



PROJECT MUSE®

---

From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt's America and the  
Origins of the Second World War (review)

Jenel Virden

The Journal of Military History, Volume 67, Number 1, January 2003, pp.  
266-267 (Review)

Published by Society for Military History

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/jmh.2003.0081>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/40507>

boundary and does not offer any broader assessments of Freeman's place in Southern history. As a Southerner and son of a Confederate veteran, Freeman's pursuit of a true rendering of history deserves additional analysis. Nevertheless, Johnson has laid the groundwork for future studies examining Douglas Southall Freeman's important contributions to shaping modern Southern identity through the use of history and memory.

Keith Dickson

Virginia Beach, Virginia

***From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt's America and the Origins of the Second World War.*** By David Reynolds. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001. ISBN 1-56663-389-3. Sources. Index. Pp. x, 209. \$24.95.

In his latest volume, David Reynolds discusses United States foreign policy in the years immediately preceding America's entry into the Second World War. The author gives a narrative account of events, from Munich to Pearl Harbor, which had an impact in three areas: Roosevelt's policies, public perceptions and precedents for the postwar world. Reynolds notes that Roosevelt was able to replace the weakened New Deal coalition with one based on foreign policy and aid to Great Britain. This transition could happen because Roosevelt was able to negotiate resistance to German aggression in the Atlantic, to the point of undeclared naval war. However, FDR was less able to manipulate policy in the Pacific because, according to Reynolds, opinion was more divided over Japan.

The author then goes on to discuss the way FDR altered the American people's perceptions from a strictly hemispheric concern to a more global attitude. FDR's newly coined term "national security" worked to broaden the United States's interests in the world. Reynolds suggests that it was necessary for Roosevelt to alter perceptions based on ideology. If Germany, Japan, and Italy were totalitarian regimes, then democracy was the only way to defeat them. Britain was repackaged as less class based, less imperialist, and more egalitarian. The Atlantic Charter and Four Freedoms provided the rhetorical foundations for FDR's use of democratic ideology to define the war's aims.

Reynolds's final point looks at the precedents set during the period 1938–41, which would have an impact on the Cold War. He suggests that U.S. foreign policy, especially in 1940–41, has been neglected when analyzing how the United States emerged as a superpower and how its Cold War ideology evolved. Reynolds traces the prewar origins of Cold War traditions such as how: globalism led to the establishment of NATO; the charge of totalitarianism was applied to the Soviet Union; the imperial presidency under FDR led to Johnson's and Nixon's policies in Vietnam; the failure of intelligence at Pearl Harbor led to the wartime establishment of the OSS and later the CIA, and Roosevelt's push for atomic research led to the development of the atomic bomb and the Cold War nuclear arms race. By tracing the devel-

opment of Roosevelt's policy initiatives between 1938 and 1941, Reynolds is able to show that many of the United States's Cold War ideas predate the wartime conferences often suggested as harboring the origins of the postwar conflict. This thin volume is a good, concise overview of the foreign policy of the United States in the crucial years just prior to American involvement in World War II. Reynolds includes an excellent account of the historiography of Roosevelt and his wartime policies that should be standard practice for volumes of this nature. The book would make an excellent addition to any undergraduate course on World War II or U.S. Cold War foreign policy and should not be overlooked by scholars who want a succinct account of the development of American globalism and Cold War ideology.

Jenel Virden

University of Hull  
Hull, England

*The Royal Navy and the Mediterranean, Volume I, September 1939–October 1940.* London: Whitehall History Publishing with Frank Cass, 2002. ISBN 0-7146-5179-6. Maps. Photographs. Charts. Tables. Appendixes. Notes. Index. Pp. xxi, 178. £59.50.

*The Royal Navy and the Mediterranean, Volume II, November 1940–December 1941.* London: Whitehall History Publishing with Frank Cass, 2002. ISBN 0-7146-5205-9. Maps. Photographs. Charts. Tables. Appendixes. Notes. Index. Pp. xxii, 318. £59.50.

These two volumes are reproductions of the Naval Staff History originally written by Commander Titterton, RN, for other naval officers or governmental personnel. They were classified as "Confidential" and were designed to give the background to the detailed "Battle Summaries" prepared soon after an action. As they were written after the war, Commander Titterton was also able to include some material from German and Italian sources. The author also commented on certain remarks made in the then recently published memoirs of Winston Churchill, for example concerning the passage of Vichy French naval reinforcements to Dakar in 1940. According to the original Preface, there were to have been four volumes. The first volume was published in 1952, the second in 1957. The remaining volumes never appeared, supposedly on grounds of economy, although a first draft for the third volume was supposed to have been prepared. The volumes contain a wealth of detail and this can make for difficult reading, but these volumes were not intended for the general public and the maneuvers to pass convoys through the Mediterranean and to and from Malta are complex. The great detail is also useful in demonstrating the multitude of problems facing the navy and the scale and intensity of the fighting involved. The volumes do not contain much tactical detail of the actions themselves. These are usually summarized and the reader is referred to the appropriate Battle Summary or other volumes in the Naval Staff History series for further detail. This