works on the crossing of the Rhine and the reduction of Ruhr pocket. Here are the accounts of the defeated German populace praying on Easter Sunday 1945 as battle rages around, here are the stories of myriad atrocities committed by both sides in the closing days of war, and most poignantly described by Zumbro is the confusion experienced by Wehrmacht soldiers in the final days, including the overpowering feeling that many didn’t want to be the last to die for a lost cause.

Thus, Zumbro truly succeeds in creating an account of not just the military experience but the human one as well. The balance is perfectly struck. This work is an essential contribution to the literature on the war.

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In the fifteen months of the World War II American strategic bombing offensive against Japan, nearly 150 B-29s were lost to enemy fighters and anti-aircraft fire. Many of the eleven-man bomber crews perished with their aircraft, but hundreds of flyers fell into Japanese hands. A great number were killed by enraged civilians seeking revenge for the devastation of the bombings or for the death in overseas combat of soldier relatives. Many others died at the hands of the Japanese army or were brutalized and tortured during painful interrogation sessions. Well over 200 American airmen are estimated to have been killed by their military captors — some, indeed, even after the official Japanese surrender. Only 362 survivors returned home safely from captivity.

Field of Spears is the dramatic story of one B-29 crew shot down over Japan. Captain Gordon Jordan’s plane was one of five bombers dropping mines on the harbor entrance to the northwest Honshu port of Niigata on the night of 19-20 July 1945. As Jordan turned the plane to leave the area, his navigator made the fatal mistake of choosing a route directly over the center of the city. Before long, Japanese anti-aircraft fire crippled the aircraft. All of the crew except the copilot were able to bail out and reach the ground safely, but three of the flyers were killed by excited, screaming, angry mobs; Japanese soldiers captured the remaining seven.

Tied up and blindfolded, the Americans were held locally, roughly interrogated by kempei-tai officers, and then sent on to Tokyo for further, more brutal kempei-tai questioning. When Japan surrendered on 15 August, the seven were shifted to a nearby prisoner-of-war camp from which they were finally liberated by American forces at the end of the month. All of the men had somehow survived their brief but bitter captivity.

Gregory Hadley, a Professor of English and American Cultural Studies at Niigata University, narrates these harrowing events with skill and percep-
tion. He carefully describes the personal background of the flyers, their training and previous experience, and their individual actions on their final flight. Several photographs taken immediately after their capture lend dramatic emphasis. Hadley also examines wartime life in Niigata and the personalities, behavior, and motives of key local Japanese civilians. His research is extensive: his chapter endnotes include archival and published materials, interviews and correspondence with the American survivors and several of the Japanese, and a number of written Japanese accounts. Some of the Japanese with whom he spoke refused to allow their names to be used, or would not answer questions at all, but Hadley nevertheless elicited an impressive amount of information from these hitherto untapped sources. In the end, *Field of Spears* emerges as a well written, balanced, and, indeed, very sensitive account, a model case study of a B-29 mission over Japan.

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One of the fascinating “what might have been” of World War II is the German development of jet and rocket aircraft and their use in the conflict. *The Jet Race and the Second World War* describes the simultaneous development of the jet engine in Britain and Germany and how the Germans won the race to first fly and first employ jet and rocket aircraft in combat. Author S. Michael Pavelec goes on to discuss the jet’s employment and the tardy Anglo-American response. He states that the Germans achieved success, a judgment based on German firsts, not the impact of these aircraft on the war. The author notes that few of the 1,600 jet and rocket aircraft saw combat and that two thirds of the Me 262s were lost in accidents. (The latter says much about the state of jet technology, German training, and the competence of German airforce (GAF) pilots at this point in the war.) Using secondary sources, he writes that the GAF claimed 446 Allied aircraft destroyed at the cost of 190 Me 262s. As might be expected, this figure is in sharp contrast to the claims of the U.S. Eighth Air Force, the principal opponent of the jets, that its aircraft destroyed 205 jet and rocket fighters for the loss of 69 bombers and fighters. (This again raises the seemingly irresolvable issue of conflicting aerial claims.) Regardless, the newest technology did not win the air war, instead victory was won by overwhelming numbers and (on average) better trained fighter pilots.

Pavelec argues that the lack of key raw materials doomed the GAF jet and rocket aircraft. There are other explanations for the program’s failure, the most convincing of which is its immature technology. Rocket engines lacked endurance and were dangerous to both air and ground crews while