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Richard Hough

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#17379642 in Books 1999-05 Original language: English #File Name: 0756779626304 pages | File size: 39.Mb

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war) of 1905 and concluding with the battle for the Philippines of 1944, and has told their stories succinctly (chapters range from 10 to 38 pages; the text of the book is only 282 pages). Some maps are provided, where the author judged the complexity of the battle warrants, and there is a select, chapter-by-chapter bibliography. My complaints are that more maps might well have been provided (e.g., no map for the battle of Midway), that the selection of illustrations is meager and inadequate, and that various errors bespeak careless preparation. Particularly in the last quarter of the book there are some silly and typographical errors that indicate a serious failure to proofread; a few of them are glaring, even egregious, but obvious (e.g., 7 May on p. 223 should read 7 June; From their base at Rabaul, the United States reinforced. . . on p. 227 should read Japan instead of US; Admiral Halsey on p. 243 should read Admiral Nimitz; Admiral Clifton Spruance on p. 267 should read Raymond Spruance). Strengths are that Hough was a good choice to write a book of this type: the writing is polished, spare, and lean; Hough is adept at painting a vivid picture with a few deft, broad strokes, at conveying much in little space. The narration of the battles unfolding is convincing yet economical, the writing colorful and incisive, with an eye for the telling detail, whether of personal character or physical description. Hough is even-handed and balanced, free from British bias or chauvinism. In several instances the author, a distinguished British naval historian with a number of books in the field to his credit, has personally interviewed survivors of these battles. Perhaps because (unlike the other .com reviewers) I wasn't expecting this book to be what it clearly is not, I found it highly readable and informative, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. So take the negative reviews here with a grain of salt. And for anyone interested, there are full, dramatic, memorable accounts of the battles of Midway and Leyte Gulf in Herman Wouk's *War and Remembrance*. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Good Read, Informative and Well Written By David A. Kemp I've read the preceding reviews here of this book, and they give this book a bum rap, but I think they miss the point. You don't criticize an apple for failing to be an orange. This book is not, and does not pretend to be, a heavyweight, exhaustive, scholarly treatment for naval professionals and buffs. 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The major naval powers -- Britain, America, Russia, and Japan -- have all played a part in the theater of war at sea over the last one hundred years. Naval fighting has always been a rapidly developing affair, and in no century have changes been so swift and fundamental. This book is a detailed account of the bloody and tragic battles that took place and of the shifting pattern in the status of the naval powers, sometimes masking its effect on our history today. In 1905, when this book begins, the first major engagement between ironclad fleets -- the Battle of Tsu-Shima -- took place in the Far East and decided the outcome of the Russo-Japanese war in Japan's favor. What follows are the mighty sea battles of our century, graphically reconstructed for the reader. Victories, defeats, and mutinies at sea, from the battle with the *Bismarck* to the battles of Midway and Guadalcanal, are all recorded in sometimes horrific detail. This is a moving testament to battles the likes of which changed the world.

From Library Journal Distinguished naval historian and biographer Hough has chosen 13 naval battles of the 20th century for analysis and discussion of their place in history. Beginning with Tsu-Shima, 1905, in which the Japanese decisively defeated the Russians, he proceeds to investigate 12 additional engagements, eight of which involve Britain and three the United States; one other is Russo-Japanese. Why the author considers Bogger Bands, River Plate, Bismarck Battle, and North Cape important is not apparent, as these battles had no real effect on the conduct of World Wars I and II. Hough, being English, has every right to emphasize the Royal Navy, but why not include the Coral Sea, Marianas, and Okinawa, all of which had great impact on the outcome of World War II? Clear and concise, this book is suitable for readers who have little or no background in 20th-century naval history but it is not much more. Recommended for libraries wanting a simplified account of recent naval battles. Stanley L. Itkin, Hillside P.L., New Hyde Park, NY Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Hough is a good storyteller with a refreshing, breezy style." About the Author Richard Hough, the distinguished naval historian, was the author of many acclaimed books in the field, including *The Fleet That Had to Die*, *Admirals in Collision*, *The Great War at Sea: 1914–18*, and *The Longest Battle: The War at Sea 1939–45*. He was the biographer of Mountbatten, and his last biography, *Captain James Cook*, became a world bestseller.