

Book Reviews

Robert W. Cherny. *Harry Bridges: Labor Radical, Labor Legend*. Urbana, ILL: University of Illinois Press, www.press.uillinois.edu, 2023. xvii+478 pp., illustrations, endnotes, bibliography, index. US \$55.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-252-04474-8. (E-book available.)

On 27 December 1936, Long Beach Police arrested and charged west coast labor leader Harry Bridges for striking and killing Joe Miranda, an eight-year-old boy riding his recently received Christmas present, a new bicycle, down the street. Bridges was on his way to address a mass meeting of striking longshore workers in nearby Wilmington accompanied by John Ring, Arthur Whitehead, and Arthur's wife, who had hosted him for dinner. Why Bridges was driving the Whitehead's automobile and whether alcohol was involved remained unanswered because the three witnesses in the car, not exactly impartial, were quick to blame Miranda and the lack of a working light on the bicycle for the accident. Lawyer Aaron Sapiro secured release of Bridges on a writ of *habeas corpus* with \$2,000 bail and represented the labor leader in the case during meetings with the district attorney and the court that eventually found Bridges not at fault for negligent vehicular homicide. As a mark of his gratitude, Bridges refused to pay a legal bill presented by Sapiro, who successfully sued International Longshore Association (ILA) Local 38-82 for \$750 instead and also launched a \$150,000 libel and slander suit against Bridges for an exchange of letters with a Hollywood boss. Miranda's parents filed a \$50,000 civil suit for damages against Bridges, which was quietly settled out of court for an undisclosed sum in May 1938. Sapiro (maligned for his own known acquaintances and dubious clients) later appeared in July 1939 as a key witness during US government attempts to deport the foreign-born Bridges back to Australia, reflecting no small amount of animosity between the two men. Robert Cherny, a retired history professor from San Francisco State University, neither mentions Miranda by name nor explains fully the

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backstory with Sapiro in a new *Harry Bridges* biography that has been many decades in the making. Still, the book is perhaps the most exhaustive look so far at the charismatic labor leader who dominated the Pacific Coast waterfront for so many decades and oversaw the rise of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) as an independent and militant trade union.

The book is divided into eighteen chapters in roughly chronological order, with several overlapping chapters addressing the question of whether Bridges was ever a card-carrying Communist, legal attempts to deport him, and later modernization and mechanization arrangements to make the transition to containerization at the same time as preserving the existing workforce.

Harry Bridges came from a lower middle class working family in suburban Melbourne and went to sea in his late teens to work as a sailor. He eventually ended up in San Francisco and to support a new wife and her children started work on the docks as a longshoreman. At the time, employment was governed by the shape-up and “Blue Book” rules that favored the bosses and meant an inconsistent existence for most maritime workers. Bridges, like others, joined a growing labor union movement looking for improvements and greater say by workers in the job environment. Taking on a leadership role during a major waterfront strike in 1934 that delivered through binding arbitration union control over dispatching, better working conditions, and increased wages, Bridges was elected head of the Pacific Coast part of the International Longshore Association and after its break-away and affiliation with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. Cherny describes the internal politics within the union, relations with the body representing employers in negotiations and other matters, and government interest in the ILWU and its leader. Bridges was subject to targeted surveillance by J. Edgar Hoover’s Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and because he was not a naturalized American citizen, several attempts to deport him by legal means were tried, first by the immigration wing of the Department of Labor and then by the Department of Justice, assisted by the FBI. Frances Perkins, Franklin Roosevelt’s secretary of labor, defended Bridge’s right to due process, though one learns in an endnote that she gained a low opinion of him after surveillance disclosed an adulterous liaison with another union member’s wife. The Supreme Court gave Bridges a reprieve by deciding in his favor on appeal, and he held the ILWU together through the world war into the period of post-war prosperity when trade and the union membership grew. A last try by government lawyers to brand Bridges a subversive Communist subject to deportation in the highly charged atmosphere of the early Cold War ended in conviction again overturned by the higher court, which released ILWU leaders from prison.

Cherny points out the mutual dislike Bridges had for the Kennedy brothers, John and Robert, who became a Democratic president and attorney

general respectively and carried over settled views that some labor leaders were associated with organized crime, Bridges lumped together with the likes of Jimmy Hoffa of the Teamsters union with whom the ILWU stayed steadfast in support. Much more conservative and less inclined toward radical action in later years, Bridges stage-managed proposals for modernization and mechanization that established a newfound cordiality with waterfront employers and guaranteed stable employment, benefits, and pensions for waterfront workers until a big strike in 1971 demanded by ILWU rank-and-file threatened the whole understanding. Bridges enjoyed good relations with San Francisco's Democratic mayor Joseph Alioto and found himself on several advisory boards and commissions, including the Port of San Francisco. After two failed marriages and messy divorce proceedings, Bridges finally realized lasting love and companionship with Noriko, his third wife of Japanese-American heritage introduced through connections to his representing law firm, and they had a daughter. A simmering feud between Louis Goldblatt and Bridges marred succession at the top ranks of the ILWU and probably delayed a graceful departure long after the labor leader had become interested in other things. Cherny asserts that Bridges remained true to the rank-and-file throughout his life and is remembered with some affection within union ranks, almost to the point of mythology.

