

Micronesian history at the University of Guam, was able to interview islanders who knew Ellis and contributed much to the story of his life during the period before his death. Merrill Bartlett is an experienced historian, scholar, and writer who has made a detailed study of the period during which Ellis was prominent in the Corps. His research into the Marine Corps' archives is key to understanding Ellis' career.

There is no doubt that Ellis was a "character," and one who would get short shrift in the Corps of today. The book makes it clear that Ellis' idiosyncrasies were tolerated by his superiors and peers because of his brilliance as a staff officer. His work on the staff of

the 2d Division American Expeditionary Forces staff during World War I and, most of all, his 1920 contribution to the future of the Corps with his study, "Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia," are examples of his good side. He had friends in high places who overlooked his dark side: poor health aggravated by bouts of alcoholism.

The mystery that surrounds Ellis' death will never be completely solved. The authors take us on his trip to the Pacific and trace his day-to-day movements with accuracy. He is not a well man, and part of this time is spent in hospitals in Japan and Australia. His last days are plotted through interviews with those who were there. It is a fasci-

nating tale. If Ellis, as is presumed, is on an intelligence mission for the U.S. Marine Corps, his conduct during the months in the Pacific is both foolish and reprehensible. The Japanese appear dumbfounded that he is actually a spy. By all accounts, Ellis destroys himself much more effectively than the Japanese could have done. Still, the circumstances of his death remain shrouded in mystery and have forever enshrined his memory in the history of the Corps.

Ballendorf and Bartlett have enlightened all Marines about the enigma that is Pete Ellis.

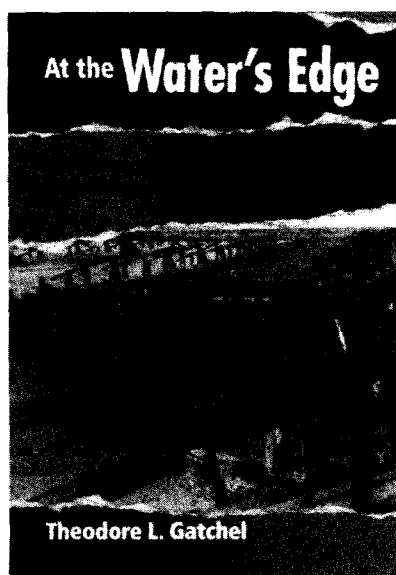


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Blocking the Amphibious Sword

reviewed by LtCol Kenneth W. Estes, USMC(Ret)

AT THE WATER'S EDGE: Defending Against the Modern Amphibious Assault. By Theodore L. Gatchel. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1996, 304 pp., \$36.95. (Member \$33.25)



Ted Gatchel's first book will be thoroughly enjoyed by Marines who know him, and by others familiar with his years of frequent and thoughtful contributions to military journalism. In a Corps of officers zealously asserting

their professional competencies, few will argue with Gatchel's seasoned operational experience from the old 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade and Fleet Marine Force Atlantic operations and planning staffs. His significant work at the Naval War College (NWC) before and after his retirement marked the maturing of his intellectual interests in military operations and doctrine.

How he chose to examine amphibious operations from the nether side probably relates more to his experiences as a teacher and lecturer than to what he states in the opening pages. Gatchel finds ironic the concept that the amphibious operation is at once the most complicated and risky type of operation, yet seldom erring in its success. He invokes the Soviet Admiral of the Fleet, Sergei Gorshkov, to develop his line of investigation:

... [Gorshkov] attributes their almost universal success to 'the general military-political conditions favorable to the invaders and ... the concentration

of the strength of the invasion force outstripping the defense.' He goes on to note that, during the war, no amphibious operation was subject to continuous disruption from the point of assembly to the landing itself.

Gatchel thus seeks to validate these fuzzy Gorshkov principles by examining the three antilanding approaches: naval, littoral, and ground defense.

Both Gatchel's use of Gorshkov as an intellectual catalyst and his employment of case studies reflect the NWC's way of doing things. The NWC has always been a bit too desperate to find a 20th century neo-Mahan to better describe the rationale for dominant sea power. Also, the use of case studies has facilitated the education of officers too busy to read books until midcareer advanced education.

What the reader gets, therefore, is a Gatchel tour de force description of various landing operations or plans in history: Gallipoli, the Battle of Britain, Sicily-Salerno, Normandy, Wake-Midway, the American offensives in the Great Pacific War, Korea in 1950, and the Falklands-Malvinas action of 1982. Gatchel shows how the naval defense option seldom works, for the simple reason that an amphibious operation usually takes place under conditions of air and sea superiority. The questions for the defender ashore of mounting a stand at the high water mark or awaiting the moment for a vigorous counterstroke are deftly handled in a variety of national and chronological cases.

