

Wavell and his Accomplishments in the Middle East 1939-41-Part III

(A Bibliographical Review)

CAPTAIN HAROLD E. RAUGH JR. US ARMY

The majority of the books written about the British expedition to Greece include accounts of the defense of Crete, since in many respects it was the second phase of the Greek campaign, although a few complete studies of this episode have been written. Again, some aspects of Wavell's role are controversial.

Perhaps the most complete, detailed, and analytical one-volume study of Crete is I.McD.G. Stewart's *The Struggle for Crete: 20 May- 1 June 1941* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). Stewart's biggest indictment of Wavell is that "a few simple measures, taken during the six months of occupation before the battle, could have deprived the enemy of any hope of success" (p.479) - these measures included roads, landing strip, and defensive construction. It is doubtful, though, if Stewart places the importance of Crete within the proper context of all the activities and campaigns being conducted by Wavell during the six previous months, and appears to treat it as an isolated situation. Of course, it was Wavell who made the recommendation to evacuate Crete, realizing the futility of sending additional reinforcements to the beleaguered island. Stewart adds, after criticizing Wavell, that "Certainly no general of the Second World War can be more sure of his [Wavell's] reputation as a fine soldier and honourable [sic] man". (p. 479).

Another fine study, placing Crete within its strategical context in the eastern Mediterranean, is Alan Clark's *The Fall of Crete* (London: Anthony Blond, 1962). The noted American military history writer Hanson W.Baldwin included a chapter entitled "Crete- The Winged Invasion" in his *Battles Lost and Won* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966). This chapter provides a cursory overview of the defense of Crete.

Wavell's campaigns in Iraq and Syria in 1941 were, though intense, overshadowed by the Greek debacle, the defense and evacuation of Crete, and Rommel's offensive in the Western Desert. Similarly, in the literary arena, studies of the Iraq and Syrian campaigns are vastly overshadowed by books on Wavell's other concurrently-conducted campaigns.

Geoffrey Warner, in his *Iraq and Syria 1941* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1974), makes excellent use of a multitude of Allied and Axis documents, both previously published and unpublished, in his narrative. In his Prologue, he

discusses "Arab Nationalism to 1939", knowledge of which is essential in understanding the reasons for and contexts of these two imbroglios. After chronicling the events leading up to and causes for these two campaigns, he includes a chapter on each, then concludes with "The Strategic Implications." Wavell was originally reluctant to engage in these operations on the outermost limits of his command, and in retrospect, Warner contends "Both (Iraq and Syria) could therefore have been left to stew in their own juice until Rommel's army in North Africa had been destroyed, rather as Wavell had appeared to favour (sic)." (p.159). This book is recommended to one desiring to know primarily about the diplomatic aspects of these campaigns.

Major-General Sir Edward Spears, K.B.E., C.B., M.C., served as Head of the British Mission to the Free French, and became Head of the British Mission to Syria and Lebanon in July 1941. He wrote *Fulfilment of a Mission* shortly after World War II, but it was not published until fairly recently (London: Seeley, Service and Cooper, 1977). Spears, in describing Wavell's character and attributes, is quite complimentary, though the two were often at loggerheads over policy with the Free French. Spears believes Wavell was incorrect not to accept the "co-operation [sic] of the French Forces in the Levant (three Divisions)" (p.15), after General Mittelhauser, the French Commander-in-Chief in Syria, refused to accept Marshal Petain's armistice in June 1940. Wavell also, according to Spears, underrated the Axis threat to Syria. Spears states that Wavell was undoubtedly exasperated at having "in Cairo a person (myself) [Spears] who had the ear of the Prime Minister and never ceased putting to him a policy urged by de Gaulle of which he [Wavell] disapproved". (p. 92). Wavell was so perturbed by de Gaulle and Spears being able to bypass him, the Commander-in-Chief, and communicate directly with the Prime Minister, that he "begged to tender his resignation" in May 1941. Unfortunately, Wavell gave Churchill the blank check the latter must have wanted and which he used the following month in "transferring" Wavell to India. This is quite an interesting book, indispensable to a knowledge of understanding the evolution of the Syrian campaign, though it is expectedly tainted with Francophilic sentiments.