The book's strength is the range of primary sources consulted over years of research on the subject. Those include government records held at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park and San Bruno and presidential libraries, union records at the Anne Rand Library at the ILWU headquarters in San Francisco, Bridges private papers held at San Francisco State University, the voluminous redacted FBI file on Bridges released through Freedom to Information request, and related records from visiting research periods in Russia and Australia. Cherny conducted a number of in-person interviews with Bridges and his wife Noriko and drew upon earlier oral history interviews conducted by David Einstein, another would-be biographer who delivered an earlier manuscript unacceptable to Bridges. Bridges boldly claimed that no academic professor could ever truly capture the rank-and-file achievements of the ILWU and his leadership, but it is ironic that Cherny has tried just that, largely through Bridges' own words and liberal quoting of primary source materials in the text. Bridges was always parochial and chauvinistic about his chosen causes and the plight of the working class that unions like the ILWU were meant to address.

Cherny only briefly mentions Canada and developments in the coast-wide ILWU north of the international border. Some attention is given to Alaska and greater consideration to Hawaii. During the long 1935 waterfront strike against the Shipping Federation of British Columbia, Bridges abandoned striking Canadian longshore workers by agreeing to lift a ban on ships from

the province once returning from consultations in Washington, D.C.; besides, the Canadian unions were, in his words, “not ILA.” Subsequent ILA and ILWU organizing drives coordinated from San Francisco and Seattle produced few tangible results. The first ILWU locals were only chartered in Vancouver and New Westminster during 1944 thanks to the efforts of Rosco Craycraft. Jack Berry was the international representative responsible for Canadian affairs up to establishment of the IWLWU Canadian Area, now known as ILWU Canada, in 1959 when Canadian locals were given greater autonomy and control over their finances. Bridges supported the move and candidly told Canadian union officials it was “time to wear big pants.” Like the FBI, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police maintained security files on the ILWU in British Columbia over many decades and referenced Harry Bridges as a possible subversive (enough to deny him entry into Canada on occasion), available in Record Group 146 (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) at Library and Archives Canada. The strikes, regulatory environment, and negotiating parties were different than the American side, though the ILWU in Canada has naturally drawn inspiration from the Bridges leadership style and his earnest belief in the rank-and-file as a democratic union. Canadian delegates regularly attend area and international conventions. Emil Bjarnason’s 1984 25th anniversary retrospective of ILWU Canada still remains useful pending the commissioning of a fuller history by the Canadian ILWU more up-to-date.

Harry Bridges has a relatively high cover price, standard with most academic works, though the eBook is a little more affordable. Reading such a dense book on a screen however presents its own challenges. The use of acronyms in the text is heavy. Endnotes are sometimes inconsistent and often missing key reference information. As a biography, one might have expected more personal details about Harry Bridges instead of the general context of his time in union affairs. Whether Harry Bridges was ever a Communist is really a red herring, and not readily solved by Cherny, despite the most extensive research. His first wife, coached by the FBI, claimed that he was, but lack of surviving documentation and Harry’s own denials leaves the question open, if it really matters. Certainly, as Cherny concludes, Bridges was maybe a fellow traveler with the Communist Party who never abandoned his admiration for the Soviet Union. The book will appeal to readers interested in labor history related to waterfronts and ports, especially in the American context of the Pacific Coast, state persecution and surveillance of prominent trade unionists and trade unions, and ILWU members seeking to learn more about their own union and those that led it in the past.

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Jeffrey R. Cox. *Dark Waters, Starry Skies: The Guadalcanal-Solomons Campaign, March–October 1943*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Books, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2023. 528 pp., illustrations, maps, table, notes, bibliography, index.

The Guadalcanal-Solomons Campaign, fought between March and October 1943, was the first Allied land victory over the Japanese in the Second World War. Beginning with a short description of the less-known *Akikaze* Massacre, the book covers the battles and events from Japan's attempts to recapture Guadalcanal, through the Japanese Operation I-Go, the ambush of Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, and finally, the Allied offensive in New Guinea. At first glance, Cox's book does not appear to have much in common with modern academic publications. It does not have a separate introduction, nor a clear statement regarding a central research question or even a central argument. This, however, does not undermine the value of the book. Its role is to dig deeply into every battle and nearly every moment during this little-known period of the war in the Pacific.

As the first victorious Allied land offensive, the Battle of Guadalcanal was second in importance to the Battle of Midway, which doomed four Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) fleet carriers. Historical attention, however, has focused mostly on the early mid-stage of the campaign, which was the initial landing of American forces and the US Marine Corps' defense against the Japanese garrison. It also included the naval battles off Savo Island. Cox examines what happened after Japan's final attempts to regain the upper hand on the island, and to resupply the troops despite losing air supremacy in daylight. What remains unclear for many readers is how the battle connects to the larger strategic picture of the Pacific War.

