

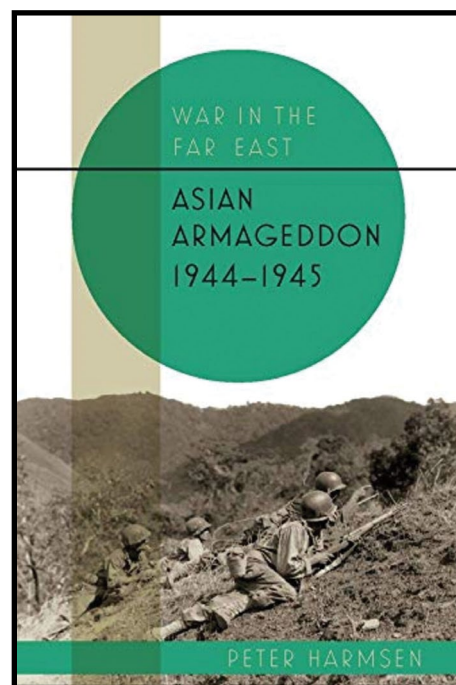
fight on to the end. He eventually bowed to the inevitable and allowed Taylor to reach his terms with Canby, putting an end to all his hopes to escape to the trans-Mississippi region and continue the fight there. When negotiations commenced, Taylor was not surrounded and conceivably could have fought on, but he realized that nothing could be gained by doing so. A cease-fire was called, and surrender negotiations commenced in a respectful atmosphere that surprised the Southern participants. Unfortunately, the cease-fire occurred just as Sherman's initial peace terms to Johnson were rejected, prompting President Andrew Johnson to order the cease-fire to end and the terms of surrender to be the same for Taylor as they were for Lee and Johnson. Taylor had little recourse, and the terms were generous, so the negotiations and subsequent surrender recommenced on those terms. Included in the surrender was Forrest, who was urged to continue fighting or escape to Mexico with other officers but decided to stay as an example to his men. He felt that continuing the fight would be tantamount to murder, and to his everlasting credit he decided he wanted to go home rather than continue the slaughter. This was a bigger risk for him than for most officers because Forrest was a commander of "irregulars," and no one could be sure how the Yankees might treat such a character. But surrender he did, and the Federals respected their bargain, and he was unmolested after the war. The war was over for these men, and all that remained was the daunting task of demobilizing a mass of men with few supplies, no transportation, and little hope.

Meanwhile, General Smith was doing his level best to improve the fortunes of the Trans-Mississippi Department under his command. He commanded few troops, a battered economy, and a fractured government and had no hope of receiving troops or supplies that might alleviate the situation. Once Vicksburg and New Orleans fell, any Confederate forces based west of the Mississippi were rendered helpless in the war. Unable to safely cross the Mississippi in the face of Union control of the river, Smith's army was nullified as an effective fighting force. Losing control of the river effectively bottled-up Smith's troops the same way that selected Japanese forces were bypassed during World War II. They successfully "island hopped" seventy years before the term was coined.

The Confederate armies could not cross the Mississippi, but the Federals could and did cross the river. Small actions occurred throughout the theater, and the garrison at Shreveport was surrendered by Brig. Gen. M. Jeff Thompson without Smith's approval or even knowledge. Desertions were now rampant, with hundreds of soldiers "self-demobilizing." There were no funds to pay the soldiery or purchase supplies, no chance of reinforcement, or reasonable chance of victory. Even so, Smith continued to resist when his subordinate, Lt. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, surrendered the army on his authority. Whether Buckner acted on his own initiative or was confused by his orders and/or command structure is open to debate. But the terms of surrender were similar to Lee's; they would not get any better and were the best that could be hoped for. Smith was faced with this reality and with the increasing levels of desertion and disorder that were verging on anarchy. So, the terms eventually were agreed to by all parties, and the final deed was done. The isolation of the trans-Mississippi, combined with the delayed surrender, eventually led to the Federal holiday of Juneteenth, commemorating the day (19 June 1865) when enslaved people in Texas learned that they were free, which is a fitting way to end this review.

Obstinate Heroism: The Confederate Surrenders after Appomattox is highly recommended to anyone who wishes to learn more about the last days of the Confederacy and how the first steps were taken to heal the nation by instigating surrenders that were just and fair. Just as Lincoln would have wished.

