

diplomat do not detract from the value of his account as a historical resource. This book will not only fascinate but greatly entertain readers of social, political, commercial and maritime history.

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Gerald A. Meehl. *One Marine's War: A Combat Interpreter's Quest for Humanity in the Pacific*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2012. xviii+244 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$43.95, UK £22.50, cloth; ISBN 978-1-61251-092-7.

A U.S. Marine Corps Japanese language specialist and intelligence officer during the Second World War, Bob Sheeks became the target of Gerald Meehl's interest during a snorkelling expedition in Borneo in 1979. Meehl, a prolific author and a specialist in the American Pacific Campaign during the Second World War, was also a member of the "science team of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007." He has traced Sheeks' tale from his birth in Shanghai in 1922, to his language training at the Navy Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado in 1942-43, and then to his deployment as a Japanese-language officer in island combat with the 2nd Marine Division in the Pacific in 1943. Meehl tells this one Marine's tale from when he began his war-time adventure with a deep hatred for his Japanese adversaries to when he ended his time in the Corps (but not as a Marine) with a greater understanding and appreciation for the sympathy, compassion, and simple humanity that balances all our personalities with the darkest impulses of our most hidden nightmares.

Meehl opens his book with a look at the battle at Saipan in the Western Tropical Pacific in 1944. The Japanese had

dug in, fighting to the death and, to prevent American "victory," killing their own civilian population rather than allowing them to surrender to the Marines. Bob Sheeks was called to the front lines with his radio equipment and megaphones, tasked with the job of convincing the Japanese forces killing their own brethren-in-arms to surrender, if not to save their own lives, then at the very least, to save the lives of the Marines they fought. In 1944, Sheeks shared a generalized perception of the Japanese soldier as a nameless cog in the "Imperial Japanese machinery". His experience with a young Japanese soldier, who was willing to kill his own countrymen in order to prevent further deaths, contradicted everything he had learned about the Japanese. He couldn't see it as a betrayal, although perhaps it was: rather, what he witnessed was an act of humanity, the willingness of a hated enemy to end senseless violence in the interests of everyone on the battlefield. Moreover, it was an incident that shook the very foundation of his opinion of the Japanese that he had held since growing up in Shanghai.

Sheeks was raised in a life of relative luxury as the son of an American business executive. The local presence of the U.S. 4th Marine Regiment prompted him and his brother to dream of becoming Marines, goals they would eventually reach. In downtown Shanghai, the young Sheeks had already been exposed to death: the gang violence that had plagued the area was exacerbated as the Japanese came in and began executing any Chinese civilian who resisted their presence. The grim reality of murder, however, did not hit home for him until, one day, he watched a young boy—a peanut seller—topple out of the back of a truck and dash his head to bits, literally, on the asphalt. As reports of Japanese atrocities became increasingly frequent, the young Bob Sheeks became increasingly

hostile toward the invading Japanese, unable to understand why they were targeting his friends and their families: when, one weekend, his father took him and his brother George to visit the home of some family friends, Bob Sheeks came face-to-face with the nightmare that, until then, he had been divorced from—the Chinese servants of his friends' family had been roasted alive. This coloured his perception of the Japanese for the rest of his youth.

Sheeks' academic career saw him attend Harvard University on a full scholarship while in the Marine Corps Reserve, but once the United States entered the war, his particular linguistic skills became in high demand, and, as a reward for attending the new Japanese language school at Berkeley, he was offered a potential commission as a Marine Corps officer. Meehl follows Sheek's life chronologically from his studies at Berkeley, to combat training at Camp Elliott. Afterwards, in 1943, he spent time in New Zealand and New Caledonia refining his grasp of the Japanese language and working to aid the American war effort. Sheeks saw his first combat at Tarawa, an operation nearly crippled by the ill-conceived (if necessary) use of the deep-keeled Higgins boat and the constant, inevitable miscommunications between the Marines at the front lines and command units farther back. His general orders were to gather intelligence, but this was hampered by the Japanese practice of committing suicide, in one form or another, rather than being captured by the enemy. By the end of the battle, Sheeks had determined that the Japanese had never learned of surrender as a military option, and the cultural barriers that prevented the Japanese from understanding the significance that raised hands or white flags held for the Americans had almost certainly led to many unnecessary deaths.

