

By Cdr. Peter B. Mersky, USNR (Ret.)

Holland, W. J., Jr., Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.), Editor-in-Chief. *The Navy*. Naval Historical Foundation, 1306 Dahlgren Ave. SE, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5055. 2000. 352 pp. Ill. The book is available at the Navy Museum gift shop for \$70 (minus a discount for foundation members). For an order form, see the foundation's website at www.mil.org/navyhist/ or call 202-678-4333.

A companion to a previously published volume on the U.S. Marine Corps and to an upcoming effort on U.S. Naval Aviation, this book is a truly fine effort that uses the writing talents, operational experience, knowledge and decades-long dedication of many well-known and not-so-well-known veterans. Its large format allows a spacious layout for graphics and type. With this luxurious coffee table book, as well as the Marine Corps volume, good things come in big packages. Juggling the weighty tome might be considered good exercise.

That said, this is one of the best overviews of the American Navy I have ever seen. It is impressive in every respect, and I highly recommend it for anyone with an interest in the subject. It's a great ready reference as well as a fine gift for any occasion. The chapters are essays on a full range of topics, from the earliest history to today's fleet and the people who man it. Well-chosen photos, paintings and illustrations complement the text.

The early chapters detail America's emergence as a world naval power, with interesting sidelights on the "society" of the Navy. There is a particularly poignant assessment of the Civil War and its effect on American history on page 45. Surprisingly, the otherwise authoritative section on WW I has nothing on U.S. Naval Aviation, which was very active from British and Italian bases in the last 15 months of the war. Succeeding chapters do portray Naval Aviation's growth and



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One chapter of *The Navy* eloquently describes carrier air power in the 1990s. Above, a Navy aircrewman mans the door gun of an SH-3 *Sea King* from HS-9 aboard *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) during Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

include a good display of photos.

The conflict between the Navy and the Army during the 1920s regarding the Navy's role, especially that of its aircraft, is covered as well as the development of the aircraft carrier. In that era, flag officers like William Moffett and Joseph Reeves took positions as proponents of naval air, even when it wasn't popular to do so.

The book's lengthy WW II chapter is appealingly written. U.S. Naval Institute editor and former battleship sailor Paul Stillwell knows his subject and chats away in his unique, folksy style, pulling together a huge panorama of the two-ocean war of the 1940s using interviews and memories. The Korean War is well described, and Naval Aviation enjoys a short portion of this large chapter dealing with post-WW II events. Dr. Ed Marolda does a fine job of covering the 40-year Cold War, including the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. Marolda discusses the building global confrontation between the Free World and communism, and the role U.S. naval forces played in deterring the adversaries in Moscow and Peking. The 1991 Gulf War rounds out this large essay.

Retired Navy Captain and Naval Aviator, Rosario "Zip" Rausa, a former editor of this magazine, writes the chapter on carrier air. His personal experience and knowledge of the subject make it more than another review of sea-based

aviation's history. It is a beautifully written description of what carrier air power has become in the 1990s, developed from the preceding eight decades.

Other chapters in the book describe various communities in the Navy, including the judge advocate corps, civil engineers, medical corps and supply corps. Author and publisher retired Vice Admiral William P. Mack offers a special chapter on the traditions that are so much a part of the Navy. There is even a section on museums and displays that highlight the sea service and its people and history.

The Navy is a unique, well-done book in which everyone will find something of interest, and will enjoy as a detailed overview of our service.

Chosin–Hungnam Symposium

U.S. Navy and Marine Corps operations in Korea during November and December 1950 will be the subject of a symposium sponsored by the Naval Historical Center, Naval Historical Foundation (NHF), U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. The symposium will be held at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., on 12 December, beginning at 1 pm. For details, contact the NHF, 202-678-4333; nhfwny@msn.com.

Ramsey Fellowship

The Ramsey Fellowship in Naval Aviation History is a competitive, in-residence fellowship in “U.S. Naval Flight History,” including Navy and Marine Corps aviation, the history of rocketry, missile and space activities in U.S. naval service, biographical studies of Naval Aviators, and multinational comparative studies that include the United States. It is open to all interested candidates with demonstrated skills in research and writing; an advanced degree is not required. A stipend of \$45,000 will be awarded for a 12-month fellowship, with limited additional funds for travel and miscellaneous expenses.

Send requests for fellowship application packages to: Collette Williams, Fellowship Coordinator, Room 3313, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0312; collette.williams@nasm.si.edu. Application packages are available on the museum’s website: www.nasm.edu/nasm/joinnasm/fellow/fellow.htm.

Color Slides Wanted

Author wishes to contact anyone who took color slides of Navy or Marine Corps aircraft dating from WW II through the Vietnam War to be used in articles and books. Contact Warren Thompson, 7201 Stamford Cove, Germantown, TN 38138; 901-754-1852; migaley@attglobal.net.

Thank You, Veterans!

Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in the eye. Others may carry the evidence inside them: a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg, or perhaps another sort of inner steel—the soul’s ally forged in the refinery of adversity. Except in parades, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badge or emblem. You can’t tell a vet just by looking.

So, what is a vet? A veteran is . . .

The cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn’t run out of fuel.

The barroom loudmouth whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four hours of exquisite bravery near the 38th parallel.

The nurse who fought against futility and went to sleep sobbing every night for two solid years in Da Nang.

The prisoner of war who went away one person and came back another—or didn’t come back at all.

The Quantico, Va., drill instructor who has never seen combat but has saved countless lives by turning slouchy no-accounts and gang members into Marines, and by teaching them to watch each other’s backs.

The parade-riding Legionnaire who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand.

The career quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by.

The anonymous heroes in The Tomb of the Unknowns, whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor dies unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean’s depth.

The old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket, palsied now and aggravatingly slow, who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come.

An ordinary and yet an extraordinary human being who offered some of life’s most vital years in the service of country, and who sacrificed ambitions so others would not have to sacrifice theirs.

A soldier and a savior and a sword against the darkness, and nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation ever known.

Each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say, “Thank you.” That’s all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could receive.

Remember, November 11th is Veterans Day.

— Author unknown