There were a number of leading personalities, civilians as well as soldiers, who held positions of great importance and were able to place Wavell's campaigns in the larger context of the world-wide conflagration. These autobiographies/memoirs/reminiscences cast a great deal of light on Wavell himself as well as on his Middle East campaigns. Foremost among these writings is the monumental six-volume narrative *The Second World War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, various dates), by Winston S. Churchill, who served as Prime Minister as well as Minister of Defense, 1940-45. Of particular interest are Volume II, *Their Finest Hour* (1949) and Volume III, *The Grand Alli-*

ance (1950), which both cover Wavell's Middle East campaigns in superlative detail. They are supplemented by "the memoranda, directives, personal telegrams, and minutes" issued by Churchill as Prime Minister. Churchill believed Wavell to have been "tired" and under a great deal of strain, the latter of which was undoubtedly true. In explaining Wavell's transfer to India to United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Churchill stated:

....Wavell has a glorious record, having completely destroyed the Italian Army and conquered the Italian Empire in Africa. He has also borne up well against German attacks and has conducted war and policy in three or four directions simultaneously since the beginning of the struggle. I must regard him as our most distinguished General. (Vol.III, p. 350).

Churchill won the Nobel Prize for Literature for *The Second World War*.

Other outstanding primary accounts are the war diaries, edited by Sir Arthur Bryant, of Field-Marshal Viscount Alanbrooke, who, as General Sir Alan Brooke, served as Chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1941 to 1946. His edited war diaries were published as *The Turn of the Tide* and *Triumph in the West* (London: Collins, 1957 and 1959, respectively). Major-General Sir John Kennedy served in privileged and responsible positions only one echelon below that of the CIGS: he was Director of Military Operations from 1940 to 1943, and thereafter Assistant Chief of the Imperial General Staff until December 1944. Kennedy's "war narrative", very evenly-written and critical when necessary, was edited by Bernard Fergusson and published as *The Business of War* (London: Hutchinson, 1957).

General Hastings Ismay became Chief of Staff to the Minister of Defense (Churchill) in 1940, serving in that position until 1946. He also served as Deputy Secretary to the War Cabinet. From this vantage point Ismay was intimately involved with all aspects of the central direction of the War. In *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay* (New York: Viking, 1960), the Churchill-Wavell relationship is commented upon in great detail, as are the strategic facets of all of Wavell's Middle East campaigns. In paying tribute to Wavell, Ismay wrote, in part:

.... He had shown strategic genius of a high order. His withdrawal of the Fourth Indian Division from a battle still raging in the Western Desert, and their despatch to the Sudan, a distance of over 1,000 miles, was a master stroke. Rommel rated him as the most redoubtable of the commanders who were pitted against him. He had gained the complete confidence of his troops. He had the happy knack of turning up at the

critical moments of a battle; and the flying risks he took to get there nearly cost him his life on several occasions. (pp. 211-212).

Ismay concludes this section by stating Wavell's relief was justified, since Churchill had lost confidence in him.

"Jumbo" Wilson-later Field-Marshal Lord Wilson of Libya, G.C.B., G.B.E., D.S.O., served as Wavell's right-hand man in many of the Middle East campaigns. Wilson, at the outbreak of the war, was commanding in Egypt and oversaw Wavell's early campaign in the desert and Cunningham's in Ethiopia. In the next few months he commanded the expedition to and evacuation from Greece, commanded the force that occupied Iraq after a pro-Axis coup, and led the sensitive operation that resulted in the occupation of Syria which had been held by Vichy French forces.³⁰ Wilson's direct participation in many of Wavell's Middle East campaigns, as the commander of the ground forces involved, makes his book of World War II experiences, *Eight Years Overseas* (London: Hutchinson, n.d. (1948)), indispensable reading.

