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Prelude to Pearl Harbor: War in China, 1937-41

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downed F-105 pilot. As they moved in the waiting communist troops opened fire at point-blank range, downing the chopper and capturing the crew. The copilot, kept in harsh conditions in Laos, made a heroic attempt at escape after a year, but was recaptured. Tilford reports that the pilot was murdered by a peasant. Those, including this reviewer, who were in Udorn in 1965 remember the details as briefed at the time—he was given away by peasants, then beheaded by the Pathet Lao.

Crews flying over North Vietnam had a rule of thumb on rescue: up to the Black river there was a good chance of rescue; between the Black and Red rivers, one's chances for rescue dropped sharply, but a save was possible; beyond the Red river, log it out (although a few daring saves were made in Route Packs 5 and 6).

If the worst happened, crews were better off being taken in North Vietnam than by Communist Laotian guerrilla forces. To the North Vietnamese, an American flyer was a valuable pawn to be kept alive as political leverage; to the Laotians the prisoner was a bother to be disposed of as quickly as possible—hence it is not surprising to those who flew those missions that so many of the MIAs were lost in Laos. Besides, the jungle covered its scars quickly, so that wreckage rapidly disappeared from view.

There is one slight omission in the book when describing the search and rescue task force in action. This was the role played by an always unsung group, the radar controllers ("Weapons Directors") at the area radar stations ("Brigham" at Udorn, "Invert" at Nakhon Phanom, etc.). While the airborne control ship Crown (later King) ran the show at the scene, the whole thing was organized and tracked by a young lieutenant or captain controlling the fleet at the radar station; Crown depended on him to track the force, mark the spot of a downed plane, effect the air refueling rendezvous for the supporting fighters, provide weather information, and more.

Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia contains several pages of photographs. For many, there can be no such thing as "overkill" when describing the dangers faced by the men of the rescue forces who so often risked so much in living up to their Service's motto "That Others May Live." Earl Tilford's work, valuable for both historian and the interested reader alike, does justice to those brave men.

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Stanley, Roy M. II. *Prelude to Pearl Harbor: War in China, 1937-41: Japan's Rehearsal for World War II.* New York: Scribner, 1982. 213pp. $24.95

War books for American audiences sell better if Pearl Harbor is mentioned in the title. Relevance may also be suggested by claiming that prewar activities under study (such as Japanese operations in China) have an intimate connection

with the main event, in this case the Pacific War. On both counts, the titling and subtitling of Colonel Stanley's monograph are misleading. That the combat in China broke out four and a half years before Pearl Harbor does not make it the prelude to the naval air strike on Hawaii; that the Japanese army and air forces fought extensively in China does not constitute a rehearsal for the global war against the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands. Masked by these semantics is the fact that Stanley does document an extremely sound point: prewar allied intelligence lacked the scale, structure, and skill to collect and evaluate potentially useful data on the shadowy, underrated Japanese, even after their armed forces came out of the closet in China in 1937.

To Stanley's examples of benign American neglect could be added the unnerving experience of General Victor Krulak who, as a young marine lieutenant stationed in Shanghai in 1937, found his first-hand observations of innovations in Japanese landing craft and amphibious tactics pigeonholed and ignored by US higher headquarters. Krulak had forwarded detailed data and photographs on materials, design, and dimensions in his "Report on Japanese Assault Landing Operations Shanghai Area 1937," identifying such advances as modified hull bottoms and bow ramps. When Krulak later visited Washington in 1939, he traced his report to an obscure cubicle in BuShips, where an unknowing civilian employee commented that the author must have been a crank who did not know the difference between a stern and a bow. If anybody important had taken notice of the document, Krulak was not aware of it. (See Richard H. Hoy, "Victor H. Krulak: A Marine's Biography," M.A. thesis, San Diego State University, 1974.)

But back to Colonel R.M. Stanley: an expert on photo interpretation, he has assembled a folio of more than 250 prewar and wartime photographs from open or declassified sources, and has spun a text around them, complemented by interesting excerpts from musty US training pamphlets and guides. The author is at his best in chronicling the Flying Tigers and his hero Claire Chennault. Knowledgeably captioned, the photos range from informative to picturesque. My favorite in the latter class is a posed photograph (vintage 1926) showing the wizened Old Marshal of Manchuria, Chang Tso-lin, and his surprisingly bookish-looking son Chang Hsueh-liang, towered over by an impeccably uniformed American regimental commander in Tientsin. Many photos, however, will interest only target analysts, devotees of military gear and uniforms, and ordnance buffs.

Stanley's writing style is often chummy, "The Japanese Army had an amazing talent for stepping on itself"; his transliteration of Asian (especially Japanese) names is erratic, inconsistent, and sometimes uninformed. Why, for instance, call the famous Japanese Kwantung Army

the Kanto Force or the Manchurian Army? More importantly, the historical underpinning of the text leaves very much to be desired. A particularly vexing example is Stanley's confused handling of the crucial Mukden affair of September 1931, where even his times are out of kilter. One also wonders about the feeble characterization of the modern Japanese officer corps as springing from aristocratic or *samurai* stock.

It is true that remarkably little of moment has ever appeared in English on the subject of the so-called China Incident; e.g., Frank Dorn's retrospective *Sino-Japanese War* (1974), Dick Wilson's journalistic *When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War* (1982), and Hsi-cheng Chi's illuminating *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse* (1982). Stanley's photographic survey can best be used with the other works in precisely the category selected for it by the publisher: as a reference album.

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Bean, C.E.W. *The Story of Anzac.* Lawrence, Mass.: Queensland University Press, 1981. v. I, 662pp. $36, v. II, 975pp. $36. Volume I was first printed in 1921 and Volume II in 1924 in Sydney, Australia.

The Australian official history of World War I is justly renowned for its accuracy, clarity, and forthright judgments. There was no official censorship, and authors were able to express their opinions freely often to the discomforture of their British military and academic counterparts. Thus, while British official historians concealed casualty figures to preserve Haig's reputation, the Australians wrote forthrightly and without fear of retribution.

C.E.W Bean was the general editor of *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918* and personally wrote the first two volumes which cover the creation of the Australian Imperial Force, its operations in Egypt in 1914 and 1915, and the Gallipoli campaign of 1915-1916. Bean in fact accompanied the Australians to Egypt as a war correspondent and in this capacity went with the Anzac Corps to Gallipoli. He was therefore able to supplement his research and extensive postwar interviews with participants with his own frontline experience.

The Story of Anzac is painstakingly detailed comprising about 1,400 pages of text plus maps, notes, and appendixes. Bean describes not only the operations of the Anzac Corps but also the activities of the British and Turkish forces. For anybody interested in examining the actions of the Anzac Corps right down to the company, platoon and even squad level there is no better source than Bean's volumes.

Bean's study is also a first-rate description of the problems inherent in amphibious operations. Gallipoli was, of course, the first major seaborne assault under conditions of modern war. The author carefully describes all of the shortcomings of the expedition. He notes, for exam-