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The Royal Australian Navy in World War II

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played a role in the Japanese navy's effectiveness; the Japanese possessed the Type 93 (Long Lance) oxygen-propelled torpedo, a weapon with range, speed, and payload much greater than those of contemporary American and British weapons. Here again, however, technology is at best a partial explanation: the Japanese navy inflicted considerable losses upon Allied naval forces off Guadalcanal because it had developed a coherent tactical system for conducting night combat, one that included operational concepts and organizations allowing it to employ its technology (much of it seeming today decidedly "low-tech," such as high-quality optics) to maximum effect. These examples suggest that while technology is an important element of victory, it does not by itself offer a winning edge.

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Stevens, David, ed. *The Royal Australian Navy in World War II*. Allen & Unwin, 1996. 212pp. (approximately \$23 U.S.)

This book represents the outcome of a conference titled "The Royal Australian Navy in World War II," which was held in Australia in 1995 as part of a nationwide program, sponsored by the Australian federal government, called "Australia Remembers 1945-95." The book is an edited collection of papers presented at that conference, and as such it is quite different from many of the more traditional histories with which many of us are familiar.

I was immediately struck by the diversity of subjects covered, which range from analysis of strategic and policy considerations, through commentary on selected operations, to discussion of industrial and demographic influences. Indeed it would be fair to say that there is something for everyone in this collection, which is well edited and presents a readable and coherent account of its subjects.

The contributors to the book are as diverse as its topics, including both professional and part-time historians, as well as people who were actually involved in the events discussed. This adds a unique dimension to the book, and the mixture of backgrounds and treatments generally works well.

The book contains an excellent summary chapter by Frank Broeze, and for many readers this might be a very good place to start; it will serve to focus consideration of the individual chapters. Because of its nature, this publication does not attempt to address any topic in great depth; however, enough detail of events is provided to support the commentary and analysis. What this does is invite the reader to conduct further reading and research.

Many chapters represent only a first step in examining issues that have in the past received scant attention. Typical of this are the chapters on the industry perspective by Chris Coulthard-Clark, the role of women by Kathryn Spurling, and social and demographic issues by Jason Sears. As a surface warfare specialist, I was particularly interested in Bruce Loxton's account of the loss of HMAS *Canberra* in the battle of Savo Island. The author was serving in *Canberra* at the time and has made a

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detailed, long-term study of that battle to support his conclusion that the ship was lost to friendly fire, in the form of torpedoes from a U.S. destroyer. His chapter inspires one to read his more complete work on the battle.

There is one chapter, however, that left me wondering at its inclusion: "The Forgotten Bases: The Royal Navies in the Pacific, 1945." This contribution by David Brown has an almost total Royal Navy focus and is not in harmony with the remainder of the book.

Those who had the vision to organize the conference from which this collection of papers was derived deserve particular praise. The result has quite significantly improved our understanding of the history of the Royal Australian Navy during the Second World War. We are all products of history, and the way we operate and continue to develop into the future is heavily influenced by that history. This book points to why the Royal Australian Navy has developed the way it has since the end of World War II. There is much more history to be written and evaluated. This volume sets a firm foundation for that work.

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Walker, Mark. *Nazi Science: Myth, Truth, and the German Atomic Bomb*. New York: Plenum Press, 1995. 325pp. \$28.95

Among the many books to have come to press concerning the behavior of

German scientists in the environment created by Hitler, *Nazi Science* presents the most balanced view. The popular conception of German scientists, especially nuclear physicists, in that era is that they easily fit into three distinct categories, Nazi, anti-Nazi, and neither one nor the other. This trichotomy is too simplistic a categorization of the mixed motivations that existed and induced individual behavior. For most scientists then, day-to-day realities made them behave in a complex and inconsistent manner.

Mark Walker presents a coherent view of German science and dispels the myths presented to us by proponents with varying agendas. The selective disclosure of excerpts of the Farm Hall recordings by Leslie Groves in *Now It Can Be Told* (2nd ed., Da Capo, 1983); Samuel A. Goudsmit's *Alsos* (2nd ed., Tomash, 1983); self-serving revisionism by Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker and Werner Heisenberg, propagated by Robert Jungk's 1958 bestseller *Brighter than a Thousand Suns* (Harcourt, Brace) and by Thomas Powers's *Heisenberg's War: The Secret History of the German Bomb* (Knopf, 1993) are all placed into context in this well documented history. Walker shows how one of Hitler's first and most loyal followers, the Nobel laureate Johannes Stark, was rejected in the end by the Third Reich establishment in favor of "White Jews," like Werner Heisenberg. Science under National Socialism remains controversial, fascinating, and disturbing, because it is the history of scientists as *fellow travelers*, adjusting their behavior and what they said to avoid difficulty with authorities. This pattern abetted opportunistic individuals who