one location is of tremendous value for non-specialist and specialist alike. Alan Springer's summary of Gulf of Alaska bird populations and rookeries (Chapter 7), together with specific case studies, is near encyclopedic in coverage, and Tom Weingartner's chapter (4) on the physical oceanography of the Gulf is similarly outstanding. Ted Cooney's treatment of biological processes (Chapter 5) is a concise distillation of the work of many individuals and studies over the years. Charles Peterson (Chapter 6) reviews the benthos and nearshore communities from an ecological perspective that is different in tone from the process-based approaches used elsewhere in the volume, but this is also a very effective summary of the state of the knowledge on species interactions and biodiversity in the Gulf of Alaska.

While comprehensive understanding of the Gulf of Alaska system is clearly still a work in progress, the authors and editor of this volume are to be commended on the quality, value, and significance of this contribution. I have no hesitation in recommending this volume for purchase by academic and public libraries and by individuals with specific interests in the Gulf of Alaska as an ecological system.

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LIFE AND DEATH ON THE GREENLAND PATROL, 1942. By THADDEUS D. NOVAK. Edited by P.J. CAPELOTTI. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005. ISBN 0-8130-2912-0, 206 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, maps, index, bib. Hardbound. US$59.95.

In May 1940 Eske Brun, the Danish Governor of Greenland, requested protection from the United States against Germany. Anxious to safeguard its supply of cryolite (essential for the manufacture of aluminum) from the mine at Ivigtut, the United States government readily agreed and dispatched James Penfield, the first United States consul to Greenland. Then, with the signing of the Lend-Lease Act with the United Kingdom early in 1941, planning began for ferrying fighter and bomber aircraft to Britain from the United States via airfields in the Canadian Arctic, Greenland, and Iceland. As a result, early in the summer of 1941 the South Greenland Survey Expedition was dispatched to Greenland on board USS *Cayuga* to locate sites for airstrips and for radio and weather stations. A total of 13 potential sites for airstrips were identified, those in West Greenland being designated by the code name Bluie West (BW) and those in east Greenland by Bluie East (BE). After the United States entered the war in December 1941, the pace of preparing for and building the various airstrips accelerated. In this connection, the United States Coast Guard purchased 10 relatively new, wooden New England trawlers of 120 to 225 tons that would escort freighters and haul equipment and supplies needed to construct and maintain the airstrips and weather stations. These trawlers constituted what was termed the Greenland Patrol.

Assigned to one of the vessels (*Nanok*, WYP 169, formerly the trawler *North Star*), was Leading Seaman First Class Thaddeus D. Novak, the author of this book. The Coast Guard strictly forbade any of its officers or men to keep diaries during World War II, but Novak claimed to be unaware of this prohibition and kept a detailed journal of his experiences on the Greenland Patrol for the period June–December 1942. The diary accidentally came to the notice of *Nanok*'s Chief Mate, George Talledo, towards the end of the voyage; overlooking what was a serious infraction, Talledo told Novak to take the diary home and hide it till after the end of the war. Fortunately, in 1994 the diary found its way to the Coast Guard Historian's Office, where the editor, P.J. Capelotti, a senior enlisted member in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve and head of a small staff at that office, spotted it and recognized its value as the only surviving journal kept by an enlisted man who took part in the Greenland Patrol.

Under the command of Magnus Magnusson, an Icelander with vast experience of commanding trawlers in northern waters, and previously Danish consul in Boston, *Nanok* put to sea from that city, with two officers and 21 men on board, on 12 July 1942. At Portland she joined a convoy, which sailed from there four days later, bound for Greenland. She reached Narsarssuak (Bluie West 1) on 27 July.

Thereafter *Nanok* spent the rest of the summer and the fall hauling freight (and sometimes towing a scow) up and down the Greenland coast to and from such locations as Bluie West 3 (Marrak Point, near Fiskenaesset, now Qeqertarsuatsiaat), Arsuk, Ivigtut, Julianehåb (now Qaqortok), Bluie West 8 (Søndre Strømfjord, now Kangerlussuaq), Bluie East 2 (Comanche Bay or Pikiutdleq) and Bluie East 1 (Angmagssalik). The freight in most cases was materials and equipment for building airstrips or weather stations or for resupplying these facilities. Inevitably, given the lack of ports, *Nanok*'s crew found themselves engaging in some rather unusual tasks, such as watering the ship from rivers or waterfalls. And not surprisingly, given the weather and ice conditions, her trips were not without incident. During a storm on 7 September, while *Nanok* was towing a scow round Kap Farvel, bound for Comanche Bay, the scow went adrift, and the towing hawser became wrapped around *Nanok*'s propeller shaft. Once the hawser had been disengaged (with considerable difficulty) from the shaft, and the errant scow had been located, three men boarded the scow, but *Nanok* then lost sight of it again. When the weather cleared, the scow was found again, with the three men safe and well. On another occasion, on 30 October, off Angmagssalik, a large iceberg that *Nanok* was nudging aside rolled over onto the ship's bow, pushing the bow under water. Fortunately it

did so quite slowly; both ship and berg bobbed up again, without any serious damage.

