

1994

Sharks of Steel

James Patton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Patton, James (1994) "Sharks of Steel," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 47 : No. 1 , Article 28.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol47/iss1/28>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

increase in the volume of U.S. arms sales abroad.

Material in the book generally is balanced, relevant, and fair, although several of the authors manifest a definite orientation toward a particular side of an issue. The most obvious of these is Thomas Morgan in his discussion of defense against ballistic missiles. His ideas are more provocative than compelling. For instance, the economic argument that an adversary with ballistic missiles can bankrupt those who employ active defenses against the missiles seems flawed to me; his example assumes continuous defense of every target within range of the adversary's missiles.

Several times writers raise the question of double standards for members of the United Nations Security Council and for developing nations in regard to the legitimacy of having advanced weaponry in their arsenals. Why is it acceptable for the U.S., China, etc., to have nuclear weapons, but not for Brazil, Iran, etc.? Before long-term multilateral restrictions on the proliferation of advanced military technology can be very effective, this question will have to be answered more satisfactorily than it has been to date.

This book, which reads easily and is well organized, does the defense community an important service—not by providing answers to proliferation policy issues but by clarifying a large number of the issues and identifying relationships among them. It is a valuable contribution to the literature

and a convenient summary of pertinent background information.

DALE K. PACE
The Johns Hopkins University

Kaufman, Yogi and Stillwell, Paul.
Sharks of Steel. Annapolis, Md.:
Naval Institute Press, 1993. 176pp.
\$39.95

Yogi Kaufman was the skipper of my first submarine, the *Scorpion*. Though I was only an ensign, it is an understatement to say that we clashed at times—but I survived, much better for the wear, and now count Yogi among my professional mentors and friends. When I was asked to do this review, I called him and said it was true that if one waited long enough, the chance to “get even” would arrive; he recommended that I start the review with that observation.

At first glance, *Sharks of Steel* is but another glossy “coffee table” picture book. A clue that it is something more, however, is the gold sticker in the corner that advertises it as a companion piece to the recently aired Discovery Channel four-hour miniseries of the same name, “starring” none other than Yogi himself. Although it stands alone as an informative and aesthetically pleasing document, to appreciate fully the significance and worth of this beautiful book one should savor its photos and study its text after watching at least part of the miniseries.

152 Naval War College Review

This book is a documentary unto itself. With photos, artwork, and detailed text, it discusses World War II, the era when the United States submarine force firmly established itself as a first-class combat force, then the birth of the nuclear navy under Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, and then moves into a detailed disclosure of our current force of nuclear attack submarines and the ballistic missile deterrent force. "Disclosure" is a carefully selected word, for only a few years ago many of the photographs would have been stamped "Secret, No Foreign Dissemination." The visual grand finale of the work is the set of pictures taken of a Russian Typhoon-class submarine when Admiral Kaufman was invited to visit that huge ship at Severomorsk on the Kola Peninsula. You will have to view the miniseries, however, to see footage of Yogi's interview with the skipper and the interior of this massive submarine with (honestly) its small swimming pool/large hot tub!

The authenticity and credibility of this book are beyond reproach. There are none of the factual errors that so often mar attempts of this sort. Those who know Yogi, and particularly those who have served with him, would have expected nothing less. The commanding officer of a diesel submarine, the USS *Cavalla*, before attending nuclear power training, Yogi served as executive officer of the *Sea-wolf*, commanding officer of the *Scorpion*, the commissioning commanding officer of the *Will Rogers*, and the commanding officer of the Nuclear Power

Training Unit in Arco, Idaho. He was also a prime mover of the Ultra Large Missile Submarine project, which evolved into our present *Ohio* class of Trident submarines. His personal knowledge gained from such broad experience is the core around which *Sharks of Steel* is woven.

In addition to the technical detail that both photos and text convey, Yogi, his son Steve, and Paul Stillwell also manage to capture the most elusive but most critical dimensions of this nation's submarine force—the extraordinary training of superior officers and men, their professionalism and camaraderie, and the sacrifices that have been and are still being made by their loved ones during consecutive months and aggregated years of total separation.

Many who read or saw *The Hunt for Red October* likely thought the story entertaining but somewhat "hyped"—no machine could be that capable, no people that talented. As the submarine force inches its way out of the "Where'd you go? Nowhere! What'd you do? Nothing!" closet, works such as *Sharks of Steel* will demonstrate that both Tom Clancy and Paramount Pictures significantly *understated* the case for material and personal excellence. If one is a submariner, he should own this book. If he is not, he particularly should.

JAMES PATTON
Captain, U.S. Navy, Ret.
North Stonington, Connecticut