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## The Submarine: A History,

William S. Murray

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and force mentorship. A recurring theme is the failure of a top-heavy bureaucracy of “big military/Army/Navy” that is “organizationally miscast for dealing with twenty-first-century insurgencies,” versus smaller, more efficient Marine, special forces, and civil affairs units. One example is the transformation of “big military” control over the Afghanistan battlefield. In 2001, master sergeants were empowered to call in B-52 airstrikes that arrived within minutes; by 2003, approval of task force concepts of operations required three days of paperwork and senior-officer authorization.

Kaplan holds out the ethnic composition and language skills of U.S. Southern Command personnel as exemplary. He posits that, for the twenty-first century, “indigenous culture must be appreciated before anything can be accomplished with its inhabitants” and that “cultural and historical knowledge of the terrain is more likely than technological wizardry to dilute the so-called fog-of-war.” Kaplan states that in Afghanistan the “American Empire . . . was weakest” because of an absence of linguistic skills among deployed military personnel. “This . . . neglected part of . . . defense ‘transformation’ . . . had nothing to do with the latest weapons systems.”

According to Kaplan, future military operations should optimally leave small footprints. In the Philippines, he observes, Army civil affairs teams, part of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, functioned like relief charities or nongovernmental organizations—they built schools, dug wells, and provided medical assistance. These personnel “represented the future reality of Special Operations: the Peace Corps with

guns, the final articulation of unconventional war.”

Contrary to media reports of poor military morale due to overdeployment, Kaplan states that “with Army Special Forces and the Marines I had met only two kinds of troops (from 2002–2004): those who were serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, and those who were jealous of those who were” and “those in the Special Operations community whom I had met (in the Philippines) and in eastern Afghanistan were having the time of their lives.”

*Imperial Grunts* is intended to be the first of several books on “imperial maintenance on the ground, and seeking a rule book for its application.” The strong opinions of the author notwithstanding, those desiring to learn about military personnel deployed worldwide in the war on terror can benefit from reading this account.

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Parrish, Thomas. *The Submarine: A History*. New York: Penguin, 2004. 576pp. \$17

In this excellent and rather lengthy book, Thomas Parrish uses detailed vignettes to illustrate how submarines, the men who operated them, and the organizations that produced them changed naval warfare between great powers during the twentieth century. The author does this with a deft hand, providing a wealth of details concerning many notable personalities and technical facts of his arcane subject in a way that both informs and entertains. One has only to read the first three pages, which quickly discuss the short and

tragic life of the Confederate submarine CSS *H. L. Hunley*, to get an accurate feel for how the rest of the book will progress. Parrish maintains this fast pace as he relates the legend of David Bushnell's Revolutionary War submersible vessel, the *Turtle*; Robert Fulton's submarine efforts; and those of other early inventors. His discussions on World War I are more substantial, and his penchant for detail emerges in his short biographies of some of the major figures of the time. He ties their careers to submarine technology, not only describing Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz's rise to high command in the German navy but quoting the admiral's observation that his success was bound to the development of the torpedo. Parrish then traces the development of both the German and British fleets and the grand strategies that led to their acquisition. For the next ten pages, we are told the riveting story of how Lieutenant Otto Weddigen, commanding the six-hundred-ton submarine *U-9*, with a crew of twenty-six men, sank the British cruisers *Aboukir*, *Cressy*, and *Hogue* with just three torpedoes in less than two hours in the early days of the war. In that battle 1,459 British men died, which at the time represented the worst butcher's bill, and arguably the most stunning defeat, in the history of the Royal Navy. As Parrish later observes, the century of the submarine had arrived.

Parrish treats his discussion of World War II equally well. He relays, among other things, Admiral Karl Dönitz's rise, *U-47* commander Lieutenant Günter Prien's attack in Scapa Flow, the U.S. Navy's participation in convoy escort duty before the official declaration of war, and the second Battle of the Atlantic. He discusses the parallel Allied

and German code-breaking efforts and the action/reaction technology cycle between submarines and those who hunted them. Readers with an interest in the U.S. submarine force's contributions to victory against Japan will be pleased with the author's treatment of that important campaign and of the major figures involved.

If the book has a weakness, it is that some important points receive scant coverage. All told, nearly four hundred pages of the book discuss the history of diesel-powered submarines, while only eighty-four pages are dedicated to nuclear boats. Yet even here the author does a creditable job in describing the development of American nuclear submarines, evenhandedly discussing the rise, behavior, strengths, and weaknesses of Admiral Hyman Rickover. Oddly, Russian submarines receive little attention, most of it devoted to peacetime losses of the *Komsolomets* (the Mike-class submarine) in 1989 and that of the *Kursk* (an Oscar II) in 2000.

Submarine accidents also present the few stumbling points. Parrish states that all hands were lost when HMS *Thetis* sank in 1939, when in fact three members of the crew and a shipyard worker escaped from the stricken submarine. Similarly, he describes the USS *Scorpion* as "shabby and seedy" and "rickety," citing these alleged characteristics as contributing to its loss. However, these oversights are relatively minor and do not significantly detract from what is otherwise a fine treatment of a complex subject. The book will appeal to the interested layman, naval professional, and, especially, to current and former submariners.

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