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Heavy Weather Guide

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complex command system aggravated by a lack of communications. Shortages of artillery and of all kinds of ammunition was a significant factor in tactical defeats. A British or Greek unit would obtain an objective and then be forced back for lack of ammunition to conduct a proper defense. Meanwhile, the key airfield was lost, opening it to a constant flow of German aerial resupply and troop buildup.

Recurring tactical defeats led to the decision to evacuate. Evacuees included the British and Commonwealth troops who could disengage and make their way over the mountains to the southern beaches. No provision was made for the evacuation of Greek troops, although the King and his entourage were rescued by the Royal Navy. The valiant civilians who had gallantly defended their soil were left to the "tender mercies" of German reprisals. The post-invasion toll was high and hardly a family was spared some loss. Age or sex were not a bar to German revenge.

The author points out that the tactical victory, which was less than the propaganda of the time would have us believe, was a strategic blunder for both sides. Although it was probably a mistake for the British to attempt to defend Crete at the time (another Churchillian whim), it paid off in the future. The German airborne capability was almost erased, both in the sense of manpower and of vital air transports. Another two-week delay was tacked on to Hitler's invasion of Russia. The

lack of air transport was later to prove critical in that campaign. But for the Germans, the strategic blunder was greater. First, as the author points out, Crete was not the key to control of the Mediterranean. Malta was. Crete, therefore, was not a vital objective. Further, the aforementioned losses and delays became critical in the invasion of Russia.

Thus, the title projects a double *entendre*. It surely portended destiny, but whose?

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Kotsch, William J. and Henderson, Richard. *Heavy Weather Guide*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1984. 399pp. \$21.95

She dipped into the hollow straight down, as if going over the edge of the world. The engine-room toppled forward menacingly, like the inside of a tower nodding in an earthquake. An awful racket, of iron things falling, came from the stokehold.

From the near hypnosis of Conrad's *Typhoon* to the near pedantry of some of the tables, Admiral Kotsch and Mr. Henderson have compiled and revised a fine second edition of this informative text. There is almost too much, at times, with instructive cases ranging from carrier task group operations, to merchant transits, to single-handed sailing. One wishes there were a ready reference section among the sea stories, to permit a shiphandler to find in short order the guidance applicable to his ship and situation. Paragraphs on staysails and

trysails are intermingled with those on handling destroyers and container ships to the distraction of a reader in extremis. That aside, this is a superior textbook with a wealth of data from buoy locations, to forecasting systems, to ship stability tables.

Despite increases in the complexity of naval warfare over the past 40 years, and the technological changes to naval ships which go with it, the power of a raging sea remains the same. So does the helplessness of indecisive and inexperienced men who face it. Today's forecasting techniques would have been deemed impossible just a few decades ago, but the capriciousness of a storm at sea seems to more than have kept pace. Faced with the annual hurricane season, naval leaders ashore too often issue self-protecting platitudes in early summer, then wait too long to sortie ships from east coast ports when the storm approaches—until the COs are forced into the most dangerous quadrant of the storm. The Navy is not alone in this. Witness the millions of dollars of beachfront housing built 10 feet below the high-water mark of our last big storm. As one admiral pointed out here at the War College, a task larger than learning new lessons is that of teaching old ones to new generations.

This past summer ComSecondFlt chose to avoid platitudes and simply restate one splendid set of old lessons for all his ships to peruse. His 181418Z JUL 85 message was a partial restatement of Admiral Nimitz' timeless letter to the Pacific Fleet, 14CL-45 of 18 February 1945. Appendix VII of

Heavy Weather Guide contains that letter *in toto* along with all the comments it generated in the US Naval Institute *Proceedings* when it was declassified and published in January 1956. The topic of that letter was the horrendous damage done to Halsey's fleet off Luzon during the typhoon of 17-18 December 1944—790 men lost, 200 planes lost, three destroyers lost and 28 ships severely damaged. As both Nimitz and Halsey pointed out, "this was the Navy's greatest uncompensated loss since the Battle of Savo Island." Operational commitments to support MacArthur had caused Halsey to delay fueling until the small buoys were at 10-15 percent of capacity. Most had not ballasted because they were to refuel on short notice. Crews were exhausted and inexperienced at shiphandling in heavy weather. The wind was near 100 knots, the seas at 70 feet. Halsey states that *New Jersey* shook worse than she had when hit by 5" gunfire. Regular Navy commanding officers had fewer than eight years out of the Academy, some less than five. Halsey awarded the Legion of Merit to Lt. Cmdr. Henry L. Plage, USNR, commanding the destroyer escort *Tabberer*, "who had been to sea exactly once before, for a short cruise during his ROTC course at Georgia Tech!," yet brought his ship through with only mast and radios gone and rescued survivors from the sunken destroyer *Hull* during the worst of the storm. One is reminded of Herman Wouk's vivid portrayal of Captain Queeg and his crew on the old destroyer-mine-

sweeper *Caine*, when he fell apart and was relieved by his XO during such a storm.

This fine text should be perused at leisure by the officer coming newly to command. Before passing the sea buoy he should tab those pages he may need when "operational commitments" to a hard-changing admiral practicing at war or facing the enemy ashore may leave him with no option but to sail, as the sea shanty says, "in the teeth of the boomin' gale!"

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Sinke, Ralph E.G., Jr. *Don't Cry For Us*. Dale City, Va.: REGS Enterprises, 1984. 140pp. \$12.95

Don't Cry For Us is a book of poetry and vignettes written by a Marine Corps major who first fought in Vietnam as a private first class in 1966. The simplicity of the verse in this book is effective in establishing the theme of lost innocence and accelerated maturation in the laboratory of life—Vietnam. Many of the pieces in part I were written by Sinke as he recovered from battle wounds. The poem of the title is an unapologetic account of the Vietnam veterans' contributions to their nation. Like many of the poems in the book, it captures the pulse of a nation and a generation. It is angry, bitter, tired and sad—most of all, it is proud. The pride of the Vietnam veterans and the recent and long overdue acceptance of their gallant efforts provide Major Sinke with the material for his work.

From the lost youth, realities and sacrifices addressed in the initial poems, Major Sinke moves to the tragic homecoming of American fighting men in part II. The poems are sad because they tell of how the veterans became the object of the American people's confusion, frustration and hatred. The transference of their wrath to the veterans increased the guilt of the warriors and inflicted psychological wounds that complement their physical wounds.

Part III, "The Reconciliation," was written by Sinke the day after the dedication of the Vietnam War Memorial. It ties together loose ends, and is a reflection of pain and sacrifices which have lately been recognized because of our nation's collective guilt; it signals the end of an era and the ushering in of a new era of legitimacy and acceptance of our Vietnam veterans. "The Reconciliation" is a definitive explanation of the catharsis of the Vietnam War and its warriors. It makes as eloquent a statement about the meaning of the war as the Memorial Wall itself.

The title of the book, *Don't Cry For Us* is ironic because many of Sinke's pieces will bring the reader to tears. "Just Three Days" and "We Called Him 'Abe'" are emotional, gut-wrenching, soul-searching, beautiful and profound instances of Sinke's unabashed intensity and heart. Although Ralph Sinke is a United States Marine, his work transcends service. It is a book for men who fought in Vietnam and for Americans who only now, a decade after the war in Vietnam ended, have begun to