

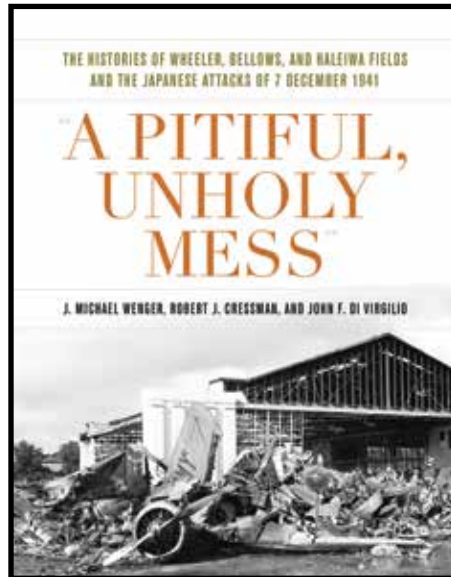
to the Nazi ideology. At a time when unemployment was at its peak, the army was perceived as a viable and respectful option for employment. Joining the armed forces was more about “supplying their basic needs than wearing a uniform and believing in Nazi ideology” (x). It was only after Hitler became the Reich chancellor in 1933 that these war veterans began believing in the Nazi ideology and taking Hitler and his followers seriously. Besides providing a brief overview of the developments in Germany in the immediate days before Hitler took power, the author delineates the initial days of the Reichswehr. Webb highlights the important roles played by individuals like General Werner von Blomberg and General Walther von Reichenau in the formation of the Nazi armed forces. General Blomberg was appointed the minister of defense, and General Reichenau became the chief of staff. In 1934, these two were responsible for overhauling the military. Their significant changes were dishonorably discharging Jews from the armed forces, inserting the Nazi swastikas and eagle on military uniforms, and making it compulsory for all military personnel to take an oath of loyalty to Hitler.

This section also provides fascinating insights into the power struggle between the senior officers of the Reichswehr, which marked the early years of the Third Reich. Significantly, the tug-of-war involved not just military personnel but also the Führer himself. In this context, Webb discusses the acrimonious relationship between Hitler and his officers, Generals Blomberg, Werner Freiherr von Fritsch, and Ludwig Beck. Given their terrible memories of the Great War, these officers did not support Hitler’s aggressive political campaigns. In order to keep the reins of political power in his hands, Hitler replaced them with more ardent supporters. Hermann Goering and Heinrich Himmler aided Hitler in forcing Generals Blomberg and Fritsch to resign from the Reichswehr in January 1938. Webb explains that this was not the only instance of Hitler becoming actively involved in a factional fight. Earlier, he had forced his senior *Sturmabteilung* officer, Ernst Roehm, to commit suicide, because he perceived Roehm as a threat to his domination. Without the support of the army, Hitler would have found it extremely difficult to achieve his goals.

Deftly written, James Webb’s *Generals and Admirals of the Third Reich* is an important academic intervention. James Webb’s monograph is an accessible go-to reference work for all researchers and

historians working on the varied aspects of the Second World War.

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**“A PITIFUL, UNHOLY MESS”:
THE HISTORIES OF WHEELER,
BELLOWS, AND HALEIWA
FIELDS AND THE JAPANESE
ATTACKS OF 7 DECEMBER 1941**

EDITED BY J. MICHAEL WENGER,
ROBERT J. CRESSMAN, AND JOHN F.
DI VIRGLIO

Naval Institute Press, 2022

Pp. xxi, 337. \$44.95

REVIEW BY CHRISTIAN A. GARNER

Modern, popular understandings of the Japanese attacks on 7 December 1941 often center around the actions at Pearl Harbor, Hawai‘i. Images of battleships, like the USS *Arizona* and the USS *Oklahoma*, being set ablaze and subsequently sunk by Japanese munitions dropped from waves of aircraft are seared into the American conscience. These events are further canonized by the memorials visited by tens of thousands of individuals each year. However, the “day that will live in infamy” encompassed more than the maelstrom of destruction at Pearl Harbor. The attacks also engulfed the rest of the military installations on the island

of O‘ahu, along with the military personnel and residents who were present on that fateful day.

