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Nuclear Navy 1946-1962

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Hewlett, Richard G. and Duncan, Francis. *Nuclear Navy 1946-1962*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, 477pp.

In this continuation of their previous work on the history of the nuclear age, Richard Hewlett, the chief historian for the Atomic Energy Commission, and his assistant have sought to accomplish four objectives. First, they have detailed the initial efforts in the application of atomic energy to such nondestructive processes as the design and construction of nuclear reactors for naval propulsion. Second, they have—with no small measure of admiration—elucidated Hyman G. Rickover's style, methods, and contributions to the development of nuclear power both for the Navy and for general peacetime use. (The Rickover group developed the first great electricity-producing reactor at Shippingport, Pennsylvania.) Third, they have examined the changing organizational relationships between the Atomic Energy Commission and the Navy (and among Navy codes and bureaus) and, perhaps even more interestingly, between Government agencies and private industries. Lastly, the authors have attempted briefly to assess the importance of nuclear power for postwar naval requirements, tactics, strategy, and consequently for national security in the nuclear age.

In their effort to accomplish all of these objectives, the book has become overly complex in organization as well as in theme and the goals have been only partially achieved. The authors apparently intended to tell a grand story, an epic in the history of science, wherein individuality and the human spirit weighed mightily in the forward march of technology. Unfortunately, this aspect of the book has fallen short of the mark. This shortcoming can be attributed to an overlap of the first two themes, the coming of practical nuclear power and the work of Rickover. Due to the fact that security restrictions

limited the technology which could be discussed and because the authors have failed to capture the drama and excitement which characterizes the best writing in the history of science, the first theme is treated much less successfully than the second.

The treatment of the third theme, that of organizational relationships within the Government and between the Government and business, is a substantial improvement over the first two. Indeed, this section may well be a pioneer account of the development of this important component of the military-industrial complex.

The weakest portion of the book is undoubtedly the authors' treatment of the fourth theme, implications of nuclear power for postwar naval tactics, strategy, missions, and force structure. The opening chapters on control of the sea and the evaluations of nuclear naval power later in the book are inadequate.

Even so, the book has other features that are definitely worth noting. It was, of course, sponsored by the Atomic Energy Commission and its authors had privileged access to material that will remain closed to others for some years. That access alone will make it a valuable source of reference for many writers. Many details of Rickover's operations contained in the book will fascinate military professionals and buffs alike. And, finally, the authors' account of the developing nuclear navy, especially the submarine fleet, has much narrative information which most military and academic readers will find instructive.

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Lucas, William A. and Dawson, Raymond H. *The Organizational Politics of Defense*. Occasional Paper No. 2. Pittsburgh: International Studies Association, 1974. 131pp.

In many respects the history of the Department of Defense since its incep-