

FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

Bedside Anthology

THE CROWDED SKY, by Neville Duke and Edward Lanchberry. Cassell & Co. Our copy from the Technical Book & Magazine Co., 295 Swanston St., Melbourne. Price 39/3.

THE scope of this anthology is that of flying since the earliest balloons, that is, within less than 200 years. There is a brief (and perhaps insufficient) reference to Leonardo da Vinci and a few lines about still earlier and purely mythological flyers. From these beginnings the tale is carried up to current times. It is a good bedside book which one can open anywhere and scarcely be disappointed.

The arrangement is quasi-chronological, but broken from a straight sequence by sub-division into separate sections, such as 'Quest,' 'Ballooning,' 'Airships,' 'Stick and String,' the Wars, the Peace, 'Skyways,' 'Gliding' and 'Test Flying.'

What is included is good. What has been excluded is equally good and in some cases might be considered even better. Where, I think, this anthology lacks balance, is in its over-emphasis on certain aspects or periods of flight at the expense of others. For example, there is no mention of the Schneider Trophy contests, none of the Battle of Britain (although Richard Hillary's moving story surely could have provided something of that period), nothing of the famous British flying boats, the F.2a, F.3 and F.5 of the first world war, the Empire flying boats that carried the un-surcharged empire mails and in modified versions opened the trans-Atlantic services, or of the float-seaplane that circumnavigated Australia piloted by Goble or its sister-plane that Cabral flew across the South Atlantic to St. Paul's Rock. Instead we have but two marine aircraft, the Dornier Wals that were used for Lincoln Ellsworth's polar flight and the Lindbergh's American floatplane that snubbed at taking off from Bathurst in a calm. We find included the Pou de Ciel (Flying Flea), but there is never a word of the practical Moths and Avians and Gulls that achieved such wonderful flights about the world in the hands of the Mollisons, Bert

Hinkler, Jean Batten, Smithy and others. There is much about comparatively recent test flying, little about the days before there were parachutes and ejection seats. And one would have thought that the extract from the "Diary of an Unknown Aviator" would have been given under the name of its author, Elliott White Springs who died some three months ago, instead of perpetuating unnecessarily the myth that he was killed in 1918, 20 miles behind the German lines.

Readable, pick-up-able and recommendable as it is, this book might have been a classic in its own right if the selection had been made so that it was a balanced anthology of aviation history. N.M.

Last War Bombers

FAMOUS BOMBERS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, by William Green, MacDonald. Our copy from Technical Book and Magazine Co., 295 Swanston St., Melbourne. 31/9.

LAVISHLY illustrated by half-tone, line and wash drawings covering each type, this book tells the story of 12 bombers: four American, four German, three British and one Italian.

The aircraft dealt with are the Fortress, Liberator, Mitchell, and Marauder; the He III, Ju 87, Ju 88, Do 17; the Wellington, Mosquito, Lancaster; the SM.79.

Information given includes all the variations of each type, and accompanying the wash drawings by G. W. Heumann are detailed statements of the finish and insignia. All the illustrations are in black and white.

As William Green states in his foreword, the number of aircraft included in this volume was restricted by publisher's costs of production deciding his length, and he had to choose which of the many he would make into the few. Although there may be critics of his choice, he has chosen well, and his factual text is sufficiently larded with narrative to prevent the crust of his informative pie from becoming too dry. In a companion volume he will later present other well-known bombers of the same period.

This book will appeal to all who flew in these aircraft, helped to design and build them, or worked on them during operations. It will attract readers, too, in the younger generation who did not know these metallic

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