

Charles Burdick, *The Frustrated Raider: The Story of the German Cruiser
Cormoran in World War I.* Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois

University Press, 1979. Pp. x, 11, 119, illustrations, bibliographical notes, index. \$9.95.

This is a book at times for the *cognoscenti*. If you like war stories, heroism, adventure and history then you will still enjoy it, but to empathize with what is going on you will need to know something about the Germans in the Pacific before 1914.

This book does not give that knowledge. The title might confuse the reader to begin with. It is a tale of two ships of the same name, not the *Cormoran* which took part in the Ponape campaign and punitive expeditions in German New Guinea, but of its successor, a Russian ship captured off Tsingtao in the early days of war and hastily converted into a German raider. Chapter 1, "German Colonial and Naval Policies," conveys a very brief background which is adequate for the immediate story but which is silent about relations between colonial authorities and naval ships in Africa and the Pacific, and about contests for authority and resources between the various arms of the German colonial service. The presentation of Germany's colonial possessions is slightly misleading. Samoa is not in the "extreme south" of the Pacific. Madang was not the "major settlement" of German New Guinea. And the question of whether Germany owned "the smallest and least important specks on the map" is a very relative one. Australians and New Zealanders would hardly 'have agreed. And most surprisingly there are no maps, either of Pacific colonies or of the wanderings of the *Cormoran*, in an otherwise technically well-produced book.

Still we have here an action-filled adventure story which begins with the practical problems of running a colonial naval police force with an eye to the outbreak of war, and moves through a good general treatment of Tsingtao and the weaknesses of the outwardly impressive East Asia Squadron to the point at which the new *Cormoran* sets out to add to Germany's glory as a raider. For the *Cormoran*, it stops there. Tsingtao falls, the *Emden* goes on to her glory in the Indian Ocean, Spee's squadron, after an emotional meeting in Majuro, sails off to heroic oblivion in the battle of the Falklands. *Cormoran's* fate was a life of weary tracking and backtracking over the Western Pacific in a desperate and fruitless search for fuel to carry out the action she was designed for. It is a salutary reminder of the limitations of a sea-borne empire and of the logistics necessary for control in peace as well as in war. The nearest *Cormoran* came to action was at Alexishafen, New Guinea, where she was surprised by the arrival of the Australian fleet. But luck and the ineptitude of the Austra-

lians left her undetected. Finally, *Cormoran* makes a sad run for safety to Guam where she is interned.

This opens a new chapter of personal contest between *Cormoran's* commander, Zuckschwerdt, and Guam's naval governor, Maxwell. A gradually worsening situation between Germany and the United States leads ultimately, one day after the outbreak of war between the countries, to the scuttling of the vessel and the death of seven men. Here Burdick's story ends abruptly, perhaps because of fragmentary sources. A very brief bibliographical note at the end talks of the official documentation available for the story but doesn't say where these records are to be found.

Though his style is at times a little wooden and academic, Burdick has worked hard and successfully at telling this interesting tale of a war carried on 12,000 miles from its furnace centre. For her crew, *Cormoran's* campaigns were just as earnest as any on the Western front. And *Cormoran's* lot was in the end a significant one to be given a place in history, for her scuttling in Guam saw the first shots fired between Germany and America, and the first Germans killed in action.

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