Cox's main research involves in-depth narratives covering this forgotten period of the war. He begins with a well-written history of the second half of the Guadalcanal Campaign as Japanese forces tried their best to turn the unfavourable tide on the island. This provides basic knowledge to those who are unfamiliar with events, plus adding context to what happened over the course of the war. He does not offer a strategic discussion of actions on either side but focuses more closely on the people involved, such as Admiral Yamamoto, USN. Admiral William Halsey Jr, and General Douglas MacArthur. But lesser, mid-ranking officers are also included, executing their orders while under pressure from those above them. For example, when narrating the IJN's November landing operation, the author emphasizes the roots and consequences of the action. Before drawing a conclusion, he explains why the Japanese were forced to adopt the inefficient, yet partially-practical "Tokyo Express," using destroyers as fast transport to land the troops before sunset. This was due to

a lack of air supremacy thanks to the loss of their airfield on Guadalcanal and the absence of another intermediate airfield in the region. Faced with such a problem, and unable to undertake the large-scale transportation required using merchant vessels, the Japanese Army and Navy were forced to admit that the Battle of Guadalcanal was hopeless.

Another example demonstrates how the author uses March-October 1943 as a bridge between the struggle in 1942 and the triumph in 1944-45. The underperformance of the USN torpedoes in the early stages of the war is well-known among naval historians, if not by ordinary readers. Cox reveals the torpedoes' inefficiency using the example of USS *Trigger's* wartime patrol during early 1943, where the weapons were either duds or missed their targets. Nevertheless, he argues that even malfunctioning torpedoes could damage IJN ships that had no effective convoy escort system at the time. Before the war, the Japanese Navy's limited number of destroyers meant that only obsolete destroyers like *Akikaze* could be allocated to convoy duty. No matter how the ineffective USN torpedoes were, every destroyer lost left the Imperial Japanese Navy one destroyer short. In the end, Japan could not overcome the losses. The IJN then switched to subchasers as a substitute for destroyer, not because they were more effective, but because they were more affordable and had a shorter construction period.

Although the book does not offer a traditional strategical analysis of Guadalcanal, Cox does include a chapter called "Dominoes," which features his strategical understanding of the battles between March and October 1943. In the opening stages of the Pacific War, Cox argues that the fall of Rabaul and Bougainville were well-planned and executed like a game of dominoes, but somehow did not result in the fall of Guadalcanal. He suggests that the Japanese failed to recognize the need to establish an airfield on Munda to support the Guadalcanal operation, and when they finally realized its importance and tried to correct it, it was too late. The author's insights about the importance of intermediate airfields should cause readers to reconsider the strategic importance of these islands.

This book is not light reading—either physically or subject-wise. It is, however, a book that should be read from the beginning to the end without any interruption. It is recommended for everyone who wants to learn more about the Pacific War in 1943.

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Andrew Cunningham. *A Sailor's Odyssey: The Autobiography of Admiral Andrew Cunningham.* Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2022. (Originally published 1951) 720 pp., illustrations, index. US

\$63.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-39909-295-1. (E-book available.)

As a sailor, then an admiral, and later Viscount Cunningham of Hyndhope, the author takes readers through his role as commander-in-chief Mediterranean during the Second World War. Andrew Browne Cunningham, known as ABC, opens with a relatively brief description of his childhood and upbringing, then quickly moves on to his enlistment in the Royal Navy and subsequent career. Though his level of detail varies depending on the frequency and intensity of the events of which he was part, the author provides an exploration of the full spectrum of his career, from the mundane and ordinary, to the intense and chaotic. It took his fleet to places like Taranto, Matapan, Greece, Malta, and Tobruk and earned him praise from Churchill and Eisenhower. Cunningham's discussion of the role that Royal Navy (RN) sailors played in diplomacy and interaction between nations sheds light on the missions and duties of RN ships beyond the conduct of war. Additionally, his frequent discussions of home and family provide a window into the interaction between life at home and life at sea during both war and peace time, offering readers who may not be interested in the military aspects of his career, something to explore.

The author spends almost as much time discussing the background to events as he does the events themselves, providing context at both the fleet level, and also their subsequent impact on the broader conduct of the Second World War. He was at the conferences in Casablanca and Yalta as well as others, and offers fascinating insights into the meetings and participants such as Churchill and Stalin. He also notes that future readers might want to look elsewhere for in-depth discussions of events where his participation was only peripheral.

Cunningham's work provides a useful resource for those familiar with the naval history of the Second World War, and those exploring those events for the first time. He also provides a window into events that readers more familiar with other campaigns may be lacking. Those who are new to the study of the war in the Mediterranean, and the conduct of the Royal Navy in the Second World War will find this book a good place to start, unhampered by complex discussions of engineering and tactics, except where they are relevant to the events at hand. Though lengthy, the book is well written and accessible, almost conversational, which should appeal to both casual readers as well as academics. It is, however, written from a singular perspective, so that someone requiring more detailed information will need to do their own research.

While interesting, there is nothing new or revolutionary in Cunningham's work, although it was a great success when first published in 1951. He relies on his own recollection of events as he lived them, rather than consulting outside sources for events where he was not present or involved, or later sources that

emerged after his experience. Rather, his is an excellent firsthand account, one sailor's recollection of events that were written several years after they occurred. As with any memory, verification is always a safe bet.

Students wanting to use this in an academic context may find Cunninghams work both useful and frustrating. Though thoroughly indexed, he does not provide a bibliography. In fact, given the author's position and perspective on events, his work is often cited as a reference for the Royal Navy's role the Mediterranean. In it, he mentions the names of specific people, places, and events, leaving readers to pursue aspects of his autobiography in greater detail as they wish. More recent scholarship may contradict or correct the information Cunningham provides, but this is his story as he lived it.

