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Gear Up, Mishaps Down: The Evolution of Naval Aviation Safety, 1950–2000

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How does a leader deal with a workforce that is increasingly transient and for which organizational loyalty is no longer a hallmark of professionalism? How are questions involving public relations, legality, and political involvement and interest handled? These problems are not unique to the military. There is no discussion of how leaders cope with periods of disruption, challenge, or failure.

Two other issues deserve mention. The first is the book's method of citation: there are no footnotes or traditional endnotes. This aids the casual reader but not the serious scholar, student, or executive who needs to delve deeper. Perhaps the publisher insisted on this methodology; if so, one hopes it is for the last time.

The other issue is more challenging. McChrystal goes to significant lengths to present *Team of Teams* as a collaborative effort. This is commendable, and there may be portions of the book that represent a collective effort that is so interwoven it defies any assignment of individual credit. However, McChrystal is the only author who truly can explain the senior leader's perspective and feelings. As such, his voice should dominate the work, or at least be given clearly identified and dedicated portions of the book to provide solely his point of view.

Despite these shortcomings, *Team of Teams* belongs on any bookshelf devoted to modern works on leadership. It asks important questions, has more than a few sensible recommendations, and provokes useful follow-on conversations. Its readability also will be a plus for business school students, who increasingly will be likely to find it on their list of required texts.

RICHARD J. NORTON



Gear Up, Mishaps Down: The Evolution of Naval Aviation Safety, 1950–2000, by Robert Dunn. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017. 224 pages. \$29.95.

The average American's view of naval aviation likely is informed by the movie *Top Gun* or, for those with some historical knowledge, the carrier battles of World War II in the Pacific. Unknown even to most naval aviators is a larger and equally dramatic story: the Navy's struggle to bring its aviation accident rate under control. The number of aircraft and aircrews lost to accidents over the course of naval aviation's history is staggering—in the tens of thousands, far more than ever were lost to combat.

A critical segment of that history occurred during the period that retired vice admiral Dunn reviews in his book. After World War II, tectonic changes occurred in naval aviation, including the introduction of jet aircraft and the advent of nuclear weapons. The pressure on the Navy to demonstrate the effectiveness of its aircraft carriers in the rapidly evolving environment of the 1950s and '60s was intense. The need to fight in Korea with new and inadequately understood aircraft technology, as well as to maintain a viable nuclear deterrent posture day or night, in almost any weather, produced horrendous accident rates. In 1954 alone the Navy and Marine Corps lost 776 aircraft to accidents, and 536 aircrewmen and passengers were killed. There was legitimate doubt that naval aviation would survive if that rate of mishaps could not be reduced.

But survive it did, through reducing accident rates—step by painful step. It is a complex, multifaceted story that

Dunn, a former commander of the Naval Safety Center and Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air Warfare, is uniquely qualified to tell. This is a book most easily understood and appreciated by those who have been a part of naval aviation. However, while the book's second half gets rather technical, the author does provide both explanatory endnotes and appendices that offer background information to help the lay reader make sense of it.

Dunn appears to be on a mission to glorify those who made key contributions to the reduction in mishaps. This is entirely justified, as the efforts of such luminaries as James Flatley, Dr. Ashton Graybiel, and Bob Osborne helped to bring the accident rate down from the hundreds of planes and crewmen lost each year in the 1950s to the occasional mishap that naval aviation experiences now. Their efforts, and those of many others, not only saved thousands of lives and aircraft but ensured that the nation would be able to maintain command of the seas. The book is a mixture of narrative and analysis that forms a coherent explanation of how naval aviation shifted from being a freewheeling, daredevil operation to a disciplined and professional enterprise.

The book is well organized and the author's writing is straightforward and clear. However, the book contains some small issues that casual readers likely would miss but that can nag at an experienced naval aviator (such as this reviewer). One is the presence of contradictory statements about the potential utility of the canceled supercarrier USS *United States*; another is what appear to be typos. The latter subtly change the meaning of certain paragraphs, such as the statement on page 22 that the

helicopter community's mishap experience was "atypical" for the day, when the word should have been "typical," or the incorrect statement that the Frenchman Paul Bert's hypoxia experiments took place in the twentieth century versus the nineteenth. There are enough of these "nits" in the first few chapters to distract the knowledgeable reader, although later chapters are cleaner.