Stephen M. Donnelly is a consultant for the life insurance industry. He received his master's of business administration from Western New England University and his bachelor's degree in social science from Westfield State University. He is a frequent reviewer for the *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*.



WAR IN THE FAR EAST, VOLUME III: ASIAN ARMAGEDDON, 1944–1945

BY PETER HARMSEN

Casemate Publishers, 2021

Pp. viii, 239. \$34.95

REVIEW BY IVAN A. ZASIMCZUK

In *War in The Far East, Volume III: Asian Armageddon, 1944–1945*, Peter Harmsen completes his trilogy of the Asian and Pacific war with a rare combination of succinct and excellently researched history of the last twenty months of World War II. This final volume picks up where he left off in *Volume II: Japan Runs Wild, 1942–1943*. The impressive range of his analysis covers key personalities, major battles and campaigns, tactics, operations and strategies, and both sustainment issues and other lesser-known aspects of this history. Overall, he balances the right amount of detail on each subject with a brevity of writing that easily keeps readers engaged. Although his focus is narrow at times and broadly sweeping at others, the diversity of themes and topics covered is a testament to the complexity of the Asia-Pacific Theater of World War II. With effortless transitions across time, space, and themes, he has produced a tightly woven and concise contribution to the field. This engaging, dense work of 186 pages, divided into nine chapters, will spark readers' interest in this topic.

Typically, works about the conflict between the Allies and the Japanese focus mainly on the fighting and politics of the war and short-shrift the non-Japanese Asian perspective of the conflict. *Asian Armageddon* clearly demonstrates the national and ethnic complexities of the Asia-Pacific Theater in a meaningful manner. Because they were Allies supported by the United States, most works include the contribution of General Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Nationalist Army against the Japanese. However, fewer works give details about the other two Chinese forces; Mao Zedong and the Communists; and Wang Jingwei, the head of the Chinese collaborationist regime in Nanjing. In this volume, readers learn that American envoys serving in “rebel territory” in Yanan, in the “Dixie Mission” to the communists, were impressed by Mao and his organization (152). Harmsen describes how hopelessly knotted and complex the Chinese Civil War became as it resumed so terribly by November 1945 (180).

Harmsen demonstrates that some Asians welcomed the Japanese claim and message of liberation from European colonizers. The British were susceptible to this claim in India. The Japanese exploited the bitter resentment of Subhas Chandra Bose, head of the Nationalist Indian government-in-exile, and the *Indian National Army*, which fought the British in Burma, hoping to liberate India from the British. Harmsen discusses the anxieties of various Asian peoples who, sensing the end of the war, feared that the British, French, and Dutch would return in their colonial capacity to reclaim the lands taken from them by the Japanese. For some, this fear was realized in worse ways than they could have imagined. The war’s end did not necessarily result in peace. As a result of the lawlessness and chaos of the war, in some cases, the British allowed areas they previously had ruled to be patrolled ruthlessly by the Japanese after the war ended until the British properly reestablished prewar colonial control (169). Readers learn of two war-induced famines, one in Indochina, where the Vietnamese resorted to cannibalism (128), and the other in Indonesia, which claimed 2.5 million lives (130). Harmsen’s inclusion of these significant events is fleeting, but they leave readers with indelible impressions.

Harmsen’s coverage of *Operation ICHI-Go* and other Japanese land offenses in China is especially welcome. China was a bright spot for the Japanese, as it was the only place on

the map where their forces were advancing and winning. The Japanese operational objective in June 1944 was to subdue Hunan Province and then neutralize the threat of China-based American bombers. The tactical objective was to seize Changsha, Hunan’s capital. Learning from three previous failures to capture Changsha, the Japanese deployed three massive columns across a 100-mile front from Wuhan toward Changsha. The Japanese earned a victory in three weeks through their improved tactics, as well as miscalculation and poor judgment from the Chinese. Chinese Nationalist General Zhang Deneng decided to preserve his force and forfeited Changsha after a sharp fight with the Japanese (46–47). Chiang Kai-shek was furious with Zhang for losing Changsha and its massive cache of artillery. Zhang was executed a few days later.