A Sailors Odyssey: The Autobiography of Admiral Andrew Cunningham presents the Second World War at sea and in the Mediterranean through the eyes of a uniquely well-placed individual. It combines a broad overview of the conflict with Cunningham's personal insights into the events discussed, making it an essential contribution to the study of the Royal Navy in Second World War.

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Jingle Davis. *Island Passages: An Illustrated History of Jekyll Island, Georgia*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, www.ugapress.org, 2016. 267 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. US \$37.95, cloth; ISBN: 9-780-8203-4869-8.

The life of an island is inextricably linked with that of the sea surrounding it. *Island Passages* is the tale of Jekyll Island, Georgia.

The coast of southeastern Georgia advanced and retreated over millennia as glaciers and sea levels altered in inverse proportion. Chapter one begins 50,000 years ago and examines geological changes to the present. The ocean ebbed and surged, rivers changed course, fossils were deposited, storms battered, shores eroded and were replenished, marshes drained, and flora and fauna left their marks.

Humans arrive in the second chapter, from nomadic Paleoindians from 12,000 years ago to the landing of Europeans around 1735. Settlements can be located from deposits of oyster shells, shell rings, pottery, and tools. Lifestyles are reflected in food and language.

The third chapter recounts the struggle for empire between Spaniards in Florida and the English settlers in Georgia who arrived at the end of lengthy, trans-Atlantic voyages. Among the most significant was 1735-1736 voyage of the 220-ton *Symond* that brought James Oglethorpe, founder of Georgia, and

brothers John and Charles Wesley, who would later achieve renown as founders of Methodism. Traveling with its sister ship, *London Merchant*, and the armed sloop, *HMS Hawk*, their crossing was typical for the time. Passengers and crew suffered while laying at anchor for weeks on the English coast awaiting favourable weather. Aboard were Moravians from today's Czech Republic, Scots Highlanders, Lutheran Salzburgers, other German speaking refugees, and English middle class as well as slum dwellers. High winds and rough seas encountered during the eight-week transit ended with the navigation of the shoals between St. Simons and Jekyll.

Chapter four focuses on the arrival of the du Bignon family, refugees from Revolutionary France. Their promotion of the plantation production of sea island cotton would influence Jekyll's economy for generations.

The fifth chapter relates the slave trade from Africa to Jekyll. Davis devotes particular attention to the 1858 voyage of *Wanderer*, arguably the last slaver to bring a sizeable number of slaves to the United States. Cruising west African shores for weeks, *Wanderer* loaded perhaps 500 slaves, and managed to evade the African squadron, an American and British naval fleet tasked with indicting the slave trade. Anchoring off Jekyll, the cargo was off-loaded, an event today commemorated by an historical marker and the identifiable descendants of *Wanderer* captives. Among the sidebars is an interesting account of Face Jugs produced by *Wanderer* captives.

Along with the rest of the country, the American Civil War also laid its hand on Jekyll. Defending Confederate troops and guns were withdrawn to other sectors and Union troops occupied the island. Planters retreated with their slaves to mainland locales and returned to rebuild on ruined plantations.

With the return of peace, a new chapter in Jekyll's life began with the founding of the Jekyll Island Club, a luxury hunting club catering to the richest of the rich Northern industrialists. Astors, Goodyears, Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Morgans, Pulitizers, and their peers made Jekyll their winter playground from 1886 until the beginning of the Second World War. I find this to be the most interesting period Jekyll history. Land transportation and docking facilities were established to accommodate yachts of Club members. The photo of the *Corsair* that transported J. P. Morgan to Jekyll hints at the luxury of the age.

The end of the Second World War turned a new page in Jekyll history. Superseded by resorts in Florida and elsewhere, Jekyll Club closed and the island became a political football between proponents and opponents of state purchase to preserve the island's use as a state park. Proponents prevailed, but its operations were sufficiently hampered to prevent the park from becoming a major tourist attraction.

Jekyll is a special place and author Jingle Davis has captured it in a special,

coffee-table book. The text relates history in an informative and entertaining fashion, supplemented by maps and portraits. The index aids helps you find what you think you remember and the bibliography is a guide to further reading. The scenic photos, both historic and contemporary, of land and sea are spectacular and set this tome apart from others. I was given *Island Passages* in preparation for a Jekyll Island vacation. What I read before the departure gave me ideas of what to look for, and post-trip, generated pleasant memories and answered lingering questions. Whether seeking a worthwhile read, or a treat for your guests, *Northern Mariner* readers will be pleased with *Island Passages*.

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Alfred de Quervain. *Across Greenland's Ice Cap: The Remarkable Swiss Scientific Expedition of 1912*. Montreal & Kingston, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, www.mqup.ca, 2022. xxxiv+148 pp., illustrations, index. CDN \$37.95, UK £26.99, cloth; ISBN 978-0-2280-1066-1.

When thinking about crossing Greenland's ice cap, the first name that comes to mind is most certainly Fridthjof Nansen's expedition in 1888. Alfred de Quervain's crossing of the ice cap in 1912 (or the Swiss Scientific Expedition of 1912), on the contrary, is probably known only to a small group of specialized polar historians – despite its equal importance for exploring the inland area of the world's largest island. This group also created an altitude profile along the route of the 640 km traverse of the Greenlandic ice cap from West to East.

