

Aside from these quibbles, Hulver and Luebke's primary source selections are superb; their introduction and annotations are detailed, well written, and illuminating. *A Grave Misfortune* is a significant and nearly comprehensive addition to the history of the *Indianapolis* tragedy.

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Soldier, Sailor, Frogman, Spy, Airman, Gangster, Kill or Die: How the Allies Won on D-Day. By Giles Milton. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2018. ISBN 978-1-2501-3492-9. Maps and photographs. Notes and sources. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 486. \$30.00.

The Allied invasion of Normandy provides the backdrop for Giles Milton's latest book, *Soldier, Sailor, Frogman, Spy, Airman, Gangster, Kill or Die: How the Allies Won on D-Day*, a sweeping tale of the events surrounding 6 June 1944. This book recounts tales of everyday heroism through the eyes of the soldiers, sailors, and civilians doing their part to liberate Europe from Nazi occupation and influence. This eyewitness narrative reads more like a novel than a textbook, pulling in readers with its engaging prose and penetrating storytelling. An accomplished producer of narrative history rooted in personal stories, Milton is the author of twelve previous nonfiction books. This book was published to coincide with the seventy-fifth anniversary of D-Day and is available in the United Kingdom under another title: *D-Day: The Soldiers' Story*.

With its engaging dialogue and descriptive prose, the work provides a worthy successor to previous narrative histories of the same subject, such as Cornelius Ryan's *The Longest Day*, Stephen Ambrose's *D-Day*, or Max Hastings's *Overlord*. Milton's contribution highlights many forgotten characters, like the French civilian caught in the crossfire, or the private soldier just trying to survive—on either side of the beach. He also describes the actions of top commanders such as Eisenhower and Rommel during Operation Overlord with equal skill and attention. Milton's book describes the wide range of personalities involved in the Normandy operation.

The author's preferred sources for recreating the historical moment are an impressive array of oral history interviews. Through his extensive use of the Cornelius Ryan papers, including many interviews and stories that never made it into the final version of *The Longest Day*, Milton has recaptured the genius of Ryan's research. Milton also did archival work at the National World War II Museum, the Imperial War Museum, and the National Archives in both the United Kingdom and the United States. This book relies, however, on personal testimonies, diaries, journals, and letters to tell the story of critical moments during the Normandy operation. Milton's focus on individual narrative and oral history gives the book a personal feel that brings the reader into the action.

He presents a logically organized book that takes the reader on an eight-part, twenty-eight-chapter chronological journey from midnight to midnight on 6

June. Milton uses classic storytelling to create intrigue; the story of George Lane's exploits in the opening chapter is but one example. The tension is palpable as the reader awaits his imminent execution; instead, we learn that none other than Field Marshal Erwin Rommel interrogates him, and that Lane's "charm and bravado had spared him his life" (p. 20). Replete with captivating stories like this, the book is an excellent read for anyone interested in D-Day, especially those enthralled by individual, soldier-level experiences.

Although Milton provides a thrilling narrative of D-Day, there are problems. He leaves the discerning student of the Second World War with raised eyebrows by, for example, calling the German machine gun an "M42" rather than using its proper nomenclature as the Mg42 (p. 219). Moreover, he leaves readers wondering to which of several potential "A" companies of the six regiments and two divisions that landed at Omaha Beach a character belongs (pp. 203–15). The omission does not make the exploits of the 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division any less heroic, nor does the omission of a single "g" make the machine gun any less deadly. Still, these types of errors force the reader to digest the rest of the book with a skeptical mind.

The grandeur of the operation makes it difficult for any author to present a complete, cogent narrative. Because Milton moves back and forth between general officers and lowly privates, the book often reads more like a collection of stories instead of a complete narrative of the day's action. Nevertheless, this is an interesting addition to the pantheon of works detailing Operation Overlord and gives significant voice to the ordinary citizen and private soldier, and their role in the liberation of northwest Europe. Scholars looking for a fresh analytical perspective or a comprehensive operational look at D-Day, however, would do best to look elsewhere.

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The Secret History of RDX: The Super-Explosive that Helped Win World War II. By Colin Baxter. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018. ISBN 978-0-8131-7528-7. Photographs. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. x, 204. \$45.00.

Relating the history of a technology poses important challenges, but the distinct value of informative and contextualized tech history underscores the need for works that nest technologies into events and can explain the fundamental themes about their development, operation, and use. RDX, an explosive developed by the Allies during World War II, deserves such a treatment.

Yet RDX has remained comparatively in the shadows in the historiography. Mentioned sometimes, as in connection with Allied efforts against the U-Boats in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, it has not enjoyed the focus of study given to the

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