Michael Wenger, Robert Cressman, and John Di Virgilio’s *A Pitiful, Unholy Mess* is the fourth book in the Pearl Harbor Tactical Studies Series published by the Naval Institute Press. Collectively, these works offer a comprehensive view of the various military installations on the island of O‘ahu and how they were affected during the Pearl Harbor attack. In this latest installment to the series, the authors provide a detailed understanding of the development and utilization of the Army Air Corps’ airfields Wheeler, Bellows, and Haleiwa before, during, and immediately after the attacks of 7 December. Both the Americans and the Japanese considered these bases essential to the defense of the islands, thus leading them to be targeted early in the Japanese aerial onslaught to prevent American fighter planes from interfering with the attacks on the Pacific Fleet at anchor just a few miles away.

As a framework for comprehending the book, the authors devote the first two chapters to the development and construction of the airfields. From the early 1920s to the days leading up to 7 December 1941, significant energy, effort, and economic capital had been expended to transform the bases from what essentially were dirt runways interspersed with scrub guava brush and sugar cane to robust installations that were critical to the training of fighter squadrons and the defense of the islands. The following five chapters deal with the training and equipping of the fighter squadrons that operated at Wheeler, Bellows, and Haleiwa Fields. A juxtaposition quickly emerges: The U.S. soldiers stationed at these locations had been enjoying a sweet assignment in a tropical paradise that was thought to be far away from any future conflict, but they were forced to shift into gear as their locations gained importance in the defense of strategic assets in a conflict against an emerging enemy. The authors do an admirable job painting a picture of American commanders attempting to advocate for the modernization of equipment that rapidly was becoming obsolete, while attempting to build combat proficiency among an inexperienced population of junior officers and enlisted soldiers surrounded by the temptations of sun and surf.

As the Japanese attacks of 7 December play out, the authors devote the remaining

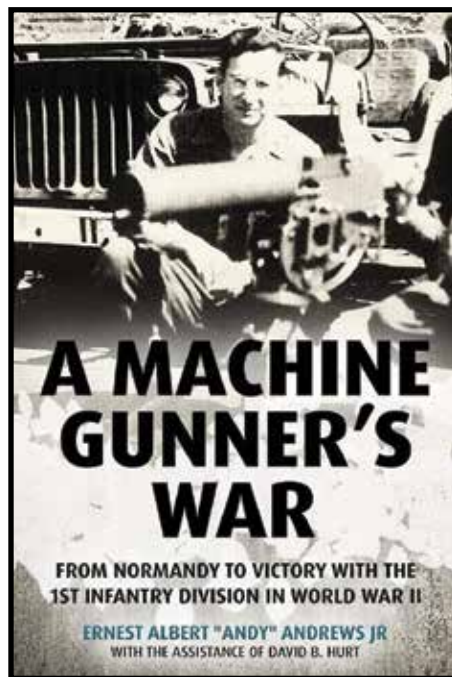
five chapters of the book to an examination of the aerial assault, the American response, and the subsequent aftermath. A comprehensive breakdown of the waves of Japanese planes descending on the unsuspecting American airfields, illustrates how ill-prepared the American forces were to defend themselves or mount an effective response. Because the Americans' ability to arm and launch their aircraft rapidly on that infamous day was minimal, the authors focus on the pilots who were able to get in the air and engage with their aggressors against overwhelming odds. Likewise, the resulting analysis of the Japanese attack demonstrates a flawed execution because of fractured command and control by flight leaders, target misidentification, and airfields obscured by smoke, which led to ineffective attacks by subsequent flights. The authors do not minimize the enormous loss of life and destruction inflicted by the unexpected Japanese attack, but they do allow that the attack was not as effective or deadly as it could have been.

