**PAN AMERICAN CLIPPERS**
The Golden Age of Flying Boats
by James Trautman, Boston Mills Press, 2019, $39.95.

Pan American Clippers is more than merely a history of an airline; it’s an evocation of a bygone era. An entire generation has already grown up without ever having heard of Pan American World Airways, which formerly held pride of place as the premier U.S. carrier serving foreign routes. This book is not so much a history of Pan American, however, as it is a chronicle of the pre–World War II years – the many international routes they pioneered and serviced.

> For those unfamiliar with the Clippers, they were not one specific type of aircraft but a whole series of large, long-range, passenger-carrying flying boats originating from three different manufacturers: Glenn Martin, Sikorsky and Boeing. Each was distinctly different, but all were designed and built specifically for company president Juan Trippe’s rapidly expanding Pan American Airways System. Those Clippers were far more advanced in design than anything operated by the U.S. Navy at the time. Beginning in 1928 with a single route between Key West, Fla., and Havana, Cuba, Pan Am had by WWII expanded its services throughout the Caribbean and South America, as well as across the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Along the way the company established bases that would become of vital strategic importance during the war, including on Midway Atoll and Wake Island in the Pacific.

Meticulously researched and gorgeously illustrated with numerous photographs and period artwork, Pan American Clippers does an excellent job of reminding readers that there was once a time when air travel was very special, and airlines were something considerably more than mere buses with wings.

Robert Guttman

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**CRASH COURSE**
Accidents Don’t Just Happen

On December 28, 1978, a United Airlines DC-8-61 crashed after running out of fuel during an approach to Oregon’s Portland International Airport. In the four decades since then, every airline pilot and knowledge-able aviation enthusiast in the world will tell you exactly what caused that crash. The captain, Malcolm McBroom, ignored the entreaties of his first officer and flight engineer to land immediately, since they knew how rapidly their fuel was disappearing.

But McBroom was pre-occupied with a gear-safe light and didn’t listen to their advice. He had a problem to solve. By the time he had decided there was no solution, it was too late. He had asserted his F/O in charge here captain’s prerogative, and his crew wasn’t assertive enough to correct him.

Out of that tragic situation grew a new policy called Crew Resource Management. Henceforth, captains would consider the advice of their crews, and crew members would be trained in offering it. Cockpit crews would work as teams, not as hierarchical structures. McBroom was through.

Julie Whipple, an excellent writer, is also the daughter of Portland lawyer who was involved in the courtroom tussling that inevitably followed the crash. Whipple had access to court records filled with expert reports, engineering reports, videotapes and company documents, but some of those crash-review boxes revealed to her some surprising facts.

We’ll provide no spoilers, so read this important book to learn how an airline company did much to assure that one of its own airplanes would crash, and why.

McBroom was so unfairly punished.

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**THE BLUE ANGELS**
The U.S. Navy’s Flight Demonstration Team, 1946 to the Present

Since their first public performance in Jacksonville, Fla., on June 15, 1946, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels have been thrilling audiences, promoting naval aviation and demonstrating the capabilities of the aircraft they fly. The Blue Angels—originally known as the “Blue Blasters” and later with the nickname “Fumes” due to the blue smoke—have been in front of millions of people in more than seven decades of exhibition flying. The fast-paced visual tour starts with the Grumman Helicat and runs through descriptions of the Bearcat, Corsair, F-8 Crusader, F-4 Phantom, Skyhawk and Hornet, evincing naval aviation’s technological progress in the post–World War II era.

In the five subsequent chapters the focus shifts to present-day operations, compactly encompassing everything from the support aircraft to pilot selection and training and from accommodating the media to the intricacies of the aerial maneuvers. Most of the images have been drawn from Navy archives and show the team in spectacular formations. The professional photography is supplemented by the author’s own casual airshow snapshots.

The final chapter reports that the Blue Angels expect to take delivery of Boeing’s FA-18E Super Hornet as replacements for the older “C” model Hornets in 2021—in time to begin the team’s 75-year anniversary three years hence. Throughout the book, the author’s fascination with the team and their aura shines through. If you’re not able to see the Blue Angels in person, thumbing through this book is the next best thing.

Philip Handler

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**HOW CARRIERS FOUGHT**
Carrier Operations in World War II
by Lars Celandar, Casemate Publishers, 2018, $34.95.

This book caught my eye, and after getting into it I was quite taken by the general design and presentation of the narrative and how the author found a new approach to what has admittedly become a rather worn out subject. He does have several flaws of omission, but as the review flyer says, it focuses on the “how” not on the “why.”

