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## Tiger the Lurp Dog

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boat and destroyer bases thereon. British ships and aircraft failed to drive them from this advantageous position.

In Britain, for lack of a staff, a small group comprised of Winston Churchill, Sir John Fisher, and Sir Arthur Wilson, aided by Henry Oliver, made the decisions. In Germany, following the Battle of the Heligoland Bight, Adm. Friedrich von Ingenohl on the Kaiser's orders kept his High Seas Fleet tethered except for raids on the British east coast by Commander, Scouting Forces, Franz Hipper, in October and December 1914. Though Room 40 decoded German wireless radio intercepts and obtained a fair idea about German intentions. British errors enabled Hipper to escape.

One of Hipper's sorties led to the Battle of the Dogger Bank, 24 January 1915. Goldrick describes the battle in the penultimate chapter, and analyzes the reasons why the British were able to do better than the Germans despite their many errors. Ingenohl was discredited; he had not reduced the strength of the Grand Fleet by attrition tactics. His successor, Adm. Hugo von Pohl, shifted his efforts to a U-boat campaign.

Goldrick concludes, first, that navies must "derive sufficient knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of novel technology during peacetime operations so as to minimize the deficiencies of their equipment and to be able to create realistic strategy and tactics for a possible conflict. Second, navies must develop

systems by which operational experience at all levels can be assessed effectively and rapidly in order to maintain advantages and remove deficiencies in wartime."

Goldrick has obtained more British and German naval records than the official British historians, Corbett and Newbolt, did for their 5-volume *Naval Operations*, published in 1920-1931. He says that his objective is to retell the story they told in their first two volumes but without the official and unofficial constraints under which they labored. Since he prefers not to state where the earlier writers—and also Arthur Marder in *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*—fell short in their analyses and interpretations, he leaves the readers up in the air. He says little about the reaction of neutrals to either British or German attempts to control sea trade, and he shortchanges French naval contributions. While he has provided a fine operational history, he might have included an analysis of the mistakes in Grand Adm. Alfred Tirpitz's prewar assumptions. It was those errors that did much to cause Germany to lose the naval war and, in the end, enabled Allied sea power to strangle German land power.

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Annapolis, Maryland

Miller, Kenneth E. *Tiger the Lurp Dog*.  
Boston: Little, Brown, 1983.  
214pp. \$14.95

*Tiger the Lurp Dog* is not an animal story for children. It is a novella

encapsulating the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP =Lurp) microcosm of the American war in Vietnam. As a war story it is not a latter day "All Quiet on the Western Front." It is a *tranche de vie* cut out of a specialized experience.

As a means of communicating the techniques of Lurp, the book somewhat resembles a remarkable combination of a vivid Army Field Manual with a highly personalized unit history. The author achieves the smell of authenticity in a setting which might have tempted the odor of verisimilitude. There are no heroes, no human heroics and no real point or message. Perhaps the one dimensional result is a significant accomplishment.

In its tightly controlled narrowness, there is a strong resemblance to a prison novel. The young airborne troopers emulate their role model "lifer" NCO leaders, and all are subordinated to the techniques—the tricks of the trade. The language and setting are well done and set the stage for a predictable drama; but when it is over there is no sense of tragedy nor residual sadness. Two Lurp teams get wiped out in the same nasty jungle area and are never heard from again.

Tiger, ". . . the sneakiest little thief and coward in the world . . .," is the vehicle threading the various parts of the story together. It is always risky to attribute human thoughts and actions to dumb animals. However, to challenge the dog is pointless: he is a necessary ingredient. One entire chapter uses the dog

as a means of describing a Special Forces Camp on the Laotian border. The high mark of the chapter is Tiger getting into the maze of minefields, punji stakes, claymores, etc., and then working himself out while various characters—Americans, Vietnamese, Chinese Nungs, Cambodians—react. The low position of dogs in Vietnamese society counters any romantic thought that his safe return through a seemingly impenetrable defense perimeter represents an apocryphal portrait of Vietnamese survivability.

This short novel is in many respects a reflection of the total war—remote, exotic and lacking in clearly defined purpose. Whether this is art or just making the best of the situation, the author writes with skill. Reading the book is a help in understanding the Lurp operation. It is sometimes funny; it is not light reading.

The flaw as well as the strength is in the narrow drawing of the scene. It is strictly a soldier's story. Officers are an embarrassment, and when inserted are (like the civilians) caricatures—negative or antagonistic outsiders. The enlisted people, particularly the young, seem to have learned how to kill and to die; not how to live. Perhaps there ought to be a worldwide school for this purpose that is as proficient as the many educations in the techniques of death. It always seems a shame to see men so alienated that all they have to live for is a chance to die well.

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