

a “supersecret” base on Christmas Island, around 1,000 nautical miles south of Hawaii. The base would furnish Australia-bound shipping its first stepping-stone across the Pacific Ocean.

Outfitting the base involved erecting infrastructure to support 5,000 army troops and refuel ships headed down under. This might sound like workaday routine for any construction corps given that such bodies exist to build things. But the timeline was daunting. Triest exclaims that all design work had to be done “and the equipment accumulated—about twenty thousand tons of it—and loaded on two ships in Quonset Point in two weeks—I repeat in two weeks!” An old German map and a movie that happened to feature the site for the facility were their guides to Christmas Island terrain. The navy lacked expertise on pipelines and tank farms, so project overseers hurriedly reached out to private industry to recruit officer and enlisted specialists. With diligent effort and timely help from higher-ups – Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest King helped the Seabees override bothersome rules and regulations – freighters laden with builders and hardware steamed off for the Pacific by the deadline.

Triest’s account sets the tone for chapters on such topics as how navy underwater demolition teams prepared beaches for US Marine Corps amphibious assaults on island strongholds like Saipan, Tinian, and Okinawa. Salvage officer Rear Admiral William A. Sullivan recounts clearing Manila Harbour of sunken ships and debris strewn about by retreating Japanese occupiers to impede efforts to return the shipping hub to service. There is even an amusing tale from a maintenance officer assigned to drydock the battleship *Iowa* for shafting work at short notice. *Iowa*’s skipper, evidently a cowboy of a shiphandler, pulled into the dock too fast, backed down hard and disturbed the blocks emplaced be-

low to support the battlewagon’s hull once the water drained out. What is a maintenance superintendent to do?

Fleet designers obsess over funding and constructing fighting ships, aircraft, and armaments. Emerson would approve of *The Pacific War Remembered* as history – but this treatise reminds posterity that there is far more to naval warfare than battle. Neglect mundane-seeming capabilities at your peril.

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Stephen L. Moore. *Rain of Steel: Mitscher’s Task Force 58, Ugaki’s Thunder Gods, and the Kamikaze War off Okinawa*. Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, www.usninp.org, 2020. 456 pp., illustrations, notes, glossary, appendix, bibliography, index. US \$39.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-68247-526-3. (E-book reviewed.)

In his book *Rain of Steel*, Stephen L. Moore follows the exploits of Task Force 58 during the last year of the Second World War. While focusing on the kamikaze campaign off Okinawa, he also examines raids on shipping and the destruction of the last remaining elements of the Imperial Japanese Navy. He hits all the high points well known to most students of the period: the attacks on radar picket stations off Okinawa, the tremendous damage done to *USS Franklin*, *USS Laffey*, and the search for and sinking of *Yamato*, and its escorts. He examines the campaign against the kamikaze threat from multiple angles, including the efforts to build, and coordinate effective fighter screens and tactics, as well as the need to attack airfields around Japan, in order to catch planes before they could attack.

For casual students of the events of the last year of the Second World War in the Pacific, this book serves as an

excellent introduction to the naval aspects of the Okinawa campaign. Drawing on extensive first-hand accounts and interviews, much of the book reads like a personal account of events, without being a blow-by-blow account of events. The narrative style of the author, while it may be disconcerting for those looking for a technical analysis of the events, gradually draws the reader in and provides a feeling of what it was like to be in the cockpit of a fighter, chasing a pilot intent on suicide. Rather than addressing the efforts of the entire American fleet, Moore focuses on a single fighter group, only occasionally exploring the actions of other units. With so much going on during the campaign, this singular focus allows readers to identify with a smaller, more relatable group, rather than getting lost in the vast campaign. For readers interested in narrative histories of military conflict, this could prove far more appealing than a more technical analysis. For students interested in more abstract concepts, the book also tackles the question of what does a carrier group do when there are no more enemy ships to sink? Also included are tables of aircraft kill totals, and a glossary of aviation terms and aircraft identification, for readers who may not be familiar with them, making the work far more accessible to those looking for an entry point on the subject.

Readers looking for a detailed analysis of the Japanese side of the campaign may want to look elsewhere. While Japanese sources are referenced throughout the book, there is a definite and intentional American bias. The author does provide Japanese sources for those who want to explore that side of the campaign further. Intentionally or not, Moore tackles one of the larger preconceptions of the Okinawa campaign. While suffering from a lack of experienced pilots at this stage of the war, Japan still possessed both experienced

pilots and effective aircraft at the end of the conflict. Moore indicates that losses were considerable on both sides.

On a minor technical note, the book was reviewed from a PDF file. Readers transferring the file to an E-book reader, and not reading it in a PDF format, may encounter some unusual issues with things like spacing, particularly when dealing with hyphenated words. Some of this, however, may be correctable if the reader can change margin settings, or read it in a PDF format.

The author concludes his work with a brief epilogue concerning what various American pilots did following the Second World War. This provides a wonderful conclusion to the book and reminds the reader that when the fighting was done, many of these men went back to ordinary lives. While not a deep technical analysis, *Rain of Steel* provides something for all students of this period, particularly those wanting to look at the events of the kamikaze campaign and the last year of the Second World War.

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Kristian H. Nielsen and Henry Nielsen. *Camp Century—The Untold Story of America's Secret Military Base under the Greenland Ice*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, www.cup.columbia.edu, 2017. 352 pp., illustrations, notes, index. US \$ 30.00, paper; ISBN 978-0-231-20177-3.

Nicknamed the “City under the Ice,” Camp Century was an installation built and operated by the American army in the ice of the Greenland icecap during the heyday of the Cold War. For the first time, a new book by Danish authors Kristian Nielsen and Henry Nielsen provides a comprehensive, easily accessible, English language account of