"Battleaxe" was the excuse Churchill had been looking for to remove Wavell, in whom Churchill had lost confidence and believed to be tired. However, the majority of knowledgeable and authoritative sources question, if not condemn, Churchill's action:

The reasons for relieving Wavell of his former command are obscure. Heavily handicapped by inferiority of numbers and equipment, he has conducted campaigns simultaneously on four fronts and has displayed, by the just timing, strength and range of his strokes, not only ability of a high order, but, also and distinctly, the spark of genius. He has the confidence of his troops and the confidence of the nation. His known toughness of fibre [sic] and his transfer to another command together preclude any doubt as to his health, though the appointment of a triumvirate to replace him is an indication that he must have been subjected to a colossal strain... Whatever the cause, the public, and, in particular, the army will be unhappy until the truth is revealed.³¹

As the above account was written shortly after Wavell's transfer, it is highly possible that it is tinged with emotionalism and is not totally objective.

However, almost two decades later, Correlli Barnett, after exhaustive research and analysis of primary sources, published and unpublished, came to the same conclusion:

There was no valid case for relieving Wavell. In his two years in the

Middle East he had built a base and a command structure from nothing. He had conquered the whole of Italian East Africa, had captured two hundred thousand prisoners, including the Duke of Aosta, Viceroy of Ethiopia. Under his strategic aegis, O' Connor had taken Cyrenaica and another two hundred thousand prisoners. Between February and June 1941 he had conducted six major campaigns, never less than three at a time, and in May five at a time. No other British soldier of the day had the strategic grasp, the sagacity, and cool nerves and the immense powers of leadership to do all these things and steer a course free of total disaster. Certainly Wavell's career had been latterly clouded by defeat- Greece, Cyrenaica, Crete. Yet Greece and Cyrenaica, the most serious of the three, were the Prime Minister's responsibility.³²

By sending Wavell to India, Churchill wanted him to relax, "sitting under the pagoda tree."³³ This position turned out to be no sinecure, but Wavell's valiant actions against the onslaught of the Japanese and his Supreme Command of ABDACOM, in addition to his service as Viceroy of India (1943-1947), are outside the scope of this review. Wavell is the only man to have served as both a Field-Marshal and as Viceroy of India.

The first full-length biography of Wavell was R.H. Kiernan's *Wavell* (London: George G. Harrap, 1945). Kiernan was relatively well-known as a biographer of contemporary subjects, and his other books include *General Smuts* and *T.E. Lawrence*, among others. As the first biographer of Wavell, the author writes a very complete, interesting, and intriguing history of the Wavell family. Over the centuries there have been two common threads- attendance at Winchester and service in the army- in the tapestry of the Wavell family history. Falling into the latter category was Wavell's grandfather, Arthur Goodall Wavell, who served in the Bengal Army, Spanish Army (1810-1818, to include service in the Peninsular War and the receipt of a Spanish kinghood, Chilean Army (Deputy Commander-in-Chief), and Mexican Army. Wavell's father achieved the rank of major-general in the British Army.

Wavell's life is covered in a very detailed and complete manner, and Kiernan gives "a spirited account" of his Middle East campaigns, emphasizing Wavell's boldness and audacity in defeating the Italians. The Greek campaign is covered rather superficially, however. The author gives credit to Wavell's subordinates when due, and "makes it clear that in his exceptional situation at the hub Lord Wavell was always the coordinator and strategist and never had the opportunity to fight the battle himself,"³⁴ which in no way detracts from the magnitude of Wavell's achievements. This is a well-written, thoroughly readable book, as complete as one could expect in 1945.

Major-General R.J. Collins wrote *Lord Wavell (1883-1941): A Military Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), which covers Wavell's life up to his transfer to India in 1941. Collins and Wavell were old friends, having first served together in the same staff office as captains during the Great War. In fact, Collins dedicated this book "To our many mutual friends, without whose help this biography could not have been written".

