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Adolf Galland: The Authorized Biography

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(glorious self-annihilation) and their devotion to the emperor, they regarded the "lives of detainees . . . as obstacles toward the successful completion of glorious self-annihilation."

Among the most horrendous crimes committed by the Japanese were their medical experiments (which General Douglas MacArthur refused to treat as warranting criminal prosecution). Tanaka explains away the doctors' actions as "doubling"—asserting that while "they maintained a conscience [the doctors] were concerned with their responsibilities to others, not to the people they experimented on. Doubling enabled them to see experimenting on prisoners as consistent with the high moral causes of saving Japanese lives and demonstrating loyalty to the emperor." Regarding the Allied accusations that the Japanese abused the Red Cross to secure immunity from attack, Tanaka suggests that such charges were "perhaps an attempt to exculpate the Allies for acts such as the bombing of Japanese hospitals."

Most of the research for this work was done while the author was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Australian National University, and the book is, therefore, primarily concerned with the treatment of Australian prisoners and civilians—although it may be presumed that Japanese behavior here was in no way unique. Tanaka uses the Australian War Crimes Commission archives, but he fails to understand that body's task. Thus he complains that trials were confined to offences against Australians or Allied personnel, and that the Japanese were not accused of war crimes against their own men or charged with the

contemporaneous murder of German missionaries.

There is much to criticise in the author's philosophising, but one must be grateful that a Japanese author has not hesitated to disclose, examine, analyse, and even deplore some Japanese actions during the Pacific War and condemn them as war crimes. Perhaps we may hope that this work indicates a true awakening of the Japanese conscience.

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Baker, David. *Adolf Galland: The Authorized Biography*. London: Windrow & Greene, 1996. 316pp. \$29.95

Adolf Galland rose by ability and circumstance to become the youngest German general of the twentieth century. In November 1941, at age twenty-nine, he was appointed to command the Luftwaffe fighter arm, a position he retained for three years. Then, condemned by Hermann Goering, "Dolfo" finished the war where he began it: leading a combat unit in the air, as a two-star wing commander.

Although Galland has been the subject of previous biographies and wrote his own classic, *The First and the Last*, British author David Baker provides the definitive word. He worked extensively with Galland up to the general's death in February 1996. Baker's background in aviation literature includes some fifty books in addition to projects with NASA and the U.S. Air Force.

Throughout the text, Baker excels not only at describing Galland's

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actions and motives but at placing the man in context of his time. Like so many of his generation, the young Galland was absorbed in aviation, and he survived two crashes (one nearly fatal) to fly in the Condor Legion during the Spanish Civil War. There he excelled in close air support, as he did early in World War II.

However, Galland the dedicated hunter yearned for fighters; indeed, the German term is *Jäger*. Combat success over France and Britain soon brought him to command of an Me-109 wing, Jagdgeschwader 26, which he led until his promotion to general in late 1941. At that time he was credited with ninety-four kills.

However, despite his exceptional combat success and love of the hunt, Adolf Galland was no war lover. He lost seven uncles in the First World War and two of his three brothers in the Second. With Germany burning down around him, his aircrews fought a losing battle against appalling odds, sustaining losses as high as 40 percent in aircraft and 25 percent in pilots per month. Yet morale held, as it did in the U-boat arm despite overall losses of 78 percent; there was no mutiny as in 1918. The difference was leadership—the exceptional variety represented by Adolf Galland and Karl Dönitz.

Galland's final mission, on 25 April 1945, was eventful. Flying an Me-262 jet, he scored his 104th victory, then was shot down and wounded for the third time. Following a yearlong interrogation by Allied debriefers, Galland went to Argentina to continue in aviation. He was only thirty-four years old.

Dolfo Galland developed a global following in the flying fraternity, one that included many former enemies. Baker aptly describes the former *jagdflieger's* postwar relationships and boldly explores the man's personal attitudes toward the horrors of the Nazi regime. Essentially, Galland and his contemporaries became ultimate pragmatists, trying to stem thousand-bomber raids that destroyed German cities while millions perished in concentration camps.

Aside from the enduring respect of his former opponents, Dolfo Galland leaves an even greater legacy. Confronted with the chilling wrath of Adolf Hitler and Hermann Goering, the general of the fighters stood by his aviators, defending them from vilification as incompetents and cowards. In doing so he risked his life to preserve his self-respect: Goering had condemned him to death, but Hitler intervened and sent him off to die in combat.

The contrast between the behavior of a Luftwaffe general who literally put his life on the line to protect subordinates against unwarranted political pressures, and some contemporary leaders who seem not to know what "loyalty down" requires, is appalling. For that reason alone, this excellent biography should be required reading at war colleges everywhere.

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Bunker, John. *Heroes in Dungarees: The Story of the American Merchant Marine in World War II*. Annapolis,