

ADDENDUM TO  
**THE WINNING OF WORLD WAR II**  
BY GEORGE LORING THURLOW, JR.

Having read the book entitled "The Two-Ocean War" by Samuel Eliot Morison, a History professor and War Time Admiral, I add the following information to my story about my War Time experiences. It must be remembered that those who were involved in various operations did not always get accurate information about what was going on, even though it may have been in their close vicinity.

On Page 12 of my history, I speculated concerning the purpose of our convoying baby aircraft carriers that were ferrying airplanes to Casablanca. Admiral Morison tells in his book about German "milch cows" that were operating in the Atlantic in the vicinity of the Cape Verde Islands. Task forces consisting of U.S. baby flat tops and destroyers and destroyer escorts, were sent out to sink the supplying U-boats as well as any other German submarines in the area. So, it may be that the planes that were being ferried to Casablanca were meant to replace those lost from the task forces that were hunting for submarines.

I told on Page 13 of the sinking of the Block Island, one of the small aircraft carriers that was on the anti-submarine patrol. She was sunk by torpedoes from U-549 about 320 miles West Southwest of Funchal. Fortunately, 951 men were rescued after she was sunk, and one of the escorting destroyer escorts sank the U-549.

On Page 12, I talked about seeing the French battleship, Jean Bart in the harbor at Casablanca. In his book, Admiral Morison told of the fight involving the U.S. battleship Massachusetts and the Jean Bart. When I visited the Massachusetts with my grandson, Matt Thurlow in 1995 where it is tied up at Fall River, Massachusetts, the guide pointed out a hole on the topside of the ship which was made by a French shell. This was the only damage to that ship during the entire war, including its duties in the Pacific.

On Page 15 and 16, I tell of entering the Mediterranean with baby aircraft carriers. We never saw the carriers again after we arrived in Oran in North Africa. However, Morison in his book says that these carriers operated off the shore of Southern France during the invasion there on and after August 15. Their mission was to spot for naval gunfire and later to bomb the retreating enemy. They were under the command of Admiral Durgin in the U.S.S. Tulagi.

I told of our part in the Southern France invasion and the convoys to the beaches there after the invasion. I learned from Prof. Morison that by August 21, there were about 124 escort vessels convoying in troop and supply ships. By September 2, 1944, 190,565 men, 41,534 vehicles and 219,205 tons of supplies had been landed

over the assault beaches.

The book by the Admiral said that intensive minesweeping operations were necessary before the port of Marseilles could be used after its capture on August 28. As my history says, we entered the harbor before the minesweeping had been completed.

In reviewing the Southern France invasion, which was code-named DRAGOON, Morison said: It may stand as an example of an almost perfect amphibious operation from the point of view of training, timing, Army-Navy-Air Force co-operation, performance and results.... operation DRAGOON justified itself.... Its greatest accomplishment was to swell the tide of victory by an entire Army group which made the Allied advance into Germany irresistible”

Skipping over to the Pacific, the Professor truly said that the battle of Iwo Jima was one of the toughest battles in the entire history of the United States Marines, conducted with exemplary endurance, skill, and valor. By the end of the war about 2400 B-29 landings had been made on the island, carrying crews of many thousand men. He concluded by saying that the capture of Iwo Jima became a major contribution to victory over Japan.

The tenacious defense by the Japanese on Iwo led most of us in the Service in the Pacific to believe that they would fight even harder to defend their home-land of Japan. Therefore, when the atomic bomb was dropped and the War ended, we deplored the fact that it was necessary, but believed, and many of us still believe that it saved hundreds of thousands of lives both American and Japanese.

One of our small expeditions before the capture of Iwo Jima was to head north escorting an LCI which was carrying Negro soldiers. Our destination was one of the remote Mariana Islands. I'm not sure now whether it was Anatahan or Agrihan. A B-29 had crashed on the island, and there was a question as to whether any of the crew had survived. It was believed that there were Japanese on the island, which was of little strategic importance and had been by-passed.

The mission was to search for any surviving American airmen and to overcome any enemy resistance to the search. Some of our seamen armed themselves with rifles, in case their help was needed by the soldiers. We sailed into a little harbor for which we had some old charts, hoping that they were accurate as far as the depth of the swater was concerned.

Fortunately the soldiers encountered no Japanese, but unfortunately, there were no survivors of the B-29 crash. This was another example of the willingness to risk many lives to try to save a few, of which there were many instances during the War.

I told of our work in the capture of Rota Island after the Armistice. We had thought that there was little there of military significance, but the Morison work tells of there being land-based aircraft on Rota. They were never apparent when we visited Guam, which is next door to Rota, or when we led the "Invasion" of Rota.

I shall close by referring to the sinking of the cruiser Indianapolis shortly before the end of the War. As I stated in my history, we had been aware of the possibility of Japanese submarines operating in the Pacific, but they were not considered to be nearly the threat of the German subs in the Atlantic. So, when the Indianapolis was sunk by a Japanese submarine, it came as a surprise to us, and apparently to higher-ups in the naval hierarchy. They had become so complacent that they did not think it important to send escorting destroyers with the Indianapolis on its way from Guam to the Philippines. The lack of escorts cost at least 500 sailors their lives.

Morison calls the unnecessary loss of life from the Indianapolis a tale of routine stupidity and unnecessary suffering. Unfortunately there was a great deal of stupidity and of unnecessary suffering during the War on all fronts and by all services, both Axis and Allied.