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Recent Books

Frank Uhlig Jr.

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Recent Books

Buell, Thomas B. *The Quiet Warrior: A Biography of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987. 518pp. \$23.95

Once a student at the Naval War College and twice a member of the faculty, Raymond Spruance went on to prove himself as the U.S. Navy's outstanding tactician and operational commander of the 20th century. After World War II he returned to the College as its president. When Little, Brown published the first edition of this book in 1974, Professor Gerald Wheeler wrote in the *Naval War College Review* that Buell "deserves the thanks of the Navy, those who served with Admiral Spruance's forces . . . and the reading public in general for this excellent biography." Now, in its "Classics of Naval Literature" series the U.S. Naval Institute makes the book available once again, this time with a fine new introduction by John B. Lundstrom.

Chinnery, Philip D. *Life on the Line: Stories of Vietnam Air Combat*. New York: St. Martin's, 1989. 256pp. \$17.95.

Chinnery has spliced together a series of vignettes (thirty-three in all) from the recollections of former aviators who flew combat in Vietnam. The stories are arranged in a rough chronological order in three parts: the start-up phase, the air war, and the wind-down. This book is best enjoyed if each story is read independently, for there is little to tie them together. The author appears to have taken his inputs from wherever he could get them. To his credit, he focuses on the daily air war involving arduous, dangerous and mostly forgotten missions. The book makes the point that while most missions flown by the army, navy, and air force were team efforts, the most vivid memory of the participating aviator was of that which occurred within the confines of his cockpit. The impact of his mission on world events was lost in the melee of just getting done what was expected. Some recollections are vivid, some a bit hazy. Each saga, regardless of historical accuracy, is well illustrated with candid and official photos, along with well-annotated maps. Good bedtime reading.

Connaughton, Richard. *The War of the Rising Sun and the Tumbling Bear*. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1988. 300pp. \$49.50

For naval readers, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 is remembered for Admiral Rozhdestvenski's mad Russian dash from the Baltic, round

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Capetown, through Kamranh Bay and to the Straits of Tsushima, where he lost it all in one afternoon. For political historians, the war is remembered for President Theodore Roosevelt's role in negotiating the settlement and for dating the rise of Japan as a Pacific power potentially in opposition to the United States. The land campaign is generally forgotten. Connaughton, a British officer and military historian, has done an important service by reconstructing in detail that land campaign, with barbed wire, trenches and machine guns, that presaged the horrors of the First World War to come. Regrettably, no one in Europe noticed.

Dougan, Clark and Weiss, Stephen. *The American Experience in Vietnam*. New York: Norton, 1988. 352pp. \$39.95

This book claims to be "the complete history" of the war in Vietnam. It isn't that, but it does have eyewitness accounts by observers and participants such as Walter Cronkite. The photographs are impressive, and half of them are in color. The book is well printed and well designed.

Gilbert, Stephen P. and Carpenter, William M., eds. *America and Island China: A Documentary History*. New York: University Press of America, 1989. 418pp. \$37.50

This fine college text and reference book is divided into three sections. Part one includes articles on the history of the Republic of China from 1911-1988 by Dr. Harold Hinton, military relations between Washington and Taiwan by Dr. Martin Lasater, and U.S.-ROC economic relations by Dr. Jan Prybyla. Part two contains documents relating to U.S.-ROC relations between 1949 and 1978, and part three contains similar documents covering relations between Washington and Taipei from 1979 through 1988. The most significant contribution of the book is the complete collection of documents relating to U.S.-ROC relations from 1949 to the present. These cannot be found in any other single text. It is thus an invaluable source book for those concerned with modern Sino-American relations, particularly the relationship evolving between Washington and Taipei since the severing of formal diplomatic relations in 1979.

Lewis, Bruce. *Four Men Went to War*. New York: St. Martin's, 1987. 209pp. \$16.95

Samuel Johnson once said: "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier." Lewis tells the individual stories of four young men who became soldiers in 1940: an American air gunner, a British paratrooper, a German tank driver and an Italian Alpini. None had reason to think meanly of himself when it was done. None of them were remarkable, save that all went into combat, did their duty, and survived to live productive lives. The American and the Briton became POWs, the German a defeated POW in

his own country. The Italian is perhaps the most interesting for he made it through the Russian campaign and back, protecting his men all the way.

