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Those Who Fall

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Indian country gives the Air Force rescue crews the credit they richly deserve, but after spending an evening engrossed in the flying, it seemed a bit contrived. But, the book claims to be a novel. Whatever, it's a good book.

The scenes of liberty will bring back memories, some never to be relived. For God's sake, they've paved the streets of Olongapo. Somehow the smell could not be captured in print, nor the gastric distress that lingered when you dined in town. I hope the gut-wrenching emotion of this book is not lost on the casual reader, or overplayed in the inevitable movie. My thanks to Stephen Coonts for giving us *Flight of the Intruder*. It's a damn good book.

DON A. GERRISH, JR.
Captain, U.S. Navy

Ferrell, Henry C. *Claude A. Swanson of Virginia: A Political Biography*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985. 294pp. \$28

This is a detailed, thoroughly researched, and quite unexciting study of the long political career of Franklin Roosevelt's first Secretary of the Navy. Appointed Navy Secretary in 1933 at the age of 71, Swanson served until his death in July 1939. Ferrell properly emphasizes Swanson's career before his appointment when the Virginian was, successively, Congressman (1893-1905), Governor (1906-1910) and then four-term Senator. In the Senate, Swanson built a reputation as an

astute politician and as an expert in the field of naval affairs. As Navy Secretary, Swanson concentrated on building political support in Congress for Navy expansion. Ferrell disputes the claims of Swanson's critics that, as Senator, the Virginian was a spokesman for a party "machine" which catered to corporate interests and that, as Navy Secretary, Swanson was too feeble to have a major impact on Navy affairs. Characteristic of Swanson's approach to politics was his observation that "No sane man would slap a tiger in the face when his other hand is in the tiger's mouth." This pragmatism was the hallmark of all of Swanson's public life.

THOMAS HONE
Arlington, Virginia

Muirhead, John. *Those Who Fall*. New York: Random House, 1986. 285pp. \$18.95

John Muirhead's memoir of piloting B-17s out of Italy in 1944 ranks with and adds a new dimension to Murray Peden's *A Thousand Shall Fall* and Beirne Lay's *Twelve O'Clock High*. Flying and eventually leading missions into Germany, Italy and Romania, Muirhead evokes an extraordinarily vivid sense of the exhilaration and fear of tight formation flying and combat with rapacious Me-109s. The reader is struck by the courage of these very young men as they fought weather, equipment malfunction, flak, and fighters on the way to such infamous targets as

Regensburg and Ploiesti. To these men, surviving 50 such missions seemed too remote a possibility to even dream about. The story has been told by others, but rarely with such insight into the character of these men and the sources of their strength.

For the military historian, this memoir is an interesting revelation of the state of the aircraft and the precombat flight training that was prevalent in 1944. Muirhead's additional duty as an assistant maintenance officer and as a training and check pilot for newly joined replacement pilots illustrates a sharp contrast to today's practices.

Nearing Ploiesti on his 30th mission, Muirhead's aircraft lost an engine and was shot down as he fell behind the protective firebox of his squadron. He and his crew became POWs in Bulgaria where they were treated with indifference and incompetence. They survived with their intellects intact.

This is a thoughtful memoir with little of the youthful camaraderie and the "we band of brothers" flavor of the popular accounts of this time. As Muirhead says: "to remember war is not so much to reveal its brutal matrix as it is to try to understand it." The glory he found was in the survival of an enduring spirit which he shares with us.

FRANK C. MAHNCKE
Silver Spring, Maryland

Allen, Thomas and Polmar, Norman.
Ship of Gold. New York: Macmillan, 1987. 256pp. \$17.95

One of the sad events of WWII occurred on 1 April 1945 in the midst of an impenetrable fog in the Formosa Strait, when the U.S.S. *Queenfish* (SS-393) sank the former Japanese cruise-liner *Awa Maru* without even seeing her. She had been given safe passage for a round-trip from Japan to Indonesia to carry vitally needed supplies to Allied POWs still held there, despite the certainty that an unscrupulous and desperate Japan would also use the ship to carry cargo forbidden by the agreement—which, in fact, it did. The *Queenfish* had received notification about the specially privileged Japanese ship, but through a failure of internal communications this was not made known to her skipper.

He reported the facts when he discovered what he had done and was summarily ordered back to base, relieved of command, and court-martialed. Having borne his punishment in stoic silence, he is remembered by submariners of our Navy as a man who did not flinch when the going became rough.

Now the incident has been turned into a novel, a modern shoot-'em-up with oriental overtones. *Queenfish* has become the *Tigerfish*, and the *Awa Maru* has been renamed *Osaka Maru*. Her contraband cargo becomes the secret national treasury of Japan, 75 tons of pure gold. Sunk to the bottom of the Formosa Strait, the gold is a mecca for adventurers and they all arrive there together: Formosa-based