This superlative book is exceedingly well written by a discerning author. The fact that Collins and Wavell were friends does not stifle the author's objectivity. Collins assesses items critically when judgements call for it. One distinguished reviewer of this book highlighted the significance of Wavell's first campaigns:

'The early African campaigns,' remarks Field Marshal Smuts [of South Africa], 'were the first rays of sunlight to pierce the gloom of those early years of the war.' That is something which ought never to be forgotten of Lord Wavell.³⁵ and remarks that "It is doubtful whether any commander-in-chief has borne greater responsibilities than those of Lord Wavell in the month of May 1941."³⁶

Collins writes extensively of Wavell's characteristics and attributes:

Lord Wavell had done much by his writings to explain the extraordinary mental as well as physical stress to which the commander in war is likely to be subjected, and few have revealed the temperament better suited to withstand them. He combined moral and muscular strength; he proved himself tireless and unflinching; he maintained his optimism without painting fancifully optimistic pictures; he met reverses and disappointments without undue perturbation, he preserved a steady good temper; he made allowance for failure in subordinates not due to slackness or stupidity. Few British commanders have been able to take on so many tasks at the same time, and to do them all justice.³⁷

The author's concluding chapter assesses "Wavell the Man" and "Wavell the General" with a great deal of perspicience. The former emphasizes Wavell's "capacity for making friends, and for keeping them once made; his kindness and thoughtfulness for others; his courtesy and unfailing good temper; his modesty and even temperament," (p. 440) and comments upon his taciturnity and legendary "silences". Of "Wavell the General", Collins states "Of Wavell's great ability and sagacity there is no need to enlarge. His reputation in this respect increases with the years" (p. 443), and comments upon Wavell's elephantine memory, his capacity for doing two things at once, his literary

capacity, perfect loyalty to his superiors, first-rate tactical eye for ground, unorthodoxy, and undaunted optimism. A number of interesting appendices are included, the most important being "The Pros and Cons of Intervention in Greece". This is an exceedingly well-written book with a great deal of detail, benefitting from the author's intimate knowledge of his subject. Collins concludes that "It is doubtful if the British Army has produced a better soldier-statesman since the days of Marlborough. (p. 451).

Bernard Fergusson (later Brigadier The Lord Ballantrae, K.T., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., O.B.E., D.S.O.) became Wavell's first aid-de-camp in 1934 and served on Wavell's staff on five separate occasions. Fergusson wrote *Wavell: Portrait of a Soldier* (London: Collins, 1961), "to do no more than to present a personal portrait of that great soldier as he appeared to an officer of his own Regiment". This slim volume does not pretend to be a biography, but is, rather, a fascinating and charming collection of anecdotes and recollections of Fergusson about his mentor, Wavell. An example remembered by Fergusson, which Wavell himself recorded in a foreword to one of his protege's books, pertains to their dialogue when Fergusson was interviewing to be Wavell's aide-de-camp. Fergusson apparently said:

"I've never been an A.D.C. before, and I may make an awful mess of it." And he [Wavell] said:

"Well, I've never had an A.D.C. before; I may make an awful mess of you."

So began a happy friendship which was to last more than fifteen years. (p.16-17).

This tome illuminates the lesser-known side of Wavell's life, and superbly complements the other biographies of Wavell. To be sure, Wavell "bequeathed to us an example of integrity and of the soldierly virtues which is unlikely ever to be surpassed". (p. 12).

Fergusson also wrote the superb biographical sketch entitled "Field-Marshal The Earl Wavell," a chapter in *The War Lords: Military Commanders of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Field Marshal Sir Michael Carver (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), pp. 213-230.

The first biography of Wavell to make use of the Field-Marshal's voluminous papers was John Connell's *Wavell: Scholar and Soldier* (London: Collins, 1964). Connell was eminently well-qualified to write this biography, since he had served on Wavell's staff both in the Middle East and in India,

and possessed "an unrivalled knowledge of the military and political ramifications of those momentous years."³⁸

Wavell's papers, which Connell had total access to, are

.... as voluminous as they are historically significant. They consist of, first, folders and bound volumes of almost all the letters and telegrams he wrote and received in the course of his duties after his promotion to Major-General [1933]; second, a wide and varied range of his private correspondence over many years; and third, his 'Recollections,' forming a detailed narrative of his life, from his earliest childhood until 1941, compiled for his family's sake and dictated during such short leisure hours as he could snatch while he was Viceroy of India from 1943 to 1946 [sic]. (p.11).