How Carriers Fought is a much different and well-considered treatment of its subject in an attempt to arrive at lessons for today’s carrier operations. The author, is also the daughter of a veteran of the Korean War who was involved in the carrier community. It may be a case where he should have stopped while he was ahead. Still, How Carriers Fought deserves attention in today’s highly overpopulated market.

Peter Mersky

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Peter Mersky
MISSILE WITH A MAN IN IT


"Victory Through Air Power" is a classic book that has stood the test of time. It provides a "big picture/little picture" perspective of air power and its influence on warfare.

While the book includes a discussion of the political difficulties faced by Allied combatants, it does a great job of highlighting the dedication and resourcefulness of the Resistance factions and the intelligence agencies tasked with helping Allied combatants.

Howard Schnitzler

SOARING TO GLORY


The book begins with testimony from Stewart, who faced the prejudices of the time and was among the very few who would not just stand by and watch, but instead chose to actively resist.

Stewart faced the prejudices of the time, including those of the military, as he pursued a career in civil aviation. Interviews with Stewart from 2017 to 2019 provide a vivid account of his experiences during World War II.

Stewart’s story is one of resilience and courage in the face of adversity. His experiences in the Resistance are a testament to the power of human determination and the importance of individual action in the face of oppression.

Jon Gutman

Any kid who grew up in the late 1950s or 1960s knew about the Lockheed F-104 Starfighter. It was one of the rare fighter aircraft that are so distinctive, so instantly recognizable that they became icons. The F-104 was a true legend in aviation, with the legendary “missile with a man in it” that looked as though it was speeding along at Mach 2 while sitting upright.

And for all the Starfighter’s undeniable wow factor, the large numbers produced and its key role in airpower all over the world, Lockheed’s creation was a troubled aircraft. Of the 2,578 examples built, the company sold only 296 to its original customer, the U.S. Air Force. The remainder were produced under license by foreign companies for use by overseas air forces, the negotiations for which became associated with allegations of bribery and corruption. Beyond that, the F-104 suffered a notoriously high accident rate. To many foreign pilots it became known as the “Widowmaker” and “Flying Coffin.”

Martin W. Bowman’s new book covers not just the initial development and USAF use of the F-104 but also its subsequent refinement, production abroad and operational use by nations other than the USA. The book provides a detailed look at the Starfighter’s history, including its contributions to military aviation and its place in aviation history.

Robert Gutman

CLASSICS

VICTORY THROUGH AIR POWER

by Alexander P. de Seversky, 1942.

Alexander P. de Seversky was the Russian navy’s leading ace of World War I, losing a leg in a plane crash. After emigrating to the United States following the Bolshevik Revolution, de Seversky became one of America’s leading aircraft designers and test pilots of the 1920s and 30s. His many innovations included the first patented for air-to-air refueling (1925) and the first for a gyroscopic stabilized bomb sight (1925). Once he gained a U.S. military commission, he was commissioned as a major in the U.S. Army Air Corps and graduated from the U.S. Military Academy. He was never awarded the Harmon Trophy for outstanding achievement in aeronautics but he did the first for a gyroscopic stabilized bomb sight (1925).

Of his work on the F-104, Seversky said that the aircraft could operate equally well from a carrier deck or a runway. Today, the U.S. Navy’s fleet
to the interval- oper ated equally well from a carrier deck or a runway. The F-104 was widely used by the U.S. military and was manufactured by several countries.

David T. Zabecki

ABBREVIATIONS

AH: Aviation History

REvIEWS

MARCH 2020

ESCAPE FROM PARIS


Escape from Paris tells a poignant and little-known true story of love and resistance during World War II. The 28-year-old from Washington State was a prisoner of the Gestapo behind enemy lines. The city was swarming with German troops, Gestapo and Abwehr. (military intelligence) agents, and collaborators. But Cornwall was provided shelter by the brave and clever Moore family in their two-story house on Georges, Denver and their 22-year-old daughter. Yvette. Cornwall and the pretty and charming Yvette very quickly fell in love. Cornwall was soon married and moved to Paris. Cornwall B-17 was downed in a horrifying incident: A German Focke-Wulf Fw-190’s “blazing fuselage slammed into the Fortress’s left wing.” Nine men on board were killed, but Cornwall survived and returned to Britain. After the war, Cornwall assisted in the prosecution of Nazi war criminals and contributed to the establishment of the International Military Tribunal.

Jon Gutman

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