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**‘Tim McCormack and Narrelle Morris (Editors), Law Reports of the Australian War Crimes Trials 1945-1951: Volume 1 – Reports of the Trials: Morotai, Wewak, Labuan and Darwin’**

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Tim McCormack and Narrelle Morris (Editors), *Law Reports of the Australian War Crimes Trials 1945-1951: Volume 1: Reports of the Trials: Morotai, Wewak, Labuan and Darwin* (Brill, 2024), 800pp. Hardcover. €286. ISBN: 978-9-0046-8334-1.

Rarely does one get an opportunity to review a book for which superlatives such as magisterial seem woefully inadequate. This book, *Law Reports of the Australian War Crimes Trials 1945-1951: Volume 1: Reports of the Trials: Morotai, Wewak, Labuan and Darwin* is most certainly the absolute gold standard analysis of the Australian trials of Japanese war criminals after the Second World War. This book, published in 2024, is the deepest analysis of these war crimes cases ever published and, in my opinion, invaluable to both historical and legal scholars alike. My only criticism of this book is the price; at nearly €300, such a work is out of the reach of young and emerging scholars and, in the current financial climate of tertiary institutions, unlikely to find its way into most campus libraries.

This volume explores the war crimes trials conducted by Australia in the aftermath of the Second World War, particularly those war crimes that took place in the south-west Pacific theatres of war. In this post-Second World War period, the Australian government undertook 300 trials, encompassing 952 individuals. These trials were held in the shadow of the more famous Nuremberg trials of Nazis, but for Australia at the time, were more significant than those in Germany. These trials provided an opportunity for Australian authorities to assess the guilt of Japanese troops and officers complicit in some of the most egregious acts of the war.

The book itself is separated into four sections, each focused on the location of one of the Australian courts. It provides a clear and concise analysis of each of the trials and the contexts in which they operated, before providing an in-depth analysis of each individual trial. The level of detail provided for each case is phenomenal and truly gives a full picture of the context of the defendant's actions, the consequence of said actions, as well as the punishments given and precedents established. It truly is the most impressive analysis of these trials ever seen, especially in an area of law not generally covered.

This book is a worthy first step to a planned series covering this important period of legal history. Its depth of analysis, coupled with the thorough use of the original archival documents and trial transcripts, provide readers with an opportunity to understand the immensity and gravity of these proceedings. My only concern, as stated at the beginning of this review, is that the cost for this will prove prohibitive to potential audiences. The feasibility of a softcover version should be explored to provide access to more scholars. This book is far too important a document in Australian history to have limited availability.

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