To shape their analysis, the authors draw on various archival sources, both American and Japanese, to present a detailed understanding of the airfields and the attacks upon them. These unique sources, specifically the Japanese carrier reports, offer a perspective not found in older or better-known works on the events of 7 December. The authors use these sources to create detailed maps and graphics that allow readers to visualize the Japanese attacks and American responses at the various locations. A robust number of pictures are scattered across the pages, further supplementing the text and allowing for greater visualization and understanding of the airfields, equipment, and personalities discussed throughout the book. While visually appealing overall, some of the images do not contribute effectively to a deeper understanding of the subject matter and could have been removed to reduce clutter.

An invaluable contribution to the study of the defensive preparations of American airfields in Hawai'i before World War II as well as the events of 7 December, this volume joins the authors' previous works as a detailed, authoritative account on a milestone event in history. Accessible to both the casual reader and the military scholar, *A Pitiful, Unholy Mess* is a compelling narrative that provides further explanation to the Japanese attacks on Wheeler, Bellows,

and Haleiwa Fields and should be considered by anyone exploring topics related to the interwar period, World War II in the Pacific Theater, or, more narrowly, the actions on that infamous day itself.

Lt. Col. Christian A. Garner is an active duty Army officer who will assume command of the 502d Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Battalion at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, in the summer of 2025. A former assistant professor of history at the United States Military Academy, he has spent all his operational field-grade time serving in the Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility.



A MACHINE GUNNER'S WAR: FROM NORMANDY TO VICTORY WITH THE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION IN WORLD WAR II

BY ERNEST ALBERT ANDREWS JR.
WITH DAVID B. HURT

Casemate Publishers, 2022
Pp. xii, 356. \$34.95

REVIEW BY WESTIN E. ROBESON

The memoir *A Machine Gunner's War: From Normandy to Victory with the 1st Infantry*

Division in World War II is a mostly successful balance of a personal narrative and a chronicle of the European Theater of Operations from the perspective of an enlisted infantry soldier in the 1st Infantry Division. Overall, the book provides an engrossing grunt's-eye view and a valuable lens through which the reader can understand the life of a machine gunner and his tactical role on the battlefield during World War II. Ernest Albert "Andy" Andrews served as a gunner in the 1st Infantry Division from January 1944 through October 1945. The book chronicles his day-to-day experience—examining the terrific, the absurd, and the mundane—and explores the "profound ethical tension" many soldiers experienced during the war (x).

The prologue opens with a phenomenal recounting of the marshaling and embarkation operations during the week leading up to D-Day. When boarding the USS *Henrico*, Andrews marveled that a boarding officer sounded off his name just as he stepped aboard the ship. He reflected, "With this truly amazing display of efficiency that belied its well-deserved reputation for screw-ups, the U.S. Army was demonstrating it knew the exact location of every one of its GIs" (9). The narrative is rich in absorbing details, such as Andrews's riveting four-page account of the perils of descending the scramble nets into the jouncing Higgins boats on D-Day. The first chapter concludes with the 20-year-old machine gunner dug-in on the bluffs of Omaha Beach.

Chapters 2 through 5 cover Andrews's life leading up to the war, enlistment, and training. In March 1942, Andrews received his draft notice and reported to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. Though he had requested a photographic unit in his processing questionnaire, he told a clerk that he enjoyed hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking, thus sealing his fate to serve in the infantry. He soon began training, which took him through Fort McClellan, Alabama, and Fort Meade, Maryland, before his ultimate embarkation camp—Camp Shanks, New York. Specifically, he trained on the M1917A1 .30-caliber water-cooled machine gun.

After landing in Greenock, Scotland, Andrews traveled 450 miles by rail to Bridport, England, where he joined the 1st Infantry Division's 16th Infantry Regiment, serving as a machine gunner in