

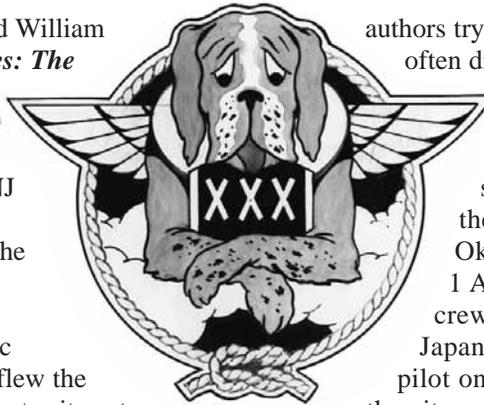
By Cdr. Peter B. Mersky, USNR (Ret.)

Sweet, Donald H., Lee Roy Way and William Bonvillian. *The Forgotten Heroes: The Story of Rescue Squadron VH-3 in World War II*. DoGo Publishing, Eze-Read Books, 76 North Maple Ave., Ridgewood, NJ 07450. 2000. \$25.

This spiral-bound volume tells the little-known story of PBM *Mariner* crews (of which the authors were members) in the Pacific during the last year of WW II, who flew the twin-engined flying boats into hostile territory to rescue downed aircrews. If you are a seaplane veteran or buff, this book is a must.

The half dozen VHs were established in 1944, and their crews had to make do with worn-out aircraft that did not always have the latest engines, weapons or equipment. But with plenty of heart and determination, they recovered nearly 200 aviators, sometimes right from under Japanese guns.

The Forgotten Heroes begins with a series of forewords, prefaces and introductions leading up to the main narrative. The photographs are interesting, often showing crews in informal activities. Sweet and his co-



authors try to include too much in their book, often diverging into other areas, but when they begin to recount operations, the book becomes enjoyable. The best part is the short accounts of rescues, saving flight crews shot down during the intense ground-attack campaign at Okinawa after the initial landings on 1 April 1945. There's the story of one crew who searched unsuccessfully in a Japanese harbor for a reported downed pilot on 8 August 1945. The following day, the city and the harbor—Nagasaki—were incinerated by an atomic bomb!

This section truly brings home how terrible the action was, and that the last six months of the Pacific war were as bloody as any of the other periods. We lost a lot of men and aircraft at Okinawa, but many people were rescued by the VH squadrons and their PBM crews. And that is the main appeal of this book.

Two other related books by Donald Sweet that are worth reading: *The Sailor Aviators, A Tale of the Men of Navy Patrol Bombing Squadron 21 in World War II* (1996, \$20) and *Seaplanes at War* (Celo Valley Books, 1999, \$27).

ANA PHOTO CONTEST

The Association of Naval Aviation's photo contest is open to everyone except the staffs of the ANA, *Wings of Gold* magazine and *Naval Aviation News*. The ONLY requirement is that the subject matter pertain to Naval Aviation. Submissions can be in black and white or color, slides or prints of any dimension. Please include the photographer's complete name and address, and PHOTO CAPTION.

For deadline and submission details call 703-960-2490. Mail photographs to: Association of Naval Aviation, 2550 Huntington Ave., Suite 201, Alexandria VA 22303-1499.

Cash Awards: Bimonthly—\$100. Annual—First, \$350; Second, \$250; Third, \$150.

PH3 Jeff Russell won the bimonthly contest with this unique angle of an HS-4 SH-60 *Seahawk* from *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), framed between the vertical tails of an F-14 *Tomcat*, as the helo transferred ordnance to USNS *Shasta* (AE 33).

