

## Sighted Sub, Sank Same: The United States Navy's Air Campaign against the U-boat

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capacities. The purpose of the book, however, is not to engage these converts but to communicate to the American public, defense industry, Congress, and Navy force-design architects that we have the technology today to build a more relevant, reliable, responsive, and reconstitutable naval force to deter or fight. *Questioning the Carrier* creates a quarterdeck for the Chief of Naval Operations to stand on to inspire these naval-force-wide changes. Its message is even more powerful coming from an active-duty naval professional.

JEFFREY E. KLINE



*Sighted Sub, Sank Same: The United States Navy's Air Campaign against the U-boat*, by Alan C. Carey. Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2019. 217 pages. \$34.95.

Books on World War II seem to continually narrow the scope and scale of their examination of various battles and events, perhaps because there are fewer and fewer large-scale aspects of the war that have not been covered in detail. In contrast, *Sighted Sub, Sank Same* works on a broad canvas indeed. It examines the role played by the aviators of the U.S. Navy in detecting, engaging, and destroying U-boats in the entire Western Hemisphere from 1939 to 1945. As such, it makes a worthy contribution to our understanding of the Second World War.

The threat Hitler's U-boats posed to the Allied war effort and potential victory has been well documented. So too is the story of how, after early years of racking up impressive victories, German U-boat aces were gradually killed off, Allied antisubmarine tactics and technology got much better, and eventually German

U-boat sailors were dying at a higher rate than the members of any other military branch or service in the war, doing little more than tying down significant amounts of Allied material and human capital. Alan Carey describes and illuminates just how much material, money, and manpower the Allied response required. At the height of this effort, the United States Navy searched millions of square miles, with thousands of sailors and hundreds of platforms. It is an epic story, but it is not one that is commonly known. In many ways, the years the U.S. Navy spent hunting submarines over half the world were the wellspring of the Navy's VP community, the world's finest antisubmarine aviation squadrons.

Carey organizes his book both chronologically and geographically. In some cases, this can seem repetitive, but it does provide a feel for how the Navy's effort expanded over time. Carey takes the reader along the East Coast and through the Caribbean, then into the South Atlantic. He acknowledges the importance of Allied cooperation, especially that provided by Brazil. Carey then follows the war east, into the waters around Ascension Island and into the Mediterranean. This path is not always linear. Operations off Ascension began in 1944, but the Navy had been hunting submarines in the Mediterranean since 1942. Carey then takes a dedicated look at Fleet Air Wing 7 and its operations from August 1943 to May 1945. He concludes the book by devoting two chapters to escort carrier operations and a review of blimp antisubmarine-warfare (ASW) operations. The work is lavishly illustrated with color and black-and-white photographs, including many taken in combat.

A large part of the Navy's success against the U-boats involved advances

in technology, tactics, and intelligence. Although Carey makes an effort to cover both advances in ASW technology and tactics, he does not do the topic complete justice, in part because it can be reasonably argued that the large amount of pertinent material deserves another volume. Improved radar, searchlights, depth charges, ASW torpedoes, and sonobuoys are all mentioned, but could have been explored in greater detail. Carey does discuss the use of the code-breaking capabilities of ULTRA.

The Navy's war against the U-boats involved a myriad of different types of aircraft. These included PV-1 Venturas, PB4Y Catalinas, the four-engine PB4Y Liberators, and Martin PBM Mariner seaplanes. Unfortunately, Carey does not provide a detailed comparison between aircraft characteristics and lethality.

He also does not spend a great deal of time looking at internal Navy policies and politics. There are clues to potential policy and personal conflicts and evidence of naval priorities that apparently reflect a Navy decision to make the Atlantic a secondary theater of war. This is an area crying out for additional scholarship.

*Sighted Sub, Sank Same* painstakingly examines engagement after engagement. As a result certain surprising revelations are provided. Boredom was baked into ASW operations. Crews in lone aircraft might fly for months without a contact. When contact was made these lone aircraft would engage and the U-boats would often fight back. From time to time, the events described in *Sighted Sub, Sank Same* might more correctly be described as "sighted sub, shot down by same." There were, of course, crews that simply launched on a mission and never returned, but others reported

sightings and commencing an attack and were never heard from again. Carey also reminds the reader that U-boat crews, when they escaped a sinking boat, often leaped from one fatal situation into another. USN aircrews would report seeing survivors in the water, and even dropped inflatable rafts to them. But when the aircrews returned, the sea would be empty.

Above all, Carey reminds us that U.S. naval aviators sank eighty-three German submarines as well as the Italian submarine *Archimede* and the Japanese *I-52*. While not perfect, *Sighted Sub, Sank Same* is likely to be among the definitive sources on this matter for some time.

RICHARD NORTON



*China's Law of the Sea: The New Rules of Maritime Order*, by Isaac B. Kardon. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2023. 416 pages. \$40.

In *China's Law of the Sea: The New Rules of Maritime Order*, Isaac Kardon delivers an incisive analysis of China's transactional and often contradictory engagement with international law in general, and maritime law in particular. His long exposure to Chinese legal scholars and texts gives Kardon a unique credibility on the topic. Not only has he spent years studying the issue at the U.S. Naval War College and more recently at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, but he studied at Tsinghua University in Beijing and held visiting positions at the National Institute for South China Sea Studies in China's Hainan Province and at Academia Sinica in Taiwan. Kardon took full advantage of the opportunities for productive, and sometimes even candid, discussions that outsiders could have with Chinese scholars before that door