In company with her sister ship, *Natsek*, *Nanok* sailed from Narsarssuaq (Bluie West 1) for home on 14 December and almost immediately ran into foul weather and heavy seas. As ice began to build up on her superstructure, Captain Magnusson set the men to chopping the ice away, working in two-hour shifts (this being the maximum period they could endure on deck). The foul weather and severe icing continued for almost a week as the ship fought her way south along the Labrador coast, through the Strait of Belle Isle and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. At times *Natsek* was in sight, but there was no sign that her men were chopping ice, whereas *Nanok*'s men were chopping ice constantly. *Natsek* was last seen in the Strait of Belle Isle. With her entire superstructure covered with several feet of ice despite the crew's best efforts, *Nanok* became unstable and steadily developed a starboard list, until she was almost on her beam ends, still with gale-force winds and heavy seas. Water and spray flooding down the smokestack temporarily killed the diesel engine, but the engineers managed to start it again. A deck cargo of drums of fuel was washed overboard; the anemometer jammed and blew away; the radio antenna was carried away; and most of the paint was scoured by waves and ice from the ship's sides. Novak's firsthand account of a vessel coming within an ace of capsizing under the weight of ice build-up during a winter gale has rarely, if ever, been matched. His relief at surviving the experience was tempered by the fact that *Natsek* was lost with all hands, some of them his friends, near Belle Isle, presumably having capsized under the weight of ice build-up.

Novak's diary entries generally focus on less dramatic topics: sea-sickness, mail or the lack of it, missing his new bride, homesickness, endless gambling, and his desire to achieve promotion to coxswain. A striking feature is his pen-sketches of many of his shipmates. At the same time his entries sometimes display quite extensive and accurate knowledge of history: his awareness of the significance of the historic sites of Boston, for example (p. 8), or his knowledge of the history of Greenland (p. 42–43) are quite impressive. His descriptions of Greenland settlements and Greenlanders, or of the design and equipment of a kayak, are the product of a perceptive eye and an enquiring mind. And in places, his descriptions of natural phenomena, for example, his descriptions of snowflakes (p. 98), aurora (p. 99) and icebergs (p. 108), even verge on the lyrical. At other times his pronouncements are quite philosophical (if somewhat crude), for example (p. 52): "It seems the world always has more than enough pricks to go around."

In short, Capelotti is to be warmly commended for presenting to the public a fascinating journal of a little-known aspect of World War II in the Arctic, one that displays quite a surprising depth of insight and perception. The only very minor fault is that the solitary map of Greenland shows only a very few of the place-names mentioned in the text; moreover, it identifies Julianehåb as Bluie West I, whereas that designation was in fact applied to Narsarssuaq. But this is a very minor shortcoming, when set against the value of Nowak's journal as a unique document of Arctic history.

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THE LAST EXPLORER: HUBERT WILKINS – AUSTRALIA'S UNKNOWN HERO. By SIMON NASHT. Sydney, Australia: Hodder, 2005. ISBN 0 7336 1831 6. 346 p., maps, b&w illus., index, notes. Softbound. Austral. $35.00. (North American and British publication by Arcade Publishing (New York) and Birlinn Limited (Edinburgh) in fall 2006.)

It is ironic that a man who is described on the book's cover as "the most remarkable explorer of the twentieth century" is so little known today, either in Australia, where he was born, or in Canada, where he developed his abilities as an explorer. George Hubert Wilkins is only slightly better known in the United States where, as Sir Hubert Wilkins, he lived the latter part of his life.

Two biographies of Wilkins were published in the early 1960s, shortly after his death. The earlier one, by John Grierson, was reasonably good as far as it went. The other, by popular American radio broadcaster Lowell Thomas, was both informative and entertaining, but included a number of outrageously fictional passages. It was most gratifying, therefore, to find that a well-written biography of Wilkins, with much new factual information about his activities, has recently been published. Its author, Australian Simon Nasht, is an experienced documentary filmmaker, journalist, and former foreign correspondent.

The first two chapters tell of Wilkins's formative years—his growing up on his father's outback sheep ranch some 120 miles north of Adelaide, his home schooling, his qualifying for high school at the age of nine, his early development of responsibility and adventure, and his encounters with aboriginal people. After his father sold the ranch and moved his family to Adelaide in 1905, Wilkins apprenticed to a mechanical engineer in the mornings, took college classes in the afternoon in both mechanical and electrical engineering, and studied music during the evenings. Curiosity and chance led to his first job, looking after the electrical lighting outfit and projecting moving pictures for a traveling carnival. A year later, in 1908, he went to England and obtained employment as a moving-picture photographer with the Gaumont Company, a leading producer of documentary newsreels. From then until 1913, his filming assignments took him throughout the British Isles, around Europe, and to Canada, the United States, and the Caribbean. He even filmed and reported on a revolution in Spain in 1909 and the Balkan War in 1912. In the