With access to this veritable treasure trove, Connell sets out to correct the deficiency that "there had never been a full or fair assessment of what he [Wavell] achieved as a fighting commander in the first two years of the Second World War..." (p. 16). Connell succeeds admirably, and "handles it [his assessment of what Wavell achieved as a fighting commander] with a blend of sympathy and integrity which is wholly convincing."³⁹ His account is balanced and fair. Connell adroitly narrates each of Wavell's campaigns and places it within the diplomatic and strategic context of the theater of operations and the war as a whole. The issue of military intervention in Greece is covered in great detail, impartial in every regard. The reader of this book will be awestruck by the enormous and complex magnitude of Wavell's responsibilities in the Middle East, and equally impressed by Wavell's heroic and herculean responses to these challenges. Many consider Wavell an "Arthurian" figure, and few will disagree with Connell that "Wavell is worthy of his place in history as one of the greatest soldiers and noblest characters of his age." (p.19).

Even though Connell died shortly after *Wavell: Scholar and Soldier* was published, he had written the greater part of a second volume on Wavell's life, covering his service as Commander-in-Chief, India, 1941-1943. This volume was completed and edited by Brigadier Michael Roberts, D.S.O., and published as *Wavell: Supreme Commander* (London: Collins, 1969). Like its predecessor, this volume is also written "in Connell's vein with an intense sympathy for his subject which does not blur his judgment nor encroach on historical fact."⁴⁰

The most recent book about Wavell is *The Chief*, subtitled *Field Marshal*

Lord Wavell, Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy, 1939-1947, by Ronald Lewin (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980). The dustjacket asserts this book is "the definitive treatment of the subject Wavell", but this book fails to live up to that claim. Lewin portrays the enigmatic facets of Wavell's personality, but fails to provide information on how and why these traits or characteristics were developed. This book sheds a great deal of light on the Churchill-Wavell relationship, though it tends to be disjointed and lacks continuity at times. It could also have been much better researched, with greater information and more detailed attributions given for his sources of information; there are, on the average, only eight endnotes for each chapter of the text. Indeed, "Instead of analysis, Lewin too often gives us unsupported, contradictory statements that provide a superficial picture of his protagonist."⁴¹

There have been a number of additional attempts to evaluate Wavell's generalship. The first substantial assessment was in *On their Shoulders. British Generalship in the Lean years, 1939-1942* (London: Faber and Faber; 1964), by Brigadier C.N. Barclay's C.B.E., D.S.O. Barclay's theme is that British people have

... almost entirely ignored the small company of generals who served them so well during the two or three years of our greatest peril. The generals of the early years of the Second World War - 1939 to 1942 - are mostly forgotten' yet, these men performed splendid service in difficult times. With their forces out-numbered, out-gunned, out-tanked, and inadequately-supported from the air, they suffered many defeats. But they also won very substantial victories and kept the flag flying while more men were trained, more guns, tanks and aircraft produced and powerful Allies gathered to the cause. (p. 11).

It is Barclay's goal to "rehabilitate" these earlier generals "whose exploits saved us from defeat and made possible the victories of the latter years of World War II." The eight senior officers, all of whom held operational command early in the war, in Barclay's study are Gort, Wavell, O'Connor, Wilson, Auchinleck, Cunningham, Percival, and Hutton.

The assessment of Wavell is conducted quite objectively. The author concedes that Wavell made a few errors, and Wavell is criticized for not pointing out more emphatically the dangers of the Greek "venture", and that his direction of Operation "Battleaxe" in mid-June 1941 "may have been faulty". (p. 64). Barclay states that Wavell's mission in the Middle East was literally "to make bricks out of straw", and even though mistakes were made,

... the fact remains that against massive odds Wavell held the Middle East for the British Commonwealth during the year we stood alone and, *what is not generally realized, directed two of the most resounding military victories in history- that in the Western Desert in the winter of 1940-41 and that in East Africa - with a tally of some 400,000 prisoners.* (p. 65).

Barclay is confident that "well-informed public opinion would place Lord Wavell at the top of any list of Generals who served their country with distinction in World War II." (p. 65).

