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"Carrier Air Power," and "U.S. Aircraft Carriers: An Illustrated Design History"

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the isolation of the Soviet Union from the sea, largely through Nato controlled land-based air, which puts the shoe at least partly on the other foot.

Other issues developed in *The Defense Reform Debate* cover doctrine, force structure, modernization and weapons acquisitions, and reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. All are well written in concise, jargon-free prose. General Paul Gorman, Commander in Chief, US Southern Command, offers a particularly outstanding discussion, "Toward a Stronger Defense Establishment." His thoughts on the deep and divisive service differences—ideas, traditions, customs, prejudices and obstinacies—show an unusual understanding of cultural factors too often misidentified as interservice rivalry. Thanks to his deeper understanding, his is one of the very few, despite the wealth of talent among the contributors, to display a truly objective analysis of maritime views.

General Gorman's essay points up the fundamental contradiction in the entire book, the lack of balance in the contributions. Why are naval strategists and organization experts not included in discussions of the defense reform debate and other crucial issues of the day? Certainly some of the questionable statements about maritime war which mar a most useful and informative study would not have gone unchallenged.

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Friedman, Norman. *Carrier Air Power*. New York: The Rutledge Press, 1982. 192pp. \$29.95

Friedman, Norman. *U.S. Aircraft Carriers: An Illustrated Design History*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983. 427pp. \$44.95

Hudson Institute naval analyst Norman Friedman has used his considerable skills of synthesis and overview to produce two indispensable volumes for naval officers and historians alike in understanding the material and doctrinal evolution of aircraft carriers. Indeed, every naval officer associated with carriers must read these works not simply for essential background to current carrier policies but for learning the reasons why viable or seemingly viable, actions were rejected—small carriers, certain conversion plans, internal sacrifices, and so on.

Both books are written for the active professional officer, since they presuppose a knowledge of Navy acronyms and abbreviations, some of which baffled a retired 30-year black-shoe who looked at the reviewer's copies. The historian, however, will welcome the concise treatment of many subjects, even though he must regret Friedman's failure to cite specific documents (he only gives the general "sources" of his evidence). Also, Friedman relies too much on inferences ("probably" and "it appears" are overused), though his obvious erudition and command of the material force the reader to trust him in general.

Carrier Air Power traces the carrier aviation of the United States, Britain, imperial Japan and France, with minimal treatment of the few one-flattop navies. The author ties together ship and aircraft developments with the theme of design compromises—between the carrier's length, tonnage and maneuverability, flight and hangar deck space, cost, treaty limitations, armor weight, dockyard capabilities and antiaircraft armament on the one hand and airplane types and operating practices on the other.

For instance, in one of many wonderfully descriptive photo captions, Friedman shows how many compromise decisions doomed the *Ark Royal* hit by a single torpedo in 1941: She "succumbed to slow flooding, partly because no emergency diesel generators had been incorporated in her design and . . . her shaft, distorted by the [torpedo] explosion, opened up part of her hull as it turned. All boiler power was lost as a system of ducts immediately over the fire rooms . . . flooded. This design was a necessary consequence of the two-hangar arrangement, in turn a consequence of standard British air operating procedure."

Dividing the history of the carrier at 1945 when the flight deck replaced the hangar as the main structural deck, and when jets and missiles appeared, the author nevertheless emphasizes the two separate carrier missions throughout the years—against naval forces and land targets. His treatment of each navy is

excellent, though he could have used more photos of Japanese aircraft. The shift of carrier roles from "strategic" to "tactical" in the 1950s/60s is well-presented, as is the impact of the Vietnam War on US carrier doctrines.

After the national and chronological chapters Friedman turns to topical chapters covering every conceivable detail with great clarity—the carrier and her aircraft, strike warfare, carrier airborne ASW, fleet air defense, carrier survivability, and the future of the carrier, (far from settled). He endorses the growing size and unit cost of recent US carriers and presents the arguments for alternatives, the "Harrier carrier" and the small STOL carrier which might even operate land-based type planes.

The equally superb *Illustrated Design History* of US carriers is a massive tome which however relies too much on direct quotations from Navy documents, all part of the original 1977 Naval Ship Engineering Center study which formed the basis for the book. The factor of time is illustrated in the development of the small CVEs and CVLs at the expense of the big CVBs in order to meet wartime requirements, as is the personal part played by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The foiled attempt of the Jimmy Carter administration to return to the smaller "CVV" is given its own chapter, and the rise of the LPH/LHA is treated equally with the CVA/CVS.

Both books, especially the latter, suggest an important role of the

Naval War College in influencing interwar carrier design and doctrine, but too much of this case is inferred. Little nuggets of "new" information too numerous to list here proliferate in both volumes, while the appendixes give all the statistical data on CVs and their planes that any student of carriers could ever possibly need. The drawings and ship plans by John Roberts and A.D. Baker III, respectively, greatly complement the many telling photos in Friedman's two works; which, in spite of the price of the design history, promise to be the definitive sources for the remainder of the century.

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Mersky, Peter M. *U.S. Marine Corps Aviation: 1912 to the Present*. Annapolis: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1983. 298pp. \$19.95

. . . it is a great time to be a 23 year old 2d Lieutenant with a new set of gold wings . . . I hope these pages will show him . . . his heritage . . .

The objective stated in the above lines from Mersky's preface is well met in his book. The 298 pages—of which 96 are familiar vintage photographs of Marine aviators and aircraft—is a lighthearted, command chronology style brush of figures and facts. Marine aviation is sketched from Alfred A. Cunningham and the World War I First Marine Aviation Force to recent controversy regarding F-18 and AV-8B procurement for the Marine Corps.

Anecdotes and sea stories abound: Second Lieutenant Ralph Talbot and Corporal Robert G. Robinson, though wounded, winning the Medal of Honor (MOH) for shooting down 2 Fokker D-VII's in October 1918; the development of close air support tactics in the Banana Wars of the 20s, and First Lieutenant C.F. Schilt's winning of the third MOH awarded to a Marine aviator in Nicaragua in January 1928; the defense of Wake Island in World War II and Captain Hank Elrod's performance both in the air and on the ground which earned him a posthumous MOH; the chance discovery of buried Japanese aviation gas when the Marines were out of fuel at Henderson Field on Guadalcanal during the desperate days of October 1942; and the intense rivalry of Marine fighter aces Marion Carl and John Smith.

Some of the advertisement on the dust cover is overstated: "In this, the *first history* of Marine Corps aviation, Peter Mersky tells about the pilots . . ." It is not the first writing on Marine aviation, and the historical aspect is rather shallow, as chronologies tend to be. Mersky mentions many familiar names and units and places associated with Marines and Marine aviation through the years; but there is nothing new. All of the items have been disjointly published before in various sources such as *Marine Corps Gazette* articles and Marine Corps historical monographs. But the significance of Marine Corps pioneering in various aviation aspects has been overlooked almost entirely.