

in New York City, became the movie star Lauren Bacall. Another chapter is about the sinking of the *Titanic*, belonging to J.P. Morgan's White Star Line. This seems to be included because it recounts the fate of the prominent Jewish New York banker Isador Strauss and his wife, and various Jewish immigrants who were fellow passengers. The text is not as reliable on matters military. A discussion about how the Cunard liners *Lusitania* and *Mauretania* were built suggests potential conversion to heavy rather than auxiliary cruisers. On page 288 the German army is described as circumventing the Maginot Line (not built until the 1930s).

Steven Ujifusa writes in an easy journalistic style. His book is illustrated by a section of well-chosen photographs. Despite the title, *The Last Ships From Hamburg* is mainly not about ships and the Hamburg Amerika Line but Jewish mass migration from eastern Europe to the US between 1881 and 1914 and of how it was facilitated by capable Jewish businessmen on both sides of the Atlantic. Jews constituted 9.4 percent of all immigrants to the USA over these 43 years. This is an interesting popular history which explains why and how this significant population shift happened.

Jan Drent

Victoria, British Columbia

Brian E. Walter. *Blue Water War: Maritime Struggle in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1940–1945*. Havertown, PA: Casemate Publishing, www.casematepublishing.com, 2022. 352 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$35.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-63624-108-1. (E-book available.)

In *Blue Water War*, Brian Walter explores the role and importance of the Mediterranean Sea and its impact on the Second World War and lays a solid foundation for readers who are familiar with this theatre as well as newcomers.

Walter begins with a breakdown of the strategic and tactical situation in the Mediterranean at the outbreak of the war. Listing the assets available to both sides, he points out the strengths and weaknesses of each nation involved. Additionally, he discusses the difficulties both sides experienced, such as the lack of available ships and the importance of logistics and supply lines. Ensuring the safety of supplies and strategic convoys—or destroying those of the enemy—resulted in several major battles in the Mediterranean campaign. Walter also explores the often complimentary interaction between naval and land campaigns that occurred simultaneously in the area, particularly in North Africa. In several cases, as he points out, it is difficult to separate the land and sea components of the fight since many of the land battles centered around

port cities, which were vital in providing supplies to the armies in the region. The invasion of North Africa, the defense of Malta, the invasion of Italy and the invasion of Southern France are discussed in chronological order. Here Walter's work comes into its own. Along with such well-known components of the Mediterranean war as the defense of Malta, Operation Torch, and the invasion of Italy, the author includes lesser known aspects of the conflict such as Operation Dragoon, and the conduct of the Italian Navy in the theatre. Finally, he describes how the war in the Mediterranean evolved, gradually becoming less critical when compared to other "hot spots" as the fighting moved into continental Europe, and eventually the Pacific.

Walter focuses on campaigns and events, rather than technical details of ships and weapons. He provides a broad overview of events, touching only briefly on the relative strengths and weaknesses of Royal Navy warships compared to their Italian counterparts. The role of land-based aircraft in the Mediterranean is conspicuously absent, despite their importance to the overall campaign. Nor does Walter devote much space to major actions in the Eastern Mediterranean whose ports and harbors were critical to the region.

Those looking for a general reference to the Second World War in the Mediterranean will find Walter's book extremely useful, whether they are familiar with the conflict or not. While he does not discuss any single operation or battle in extensive depth, he does mention most, if not all the major battles and operations that occurred there. His work is thoroughly referenced with a variety of both primary and secondary sources. Furthermore, he includes three separate indexes, for people, ships, and operations in the region, allowing readers to find information about any specific ships, events, or people discussed. The author puts all the major events and people into context and explains how various actions or inactions played out during the war.

Walter's book offers readers a general introduction to the Second World War in the Mediterranean and a solid basis for further examination of the war on a regional or international scale.

Michael Razer
Ward, Arkansas

Michael G. Welham. *Combat Divers: An Illustrated History of Special Forces Divers*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2023. 304 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index, US \$40.00, UK £35.00, CDN \$53.00, hardback; ISBN 978-1-4728-5600-5. (E-book available.)

Military combat divers put the special in special forces. Subject to rigorous selection and training, the people choosing this vocation are among the most