For the first time, Martin Hood's new book makes the story of de Quervain's crossing available to an English-speaking readership and provides not only a summary of the events of 1912, but a translation of de Quervain's report on this remarkable Swiss scientific expedition that was critical to establishing Switzerland as a relevant nation for polar research.

While the report on the actual crossing of the ice cap is an informative and important source for all polar historians and historians of science, other historians might find de Quervain's descriptions of the preparation for the crossing and the time spent on Greenland prior to the beginning of the actual traverse of even greater interest. His account provides a unique, first-hand description of everyday life on Greenland at the beginning of the twentieth century, and especially the life of the small group of Danish administrators living on Greenland. Due to the Danish closed-country policy for Greenland, this group of colonial administrators were a closed sociotype. Yet, the existing historiography about Greenland includes very little information about the daily life of this group that was critical for the administration of Greenland

under colonial rule. Thanks to de Quervain, we now have a spotlight that helps to close this historical desideratum.

The description of the actual crossing, while fascinating to a very small group of readers, might be seen by most as yet another account of man versus nature in an extreme, hostile environment. Nevertheless, the highly detailed descriptions of the scientific measurements taken during the crossing, the arrangements of camps, and the experiences with handling Greenlandic sledge-dogs do provide a most valuable resource.

The real gems of the book are the high quality reproductions of the colour photographs taken during the expedition. In its early infancy in 1912, the colour photography provides extremely rare visuals of Greenland that definitely depict a realistic impression of the country and its people when most other photographs were still black and white.

As the book is mainly a translation of de Quervain's original report, there is obviously little to no historical argument in the book, nor does Martin Hood's introduction pose a real analytical argument. Fortunately, a brief chapter written by Andreas Vieli and Martin Lüthi titled: "Alfred de Quervain's Scientific Legacy: An Appraisal" puts the original report by de Quervain into historical context and argues successfully that the expedition was not only a scientific achievement in itself, but needs to be understood as the beginning of Swiss participation in polar research.

The combination of a most interesting historical report with a well written introduction to the subject and a brief, but convincing, historical analytical interpretation of the importance of the expedition for future polar research makes the book worthwhile.

The suggested retail price of CDN \$37.95 is affordable for a book targeting a relatively small readership and the publisher should be lauded for choosing such high quality binding and reproductions of the original colour photographs. Of course, any maritime historian would have hoped for "meatier" sections on the use of maritime transportation for traveling to and in Greenland, but given the fact that the ships were just a tool for de Quervain to reach his destination, a more in depth coverage could not be expected. Nevertheless, the brief sections on the journey to Greenland and the use of ships and boats while working in Greenland provide a relevant insight into the conditions of the only means of connection between Greenland and the rest of the world. De Quervain's work showcases how maritime transport to and in Greenland in the early years of the twentieth century was characterized by a unique combination of modern steam ships, traditional sailing vessels and typical Greenlandic vessels like the kayak, with the latter one often being the fastest means of communication between the different places along the Greenland coast.

The book can be easily recommended to readers with an interest in the

exploration of polar regions and also to everyone with an interest in the history of science around 1900. Maritime historians will appreciate the coexistence and relative value of modern and traditional maritime craft in remote locations like Greenland.

While this book is definitely not recommended to a very broad readership, its value as a source of historical analysis would make it a welcome addition on the bookshelves of the small target audience. For anybody else, it might be an enjoyable, even casual, read given the entertaining qualities of de Quervain's original report that has lost nothing in translation. An armchair traveler might enjoy going back a century or so to a place where only very few will have the chance to actually visit. Despite the dramatic changes going on with the polar ice-cap at large as a consequence of global climate change, the surface of the Greenlandic ice-cap itself has not changed that much since the Swiss expedition of 1912. In fact, this book might even increase our understanding of these global changes by offering modern-day readers a firsthand account of one of the places most affected by climate change.

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James Delgado. *The Curse of the Somers. The Secret History behind the U.S. Navy's Most Infamous Mutiny.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, www.oup.com, 2022. 178 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography. US \$24.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-19-757522-2. (E-book available.)

One sentence in James Delgado's fresh telling of the 1842 mutiny on the brig *Somers* sets this gripping tragedy in perspective. "History would have been very different had [Matthew Calbraith] Perry transferred [Philip] Spencer to *Grampus*." Perry, in the family line of early American naval heroes, could have dispatched Midshipman Spencer, the always-difficult son of John Tyler's Secretary of War and later Treasury, to another ship.

Instead, Perry, commander of the New York Navy Yard, assigned young Spencer, whose head swam with fantasies of pirates that he was only too willing to share with one and all, to *Somers* on what was to be its first operational cruise – to the Africa Station.

To say the moving of Spencer was "political" would be understating the matter. Aboard *North Carolina*, Spencer, already showing open contempt for orders and rank, attacked a ranking officer in a drunken fury. But for his family's influence in Washington and inside the sea service, he could have been cashiered and should have been, rather than shuffled off to another assignment.

Somers also was different from other ships in the fleet. It was to be a "school ship," where the most junior acting midshipman would literally "learn

the ropes” on their way to a naval commission. Spencer was never a model for them to follow on any ship.

