

German surface operations for the initial years of the war, from 1939-1941. As a museum curator and author of over 50 books, mainly in military and naval history, Konstam brings years of research in a variety of areas to bear on the Kriegsmarine in the Second World War. Sadly, what had the potential to be an incredible history, falls well short of this. Restricted by the Osprey formula of only 80 pages, despite lavish illustrations and pictures, the text really cannot do justice to such a large history. Broken up into six major areas focusing on initial strategy, the planning for the war, the Atlantic sorties, and the aftermath, analysis, and conclusion the text simply produces a precis of events with no depth to the study. Covering operations by *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, *Admiral Scheer*, and operations Nordseetour and Berlin, it provides the reader with many dramatic and exciting moments which seem designed to entice more than to explain.

Particularly frustrating is the absence of any citations. Photographs, illustrations, maps, and detailed information appear but not one reference indicates where anything came from. The result is an interesting read but one with little to no research value. The book seems aimed at young adults with an interest in the subject but is certainly of no use to anyone with the serious intent of doing further research. In essence, it is a starter book that I would not recommend for anyone with more of an interest than that.

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Mark Lardas. *Truk 1944–45. The destruction of Japan's Central Pacific bastion.* Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.bloomsbury.com, 2021. 96 pp., illustrations, map, chronology, bibliography, index. US \$24.00, CDN \$30.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47284-585-6. (E-book available.)

This work is the 26th entry in Osprey's Air Campaign Series and author Mark Lardas' 34th overall contribution to the Osprey catalogue. In this latest publication, Lardas examines the reduction of Japan's military facilities at the Truk Atoll via the naval air campaign that began in February 1944. Presented in the standardized Campaign series format, the text begins with a brief introduction to Truk's pre-1944 significance followed by a chronology of key events related to the atoll from 1914 to 1986, with the latter naturally focusing on the war years. Lardas covers the equipment and capabilities of both the Allied and Japanese forces along with the air campaign objectives themselves before analyzing the campaign and its aftermath. Maps, sketches, period photographs, and computer renderings are used throughout the work for visual reference. A short note on surviving aircraft, further reading, and an

index round out the text.

The introduction and chronology are relatively short sections that nevertheless highlight the Allied fears of Truk being a fortified bastion versus the reality of its neglected pre-1939 status. Its importance within the Pacific campaign as a whole is discussed, followed by the need to capture or neutralize the atoll. These points are further expanded upon in the sections on attacker and defender capabilities, where Lardas accounts for the various available aircraft types, munitions, tactics, and infrastructure. The objectives of both sides are then covered, with the straightforward Allied goal being to neutralize and bypass Truk via an air campaign, whereas the Japanese sought to hold the atoll. Lardas points out that this was a “defective objective,” however, as Truk was more powerful in terms of exploitable potential rather than pure possession (36). Its physical distance from Japan made resupply difficult, and the Japanese defenses designed to counter an amphibious invasion would prove woefully inadequate in terms of dealing with the aerial assault that was to come.

The documenting of the February 1944 to June of 1945 campaign operations actually begins with another discussion of pre-war status before laying out the situation at Truk in the early war years and touching on the worrying attacks made by approaching American forces against other Japanese possessions. Particular focus is given to the mass carrier mission carried out against the Japanese forces at Kwajalein on 4 December 1943, which would prove to be a valuable learning tool for the operations carried out against Truk two months later. From this point, Lardas examines the US Navy’s Operation Hailstone and follow-up attacks by Task Force 58, the Seventh, Eleventh, Thirteenth, and Twentieth Army Air Forces’ raiding of Truk from March 1944 onwards, and the Royal Navy’s Operation Inmate in mid-June of 1945. Primary emphasis is given to the initial USN actions, as these opening salvos were what did the most damage and reduced Truk to a largely convenient training target. Several maps and diagrams show the approaches of various assaults along with standard tactics such as the repelling of aircraft attacks on surface forces via Combat Air Patrols. The escape of the Japanese Combined Fleet and the retreat of as many ships that could dodge American aircraft amidst the destruction of Japanese aerial forces within these early attacks well-illustrates Lardas’ view that Truk was in fact a self-made “trap” (59). This is further driven home by the documentation of later Army Air Force and Royal Navy practice raids largely ensuring that the possible threat from the remaining airfields was an unviable option for whatever aircraft managed to survive the near-constant assaults. Lardas’ Aftermath and Analysis section condenses much of the previous information into a more succinct eight pages, covering Truk’s surrender 2 September 1945 and post war existence, offering

some additional information and damage statistics to further highlight the effectiveness of the attacks. He rounds out the work with a few paragraphs on surviving airframes related to the Truk campaign.

Pre-Hailstone information on Truk from 1914 to 1939 is covered, if not repeated, in several places throughout the work. If this was reduced to just one location, it would help the work flow more smoothly and free up space within the restrictions of Osprey's format for additional information or photographs. Additionally, having a section at the end of an operation's coverage with statistical information or tables of losses would be an appreciated addition. This would allow for quick referencing of force disparity and loss illustration, further driving home the effectiveness of Allied operations and the dwindling Japanese capabilities as the campaign progressed. Finally, since the Aftermath section discusses the surviving aircraft of the engagements, it is surprising that the various sunken wrecks of Truk only warranted two sentences and no images (86). Given the ongoing efforts to locate airframes in the waters, the renown of some of the shipwrecks, and the looming threat posed by the fuel and munitions carried within, a more detailed discussion would help further illustrate the campaign's lingering presence in the modern day.

Truk 1944-45 is a good introductory work about the various air assaults carried out by American and Commonwealth aircrews across 18 months against a beleaguered Japanese force who expected an altogether different type of enemy attack. Lardas provides solid summary information and important details regarding the involved airframes, plans, and attacks that illustrate the innovative island-hopping technique of aerial reduction that helped Truk morph from a potentially dangerous enemy base into a convenient live-fire training tool. For those interested in the air operations of the late war Pacific and the Japanese defenses of important forward naval anchorages, this text offers one a decent initial exposure to the topic.

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Robert K. Liu. *Naval Ship Models of World War II in 1/1250 and 1/1200 scale: Enhancements, Conversions & Scratch Building*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, www.seaforthpublishing.com, 2021. 160 pp., colour illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-5267-9391-1. (E-book available.)

The making of miniature ship models is a popular hobby and pastime among a select group of enthusiasts, predominantly male, older in age, and with some means to support their interests and proclivities. Commercial companies, trade