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The U.S. Navy in Pensacola

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The book is well illustrated, with numerous photographs, charts and graphs, and should be enjoyed by all Navy history buffs.

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Pearce, George F. *The U.S. Navy in Pensacola*. Pensacola, Fla.: A University of West Florida Book/University Presses of Florida, 1980. 209pp.

It might at first be tempting to categorize Professor Pearce's book as a local history of western Florida filled with stories of the interesting people and events which make up the history of the Florida Panhandle, of the various Navy facilities in Pensacola over the years, and of the early history of naval aviation. Thus in one sense, it is the story of the politics of western Florida and the South from British, French, Spanish, and American rule through colony, to territory, and finally to statehood. In addition, it is the story of U.S. Navy operations out of Pensacola throughout the Gulf of Mexico, which have dealt with threats ranging from pirates to dictators to U-boats. It is also the story of the cycle of birth-growth-demise and rebirth of both the naval facility at Pensacola and the civilian community around it. Finally, it is of course the story of the birth of naval aviation.

On the other hand, the history of Pensacola may also serve as an interesting model of typical American attitudes and action when it comes to national defense. If ever a naval facility suffered from the action-inaction and interest-disinterest of the exigencies of American public opinion and politics when it comes to defense spending, it has been Pensacola. Thus it is informative just to note a few of Professor Pearce's chapter titles which are at once both nautical, political and descriptive in themselves. After "Launching" in the early 19th century, based on the need for a facility in proximity to the Gulf of

Mexico and the Caribbean, came "Making Little Headway" after the pirate and slave trade had been suppressed by the Navy and the scourge of yellow fever in Pensacola found to be endemic. Then came "Under Full Steam" as Pensacola once again proved critical to U.S. efforts in the Mexican-American and Civil War, only to be followed by "Indecision in Washington" as the city and naval facility languished in the morass that was post-Civil War and Reconstruction politics. There was of course a "Rebirth" during the Spanish-American War and World War I followed by a "Demise" after the Great War when all things military throughout the country fell into decline. Finally, it was only with the birth of naval aviation and its rapid expansion in the 1920s that Pensacola could count itself really secure in its future.

Of all the pros and cons which were historically debated about Pensacola, one plus factor remains even today, the year-round moderate climate. Other factors, such as the presence of a natural harbor and its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico, seem far less important. On the negative side the strongest fear, based on several actual major outbreaks, was of yellow fever, but this great concern has not been a factor since the turn of the century. What is most evident is that throughout the story, for both the Navy and the city, the ties to southern history and politics are apparent. Thus in the early days, Navy business, just like the business of the rest of the country, was tied to the major cities, and the influence and power of the east coast. More than one early editorial from the various Pensacola newspapers quoted by the author laments that Washington continually ignored its responsibilities to the South and Pensacola in particular. The Navy facility would languish or boom based upon the priorities set in Washington and the subsequent budgets allocated by Congress based upon national politics. It is perhaps not

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surprising that the best and boom times surrounded national emergencies such as the Mexican and Spanish-American Wars. Typically, though several base commanders and commandants had pleaded for nearly 50 years for construction of a drydock to handle major shipping repairs, it was only after the Spanish-American War that Pensacola received its first floating drydock as a reparation from the Spanish. It is also perhaps typical that after the drydock was completely destroyed in a 1906 hurricane, it was never replaced.

This pattern of waxing and waning fortunes for the Navy and the city is, of course, all too typical for those who believe the country has shown a remarkable tendency to ignore defense preparations and spending in times of peace only to be forced into emergency action in times of crisis. Therein perhaps lies the value of Professor Pearce's book, since the history of Pensacola clearly depicts this American tendency. Thus no matter how feverish the activity, once a commitment is finally made to preparations, expansion or growth, the delays will be costly in terms of money, waste or even lives. Professor Pearce has done a genuine service in his remarkably clear, interesting, and informative study of the Navy in Pensacola.

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Pechman, Joseph A., ed. *Setting National Priorities, the 1982 Budget*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1981. 275pp.

This volume is the Brookings Institution's 12th annual study of the federal budget. Although the editors and individual chapter authors have changed over time, this series of analyses has been described as "a primary reference on the federal budget" and "the best single source of insights concerning how to think about complex policy questions." The current editor, and a

principal author, is the director of the Brookings Economics Studies program and a specialist in the economics of public finance.

This year's book should continue the series' high repute, although it does not have the sweep of the 1980 publication which examined in some depth a number of key policy areas for the United States in the decade of the 1980s. What makes the FY 1982 budget particularly significant are the changes in the proposed budget between the outgoing Carter administration and the incoming Reagan administration. A Carter FY 1982 budget was submitted in January 1981, only to be followed by major revisions in Reagan messages sent to Congress on 18 February and 10 March 1981. Probably no change in Administrations since the 1930s has represented such a major shift in the philosophy of government as the replacement of the Carter with the Reagan administration.

In a chapter entitled "A Change in Direction" A. James Reichley discusses the ideology of the new Administration, tracing its roots back to the movement in the Republican Party that made Senator Barry Goldwater the party's Presidential candidate in 1964. The contrast between the lopsided defeat of Goldwater in 1964 and the resounding electoral vote victory of Reagan in 1980 could be read as a dramatic shift to the right in the American electorate's views on both domestic and foreign policy issues.

The Reagan revisions of the Carter FY 1982 budget highlight in the budgetary priorities the changes in ideology. Reagan increased budget authority for defense programs by \$25.8 billion over the Carter proposals (as well as increasing the existing FY 1981 budget by \$6.8 billion), and he cut nondefense outlays by an additional \$40.4 billion over the cuts proposed by Carter. Reagan also fulfilled his campaign promises by calling for dramatic