

Waldo Heinrichs and Marc Gallicchio,
Implacable Foes: War in the Pacific, 1944-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp xiii + 711. \$34.95 hardcover, ISBN 978-0190616755

On May 8th, 1945, the United States celebrated Victory in Europe Day. The nationwide celebrations provided a catharsis to Americans who had long sacrificed in the name of unity. From victory gardens to laboring in munitions factories, the fall of Nazi Germany unleashed euphoria and a feeling of accomplishment. The victory was a long time coming, with the German retreat in late 1944 bringing a swell of anticipation that the war would soon be at an end. Despite the jubilation, however, the war was only half won. *Implacable Foes: War in the Pacific, 1944-1945*, written by long-time Temple professor and World War II veteran Waldo Heinrichs and Temple alumnus Marc Gallicchio, tracks the American effort to win the war against Japan. To this end, the authors provide a comprehensive, in-depth view into the final years in the Pacific. The scope of the work is impressive, encompassing military, social, and political aspects of the war by bringing the reader from the long slogs endured by American troops in island warfare to the headquarters of the nation's most illustrious generals – without ever feeling as though it had bitten off more than it could chew.

The visceral field issues that U.S. soldiers experienced in the Pacific theater are consistent throughout the book: coming face to face with tenacious Japanese defenses and their changing tactics, a shortage of food and equipment as supply lines stretched with military advances, an inhospitable topography obstructing soldiers' ability to dig into the earth for their own protection, and the oppressive heat and all manner of diseases that accompany it.

The horrors of battle – the combat fatigue, the stress, the restless nights compounded by commanders misestimating the real needs on the ground – are laid bare in lively and engaging writing. Yet *Implacable Foes* goes much further than the islands of the Pacific or the battlefields of Europe and explores the innumerable dimensions of waging war. The war effort was a complex one, and the United States military faced a myriad of logistical and political problems – from within and without – while fighting to bring the Pacific theater of operations to a close. A global conflict requires a global perspective from the authors.

Everywhere the historians look, a tense tug-of-war lurked beneath the veneer of American unity. In the highest offices, George Marshall struggled with perpetually Philippines-minded Douglas MacArthur over the best course of action to take and whether a speedy or discretionary advance was preferable. The commanders of the European and Pacific Theaters competed over the desperate need for finite numbers of resources, men, ships, and even news coverage, and after the conclusion of the European Theater, American forces struggled with the decision and implementation of redeploying already battle-weary troops to the Pacific Islands. Waldo Heinrich's 86th Army Division was the first to redeploy to the Pacific following victory in Europe.

At home, with the entire economy turned over to the war effort, tensions ran high between workers and businesses and between the more meticulous military leaders and the anxious public's desire for a swift end to the war so that economic reconversion could begin. After the fall of

Germany – with Japan left to fight - the army’s still-pressing requirements contended with the promises of political leaders and Congress, who adhered to public opinion and pushed for demobilization and reconversion as quickly as possible. Waging a successful war to an unconditional Japanese surrender, then, required weathering the storms of debate on the home front – debate that reached its zenith over the immense human sacrifice that an invasion of Japan would require.

Implacable Foes is a thorough, kaleidoscopic view of the Pacific theater that utilizes an impressive array of primary sources, including personal and official accounts of the theater. The authors insert themselves into one of the most contentious historiographical debates in American foreign policy: why did its leadership use the atomic bomb? This decision, our authors tell us, did not come from a forward-looking strategy to intimidate the Soviet Union at the advent of the Cold War, as some revisionist historians assert. To the contrary, the bomb’s use was the result of more practical concerns. For Harry S Truman and General George Marshall, facing an enemy determined to fight to the bitter end and its own restless public unwilling to sacrifice more of its sons, the bomb became an “indispensable” tool to end the war.

Constraints at home hindered the war-making effort abroad. Congressional and presidential accountability to war-fatigued voters anticipating a transition to a peacetime economy compounded interservice rivalry competition for resources, and visions for how best to end the war. Ultimately, the American’s ability to confront logistical problems – and the ultimate weapon with the capacity to level cities - prevailed over the burdens emanating from the home front. Cutting across large swaths of themes and topics, it is a highly recommended read that holds appeal for those with interests in military history, the public and political dimensions of war, and the intersection of state and society.

Brandon Kinney
Temple University Graduate Student