Meehl tells us of Sheeks' time in Hawaii in 1943-44, and return to the operation at Saipan in 1944 to round out his tale of Sheeks' most formative period as a Marine on the front lines. When Sheeks was sent to Tinian in 1944, he formed "A Human Connection with the Enemy," a phrase appropriately titling Meehl's eighth chapter. The end of the brutal landings at Tinian found Bob Sheeks caught between the "can-do" attitudes of those directing the American efforts and the war-weariness of the Japanese ensconced on the island. A cooperative relationship with Warrant Officer Nakazawa, who helped smooth the cessation of hostilities at Tinian, gave Sheeks an insight into the mentality of a culture he had hated for most of his life, and he was able to negotiate a conference between Colonel Dave Shoup and Nakazawa. Interpreting this conversation forced Sheeks to realize that he had begun to sympathize with the perspectives of the Japanese, while becoming alienated from the "gung-ho" militancy of the American command, who seemed totally uninterested in forging a connection with their Japanese counterparts: "It was a mismatch of minds, perceptions, and beliefs, with no real communication. Language was not the barrier," says Meehl. The final chapter relates the events of a reunion of Japanese Language School recruits in 2002, and summarizes Sheeks' post-war career. Poignantly, Meehl underscores his book with Sheeks' own reflection at the reunion that racism, whether consciously held or merely an unconscious bias ingrained by simple, benign ignorance, combined with an unwillingness or inability to understand one another's cultures, prolonged the war beyond its rational ending point. Of Sheeks, Meehl says: "He was an eyewitness to that great range of human behaviour and had, in the end, found life-affirming humanity in the midst of the brutality of war."

The technical aspects of the book, given its nature, are quite acceptable, and Meehl has done a good job balancing his references with the material at hand: anything more would be excessive and detract from the book's content. *One Marine's War* is an undeniably valuable resource for anyone interested in the Marines' war in the Pacific, whether as a student, an "arm-chair historian," or as a professional. This is one of the few books this reviewer has read that successfully combines popular history, biography and military history in a single volume without making it either too light-hearted or too intense. Meehl's telling of Sheeks' story effectively illustrates the micro- and macro-perspectives of the American Pacific campaign and the cultural difficulties that prolonged it. It is strongly recommended for American war-studies classes as well as for courses on international relations.

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Edward Monroe-Jones and Michael Green (eds.). *The Silent Service in World War II: The Story of the U.S. Navy Submarine Force in the Words of the Men Who Lived It*. Philadelphia, PA: Casemate Publishers, www.casematepublishing.co.uk, 2012. 264 pp., illustrations, index. ISBN 978-1-61200-125-8.

The Battle of the Pacific was really waged at two levels. The most visible one was the surface and air war, the story of carrier battles and dramatic amphibious invasions. Exciting and flashy, it has drawn the attention of scholars and readers for decades. The second war, waged beneath the surface by small submarines against the length and breadth of the Empire of Japan has not received nearly the dramatic attention that the surface war has. Conducted by the "Silent Service," this war

of attrition was fraught with danger and drama. Yet the lives of the men who served in the submarine fleet and their experiences have yet to be truly heard by the masses. With *The Silent Service in World War II: The Story of the U.S. Navy Submarine Force in the Words of the Men Who Lived It* Edward Monroe-Jones and Michael Green have attempted to rectify this, at least in part.

Neither editor is new to military history. Michael Green is a freelance author with 90 books under his belt with an emphasis on military history. Edward Monroe-Jones is himself an ex-submariner who writes on military matters. Together they strive to bring the submarine experience to life for the reader by associating it with the people and their experiences.

Primarily chronological in format, 249 pages of text provide a series of vignettes about individual crew members deployed throughout the fleet spanning the entire period of the Second World War. In each case, the subject is introduced with a short excerpt regarding his rank, the boat he was assigned to and brief one- or two-sentence descriptions of the experience presented to the reader. The result is an interesting taste of the submarine war at all levels. The value of this approach is that the editors are able to feature examples from both the Atlantic and Pacific theatres, as well from every command area. Thus, patrols are sampled from older O and S class submarines as well as from the *Gato*- and *Balao*-class fleet boats. Operations from treacherous Alaskan waters to the South Pacific, from the Sea of Japan to the American east coast are also highlighted.

With all ranks included and such a wide swath of experience sampled, the authors have captured a great deal of the flavour and experience for the reader. They augment this with a glossary of terms, a short introduction presenting various