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Douglas A-4 Skyhawk

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in terms of speed, capacity and size. These three were to share much of the closely contested Pacific action. Two were lost during the first two years of the war.

The book's chronology of Japanese naval advances in the western Pacific after Pearl Harbor and the US Navy's efforts to counter with its carriers is well told. Much of the story is extracted from sources on both sides of the conflict, undoubtedly secondary in nature. The carrier engagements of Coral Sea and Midway are described. These battles and those that followed between the world's two foremost carrier navies reduced the carrier forces after Santa Cruz in late 1942 to essentially one surviving operational fleet carrier each—the US *Enterprise* and the Japanese *Zuikaku*.

However, starting in 1943 the vastly superior industrial potential of the United States transformed the nature of the Pacific struggle. This occurred with the arrival of the numerous *Essex* class fleet carriers supplemented by the smaller *Independence* class CVLs, combined initially as the Fifth Fleet under Vice Admiral Spruance. The action chronology then increasingly becomes a tale of the overwhelming might and individual platform superiority of the US naval forces and the losses of the desperately determined Japanese. The author questions the efforts of the kamikazes in 1945 which diverted scarce Japanese resources. One interesting point made repeatedly is the Japanese commanders often operated on the basis of grossly exaggerated yet sincere estimates of the damage

done to the rival US carrier forces. By the end of 1944, after the battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf which saw the Japanese carriers and aircraft decimated, the American fleet carrier reigned supreme. Victory was merely a matter of time.

This book is amply illustrated with photographs, most of which would be of decent quality if they were not so poorly reproduced. The early carriers are well covered pictorially, the latter ones suffering only from being so numerous in number. There is no biographical data on the author. Presumably he is English since he shows a partiality for the British Fleet's part in this story. His writing, in any case, is superb and he does an excellent job of summarizing the story of carrier-to-carrier combat. This is a form of warfare never seen before and unlikely ever to be seen again.

The book is good reading for historically oriented carrier buffs, or anyone else who wants to understand the decisive combat of the naval war in the South and Western Pacific.

RICHARD F. CROSS III
Alexandria, Virginia

Kilduff, Peter. *Douglas A-4 Skyhawk*. London, England: Osprey Air Combat, 1983. 200pp. \$19.95

Anderton, David. *Republic F-105 Thunderchief*. London, England: Osprey Air Combat, 1983. 198pp. \$19.95

The A-4 Skyhawk was designed in the middle of the Korean War in an attempt to reverse the weight/cost

growth trend of attack aircraft. It served with distinction in the Vietnam War, bore the brunt of the Argentine fighting in the Falklands War, and is being remanufactured today to fulfill the first-line needs of such nations as Kuwait, Malaysia, and Indonesia. It was in "active" production for 23 years and served with the Blue Angels and the Top Gun Aggressor Squadron. This is a very impressive record for a "cheap" attack aircraft not intended for fighter use.

Peter Kilduff, well respected for a long list of books on naval aviation, tells the interesting story of this plane and of the people connected with it. From the insights of Ed Heineman (its designer) to the citation of Captain Michael J. Estocin (who won the Medal of Honor in a Skyhawk), Kilduff intertwines people with the technology to present the A-4 as a story, not simply an engineering discussion. Furthermore, Kilduff supports his story with over 160 photographs that are not the run of the mill often seen in all the other books on jet-age naval aviation. Eight pages of the photos are in full color, with clarity and attention to reproductive quality that speak well for this publisher. Unfortunately, for reasons of economy, the photo credits have been edited out. This decreases the value of the book for those who keep aircraft books as permanent reference works, but is only a minor irritant to the general reader. A further irritant is an emasculated index of only two and one-half pages. The index is so incomplete that it is often difficult to relate one incident

to another when the author refers to earlier points. What appears clear is that the author assumed a good index would be included.

In summary, even considering the poor index and the missing photo credits, Kilduff's book is one that persons interested in modern jet aircraft—particularly naval aviation—will enjoy and will not only read, but reread.

The F-105 was a plane plagued by ill luck, yet remembered with affection by many. Designed and redesigned to the shifting USAF perceptions of the early fifties, it reached operational service only to find its intended role (tactical nuclear strikes) unrealistic in an Air Force about to become embroiled in the Vietnam War. The F-105, derisively called the "Thud," went on to perform the majority of the war's strikes into North Vietnam. It was one of the ironies of the conflict that America's best fighter-bomber had been procured in such parsimonious quantities that it was eventually withdrawn from the war—there were not enough Thuds left to fight with! (The Thud's offspring, the A-10, was also underprocured. The Air Force had again undervalued the attack mission.)

David Anderton, whose books *The History of the U.S. Air Force* and *Superfortress At War* will be recalled fondly by many aviation readers, has written an absorbing tale of the F-105. It not only covers the F-105's Vietnam service, but also explains why the F-105 was the victim of changing defense strategies. The F-

105 was briefly a mount for the Thunderbirds, but was withdrawn from use after an in-flight failure at an air show in 1962. The F-105 soldiered on after 'Nam in electronic countermeasures ("Wild Weasel"—a chore it performed with distinction in South East Asia), and in Reserve and Guard fighter units. Although designed primarily for tactical nuclear strikes, the F-105 will be more remembered for a wide variety of other uses.

With such touches as copies of the citations of F-105 Medal of Honor winners and a foreword by Colonel Broughton (author of *Thud Ridge*), this well-illustrated volume will be appreciated by all former Thud drivers as well as the general military aviation enthusiast.

H. LARRY ELMAN
New England Air Museum

Wolk, Herman S. *Planning and Organizing the Postwar Air Force, 1943-1947*. Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1984. 359pp. \$12

This book fills a significant gap in the literature of the history of airpower and does it in a competent way. The preponderance of work so far has concentrated on the combat and logistical achievements of our World War II armed forces, and that is natural enough. Yet, it was remarkable that the wartime military leadership, buried as it was in the problem of beating the Axis, nonetheless found the time and resources to plan for the postwar organization and technological development of the military services. To their everlasting

credit, George C. Marshall and Henry H. Arnold were among the most prominent of those who kept one eye on the future even as the wartime alligators were nipping at their heels. Arnold's distinguished role in providing for postwar research and development is well enough known; but precious little has been done on the organizational planning that he and his lieutenants (like Lauris Norstad and Carl Spaatz) did during the last half of the war and in the first months of the peace that followed.

Herman S. Wolk is eminently qualified for the work. He has been at the center of airpower historical studies, in the Office of Air Force History, for many years. He has specialized in the early postwar period, particularly on the subjects of armed forces unification and the organization of airpower. Wolk is widely published in such defense journals as the *Air University Review* and *Air Force* magazine. Notwithstanding his long association with those journals and with the Air Force, he has been able to control any bias arising from that in order to paint a fairly balanced picture of the struggles among the services during the late forties.

Planning and Organizing is about the way in which an autonomous Air Force was achieved and the manner in which it was organized once separation had come. Wolk skillfully demonstrates the various factors that were affecting the decision makers involved, and gives plausible estimates of motivations in