The chapters stand alone as integral

lessons in one form of landing or another and are held loosely together by Gatchel's assertions on the continuing search for an effective defense in the face of improving offensive power. My problem with the case study approach is that the single landings often present too many anomalies or peculiarities, thus obscuring a pure demonstration of one or another doctrine of defense. Do the weak counterattacks by the defenders of Salerno and Saipan truly demonstrate the potential value of the mobile defense? Was Normandy effectively one or the other in the face of crushing Allied superiority? Did a few acres of land at Tarawa offer any choice to the defender as to the method or doctrine of defense? Perhaps the firm grasp of the obvious tells more of the tale. As Gatchel cites Japanese Adm Nomura, "everywhere, I think, you attacked before the defense was ready. You came far more quickly than expected."

Of course, any attempt at presenting a synthesis approach to Gatchel's objective of defining defensive doctrines

would make severe demands upon the reader's knowledge and retention of details of the various landing operations and plans of the century. Quibblers will still find too much material on the amphibious art and too little relating to the analysis of defense.

There are some interesting failures of the amphibious assault not covered. My favorite would be Tanga in German East Africa, where an overwhelming but crippling incompetent British landing collapsed in face of von Lettow-Vorbeck's colonial defense companies. What of the Russian Navy's landings at Novorossisk or the Kerch Peninsula in the Black Sea, repulsed by a Wehrmacht devoid of naval power there? Finally, Gatchel remains curiously mum on the question of the Persian Gulf Conflict of 1990-1991, where a few low-rate divisions (and/or Service political concerns) managed to keep 20,000 elite landing troops and all their specialized and technically superior naval support at bay and out of action for the entire campaign. Yet the pathetic defenses at

Inchon and the frustrated landing plan for Wonsan (itself a precursor of Kuwait '91) receive chapter treatment.

Gatchel's conclusions constitute a forceful lexicon for amphibious planners of the future. The language reflects his fear that the amphibious art may fall into neglect, thus presenting its defenders with unearned advantages. However, those countries capable of mounting antilanding defenses would seem to be mostly Asian mainland powers, always difficult to tackle in any form of warfare and likely eschewed in any U.S. strategy. African coastlines offer considerable freedom of action and few resources on the defensive. The isthmus connecting Africa and Eurasia offers both powerful defensive forces and attractive littoral settings. Here is where Gatchel's notions might get an acid test.



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Capsule Reviews

THE SLEEPING GIANT: American Armed Forces Between the Wars. By J.E. Kaufmann and H.W. Kaufmann. Praeger, Westport, 1996, 216 pp., \$55.00. (Member \$49.50)

The Kaufmanns chronicle how America's post-World War I return to isolationism adversely impacted the readiness, modernization, training, strategy, and tactics required of the U.S. Armed Forces in World War II. The authors believe that America's post-Cold War sense of security bears striking resemblance to the false sense of security that characterized the interwar period. They urge those who would advocate taking a budget axe to post-Cold War military spending to learn this lesson of history.

IMAGES FROM THE OTHERLAND: Memoir of a United States Marine Corps Artillery Officer in Vietnam. By Kenneth P. Simpson. McFarland and Company, Jefferson, NC, 1995, 184 pp., \$20.95. (Member \$18.85)

Simpson provides neither a Vietnam history nor an autobiography, but rather a personal journey to find understanding among threads of a life that, for him, lead back to the beginning of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Particularly moving is his account of Operation TEXAS, when Simpson coordinated the firing of more than 2,500 rounds of artillery, and his continuing loyalty to those also serving their Nation's interests in Vietnam, including then LtCol P.X. Kelley. Gen Kelley returns the sentiment in the book's foreword.

OPERATION DESERT SHIELD-DESERT STORM: Chronology & Fact Book. By Kevin D. Hutchison. Greenwood Press, Westport, 1995, 320 pp., \$69.50. (Member \$62.55)

This reference book, the most complete such work on the Gulf War to date, catalogs daily occurrences in theater throughout the buildup, air campaign, and ground action of all forces involved. Included are appendices on both coalition and Iraqi forces, casualties, prisoners of war,

and key personnel, as well as maps, charts, and a glossary. Sources are official U.S. histories, including the Marine History and Museums Division series, verified news accounts, and interviews.

THE NAVAL AVIATION GUIDE. 5th ed. Edited by LCdr Richard R. Burgess, USN(Ret). Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1996, 488 pp., \$26.95. (Member \$24.25)

LCdr Burgess' guide is a single-source reference tool with a place in the library of every Marine Corps aviation professional, enthusiast, or aspirant. The author's comprehensive coverage of naval aviation treats everything from NAVAIR's development, organization, and administration to aviation support, training, safety, and medicine. A chapter by Maj John M. Elliot, USMC(Ret) is devoted exclusively to Marine Corps aviation, which Elliot traces from its inception in 1912 to its role in the U.S. peace-keeping missions of the 1990s.