Major-General E.K.G. Sixsmith's *British Generalship in the Twentieth Century* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1970), is quite disappointing in its assessment of Wavell. This is not because the author is overly-critical of Wavell, but because Wavell, who held unparalleled responsibilities as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, is mentioned, (as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East) on only twelve pages. On the majority of those pages there is only a single, passing reference to Wavell. The assessment of Wavell is totally superficial and incomplete; even Wavell's subordinate, O'Connor, who was a prisoner of war during Wavell's last three, most hectic months in the Middle East, is mentioned in this book more than Wavell himself. Sixsmith offers no new insight, information, or theories about Wavell's generalship, but mentions in his Epilogue that in the early years of the war - "the dark day" - ... "the men in authority bore an even heavier burden than those that were to come; then the exploits of Wavell and O'Connor stood out to light the future." (p. 295).

Brigadier The Right Honorable Sir John Smyth, Bt., V.C., M.C., is much more thorough in his evaluation of Wavell's generalship in *Leadership in War, 1939-1945* (London: David & Charles, 1974). Though trying to be objective, Smyth continually notes that Wavell underestimated Rommel and the Germans just as he later underestimated the fighting abilities of the Japanese. Smyth seems to make a large issue out of the allegation that Wavell was "completely exhausted" at the end of his tour as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East (refer to pages 7, 95, 97, and 98), yet totally contradicts himself by stating that

Opinions may differ as to his [Wavell's] place amongst the top British commanders of World War II, but I very much doubt whether any of them were superior to him in sheer toughness of body, mind and spirit. (p. 65).

Smyth opines that the top five British generals of World War II were Wavell, Auchinleck, Alexander, Montgomery, and Slim. In attempting to

rationalize his choices, the author adds that "if Wavell could have retired after his early victories, his place amongst the topmost generals would have been assured". (p. 231). This is truly an incredible assertion, since it would appear much more difficult for a general, with one being required to exert greater displays of generalship under adverse conditions with (numerically or qualitatively) inferior forces, than it would be for a general with a preponderance of material and manpower over that of the enemy. Smyth commanded the 17th Indian Division and was responsible for making the decision in the incident that became known as the "Sittang Bridge disaster". Since this incident occurred while Wavell was Commander-in-Chief, India, one must read the author's assessments of Wavell conscious of a possible lack of objectivity.

Wavell, as mentioned earlier, served as Commander-in-Chief, India, from 1941 to 1943. During that time he also served as Supreme Commander of ABDACOM, a hastily-organized and illfated command given the then-impossible mission of stemming the tide of Japanese aggression.

Wavell eschewed his Army uniform in October 1943, becoming Viceroy and Governor-General of India in an era when he had to fight not only the Japanese but also radical independence-minded Indians. In spite of numerous obstacles, to include a lack of guidance and lack of support from a Home Government that would not commit itself to a policy of eventual self-rule for India, Wavell paved the way for the independence of India. When this achievement was almost within his grasp, after almost three and a half arduous years of incessant toil, Wavell was shabbily dismissed. He was superseded by the more flamboyant and youthful Mountbatten, who was armed with a government policy as well as plenipotentiary powers. This basically marked the end of Wavell's near half-century career of public service as a soldier and consul of the British Empire. He died three years later.

As has been shown in detail, Wavell served as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, 1939-1941, at a time when the British Empire had to hold its own, with a marked inferiority in resources and manpower, against the Axis onslaught. That Wavell was able to avoid decisive defeats, and at the same time achieve two of the greatest military victories in history- in the Western Desert and East Africa - while involved in operations in Greece, Crete, Cyrenaica, Syria, and Iraq, is an indication that he was a general of the highest caliber.

Wavell possessed a strategic insight and breadth of vision beyond compare. His intellectual abilities and memory helped reduce any problem to its simplest form, which was then decisively acted upon. Wavell's loyalty, to subordinates as well as superiors, was total. He never uttered a word or

wrote a sentence to defend himself or his actions, and never attempted to cast aspersions upon his superiors or anyone else. Wavell was the pillar of integrity, virtue, and self-discipline, and was a gentleman in the true sense of the word.

