



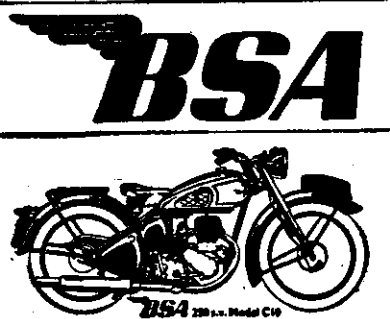
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U.S. LANDING IN THE PACIFIC
For the British effort a four-line paragraph

BOOKS

Postscript to Mahan?

THE INFLUENCE OF SEA POWER IN WORLD WAR II. By Captain W. D. Puleston, U.S.N. (ret.) Yale University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege).

WHEN an American naval officer, Captain W. D. Puleston, U.S.N. (retired), author of a biography of Captain A. T. Mahan, produces a large and handsome book named, in the largest and blackest type that can be got on its title page, *The Influence of Sea Power in World War II*, any student of naval history will sit up and take notice. But if the student, or the general reader, expects anything like Mahan's classic studies, he will be disappointed.

In his preface, Captain Puleston tells us that his book is not a "narrative history" of the war, not a critique of naval operations; yet the greater part of it is devoted to a lop-sided account of operations which does far less than justice to the immense part played by British sea power in bringing about the downfall and unconditional surrender in turn of Italy, Germany, and Japan. Captain Puleston obviously cannot ignore the British effort, but in the main, his book

can be described as an effort to "sell" sea power of the American brand to an uncritical American public. There are many aspects of sea power in relation to the war that are barely touched upon, if at all. There is scarcely a reference to the benefits accruing to the American Navy from the wide knowledge and experience gained by the Royal Navy during the first two years of the struggle.

Captain Puleston is often unfair, never generous, and not always accurate. His accounts of several joint British-American operations are ill-balanced, with the scales tilted against the British effort. The invasion of Normandy in June, 1944, for example, is covered in barely three pages at the end of a chapter of 30 pages devoted mainly to American operations in the Pacific. The only mention of the part played by the Royal Navy is that it was the "preponderant partner in the Anglo-American naval team that supported the landing"; but the American ships that took part are named and we are told that "the American contribution alone included 37,000 men for the landing craft, 22,000 in the amphibious bases in England and 15,000 aboard the combat ships." The artificial harbours, a "British conception," are dismissed in barely two paragraphs. "The many component parts, secretly constructed in various parts in England, were towed to their proper positions by a fleet of tugs directed by Commodore E. J. Moran, U.S.N.R." and "a contingent of Seabees built these harbours." There is no mention of Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief, who had organised and directed the planning of this, the greatest amphibious operation of all time.

The lop-sidedness and inaccuracy of many of Captain Puleston's comments are further indicated by his account of the American landing on Okinawa on April 1, 1945. "Before dark, 50,000 of Buckner's Tenth Army were ashore. . . The landing in Normandy had been a prodigious feat; 21,000 troops were put ashore in the first 12 hours. At Okinawa, (continued on next page)



ADMIRAL SIR BERTRAM RAMSAY
"Commander of an improvised regatta"