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50 Years Astern: Recent Books

Thomas B. Grasse

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World War II: 50 Years Astern — Recent Books —

Crane, Conrad. *Bombs, Cities & Civilians: American Airpower Strategy in World War II*. Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1993. 208pp. \$29.95

The debate over the value and consequences of strategic air campaigns has continued since the Strategic Bombing Survey of 1946. Conrad Crane, associate professor of military history at West Point, examines the attitudes and targeting tactics of commanders and airmen during World War II. He finds that targeting decisions were more often made in-theater than in Washington and that in Europe targeting was responsive to the doctrinal requirement to minimize civilian impact. Indeed, Crane suggests that the European military leaders were more sensitive to this than was the national leadership in Washington. The Pacific theater was another story, however; General Curtis LeMay believed fire-bombing cities to be a satisfactory tactic. In a short concluding chapter, the author looks at Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm. In each case, strategic bombing was conducted with collateral damage to civilian populations and infrastructure, but Crane finds that it had little effect on the outcome; he does not, however, suggest that these points are correlated.

Dorrance, William H. *Fort Kamehameha: The Story of the Harbor Defenses of Pearl Harbor*. Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane, 1993. 162pp. \$22.50

The first of Pearl Harbor's formidable coastal defenses, a twin battery of twelve-inch disappearing guns at Fort Kamehameha, was not completed until 1911. By 1916 eight twelve-inch mortars and eight smaller guns had been added to the defenses. However, because the weapons on new warships could outrange them, within only eight years every gun had either been discarded or reduced to inactivity. By 1941 their place had been taken by new guns, all capable of reaching farther than any guns afloat. When, finally, an enemy came, he came in airplanes launched from carriers far beyond the reach of any gun. Still, the Army placed more guns, many of them old naval weapons, along the coast. Yet the U. S. victories at distant Midway and Guadalcanal meant that thereafter it was Japanese bases, rather than American, that would be in danger of attack. So, without firing even once at an enemy, the coastal batteries lost their importance. Did they help to forestall any attempt at invasion by their mere presence? It is hard to say. Nonetheless, all that remains of them is their huge, bare, concrete emplacements. This is an account without a climax, but the author tells it well.

Ethell, Jeffery and Price, Alfred. *World War II Fighting Jets*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1994. 211pp. \$39.95

This aviation history covers the nine jet and rocket-propelled aircraft developed (and in most cases deployed) during World War II. It is an expansion of Ethell and Price's 1979 publication *The German Jets in Combat*, which covered the Messerschmitt Me-262, Me-163, and the Arado Ar-234. *Fighting Jets* adds two German aircraft (Heinkel He-162 and Bachem Ba-349) and their counterparts from England (Gloster Meteor), the United States (Lockheed P-80A and Ryan FR-1), and Japan (Yokosuka Ohka). Both authors are aviators in their own right, well known in the aviation history community, and highly qualified to write on the subject. The book's format precludes exhaustive coverage of each aircraft, but the material is reasonably concise and detailed. The book excels in its insightful look into political and industrial maneuvering and infighting. Some of the material is well known, such as battles between Hitler, his commanders, and the German aircraft industry over the proper employment of the Me-262. But equally important are the lesser known aspects, such as the dispute between the Japanese hierarchy and combat commanders about the use of suicide pilots. This is a good study of the balance between political, military, and technological needs. It is a well written history of late World War II aviation.

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Winners of the Hugh G. Nott Prize for 1994

The President of the Naval War College has announced the winners of prizes for the finest articles (less those on historical subjects) appearing in the *Naval War College Review* in 1994:

- First Prize (\$500), Lieutenant Commander Wayne G. Shear, Jr., CEC, U.S. Navy, for "The Drug War: Applying the Lessons of Vietnam" (Summer);
- Second Prize (\$300), A. James Melnick, of the Defense Intelligence Agency, for "Beyond the Economy: Internal Factors Affecting the Future of the Russian Military" (Summer); and,
- Third Prize (\$200), Dr. Robert M. Soofer, of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization in Washington, D.C., for "Ballistic Missile Defense from the Sea" (Spring).

This award is given in memory of the late Captain Hugh G. Nott, U.S. Navy, who made major contributions over a period of ten years to the professional life of the Naval War College.

Winners of the Edward S. Miller History Prize for 1994

Through the generosity of the distinguished historian Edward S. Miller, the President of the Naval War College has awarded prizes to authors of the finest articles on historical subjects appearing in the *Naval War College Review* in 1994.

The winner (\$700) is Dr. Thomas Hone, of the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany, for "Naval Reconstitution, Surge, and Mobilization: Once and Future" (Summer).

The runner-up (\$300) is Dr. James Pritchard, of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, for "French Strategy and the American Revolution: A Reappraisal" (Autumn).

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