This bibliographical survey has included the works written about Wavell, his Middle East campaigns, and his generalship. More research needs to be conducted on the British grand strategy in the Middle East, 1939-1941, as well as Rommel's first North African offensive, Wavell's Operations "Brevity" and "Battleaxe", and the campaigns in Syria and Iraq. It would also be worthwhile to learn the actual impact of Ultra on Wavell's Middle East campaigns. A study of Wavell's role in developing tactics and strategy during the interwar years, plus his relationship with Liddell Hart, is also recommended.

Though Connell's two volumes are the closest that have been done to a "full and fair assessment" of Wavell's life and his accomplishments, I believe that much more remains to be discovered about the enigmatic Wavell.⁴² If we knew everything there was to know about Wavell, it is doubtful that the Wavell family would be so protective of the contents of Wavell's papers, and the Field-Marshal's papers would surely be in a public document repository by now. It is believed that the opening of Wavell's papers to researchers and historians could only result in absolving Wavell of false accusations, in such items as the decision to send the British expedition to Greece, and would cast a much more positive light on his personality as well as his accomplishments.

The secondary intent of this bibliographical review has been to achieve a consensus on an evaluation of Wavell the man and Wavell the general. Wavell was, to be sure, a soldier's soldier, the epitome of the magnanimous warrior. His outstanding achievements as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, will insure Wavell a place among the Great Captains of History.

REFERENCES

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³¹Major-General H. Rowan-Robinson, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., *Wavell in the Middle East* [London: Hutchinson, n.d. (1941)], p. 219.

³²Correlli Barnett, *The Desert Generals* (1960; rpt. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 77.

³³Bernard Fergusson, ed., *The Business of War* (London: Hutchinson, 1957), p. 119.

³⁴"Soldier and Viceroy", review of *Wavell*, by R.H. Kiernan, (London) *Times Literary Supplement*, 29 September 1945, p. 465.

³⁵Cyril Falls, "Aftermath of War: The Career of Field Marshal Lord Wavell", review of *Lord Wavell (1883-1941), A Military Biography*, by Major-General R.J. Collins, *The Illustrated London News*, 31 January 1948, p. 122.

³⁶Falls, p. 122.

³⁷"General Wavell", review of *Lord Wavell (1883-1941), A Military Biography*, by Major-General R.J. Collins, (London) *Times Literary Supplement*, 31 January 1948, p. 60.

³⁸Fergusson, *Wavell: Portrait of a Soldier*, p. 5.

³⁹"Wavell The Professional Soldier", review of *Wavell: Scholar and Soldier*, by John Connell, (London) *Times Literary Supplement*, 26 November 1964, p. 1054.

⁴⁰"Disaster in the Far East", review of *Wavell: Supreme Commander*, by John Connell, edited by Michael Roberts, (London) *Times Literary Supplement*, 8 May 1969, p. 482.

⁴¹D.E. Schowalter, review of *The Chief*, by Ronald Lewin, *Library Journal*, 1 November 1980, p. 2322.

⁴²The suggestion that even Connell may not have had total and unrestricted access to the Wavell papers is deduced from the comments that appear in the catalogue describing the contents of the Connell papers: "(XII) A group of 16 folders of material relating to the preparation, publication, and reception of the Wavell biography, c. 1957-1965. These papers document Connell's researches very fully and throw light on certain difficulties thrown in his path. Much material concerns disputes over the Wavell papers". (p.5), and "12 'Contracts and extracts of correspondence ...' approx. 19 letters from Countess Wavell, the biography requested by Wavell's widow and daughters ..." (pp. 5-6). Kenneth Blackwell, ed., "The John Connell Papers", *Library Research News*, Mills Memorial Library, McMaster University, I (Spring 1969), pp. 4-6.

A REQUEST FROM THE AUTHOR

Captain Raugh, the author of this article, is writing a doctoral dissertation on "Wavell in the Middle East, 1939 - 1941: A Study in Generalship". Our readers with memories, reminiscences, or photographs of Wavell, or who served in the Middle East, including East Africa, during 1939 - 1941 (especially those who served in the 4th and 5th Indian Divisions), are requested to contact him at the Department of History, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York 10996 - 1793 USA. All contributions will be punctually acknowledged and returned upon request.