Middlebrook, Martin. *The Berlin Raids*. New York: Viking, 1988. 407pp. \$24.95
Middlebrook, author of several books on the strategic bombing campaign in Europe, has turned his attention to the 1943–44 campaign by the Royal Air Force against Berlin. Beginning with Arthur Harris' promise "to produce in Germany by April 1st 1944, a state of devastation from which surrender is inevitable," Middlebrook traces in detail the nineteen major raids on Berlin. The issue was twofold: whether German defenses would overcome the anti-radar systems of the Royal Air Force and whether the RAF would be able to so precisely locate and mark the targets as to overcome the inherent limitations of blind bombing. This was a major test for the popular prewar thesis on the efficacy of strategic bombing. The campaign failed. Middlebrook's work is an important contribution for historians who would examine the question of why the promise of strategic bombing failed at such a huge cost.

Miller, George H. *Provide for the Common Defense*. Washington, D.C.: Washington Publications, 1988. 165pp. \$14.95

During the long period after the end of World War II when possession of nuclear weapons seemed to make it unnecessary to think strategically, Rear Admiral Miller fought, seemingly alone at times, against that dangerous notion. In this book Admiral Miller, now long retired, has republished some of his articles, one of which appeared as long ago as 1949 and another as recently as 1988. More than anyone else, he struggled to close the chasm separating the Navy from the merchant marine. The author calls for "an end to the decline of the U.S. Merchant Marine and an end to land-based nuclear proliferation" and pleads for a "comprehensive review of U.S. National Security Policy on a scale similar to that undertaken by the Soviet Union in the late 1940s."

Mottola, Kari, ed. *The Arctic Challenge*. Boulder, Col.: Westview 1988. 335pp. \$29.50

This collection of essays by scholars from the circumpolar nations explores the impact of the strategic competition between the United States and the U.S.S.R. on the other Arctic nations and on the politics of the region. The book's several authors view the Arctic as a unique geographical and emerging political region. The focus is on strategic military affairs as viewed by those in between, a not always comfortable position. The data used and the scenarios postulated seem accurate. The essays are important contributions for scholars and researchers involved in understanding the potentially significant role of the trans-Arctic region in the 21st century.

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Neilson, Jonathan M. *Armed Forces on a Northern Frontier*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988. 328pp. \$39.95

When Secretary Seward bought Russian America from the Czar in 1864, the American military was otherwise occupied. When the formal transfer of sovereignty took place in Sitka in 1867, Captain Peschurov of the Czar's forces gave to General Rousseau of the American Army no small problem: civil administration of a huge, unknown and unsettled territory. Thus began the long history of the military's special relation with the territory and state of Alaska. Law enforcement, justice, civil administration, exploration, mapping, medical services, transportation, communication and tax collection have all been part of the military history of Alaska, in addition to the defense of the only part of American territory occupied by a foreign power since 1812. Neilson, a lecturer in history at the University of Alaska, details not only the familiar World War II and Cold War history, but also the earlier history as Alaska became part of the United States.

Neustadt, Richard E. and May, Ernest R. *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*. New York: Free Press, 1987. 329pp. \$19.95

This is a book for officers and officials serving in government. It depicts, in great detail, how they can use history effectively by both recognizing false analogies and developing sound ones as a means of clarifying and isolating issues before making a decision. The authors emphasize that the history of an issue can be used to define decision objectives and to foresee likely results. In short, this is the best primer available on how history can improve decision making in government. It will be particularly useful for staff officers and analysts.

Oberg, James E. *Uncovering Soviet Disasters*. New York: Random House 1988. 317pp. \$19.95

Subtitled *Exploring the Limits of Glasnost*, Oberg's book recounts what is known about Soviet industrial accidents on land, in the air, at sea, and in space. In the pre-Glasnost era, the Soviet Union was quite reluctant to admit that the perils of industrialization applied with political impartiality to the worker's paradise. Oberg's central thesis is that the Soviet Union is now more open about these matters, however, his case is built on anecdotes since comparative statistical data is not available. It appears that the Soviet Union suffers industrial disasters at about the same rate as any other Third World country engaged in forced industrialization.

