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Sunk! How Battleship were Lost

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country well. Although Mannix retired in the 20s he was, in a sense, one of them. However quaint or long ago their Navy may seem, the reader is likely to agree with Daniel Pratt Mannix IV that we are living today on their bounty. In short, this entertaining memoir is highly recommended to The New Navy.

JOHN S. PETERSON
The Military Bookman
New York City

Woodward, David, *Sunk! How the Great Battleships were Lost*. Winchester, Mass: Allen and Unwin, 1982. 153pp. \$17.95

It is difficult to say exactly what audience Mr. Woodward had in mind when he wrote this book. Surely not lovers of the history and lore of the famous battleships since the organizing principle of the book, as evident in its title, is how they all were sunk. Battleship buffs, as we know, revel in the glory of the great ships, not in their demise.

Neither is Mr. Woodward apparently interested in writing for historians. Although the subject is obviously a historical one, the fifteen short chapters of the book are decidedly slanted toward the loss of a ship or ships rather than the full story. In short, this is a book about losers, not winners. To this writer it seemed odd indeed to look at Jutland, Tsushima, or Pearl Harbor from this restricted point of view. Admittedly, the reader will find himself leaving Mr. Woodward frequently and referring to his

library to get "the rest of the story."

The style of the author is patently anecdotal. Although Mr. Woodward refers to many sources, including correspondence and some personal conversations, there are no footnotes and there is no bibliography. In one instance, for example, in preparing the reader for Pearl Harbor, Mr. Woodward retells of his personal strategic talks, in 1932, with a certain unnamed and retired Soviet vice admiral, a conversation which, to him, clearly foretold of the rise of Imperial Japanese naval power.

All of this is not to say that the book is not interesting reading. Ranging from the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, when the Italian battleship *Re d' Italia* was rammed and sunk by the Austrian *Ferdinand Max*, to the sinking of the *Yamato* in 1945 at the end of World War II, the book is a fascinating collection of sea stories. The author knows his subjects well and has a winning way of retelling each incident. He often quotes unusual sources, such as the diary of the gunnery officer in the *Lützow* in action against the *Lion* at Jutland, or Commander Semenov, who, having no particular appointed duties in the *Suvarov*, watched and took notes at Tsushima, as the great Russian fleet was sunk before his eyes.

Since Mr. Woodward can obviously spin a yarn with the very best, perhaps it is his editor who should be faulted for the book's organizing principle of sunken ships instead of the overall excitement, glory, and

heroism of the actions which are the most important part of all naval history and lore. For every *Hood* there is a *Bismarck*, and for every *Bismarck* a *King George V*, yet to focus on just the demise of a ship or ships seems too narrow a view. Would that we shall not now have a series of books on sunken destroyers, cruisers, submarines and aircraft carriers despite the best efforts of Mr. Woodward or his editor.

MICHAEL B. EDWARDS
Commander, US Navy

Snyder, Louis L. *Louis L. Snyder's Historical Guide to World War II*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982. 838pp. \$39.95

The *Historical Guide to World War II* is an encyclopedia of information about the war, arranged alphabetically, with entries ranging from a few sentences to many pages in length. It also includes some data charts on weapons systems ("German Aircraft Data," "Order of Battle of the Waffen—SS"), the original texts of some important documents and statements ("Atlantic Charter"), and a chronology of the war. The information ranges from the very basic ("Nuremberg Trials," "Arleigh Burke," "Battle of Midway") to the exotic ("Moon Planes," "Fort Eben Emael," "Waldteufel").

As a compendium that one might throw on the shelf at home, the *Guide* is too detailed—questions on the "Dam Busters Squadron," for example, seldom come up in general discussion. On the other hand, as a

serious reference work for scholarly use, the volume is far too thin and sketchy. It might have some appeal for the serious World War II buff, or find a place amidst the reference works in certain libraries. The book is Professor Snyder's latest in a long series of works on a variety of international topics and the war, and one has the feeling that he is using many of the scraps of information and research that have collected over the years. The result is an interesting and cleverly written volume, but the need for such a book is ultimately questionable—virtually all of the important information can be easily found in a general encyclopedia or in any of the countless books (including Professor Snyder's own) already written about the Second World War.

The most interesting aspect of the *Guide* is its information on the cultural, economic, and social aspects of the war. Entries on "Resources, Battle for" or the personality pieces on various leaders are neatly fitted into the overall flow of the war. Also worthy of note is the long and detailed index and the entries dealing with the literature, songs, and newspapers of the war years, subjects not normally contained in such studies.

Overall, the *Historical Guide* is highly readable and useful for quick, general research on the war, roughly at the level of a college undergraduate who needs some quick facts for a paper. For the dedicated World War II buff, it represents a means of putting much information into a convenient form for quick use. One