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REVIEW ESSAY

OFFICIAL HISTORY, NOT "INSTANT ANALYSIS"

Alexander S. Cochran

Marolda, Edward J., and Robert J. Schneller, Jr. *Shield and Sword: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf War.* Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2001. 544pp. $36.95

Over the past decade, there has been an unfortunate trend in the publications by service historical offices—a rush to historical judgment that rivals CNN's insistence on, and the public's appetite for, "instant analysis." The Persian Gulf War has been subjected to this with such books as Air Force historian Richard Hallion's unofficial *Storm over Iraq* and Army general Robert H. Scales's *Certain Victory*. At best, these "instant histories" are self-serving (with Quadrennial Defense Review overtones); at worst, they are flawed by their single-service focus. Lest the U.S. Navy feel free of this, Norman Friedman's *Desert Victory*, published within months of the conflict's termination, led the parade.

Fortunately for all, Dr. Dean C. Allard and Dr. William S. Dudley, successive directors of the Naval Historical Center, eschewed this approach, opting for time to ensure detached analysis, adequate documentation, and historical perspective. Their wise decision has been richly rewarded by this book, the work of two of the Center's historians, Edward Marolda and Robert Schneller, Jr. In the tradition of the official histories of World War II, which allowed a "decent interval" before writing, *Shield and Sword* will be the starting place for all who are interested in the U.S. Navy's role in the Gulf conflict.

The U.S. Navy's role in the Persian Gulf (renamed the "Arabian Gulf" by U.S. spokespersons during the war) over the past fifty years eclipsed those of the other services in both time and function. (For a wide-angle view, see Michael Palmer's *Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the*

Persian Gulf, 1833–1992. Palmer, now a historian at East Carolina University, had earlier worked at the Naval Historical Center.) Although the modern U.S. military first entered the Gulf during World War II, in conjunction with Lend-Lease arrangements to assist the Soviet Union, American military presence there after 1945 rested solely upon the presence of a few U.S. Navy ships. The Middle East Force, established in 1948 and for decades comprising a small seaplane tender as flagship and usually a pair of destroyers rotating into the Persian Gulf assignment, was the sole visible agent of American policy.

Seaborne command and control capabilities remained throughout the Cold War—indeed it was these platforms that provided the initial base when the Tampa, Florida, headquarters of Central Command was projected forward in the fall of 1990. Two carriers, a battleship, and their escorts had surged into the area after the invasion of Kuwait, and the maritime prepositioning ships began to arrive at al-Jubayl to equip two Marine expeditionary brigades on 15 August 1990. Then, during DESERT SHIELD, the U.S. Navy led the coalition in enforcement of economic sanctions—an essential backdrop to U.S. maneuvering for world backing as well as to UN nonmilitary alternatives. For offensive DESERT STORM planning, aircraft from the three carriers of Battle Force Yankee in the Red Sea and the three carriers of Battle Force Zulu in the Gulf, and Tomahawk cruise missiles fired from battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines, formed collectively a critical part of the air campaign. Once the air and ground wars were launched in early 1991, naval contributions more than adequately met expectations. Equally important were naval presence in the Gulf and Arabian Sea, and maritime support to the final ground operations. Overlooked by much of the public and news organizations throughout both DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM was the sea lift that provided the critical logistical support. While some writers are quick to note that 90 percent of the personnel who moved in and out of theater were transported by aircraft, far more important were the equal percentages of vastly greater tonnages of equipment and supplies that moved over sea-lanes secured by the U.S. Navy.

Marolda and Schneller handle these myriad elements of the Navy "Gulf War story" in superb fashion. One has grown to expect such scholarly thoroughness and professional detachment from Dr. Marolda, a longtime member of the Naval Historical Center, author or editor of five official histories about the Navy in Vietnam, and currently the Center's senior historian. Coauthor Dr. Robert J. Schneller, Jr., has been with the Center since 1991. Their book's four-page acknowledgment section is essentially a list of names of key participants and other researchers; Marolda and Schneller are good historians.

