

1988

Take Her Deep: A Submarine Against Japan in World War II

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Recommended Citation

Schratz, Paul (1988) "Take Her Deep: A Submarine Against Japan in World War II," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 41 : No. 3 , Article 21.

Available at: <http://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol41/iss3/21>

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to the Allied forces as over-the-beach sappers who cleared the way for landing craft flotillas. Yet the 10th Light Flotilla lives in the 1980s as the Ayatollah Khomeini's surface attack squads continue to savage world shipping in the Persian Gulf, occasionally under the noses of mighty warships.

Schofield and Carisella have illustrated this action story with photographs that show clearly how a few determined frogmen, properly equipped, can create havoc on a strategic level for the world's sea powers. The authors are first-rate naval historians, and the reader of *Frogmen: First Battles* will experience the feel of air bubbles in dark water, gray steel hulls exploding, and men swimming for their lives amid burning oil slicks.

RUSSELL W. RAMSEY
The Air University

Galantin, I.J. *Take Her Deep: A Submarine Against Japan in World War II*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books, 1987. 262pp. \$17.95

O'Kane, Richard H. *Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous World War II Submarine*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1987. 345pp. \$18.95

A number of fine World War II submarine histories by former commanding officers are now appearing in the bookstalls. *Take Her Deep* by Admiral Pete Galantin, and *Wahoo*

by Rear Admiral Dick O'Kane, certainly rank high as adventure stories. O'Kane's earlier volume, *Clear the Bridge*, on the exploits of the U.S.S. *Tang*, became a best-seller; he was executive officer for the six Pacific war patrols of *Wahoo*, having been detached before she was lost in action on the seventh. Galantin's *Take Her Deep* covers the last five combat patrols of the U.S.S. *Halibut*, under his command, ending with a near fatal depth charging in Luzon Strait in November 1944, which damaged her so badly she had to be withdrawn from service. A heroic story of a close-knit fighting team, the book was written at the urging of "Captain Pete's" wartime crewmen.

Pete Galantin took command of *Halibut* at Midway Island in August 1943. A modern fleet submarine, approximately a year old, she had compiled an excellent combat record in five previous patrols. Galantin was ten years out of the Naval Academy, having served seven years in submarines, including two previous commands in vintage boats and had made one war patrol as a prospective commanding officer in *Sculpin*. His first *Halibut* patrol, conducted off northern Honshū and Hokkaidō, soon brought the heartbreak of erratic or dud torpedoes foiling two well-conducted attacks on a *Shigure*-class destroyer. During the resultant depth charging by an undamaged and thoroughly aroused surface enemy, ship and crew paid the price of peacetime penury and bureaucratic stupidity. *Halibut* soon got her

revenge, however, damaging another destroyer and sending several more to the bottom.

On her next patrol, off Bungo Suido and the Japanese Inland Sea, she damaged the carrier *Junyo*, but the *coup de grace* to send her to the bottom was foiled by a torpedo running hot in the launching tube. Subsequent patrols finally produced the submariner's dream, five torpedo hits apparently sinking a battleship, only to find the victim subsequently downgraded to a lesser warship. On her last patrol off the Philippines, following a melee with convoy, *Halibut* was heavily damaged by air attack, dishing in the pressure hull and making a shambles of the submarine interior, forcing abandonment of the officers' and chiefs' living quarters because of deadly chlorine gas from the battery compartment beneath. Too badly mauled to continue on patrol, she struggled to the surface and headed for Saipan without gyroscope, sonar, radio, radar, or other vital equipment. When a radar could be made operational, she called her sister ship *Pintado* for help, using the radar beam as a signal light. *Pintado* escorted *Halibut* over 1,500 miles to Saipan where her damages were judged to be beyond repair. She earned a Navy Unit Citation for her gutsy skipper and stalwart crewmen, but the time had come to put her to pasture in New London, serving as an alongside training ship. The book is well-written, a gripping story for anybody with a love of the sea or adventure in submarine combat.

Wahoo tells a somewhat different story. Commissioned at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in June 1942, *Waho* made seven war patrols, the first two under an experienced but unaggressive skipper, the remaining five under Commander Dudley W. "Mush" Morton, whose amazing exploits soon made her the most famous American submarine and Morton one of the most admired COs. The transformation of *Wahoo* from a mediocre to an outstanding submarine is the heart of O'Kane's book. The accounts of the patrols are spine-tingling, both in triumph and tragedy. It is a tale of great courage, brilliant leadership, and daring innovation in a new type of submarine warfare fought largely on the surface in waters closely controlled by the enemy. Where Morton's predecessor had spent 500 hours submerged on his final patrol, Morton spent only 50 on his first, capitalizing on superb new surface search radar and the great mobility gained by surface operations. Again, heartbreaking torpedo performance limited results, yet Morton and O'Kane both became top aces in wreaking devastation on Japanese shipping. In the shallow, turgid waters of the Yellow Sea-East China Sea, for example, Morton had nine confirmed ship sinkings on one patrol, a feat surpassed only by O'Kane a year later in *Tang*, with ten.

If O'Kane's prose occasionally becomes a bit contorted, who is to say that the rough chisel in the hand of one sculptor is less dramatic in

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effect than the polished marble produced by another? The less graceful language sometimes contributes to an aura of first-person authenticity. Particularly vivid is O'Kane's painstaking reconstruction of *Wahoo's* final patrol. O'Kane assumes that *Wahoo* was struck and seriously damaged by a circular run of her own erratic torpedo, just as *Tang* was later lost. While it is more likely that the initial damage came from shore batteries, there is no doubt about the subsequent details of her final agony, which are documented from Japanese sources. Successive waves of attack on the gravely wounded submarine were launched by an overwhelming combination of shore batteries, antisubmarine air and surface forces, dropping sixty-three depth charges or large bombs and forty smaller bombs before the final destruction of this gallant ship and her incomparable crew. O'Kane asks in her memory that, based on the evidence of the four additional ship sinkings on her final patrol, not known until after the war, Morton's Navy Cross be upgraded to a Medal of Honor and the gallant ship be awarded another Presidential Unit Citation. Few would disagree; more has been given for less.

Both of these books add to the lore of the deadly game played beneath the seas. Over the years many valuable lessons learned in combat have been too largely forgotten by a new generation in a new era. Dramatic accounts such as these preserve unique records of resource-

fulness and great courage for the edification of us all.

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Hastings, Max. *The Korean War*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987. 389pp. \$22.95

Max Hastings is a writer who obviously stayed awake during English composition class. His book reads smoothly and its meaning is immediately clear. Both are essential attributes when covering the Korean war in 344 pages.

The Korean War is not so much about tactics, strategy, and logistics as it is about feelings. The dust jacket picture (an exhausted, weeping soldier) sets the reader on course for the entire book. Mr. Hastings has avoided parroting the books, papers, and news releases of the principals of that war. Instead, he has brought to print, through extensive personal interviews, the individual experiences of enlisted men, NCOs, and unit officers of many nations and both sides. Few of these participants ever would have written a book, and fewer still would have been widely read. However, their words and emotions are preserved here.

A strong cement of solid history backed by a 103 book bibliography and references to numerous military museums, archives, and institutions hold it all together. He does not allow the interviews to overwhelm, but rather, to act as flavoring or