The real issue is the book's laudatory tone. Dunn is forthright in describing the various issues that led to the Navy's awful accident rates, and correctly identifies the measures that eventually fixed the problem. Still, he fails to address what is, in this reviewer's opinion, a key issue: the rate at which the Navy reduced its accident rate in comparison with the Air Force. In 1950, the Navy's accident rate was one and one-half times that of the Air Force; by 1960 and through 1970, it was four times higher than that of the Air Force, despite a concurrent reduction in the overall accident rate for both services. Even in 1980, the Navy rate remained three times that of the Air Force. However, by 1990 the relative accident rates for the Navy and Air Force were equal—and have remained so ever since. Any analysis of naval aviation safety improvement in the period the book covers should take on this matter, and the failure to do so is a key drawback of the book. Had the Navy adopted the Air Force's methods in the 1950s, thousands of additional lives and aircraft might have been saved. Why the service did not do so is an important part of the story, one that should be told. Dunn does a good job of describing the various threads that led to the Navy's victory over mishaps and the book is worthwhile reading for anyone who has ever been involved in naval

aviation, but in the end it falls short of delivering more-thorough reporting.

ROBERT C. RUBEL



Navy Football: Return to Glory, by T. C. Cameron. Charleston, SC: History Press, 2017. 189 pages. \$21.99.

As both a U.S. Military Academy (USMA) graduate and the father of a USMA graduate, I jumped at the chance to read a book about the success of the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) football team. Let's face it: Navy has a winning program that has dominated Army football in recent years, even though both teams draw from the same pool of talented high school athletes. T. C. Cameron traces the history of USNA's football team, including its comeback, or "return to glory," over the past fifteen years.

Bill Belichick, the legendary coach of the New England Patriots, wrote the foreword, in which he pays tribute to the Navy coaches and midshipmen who taught him the game of football. "When I think of Navy football, my early role models were some of the biggest legends in the program's history" (p. 7). Belichick grew up in Annapolis and his father, Steve Belichick, was an assistant football coach at the Naval Academy for thirty-four years.

Cameron first traces the history of Navy football. He describes the period from 1950 to 1963 as its "Camelot" years. The Navy football team was successful under Coach Eddie Erdelatz and his assistant coach Wayne Hardin, who later succeeded him. During these years, Navy also built the Navy-Marine

Corps Memorial Stadium. The Navy football team was winning consistently, and legends such as Tom Lynch and Heisman Trophy winners Joe Bellino and Roger Staubach were winning the hearts and minds of football fans across the country. Even President John F. Kennedy, himself a Navy veteran, supported the Navy team. Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 was a tremendous blow to the team, and many wondered whether the Army-Navy game would even be played the week afterward. Ranked number two in the country, Navy won the game, then went on to lose to top-ranked Texas in the Cotton Bowl. After the following season, as Cameron puts it, "Camelot was over. Without knowing it, a long cold winter descended on the Navy program. It would last almost forty years" (p. 26).

Cameron characterizes the years between 1995 and 2001 as the "Big Tease." Under Coach Charlie Weatherbie, Navy football initially did well, experiencing winning seasons. However, as Cameron writes, "[h]is finish was a disaster, as Navy lost seventeen of the last eighteen" games he coached, "and twenty of twenty-one overall" (p. 51). Navy football's true renewed success began when Coach Paul Johnson, the offensive coordinator in 1995-96, returned, and Cameron portrays 2002-2007 under the heading "Johnson Returns." Johnson's record at Navy was 43-27, with five bowl appearances in six seasons. More importantly, Johnson's teams crushed both Army and Air Force, losing only once against another service academy. The football team has continued to have winning seasons under Coach Ken Niumatalolo from 2008 to the present, a period Cameron characterizes as a "Ball of Fire" because