Focusing on the theater level in general, and on its naval component specifically, *Shield and Sword* argues a clear thesis: the Persian Gulf War was an

enormously complex undertaking, and the U.S. Navy contributed to every aspect, from diplomacy and sanctions to combat and logistics. To highlight specific contributions, the authors have organized their book in both functional and chronological fashion. The opening chapter deals with Cold War presence in the Gulf and on the early buildup phases after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The second and third chapters focus upon Operation DESERT SHIELD, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth discuss DESERT STORM. The seventh chapter examines postwar events, such as mineclearing, redeployment of forces and equipment, Operation PROVIDE COMFORT, the homecoming receptions, maritime interception and sanctions enforcement operations, the establishment and conduct of no-fly zones north of the thirty-sixth parallel and south of the thirty-second, and punitive Tomahawk strikes through 1993. Chapter 8 is a thirty-page summary, concluding with the 1995 establishment of the U.S. Fifth Fleet.

While their emphasis is upon U.S. Navy and Marine planning and operations, Marolda and Schneller have done a masterful job of integrating not only the Army and Air Force aspects of the war but also maritime contributions by several members of the coalition. They have moved beyond other official service histories, demonstrating sensitivity to mutually supporting functions and capabilities. Further, by waiting for the publication of earlier official histories, they were able to mine their sources and integrate their interpretations.

The text is complemented by fourteen maps and six tables, as well as a judicious collection of photographs and artwork—almost all of it by the Navy's leading combat artist, John Charles Roach—providing a visual portrayal of the varied naval contributions to the war. Such an approach suggests new directions for future official histories, as an increasing number of readers will come from a background of MTV. One cannot review these photographs without being conscious of the cultural and gender mix of today's deployed naval forces.

Marolda and Schneller's bibliography reveals an extensive list of primary sources—documents and oral histories accumulated during the Naval Historical Center's research effort. Just as impressive is the authors' list of secondary sources. Anyone who has attempted to survey the massive amount of published material on the Gulf War will welcome their brief annotations on each entry.

To be sure, there were glitches in the U.S. Navy's performance. To mention a few, lack of mine-warfare resources, as well as outdated doctrine, proved embarrassing. Traditional U.S. naval testiness at tight command and control procedures ran counter to Central Command's demands at both the joint and combined levels. Also, the Navy's tradition of rotating commanders of units and organizations led to at least one difficult episode—during the relief of Vice Admiral Henry H. Mauz by Vice Admiral Stanley Arthur as commander of the Seventh Fleet and Naval Forces, Central Command, late in the planning phase.

Dissemination of intelligence, particularly satellite imagery, to forces afloat was abysmal due to the ships' lack of communications and processing capability, as well as to bureaucratic problems due to "an Army general and an Army J-2 [intelligence staff head] fighting an Army war." Service rivalries affected air operations as well, particularly with the notorious air tasking order and the Air Force control of the joint force air component commander role, although Battle Force Yankee and Battle Force Zulu had different levels of friction with Air Force practices. Likewise, the Navy's insistence on holding back air assets from the overall campaign for carrier protection took its toll on joint and combined relationships. The authors explain these issues, and others, in light of the Cold War focus upon the Soviet Union and its navy.

The Persian Gulf War may have been the last conflict of the Cold War. Others, however, have suggested that it was the first of the post–Cold War period. Professional officers concerned about insights with future implications would do well to dwell upon the concluding chapter, blandly entitled "Summary." Here Marolda and Schneller highlight major insights, yet in the manner of consummate historians, laying out past issues without presuming future solutions. Even the busiest naval professional should find an hour to read this chapter of *Shield and Sword*.

In sum, *Shield and Sword* is first-rate history—solid in research, comprehensive in coverage, and insightful in analysis. It will be useful to academic and serving professionals alike. Those who wish to research and write in greater depth on specifics of the U.S. Navy in the Gulf War must begin with this book. More importantly, as the authors conclude, "the Gulf War stimulated the U.S. Navy to make the transition . . . from the Cold War to a new era of regional conflict." If they are correct, every professional naval officer, and all others who expect to command, employ, or work with U.S. naval forces in the future, also need to start here.