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Louis L. Snyder's Historical Guide to World War II

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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

is left with a sense, however, that Professor Snyder's evident talents of research and writing might be better utilized in more important efforts than this.

JAMES STAVRIDIS
Lieutenant Commander, US Navy

Tilford, Earl H. Jr. *Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia*. Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1980. 212pp. \$7.50

This is a story of ghosts, of heroic people and dramatic events which increasingly haunt the reader as he moves through the story and relives the history within the covers of Major Earl Tilford's book *Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia, 1961-1975*.

Tilford has packed a tremendous amount of information into about 120 or so pages of text in a 212-page work, a tribute to the rigorous standards of scholarship and tight writing so evident in his book. The thoroughness of the research is evident in the bibliography and the ample footnotes and most of his material was derived from primary sources, including interviews with those involved.

This is a story which cannot miss. Of the elites in the Vietnam War, none stood higher than the men in the Air Rescue Service (renamed in 1966 the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service). These men, in their slow and vulnerable craft, routinely had to overcome the deep, skeletal fear which afflicted all of us who felt the enemy's breath as they risked everything to save a man. While this book is primarily about

Air Force rescue operations, the roles of the other services are not ignored.

Tilford's brief historical introduction reveals some surprises, such as the fact that a few helicopters were in use in the final weeks of World War II. (Read the book to find out where and why, and be even more surprised.)

Serious thought was given to air rescue during the RAF-Luftwaffe battles in 1940, and the Americans became deeply involved upon their commencing air operations in Europe and the Pacific. The Korean War and the French colonial war in Indochina enhanced the rescue role of the helicopter while revealing its limitations.

As Tilford points out, the American involvement in Indochina in the early sixties found the rescue forces ill-equipped and unprepared to recover downed crewmen or isolated troops, and air rescue always lagged a step behind as combat operations increased in intensity. Their coming of age is well described as the Air Rescue service moved up from the severely limited H-43 through the HH-3 "Jolly Green Giant" to the Buff, or "Super Jolly Green" H-53.

As the author so rightly notes, air rescue is often an afterthought in peace, and when war breaks out too many lives are needlessly lost because the needed equipment and training are generally years "away."

Typical of the dangers faced by the rescue forces was the experience of the HH-43 crew which departed a forward site in Laos to rescue a