Perry and his in-law, Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, a noted travel writer and author of several biographies of naval heroes, were strong proponents of formalizing midshipmen’s education. They held steady to rigorously training the mids in the ways of the sea and the Navy. The helter-skelter manner of hit-and-miss education for the teen-aged mids aboard warships at sea had proved a disgrace that should have ended decades before, but it hadn’t.

Educating and training would-be officers was near the top of the priority list for naval reformers, like Perry and Mackenzie, from the 1830s on. But exactly how that was to be accomplished remained the huge question, debated over and over again and not answered until years after the “curse of the *Somers*” was laid upon the Navy, the executive branch, and the Congress.

Delgado, author of more than 20 books and an acclaimed maritime archaeologist, establishes the range of conflict that played out on that “unlucky ship” with sharply drawn portraits of the leading protagonists, Spencer and Mackenzie.

Coming on stage in this tragedy is Mackenzie’s character, diametrically different from Spencer’s. In the author’s telling, Mackenzie’s intense religiosity, his spirited defense of the Perry family for its role in the War of 1812 and ensuing literary feud with historian and novelist James Fenimore Cooper, were contributing factors in what happened aboard the brig. They certainly were also factors in the public clamor that erupted after the “drumhead” proceeding at sea that condemned Spencer and led to him and two others being hanged for mutiny from the brig’s yardarm.

Despite his years of naval service and the slow movement of promotion in a small US Navy, *Somers* was Mackenzie’s first command at sea. Succinctly put, “*Somers* was essentially supposed to be a school ship, but it was also a functioning warship. Mackenzie would by necessity run *Somers* as a warship than as a floating school,” Delgado writes. To show where education ranked before it sailed, *Somers* did not even carry a schoolmaster aboard, a common enough practice in the navy then for its warships.

Chapter 4, packed with testimony from the official court of inquiry and Mackenzie’s later court-martial, highlights Mackenzie’s command in disturbing detail. All too often, he and his senior officers had overlooked the disciplinary problems that swirled around Spencer’s interactions with crew and the acting midshipmen. Then came the crackdown, floggings, and locking in irons.

The reason: “the discovered list,” carried by Spencer in a razor case, with the names of the “mutineers,” some certain, others leaning, and some not involved. But were those men on Spencer’s list actually plotting to murder

Mackenzie and others who stood in their way of seizing the ship? Would they go to their assigned posts to carry out the mutiny? Was the brig to be a piratical cruiser?

Delgado describes the onboard tension this way in Chapter 5: “*Somers* was now a ship in the full grip of fear by the officers of the men and boys, fear of the officers by the crew, and no one sure of exactly what would happen next.” Nathaniel Currier’s “floating gallows” lithograph of two bodies hanging from *Somers*’ yardarm below an unfurled American flag best illustrates what happened next.

The iconic image of the hangings only opened the door for more anger and controversy from a fistfight in Tyler’s cabinet between Spencer’s father and Navy Secretary, Abel Parker Upshur, through the Navy with courts of this and that reviewing and judging, and writers like Cooper and a press eager to feed an audience on details that “proved” Mackenzie was correct or Spencer a “martyr.”

Delgado leads readers into that vortex of nineteenth-century recrimination that continues to this day. He has skillfully put the facts on the table in *The Curse of the Somers*. Like the author, I now believe “all parties are to blame,” a major change from my first introduction to *Somers* through Cooper’s 1844 pamphlet on Mackenzie’s “despotism” and “unmanly conduct” on the cruise. Spencer was at the centre of the vortex that cursed *Somers*.

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John J. Domagalski. *Escape from Java: The Extraordinary World War II Story of the USS Marblehead*. Barnsley, S. Yorks; Pen & Sword, www.pen-and-sword.com, 2022, ix+310 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$34.95, UK £25.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-52678-441-4.

The prime objective of Imperial Japan’s attacks on American, British, and Dutch possessions in December 1941, was to secure the natural resources of Malaya (now Malaysia) and the Dutch East Indies (DEI – now Indonesia). Those areas were rich in rubber and tin as well as other resources, all of which Japan lacked. Starting in 1940, military officials from Great Britain, the USA, the DEI, Australia, and New Zealand began developing contingency plans to meet the Japanese military threat. For America, the US Navy’s (USN) Asiatic Fleet was based in Manila, in the then-American colony of the Philippines. Part of the Asiatic Fleet was a by-then elderly light cruiser named USS *Marblehead*. John J. Domagalski’s *Escape from Java: The Extraordinary World War II Story of the USS Marblehead* tells the story of this tough ship and its courageous crew in the early days of the Pacific War.

Marblehead was a World War One-era warship design, commissioned in 1924. Its pre-war career saw it in service across the globe, in both the USN's Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, before being assigned to the Asiatic Fleet. In late November 1941, with war imminent, *Marblehead* and its crew were transferred from the Philippines to the DEI island of Tarakan. War broke out on 7 December 1941 (8 December in the Far East, due to the International Date Line) with Japanese attacks on Hong Kong, Malaya, and the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. For a brief time, due to the Japanese need to first neutralize American and British resistance in the Philippines and Malaya, respectively, the Dutch East Indies saw little combat. Inevitably, Japanese forces worked their way south to attack American, British, and Dutch units in DEI. At 10:00 am on 4 February 1942, Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) bombers struck the ships based at Tarakan – *Marblehead* included. Two bombs struck *Marblehead* while a third bomb exploded underwater near the ship's port bow. That bomb opened a large gash in the hull, which should have spelled the end for *Marblehead*.