A revelation to this reader was the shockingly bad relationship between the Nationalist Army and the Chinese people, whom those forces were bound to protect and defend. This problem was rooted in the corrupt practices of undisciplined soldiers, who were inveterate thieves more interested in transporting smuggled and stolen goods rather than the accoutrements of war. Embedded American observers later testified that locals surrounded the retreating Nationalist Army and seized their weapons (50). It is no wonder that Nationalist commanders often reported the emergence of a fifth column, the mobilization of Chinese civilians against their own army (49). Harmsen captures these episodes often left out of many surveys of the Asian-Pacific war.

Besides a chronological development of the many Allied campaigns on land, at sea, and in the air, there are the individual struggles of those who fought and lived through these harrowing events. Harmsen’s battle narratives are from an extensive list of principal campaigns, which include Roi Namur, Kwajalein, Los Negros, Hollandia, Biak, Saipan, the Philippine Sea, Guam, Peleliu, Leyte Gulf, the various landings on the Philippine Islands, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, the firebombing campaigns against Japan, and finally the Soviet drive into Manchukuo. Rather than a litany of battles, this sequence helps readers feel the war’s magnitude and mounting cost as each struggle had enormous human tolls. The ferocity of each fight was driven by the urgency to win each conflict to accelerate the war’s conclusion.

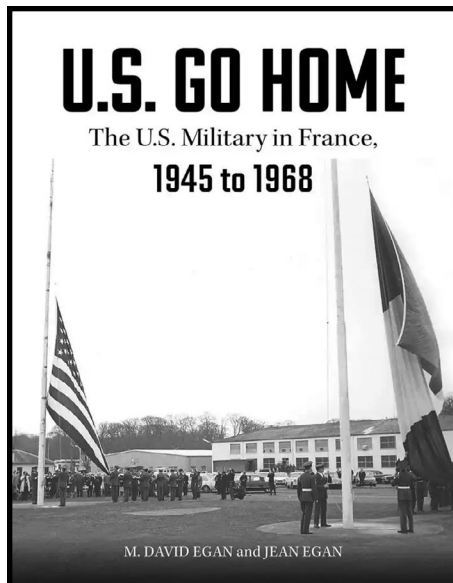
The work is enhanced by twenty-four pages of high-quality photographs that depict and graphically support the text. Another worthy inclusion is the thirteen operational-level maps that help clarify the major troop and ship movements. The maps establish a tyranny of distance and make clear the magnitude and true scale of these tasks.

The author’s tendency to deliver such critical information in small servings is an intended feature rather than a fault. However, the question remains for this reader: what is the main course? One may wonder what Harmsen thinks is most important. While readers are broadly exposed to all the events and issues, the overall effect is that it all has equal value and importance. For example, people less familiar with this era and area of World War II history may need clarification on Harmsen’s style. They potentially may fail to understand the genuine significance of the use of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He treats both critical events like any other campaign. Yet both represent a break in time and a new age.

In *Asian Armageddon*, Peter Harmsen has made a segment of complex history accessible. This volume is perfect for those with neither the time nor the need for in-depth coverage. It is best suited for executive defense officials and policymakers who are unfamiliar with this history. It will get them up to speed quickly. Additionally, this volume will serve well for entry-level students of this subject who may want broad exposure to these events. For readers who want deeper coverage, this volume could be supplemented with Ian Toll’s *Twilight of the Gods: War in the Western Pacific, 1944–1945* (W.W. Norton, 2020).

Ivan A. Zasimczuk has been the military history instructor in the Signal History Office, Office of the Chief of Signal, Fort Eisenhower, Georgia, since June 2019. He graduated from the University of California at Davis (UCD) with a bachelor’s degree in history and political science and a minor in English. He joined the Army through the UCD ROTC and entered active duty in 1997 as an Adjutant General Officer. He has served in Germany, Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait, Iraq, and Jordan. He attended Kansas State University, earning a master’s in history with a follow-on teaching assignment at the United States Military Academy at West Point, where

he taught military history and leadership. He ended his career in 2017, managing a marketing portfolio in the Army Marketing and Research Group. He then worked at the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., for one year before assuming his current role.