Perry, F. W. *The Commonwealth Armies*. New York: St. Martin's, 1988. 250pp. \$45

Throughout much of the 20th Century, the Commonwealth Armies—those of the United Kingdom, India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South

Africa, and the several colonies—were linked by their common ancestry and regimental traditions. Perry limits his concerns to the administrative history of raising manpower and organizing military units for the First and Second World Wars. He does not touch the interesting questions of why these men served and what their service accomplished.

Ranft, Bryan and Till, Geoffrey. *The Sea in Soviet Strategy*. Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 2nd ed. 1988. 284pp. \$21.95

“Withal, this is a highly germane book, benchmarking the current state of our collective awareness and the state of the Soviet Navy” said the *Naval War College Review* when this work was first published in 1981. That observation remains true with the publication of this revised and updated edition. Ranft and Till have done an admirable job of setting the Soviet Navy in its historical and contemporary context. More than a list of ship and weapon inventory and performance statistics, this book traces and analyzes the forces—political, economic, and social—which have shaped the Soviet Navy. There is discussion of the influences of Gorbachev and Chernarvin; we will await with interest the next edition when those influences will have matured.

Sajer, Guy. *The Forgotten Soldier*. 1967. Reprint. Baltimore: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Co. of America, 1988. 465pp. \$19.95

Originally published in French and subsequently translated and published in English by Harper and Row, this edition is reprinted as part of the publisher's “Great War Stories” series. A young Frenchman born of a German mother, Guy Sajer donned a Wehrmacht uniform at the age of sixteen in the autumn of 1942. He witnessed the worst of the Eastern Front in the elite *Gross Deutschland* division. Loyal to an army that treated its soldiers no better than prisoners, Sajer writes about fleeing from an enemy constantly on his back, recrossing a previously fought-for landscape, and witnessing an exodus of people surging west to escape the Russians. This is a story of war eloquently told.

Semmler, Kenneth, ed. *The War Despatches of Kenneth Slessor*. St. Lucia: Univ. of Queensland, 1988. 493pp. \$47.50

An essential companion to Semmler's 1985 edition of *The War Diaries of Kenneth Slessor*, this matching volume provides the collected dispatches of Australia's official war correspondent in World War II. In a distinctive style, Slessor describes the daily lives of Australia's fighting men from the London blitz to Greece, Syria and the Western Desert, as well as the jungle fighting in New Guinea. Slessor's colorful prose and humane viewpoint contribute to ranking his work among the newspaper classics of war literature.

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Sumrall, Robert F., *Iowa Class Battleships*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1988, 192pp. \$34.95

Skulski, Janusz, *The Battleship Yamato*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1988, 192pp. \$27.95

The Naval Institute has published simultaneous studies of the two classes of ship generally recognized to represent the ultimate in battleship design. The in-depth volume on the *Iowa* class provides a comprehensive history of the careers of each ship as well as the configuration changes each has undergone since her launching. Overall line drawings are included. Details of individual equipment are provided via text and photographs. *The Battleship Yamato*, in contrast, as the most recent addition to the Institute's "Anatomy of the Ship" series, focuses on the external details of the ship. The bulk of the book consists of over 600 drawings, ranging from overall views of the ship to individual 25mm ammunition box fittings. The book closes with an especially interesting and haunting drawing of the wreck as seen by the crew of a small research submarine in August 1985. Mr. Skulski's effort is remarkable in view of the efficient effort the Japanese made just before the surrender to destroy all drawings and photographs of the ship.

Thomas, Chris and Shores, Christopher. *The Typhoon & Tempest Story*. New York: Sterling, 1988. 224pp. \$49.95

At \$49.95 a pop (plus tax), one must be quite dedicated to the history of World War II aircraft to buy this book. Fortunately, for the serious student of World War II aircraft, the book is worth it. It is extraordinarily detailed, well illustrated and has comprehensive appendices. Both aircraft—the Typhoon as a ground attack aircraft and the Tempest as a high altitude interceptor—did extraordinary and very successful work in the later part of the war. Far more than their better known brethren such as the Spitfire, they represent the apex of piston-engined fighter development in the United Kingdom.