But the stubborn old ship came from a tough class of cruisers and was manned by an equally stubborn and tough crew; neither the ship nor the men were disposed to let *Marblehead* sink. Despite the onboard fires, the damage to the ship's steering gear, and the casualties caused by the bombing, *Marblehead's* captain, Arthur Robinson, and his executive officer, Commander William Goggins, rallied the crew. Crippled with what-should-have-been fatal damage, *Marblehead* made it to the DEI naval port at Tjilatjap on the island of Java. There, emergency repairs were carried out and *Marblehead's* seriously wounded crewmen were taken to DEI hospitals. After the repairs were affected, the remaining crew took *Marblehead* on what can only be termed "an epic voyage." Captain Robinson and his crew sailed the damaged cruiser across the Indian Ocean, stopping off at Durban, South Africa, for supplies and then Simonstown, South Africa for more supplies and additional repairs. Once those were completed, Robinson and crew pointed *Marblehead* across the South Atlantic. (That was a dangerous trip due to German U-boats and commerce raiders. *Marblehead* would have been an easy target for submarines and was in no condition to take on a German commerce raider in a surface engagement.) Finally, after plowing through the Caribbean and up the American Atlantic Coast (in constant danger from the ubiquitous U-boats), *Marblehead* entered New York Harbour and berthed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on 4 May 1942. It was truly a magnificent feat of seamanship, courage, and toughness. After repairs and upgrading, *Marblehead* returned to active USN service. It saw convoy escort duty in both the North and South Atlantic and provided fire support for the Allied landings in southern France.

The end of World War II saw the end of *Marblehead*. The old ship was

decommissioned in late 1945 and scrapped in 1946. The book also relates the after-careers of several principals – Captain Arthur Robinson, Executive Officer William Goggins, Gunnery Officer Nicholas Van Bergen, and the ship's doctor, Corydon Wassell.

If this book were only about *Marblehead* and its crew, this review's conclusion would merely note that this book is a good read. But this work is actually two books in one. Interspersed with the narrative on *Marblehead* are chapters on the initial stages of the Pacific War and the assault on the DEI. These chapters are accurate and provide good background for *Marblehead's* service Indonesia and the overall military situation in late 1941-early 1942. This is important, as the assault on DEI has been, until recently, one of the least-written about periods of the Pacific War. It, therefore, makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the Pacific War.

Domagalski writes well. The text flows and is augmented by a photograph section showing *Marblehead* both at sea and under repairs, photos of the main characters, and several valuable maps which illustrate the combat theatre as well as *Marblehead's* journey. *Escape from Java* is detailed enough that it will remain a good, brief, reference work on the early Pacific War as well as a good read about a stubborn, tough ship and its equally stubborn, tough, and courageous crew.

Robert L. Shoop
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Donald J. Feltmate. *Building a Better Boat: How the Cape Island Longliner Saved Nova Scotia's Inshore Fishery*. Halifax, N.S.: Nimbus Publishing, www.nimbus.ca, 2023. 250 pp. illustrations, bibliography, notes. CDN \$24.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-77471-158-3.

Building a Better Boat is a volume both sharp in focus and broad in scope. Seeming from the title to be the simple story of the development of a vessel design for a small inshore fishing boat, the history that emerges is a fascinating exploration of the changes in the important Nova Scotia coastal fishery through the twentieth century.

This is an area that has rarely been addressed, as the Atlantic fishery is usually examined from further offshore. For many writers, fish means cod, and cod means the Grand Banks, but little has been written on exploitation of fishery resources closer to the coast. This land-based fishery was threatened early in the twentieth century by rural poverty and lack of capital investment, inadequate fishing technology, and lack of support at both national and provincial levels of government.

Donald J. Feltmate begins by setting the scene, giving a brief outline of the

co-operative movement and how leading individuals in that movement such as Fathers Moses Coady and James Tompkins were able to empower fishing communities to work collectively and to raise awareness at the governmental level of the needs of the fishery. Successes in these areas enabled many fishermen to escape the dominance of debt relationships with local merchants, with the result that they were better able to invest their own collective and individual resources in the fishery. In doing so, they began a new chapter in Atlantic fishing history.

The in-shore fishery up to the 1920s was, to great measure, still dependent on small, shore-launched boats which were sail-powered. Shipyards in Nova Scotia were primarily focused on building larger vessels based on the schooner design for banks fishing. Feltmate traces the emergence of a new type of fishing boat which had originated in the Cape Sable Island area of Nova Scotia about 1905. Known as the Cape Island design, these boats were excellent in-shore working craft with a high bow and broad flat stern which built on the strengths of increasingly powerful engines, initially with locally built marine engines, but later with easily obtainable, modified automobile engines adapted for maritime use. These boats were used for a variety of fisheries, changing their roles with the seasons. A fisherman might haul lobster traps, tend mackerel and herring nets, engage in the near-shore swordfish harvest, and set longlines – all with the same boat. The craft grew to over forty feet with increased beam to improve stability. The move of swordfish stocks and offshore longlining further from the coastal areas, however, meant that the boats' safety and endurance limits were being tested. As well, the larger boats were becoming too large and cumbersome to be effective in the lobster and near-shore ground fishery.