U.S. GO HOME: THE U.S. MILITARY IN FRANCE, 1945 TO 1968

BY M. DAVID EGAN AND JEAN EGAN

Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2022
Pp. vi,608. \$49.99

REVIEW BY ASHLEY VANCE

When the U.S. Army stormed the beaches of Normandy in June 1944, it became a seemingly intractable force in France for the next two decades. In the final year of the war, Allied forces set up temporary encampments and hospitals, buried their dead, and used the ports in Cherbourg, Marseille, and Le Havre to process soldiers and supplies in and out of Western Europe. By all accounts, it appeared as if the United States would leave when the wartime dust settled. However, just as the Allied powers chose France as the ideal location for the invasion of Europe during the war, leaders at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) chose France as the best location for their international headquarters and supply route into West

Germany for the Cold War. When French Communists started the “U.S. Go Home” chant in response to their arrival, General Dwight D. Eisenhower responded that the Allied forces were there “to protect France and would gladly go home when they were no longer needed” (34).

Western forces spent the next two decades erecting various facilities throughout France to support the Western Alliance for the Cold War. Office buildings, training grounds, equipment warehouses, airfields, storage depots, soldier barracks, and dependent housing were constructed in locations that varied from the French countryside to the heart of Paris. Like their wartime predecessors, Allied forces in the 1950s and 1960s struggled to fully accommodate the French during their stay. Problems developed over how to house the arriving soldiers and diplomats, especially given the existing acute housing shortage for French civilians. The Western powers debated over who would pay for and construct the needed facilities. And, depending on the year, the French populace did not welcome another foreign military in their already war-torn towns and villages. Tensions ultimately escalated to the point that French President Charles de Gaulle finally asked the U.S. military to leave in March 1966. In *U.S. Go Home: The U.S. Military in France, 1945 to 1968*, M. David Egan and Jean Egan chronicle the presence of U.S. military forces in France from their initial arrival in the summer of 1944 to their eventual departure in 1968.

The authors undertook a massive project when they chronicled the history of U.S. forces in postwar France. Across twelve chapters, *U.S. Go Home* is a 520-page history that offers an additional 70 pages of supportive materials and references, including images, maps, and diagrams throughout the chapters. To do justice to the complexity of the international landscape at the time, the authors tackle not just the U.S. military presence in France. They also deal with the history of the Cold War, events in divided Germany, and the development of NATO and SHAPE. They explain the French engagement in the Cold War and French responses to the Western forces setting up there, and address the political relationship between France and the United States until the late 1960s. The book serves as a rich introduction for readers who want an internationally focused understanding of U.S. forces in Western Europe after World

War II. The book has a chronological arc with topically arranged chapters, each with nearly two dozen subsections. Given the massive amount of information to be covered in each section, most are only two or three paragraphs in length. Thankfully, extensive footnotes guide readers to locate richer sources on each topic.

Because the book is almost encyclopedic in nature, it misses many of the nuances one would achieve in a narrower history. For example, in Chapter 2, the authors discuss the return of combat troops to Europe in 1951 after the Korean War began. They note General Eisenhower’s visit to the United States in January to persuade Congress to authorize the troop buildup, which they did in early April. However, the short two-paragraph summary of the troop return to Europe ignores the fact that President Harry S. Truman authorized the buildup in November 1950 and that, by January 1951, the Army was already mobilizing troops and erecting housing for them in West Germany. Less than a month after Congress approved the buildup, the 4th Infantry Division arrived in Bremerhaven. In West Germany, Army commanders negotiated with local governments for housing and base construction. This task likely informed how negotiations of the same kind took place in France months later. The missing domestic and foreign context limits the reader’s understanding of the complexity and significance of the troop buildup authorization.

Yet the lack of nuance should not dissuade readers. Many lesser-known aspects of the troop deployment to Europe are highlighted. For example, Chapter 1 tells the story of the redeployment of “Cigarette Camps” near Le Havre that existed until mid-1946; Chapter 5 provides a wonderful overview of Camp des Loges, known at the time as the “Little Pentagon” because of its dense concentration of U.S. generals and officers; and Chapter 11 highlights the need for soldiers and their dependents to maintain “NEO [noncombatant evacuation operation] Kits” stocked with supplies in case of an emergency evacuation. Additionally, the authors have a passion for architecture, as all of the chapters provide detailed diagrams to explain how buildings and equipment were constructed and used in France. Their use of maps, which are drawn and easy to read, is also incredibly valuable for readers unfamiliar with France and its connection to neighboring nations.