

And while the more casual reader may enjoy the photographs and Darling's efforts to capture in his narrative something of the drama of aviation-assisted naval warfare in the twentieth century, with so many options from which to choose it is unnecessary to steer them towards his unreliable account. In the end, there is no good reason to recommend this book to anyone interested in this subject.

Mark Klobas
Phoenix, Arizona

Douglas C. Dildy and Ryan K. Noppen. *German and Italian Aircraft Carriers of World War II*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2022. 48 pp., illustrations, tables, bibliography, index. UK £11.99, US \$19.00, CDN \$25.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4728-4676-1.

Number 306 in Osprey's New Vanguard Series, and the first Osprey collaboration by authors Douglas C. Dildy and Ryan K. Noppen, *German and Italian Aircraft Carriers of World War II* offers an introductory examination of the German and Italian naval attempts at aircraft carrier programs. The book is divided into two distinct parts, with each containing a chronological analysis of the respective nations' efforts, accompanied by period photographs, profile renderings of the various proposed vessels, and data tables for relevant equipment and airframes. As is typical for Osprey works, a selected bibliography and index are provided at the end for further study and quick reference.

Lacking a comprehensive introduction, the text dives directly into the narrative of German carrier development. This constitutes over two-thirds of the work, totaling 29 pages compared to the 14-page Italian section. The development of German seaplane carriers and the beginnings of conversion carrier projects during the First World War provide a background to the efforts of the Kriegsmarine years later, with the majority of the section naturally focusing on the never-completed *Graf Zeppelin* and her associated aircraft designs. The political bickering and changes of leadership that hampered Germany's one wartime carrier are well documented, and the frustrations of Admiral Rader are well represented. The detailed focus on carrier aircraft designs is also appreciated, especially with the notations on the actual service of constructed airframes as the war progressed and the *Graf Zeppelin* was left to rust. The section finishes with an examination of the planned 1942 wartime conversion projects of ocean liners and unfinished cruisers into additional carriers, with information tables and profile drawings provided to better illustrate their unrealized potentials. No real section conclusion is given before

the work transitions to the Italian efforts.

As with the German section, the Italy discussion begins with a summary of their First World War forays into naval aviation, culminating in the “mobile seaplane base” ship *Europa* (34). Various interwar projects are briefly covered and rendered in a table, with the seaplane carrier *Giuseppe Miraglia* receiving an expanded section due to its status as the only major Italian naval aviation vessel at the beginning of the Second World War. The remainder of the text is devoted to the three primary attempts by the Regia Marina at carrier construction: the *Aquila*, *Sparviero*, and the proposed salvage and conversion of the cruiser *Bolzano*. Some coverage is given to the Re.2001 aircraft variants intended for use on these vessels as well, and a conclusion is provided noting the major points of contention that led to Italian efforts being “too little, too late,” while also noting that Italy did finally commission an aircraft carrier of their own in 1985 (46).

It is odd that a work discussing the design efforts of two different navies lacks an overarching introduction and conclusion. The Italian section, at least, offers a concluding paragraph on its covered material, but the absence of a clear conclusion for the German analysis or any form of transition between the two halves gives one the feeling that the work is somewhat disjointed. The disproportionately large size of the German section also gives the feeling that the Italian efforts are not receiving their fair share of coverage. And while it is understood that Osprey book page counts are often restricted by the series they are released under, either a more even split of focus or even a division of the two subjects into ‘full sized’ coverage would be appreciated. The placement of one of the Italian carrier design’s profile drawings in the German section instead of with the other Regia Marina renders later on is also done without explanation, though this was most likely due to an odd number of profiles for each nation.

German and Italian Aircraft Carriers is a decent introduction into an often-overlooked aspect of Second World War era naval ship design. While not without its shortcomings, the work highlights each nations’ naval aviation activities in the years leading up to the war, along with describing the partially-constructed hulls, proposed wartime designs, and associated aircraft that would have made up each vessels’ compliments had they been completed. For those interested in a basic history of German and Italian designs, this work is a good entry point, with a bibliography of more in-depth sources for those wishing to carry out further studies.

Charles Ross Patterson II
Yorktown, Virginia