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Lone Wolf: The Life and Death of U-Boat Ace Werner Henke

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point—three presenters were former Japanese combatants.

The reader enjoys a “you are there” perspective. Of the contributors, Hattie Brandey, an army nurse, was a Japanese prisoner of war from 1942 to 1945. Frank Ficklin, also a prisoner of war, worked on the “Death Railway” in Thailand. Richard Best tells us how it felt to be a dive bomber at Midway. Japanese torpedo officer Teiji Nakamura describes his life in the Imperial Japanese Navy destroyer *Yudachi*. We discover that Shiro Hashimoto was the real “Pistol Pete” on Guadalcanal, and Ted Waller tells us what it was like to be an eighteen-year-old seaman in the USS *Portland* during the naval Battle of Guadalcanal.

From these personal narratives the editor shifts to the historians' presentations. One can almost visualize Fred Parker and John Costello seated together at a table arguing some of the finer points of American cryptologic efforts. It is dismaying to read about the internecine struggles between Admiral Nimitz's codebreakers at Pearl Harbor and their counterparts in the Department of the Navy. It appears that had Nimitz deferred to Washington's assessment, the near-run victory at Midway might have gone the other way. Pettiness resulted in Lieutenant Commander Joseph J. Rochefort's being consigned from Pearl Harbor to duty as the commanding officer of a floating drydock—an action bordering on the criminal, considering how desperately Rochefort's talents were needed to help decipher Japanese naval codes.

The chapter dealing with the struggle for control of New Guinea graphi-

cally portrays how nightmarish fighting in the jungles can be. Nature can be less forgiving than enemy soldiers; starvation, disease, and death are constant threats. We learn that some Japanese were forced to cannibalism to survive the siege at Buna.

There are some distracting errors, such as that the battleship *Kirishima* is misidentified as a carrier; the historians E.B. Potter and Samuel Eliot Morison are referred to as Professor E.M. Potter and Samuel Morrison; and the syntax could use a little cleaning up. Nothing, however, seriously detracts from this fine history.

Mullins has done an excellent job demonstrating that 1942 was indeed a pivotal year in the Pacific War. For those not present at the symposium, this book is the closest thing to actually having been there.

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Mulligan, Timothy P. *Lone Wolf: The Life and Death of U-Boat Ace Werner Henke*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1995. 247pp. \$15.95

The eye-catching cover, bearing German naval artist Claus Bergen's dramatic painting of a U-boat knifing its way through daunting seas under the protection of six bombers, might suggest that Mulligan's biography is yet another book about U-boat aces, with all their derring-do and bravado. So conventional are the numerous contributions to U-boat literature that one cannot be blamed for the inference. However, Mulligan offers us some-

thing quite different—a critical evaluation of a maverick whose life and death provide uncommon insight into the complex relationships between the individual and the state, and truth and propaganda, in the Third Reich. With his balanced, well researched, and clearly written study, which lacks neither vivid action nor thoughtful discourse, Mulligan will appeal to a broad range of readers.

An experienced historian and archivist with the U.S. National Archives, Mulligan explains that while new sources have come to light since the book's first publication (by Praeger) in 1992, nothing has emerged to alter his interpretation of Henke's career, character, or fate.

In June 1944, Werner Henke was shot and killed while trying to escape a prisoner of war camp at Fort Hunt, near Washington, D.C. He had led a life that in many ways cut against the grain of the stereotypical U-boat "Nazi." Born in Imperial Germany in a town on the Vistula River, now in Poland, Henke eventually resettled with his family in the German lowlands of Luneburg. Entering the merchant marine, he experienced the lures of the sea and foreign travel until the Depression forced him out. A German navy burgeoning after the 1935 Anglo-German Naval Agreement offered Henke a career. He proved to be an eccentric officer. His confrontations with authority often led to disciplinary action, including temporary reduction in rank; and at one point, his open scorn of the dreaded SS required the personal intervention of Dönitz himself, and a letter of apology from Admiral von Friedeburg to Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler. By

this time, however, Henke was a "protected species"—a highly decorated "ace." He had become a war hero who had received the honours of a political system he essentially deplored.

Mulligan traces Henke's life in detail, always illuminating his social, political, and naval links, as well as assessing the conventions and values that determined his fate. The "lone wolf" image, then, has little to do with the conventional iconography of the U-boat commander preying on enemy shipping but with Henke's being trapped "between his enemies' propaganda image of the U-boat Captain and his own navy's image of a decorated line officer." Mulligan concludes in part that "Henke fell victim to a propaganda legacy of World War I, the image of the cold-blooded, professional U-boat commander who routinely committed war crimes." Mulligan's sympathetic yet critical treatment of Henke invites us to ponder further.

The image of the World War II German submariner (as Mulligan explains with polite understatement) has long been clouded by emotion and controversy. Indeed, a recent study of Germany's popular image of the U-boat and its crew has pointed out the distortions that German writers themselves have marketed over the years. This work would serve as a useful corrective to many German accounts. Should anyone now produce a study of the German submariner from the British and North American perspectives, the pattern would be complete. But whoever does attempt to explain such icons runs the risk of becoming a messenger disparaged for having an un-

seemly message. This too may well be Mulligan's fate. Despite his sterling scholarship, Mulligan subscribes in this work to a canon that may well rankle some German veterans: the German navy started the war by bombarding Polish territory; Admiral Dönitz was a Nazi ideologue and a war criminal; and National Socialism launched "a sea of crimes," including Auschwitz and the final solution. That such a canon should startle anyone today attests to the discomfort that an unresolved past can still cause in some quarters of German society. In many respects, U-boats and U-boat aces are the litmus of German naval tradition.

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Sadkovich, James J. *The Italian Navy in World War II*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1994. (No price given)

The pattern among historians writing in English about operations in the Mediterranean theater during the Second World War has been to emphasize the success of British forces, whose skill and determination, combined with the aid and assistance of the United States, allowed them to stem and eventually outmatch the numerical and material superiority of their Italian and German opponents. The Italians especially have been ridiculed for cowardice and ineptitude, not only compared with their British opponents but also in contrast to the performance of their German allies. Virtually all works in English, with the exception of the translated *The Italian*

Navy in World War II, by Marc'Antonio Bragadin and Giuseppe Fioravanzo, have particularly noted the failures of the Regia Marina Italiana (RMI), whose originally favorable strategic position and numerical and material superiority were dissipated by hesitant leadership, an ineffectual officer corps, and incompetent crews. James J. Sadkovich's purpose is to overturn this paradigm completely. His method is to attack, at every opportunity, the premises upon which this conclusion is based.

Sadkovich commences by reexamining the accuracy of the consensus view of prior Italian superiority. He highlights the RMI's lack of an organic air arm, the absence of aircraft carriers, and the fleet's failure to secure effective cooperation from the Regia Aeronautica Italiana (RAI) for its operations. He notes also that the RMI's prewar development had been conditioned by the expectation of contesting control of the Mediterranean against the French rather than the British, a factor that exerted a powerful influence on the design of its vessels. The author assesses Italian warships to have been comparable in quality to those of the British, with the exception of destroyers and some older, rebuilt battleships. He notes, however, such dangerous deficiencies as lack of radar, no doctrine or equipment for night-fighting, limited antisubmarine warfare capability, an inadequate industrial base, and a chronic lack of bunker fuel. Overall, he contends that these factors gave the qualitative edge to the Royal Navy.

Sadkovich also disputes that the strategic advantage lay with the RMI.