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German Military Aviation

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estimate of size in attacking merchant ships. The convoy runs between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom often consisted of small ships, sailing in ballast. U-boat commanders easily overestimated their tonnage under difficult conditions. In short, Rohwer has stressed that we understand the human element in warfare before we leap to broad conclusions, even about statistical data.

After having examined all reports in detail, Rohwer concludes that there was seldom a wrong report for which there was no reasonable explanation. Most errors were caused by reduced chances for visual observation; a few from the overoptimistic temperament of the observer or from lack of experience. Only very rarely were exaggerations solely the product of a captain's imagination.

In terms of decisionmaking in high command, Rohwer's most interesting conclusion is that Command Headquarters accepted and forwarded, with few exceptions, the unverified data from U-boat commanders. Staff officers failed to use other intelligence sources to examine critically the overestimates. Therefore, they allowed policy and strategy to be formulated on the basis of inflated data.

With Rohwer's remarkable compilation in hand, historians can now move forward. By juxtaposing the original reports with actual successes, one can now begin to evaluate the extent to which overinflated figures affected High Command decisions. Naval historians can look

forward to such new insights and generalizations which Rohwer's long research now makes possible.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF
Naval War College

Homze, Edward L. *German Military Aviation*. New York: Garland, 1984. 244pp. \$39

With *German Military Aviation* Edward L. Homze, already one of the leaders in his field, establishes a claim to be the front runner. This volume is a part of a series titled as *Military History Bibliographies* edited by Robin Higham and Jacob W. Kipp. It covers the literature on the German air arm from the days of Kaiser Wilhelm II down to those of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Homze logically organizes his work along chronological lines. In addition to the mandatory chapters on the great wars, he includes one on the infancy of aviation and another that covers the story after German rearmament began in the fifties. Each of these chapters begins with an authoritative bibliographic essay that demonstrates the erudition of the author that is clear and readable. Official and private works are considered in both the English and German languages, and some French literature is included. Each of these essays closes with some astute recommendations for further research which should be useful for either students at the war colleges or in graduate schools. The treatment is

largely confined to documentary sources and books.

The literature on the *Luftwaffe* has been so massive that one could not hope to treat the periodical writings in the same comprehensive way that the book literature is considered and still remain within one volume. The essays are particularly valuable to a researcher at the beginning of any given study in the field for Homze's complete grasp of his subject gives quick and understandable surveys of the various interpretations that have been placed on the history of the episodes of the German air arm—it makes it possible for the new student to organize his thinking on the subject with far greater ease. At the end of each of the chapters there is a comprehensive listing of the books relevant to that period.

The production work on *German Military Aviation* was carefully done and the mistakes are few and far between. The index is far superior to those usually found in works of this kind and that greatly enhances the value of the book as a research tool. Of course, as Homze himself points out, there is something new published on the *Luftwaffe* every day. Thus, any bibliography would quickly become dated. But *German Military Aviation* is a definitive work that will long hold its value as a research tool. Meanwhile, periodic updates will suffice to enable its owners to work their research gardens with dispatch and confidence.

The purchase of the book is imperative for any library with pretensions in the field of military history; its

acquisition for the personal collections of airpower historians is highly recommended.

DAVID R. METS

Lieutenant Colonel, US Air Force

Burns, Richard Dean and Leitenberg, Milton. *The Wars in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos 1945-1982: A Bibliographic Guide*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio Press, 1984. 290pp. \$58.50

This new, comprehensive bibliographic guide will be of value to both the specialist and the beginner interested in the Vietnam war or—to use the more accurate phrase of the authors—the *wars* in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. A number of other bibliographies and guides have previously appeared but most resemble library catalogues rather than bibliographies. The Burns and Leitenberg's guide is well organized, divided into logical subject chapters (with each chapter arranged into topical subheadings), well indexed, and easy to use. Also included are a number of graphs and tables on subjects ranging from "U.S. Expenditure of Munitions in Indochina" to "A Statistical Portrait of the Vietnam Veteran."

Each chapter contains a general introduction by the authors presenting what they view as the essential issues and problems of the period or subject discussed, together with brief descriptions of what they consider the most important books and articles bearing on those issues. For the most part, the authors' observations are judicious and balanced, although