

New Books Highlight Naval Aviation

By RICHARD R. BURGESS, Managing Editor



BLUE MOON OVER CUBA: Aerial Reconnaissance During the Cuban Missile Crisis

By Capt. William B. Ecker USN (Ret.) and Kenneth V. Jack. Oxford, U.K.: Osprey Publishing, 2012.

287 pp. \$25.95

ISBN: 978-1-78096-071-5

The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 meant high drama for the top levels of the U.S. government, but historical accounts largely have overlooked the courageous photo-reconnaissance pilots of the Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force who — unarmed and unafraid — flew the jets that detected and tracked the progress of the Soviet ballistic-missile deployment in Cuba. The authors, both members of Light Photographic Squadron 62 during the crisis — Ecker was the commanding officer — tell the stories of the pilots and the missions they flew through the flak in their RF-8A Crusader jets to obtain the photographs President John F. Kennedy needed to make the informed decisions needed to avert a nuclear war with the Soviet Union.

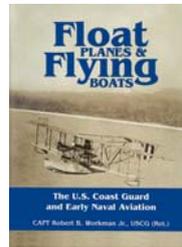


NAVAL AVIATION IN THE KOREAN WAR: Aircraft, Ships and Men

By Warren Thompson. South Yorkshire, England: Pen & Sword Aviation, 2012. 175 pp. \$50.00

ISBN: 978-1-84884-488-9

The grinding air war over Korea during 1950-1953 included daily missions flown against well-defended troops and logistic lines, often at night or in bad weather, that were exceptionally dangerous, especially when they ended with a carrier landing in the Sea of Japan. Naval aviators, many Reservists and World War II veterans, persevered with determination to provide cover for U.N. forces on the ground. The author has dug up anecdotes of the flyers and unpublished photos — including many in full color — of the carrier-based aircraft that enrich this account. The book also is well-stocked with appendices, including lists of carrier deployments, aircraft losses and aerial victories. The significant Marine Corps contribution will be featured in another book.



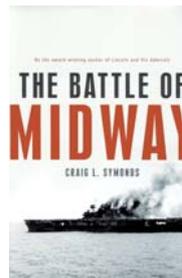
FLOAT PLANES & FLYING BOATS: The U.S. Coast Guard and Early Naval Aviation

By Capt. Robert B. Workman Jr., USCG (Ret.). Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2012.

324 pp. \$41.95

ISBN: 978-1-61251-107-8

Of the three branches of U.S. naval aviation, the Coast Guard is the least chronicled, a situation now much rectified by this new book on the establishment of Coast Guard aviation from 1911 through 1938. The author acknowledges the pioneers of naval aviation, including the first Coast Guard aviator, Elmer Stone, as visionaries who launched new technologies and concepts of operations that established aviation as an integral part of the three services. Aviation proved a natural for search and rescue and maritime law enforcement. The book also describes the aircraft — mostly float planes and flying boats — that equipped the air stations and ships of the Coast Guard.



THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

By Craig L. Symonds. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

452 pp. \$27.95

ISBN: 978-0-19539-793-2

The Battle of Midway in June 1942 continues to fascinate students of naval and aviation history, as more facts are discovered and new perspectives are formed. The battle, fought mostly by aircraft against ships, was a shattering defeat of the Imperial Japanese Navy by a smaller U.S. Navy force supplemented by Marine Corps and Army Air Corps aircraft only six months after the raid on Pearl Harbor. The author, a history professor at the U.S. Naval Academy, incorporates new research, including Japanese records, and corrects some earlier misconceptions about the battle. While he sets the stage for the battle narrative with the events and strategies leading up to the clash, he also tells the stories of the ordinary and extraordinary men who made the victory possible. ■

Seapower does not review works of fiction or self-published books.