



# The Origins of the Grand Alliance: Anglo-American Military Collaboration from the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor (Battles and Campaigns)

By William T. Johnsen



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On December 12, 1937, Japanese aircraft sank the American gunboat *Panay*, which was anchored in the Yangtze River outside Nanjing, China. Although the Japanese apologized, the attack turned American public opinion against Japan, and President Roosevelt dispatched Captain Royal Ingersoll to London to begin conversations with the British admiralty about Japanese aggression in the Far East. While few Americans remember the Panay Incident, it established the first links in the chain of Anglo-American military collaboration that eventually triumphed in World War II.

In *The Origins of the Grand Alliance*, William T. Johnsen provides the first comprehensive analysis of military collaboration between the United States and Great Britain before the Second World War. He sets the stage by examining Anglo-French and Anglo-American coalition military planning from 1900 through World War I and the interwar years. Johnsen also considers the formulation of policy and grand strategy, operational planning, and the creation of the command structure and channels of communication. He addresses vitally important logistical and materiel issues, particularly the difficulties of war production.

Military conflicts in the early twenty-first century continue to underscore the increasing importance of coalition warfare for historian and soldier alike. Drawn from extensive sources and private papers held in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, Johnsen's exhaustively researched study refutes the idea that America was the naive junior partner in the coalition and casts new light on the US-UK "special relationship."



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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"This is an important contribution to historical understanding of the military history of World War II and represents the most authoritative account of the military dimensions of the Anglo-American relationship to date."?Theodore A. Wilson, author of *Coalition Warfare: A Guide to the Issues*

"Johnsen makes a singular contribution to the literature by not only synthesizing the findings of other scholars but also bringing his own research and analysis to bear on an array of critical issues."?Paul Miles, author of *FDR's Admiral: William Leahy and the Making of Grand Strategy in World War II*

"An uncommonly astute study of the most vital American partnership of the 20th century, *The Origins of the Grand Alliance* is also the intimate portrait of a great geopolitical marriage."?Rick Atkinson, author of *An Army at Dawn*

"This well-researched, well-written and important book proves beyond doubt that the US-UK Special Relationship has far deeper roots than we imagined. Far-sighted yet hitherto unknown staff officers laid down plans for co-operation long before Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt established their personal relationship, and William T. Johnsen ushers them into history's spotlight for the first time. They are the unsung heroes of the English-speaking peoples of the 20th century and in this fascinating book they finally receive their well-deserved paean."?Andrew Roberts, author of *The Storm of War*

"In *The Origins of the Grand Alliance*, William T. Johnsen provides a uniquely empathetic description and analysis of the stresses and strains that characterized Anglo-American relations in the years leading up to World War II. Johnsen's grip on the strategic, political, and cultural contexts is thoroughly persuasive. This is a work on the experience of cooperation, including military planning, in a time of approaching hostilities. It is a very, very good book!"?Colin S. Gray, University of Reading, U.K.

"In this significant work, Johnsen describes and analyzes the initial steps in building the coalition that defeated the Axis powers. His thorough, balanced use of archival sources and his masterful consideration of the vast array of secondary sources touching on his subject result in clear images of key personalities, institutions, and processes. This book will guide 21st century strategists while earning accolades from historians."?Brigadier General Harold Nelson, USA (Ret.), Former U.S. Army Chief of Military History

"The World War II Anglo-American 'Special Relationship' constitutes one of the closest alliances in history. Contrary to popular opinion, however, that was not inevitable, and creating the alliance was not an easy process. Nor was it a process that began only after Pearl Harbor. To the contrary, by the time the United States officially entered the war in December of 1941, the two nations already possessed a combined global strategy and a series of military accords that their representatives had reached in the preceding four years. Making excellent use of a wide variety of unpublished document and manuscript collections in Great Britain and the United States as well as available published sources, William Johnsen explains just how and why these military components of the alliance originated and developed before official U.S. entry into the war. In doing so he analyzes and offers key insights into the events, individuals and early agreements that enabled the two nations to establish such close military bonds and operate so effectively from 1942-1945."?Mark Stoler, author of *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945*

"[This] is a judicious, fact-filled, and reliable account that will be a useful resource for anyone seeking to learn more about this remarkable period . . . ."? *Journal of Military History*

"A ground breaking effort . . . .

There are a number of interesting surprises in the book. . . .

This is an indispensable read for anyone interested in the political history of the Second World War."? *NYMAS REVIEW*

About the Author

**William T. Johnsen** is professor of military history and strategy in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the US Army War College, and he previously served as the institution's dean of academics. After graduating from West Point, he served in the infantry for twenty years.

## **Users Review**

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