays proper attention to what were called “post-Coronet” operations—the possibility of Japanese armed forces continuing to fight on and off the mainland of Asia after the occupation of the home islands. There had been considerable anxious discussion of this, but minimal preparations were actually under way by the summer of 1945, and the issue is related to some of the campaigns actually conducted, as well as the approach taken to the possibility of allowing the Japanese to retain the imperial institution. It is an important subject that awaits an author.

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