The freshest contribution that Feltmate's volume makes is in its examination of the impact of government programs at the federal and provincial levels. Beginning in 1936, with assistance through the Nova Scotia Fisherman's Loan Board, fishers were able to access funds for new vessel construction and more direct contribution began to flow through the Federal Fishing Vessel Construction Assistance Program in the early 1940s. Other legislation and programs during the period included the Veteran's Land Act and the federal Fisheries Improvement Loans Act. Feltmate looks closely at the policies behind these initiatives and their operational impact and demonstrates how these programs actively contributed to vessel designs.

While the federal and provincial programs were both targeted at increased building of vessels suitable for the developing Nova Scotia fisheries, they were not harmonized and as a result somewhat different vessel designs emerged to take advantage of the strengths and weaknesses of the programs. Using the Cape Island design, smaller multi-purpose boats, locally known as "snapper" boats, were clearly intended for in-shore fisheries and were mostly supported

through provincial programs. Also starting from the Cape Island design, but subject to much more elaborate and detailed design requirements, larger boats took into consideration the needs of the offshore fishery. Rather than operate as day-trip boats, these vessels had to go much further off-shore, sometimes several hundreds of miles from their ports, for periods of up to a week. These boats required larger engines, crew accommodation, increased safety and fishing gear, and needed to be built larger and stronger with watertight bulkheads between compartments. Larger boats were subject to the more robust requirements of the Federal Fishing Vessel Assistance Program. Feltmate has identified only 205 boats, built between 1948 and 1984, as meeting the full requirements of the program. They became known throughout the Nova Scotia fishery as “government approved longliners.” With the passage of time and the evolution of the vessels these craft moved further from the traditional Cape Island design which had been retained more faithfully by the smaller boats. Nevertheless, the longliners still contain hints to their origin.

The only regret after reading the book is that given the importance that Feltmate places on the changes brought by longlining and small vessel design, it is disappointing that he does not provide more information concerning the fishing methods and explanation why longlining required such a change in the design of the craft.

The volume is a surprising and fascinating resource as it explores so many of the elements making up the environment in which a fishery exists. He successfully uses the changing design of the boats to introduce the many elements having an impact on the fishery. The excellent coverage of the Cape Island Longliner is placed in the context of depleted stocks, national and international policy, bureaucratic wrangling, the social context of small port operations, changing capabilities of shipbuilders, the harnessing of community-based resources, the growth of the industry, and the direct connection between the fishers and their boats. This volume is highly recommended.

Harry T. Holman

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John Grehan. *Great Naval Battles of the Pacific War. The Official Admiralty Accounts: Midway, Coral Sea, Java Sea, Guadalcanal and Leyte Gulf.* Barnsley, S. Yorks: Frontline Books, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2022. vi+339 pp., illustrations, indices. UK £25.00, US \$42.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39901-168-6.

Great Naval Battles of the Pacific War is a compilation of British Admiralty accounts of many of what are considered to be the most pivotal battles in the Pacific during the Second World War. In doing so, author Grehan has provided

both those unfamiliar with the events discussed, as well as those who have thoroughly read the history of these events, with a useful reference tool for further research.

Grehan lays out his work in roughly the chronological order in which the battles occurred except for the reports on the Battles of the Java Sea, and the Battle of the Coral Sea. The linear structure allows readers to examine changes in tactics and strategy as they evolved over the course of the war. Each section opens with an examination of the strategic situation before each battle. The admiralty report then describes each specified engagement in a dry, detached, almost clinical manner, but often in disturbing detail. This makes sense given these reports were not written for public consumption, but rather, for internal reading within the Royal Navy, to allow for the examination of any mistakes that were made and how to correct them in the future. These accounts are written immediately after action without the benefit of years of research or hindsight. They also condense the battles into individual chapters, when entire books have since been written on a single aspect of a campaign.

Readers, whether familiar with the battles or not, might occasionally find the lack of context or background somewhat disconcerting, but it must be remembered that they are immediate reports of recent events. The author does not include orders of battle for each engagement or campaign, either because they were not included in the original accounts, or because they are available through a wide range of more contemporary resources. The lack of this information does not make this work any less useful to students, although the author's bibliography of primary source documents may not be readily accessible to those without access to specific archives. The immediacy of the analysis allows readers to explore these events untainted by historical assumptions or preconceptions and lets them draw their own conclusions concerning subsequent actions and outcomes.

Unlike more contemporary histories, the author provides a bit of background at the beginning of each report, but does not mention specific individuals, ships, or places, beyond their immediate role in the battle. Readers looking for a colourful, narrative-driven exploration of these battles might quibble, but anyone interested in the technical application of tactics and strategy, or the movements and actions of individual ships during these engagements will find much to offer here. This is not a book about people. The author includes period maps and diagrams to keep the reader oriented, but these are not particularly detailed maps with clean legends or superfluous details. Included are details that include, in some cases, the types and numbers of munitions expended. These details may not be included in more contemporary accounts, or may be corrected based on what was learned after the fact. Though not included in the main body of the text, the author does provide frequent footnotes

providing clarification, concerning ambiguous subjects, as well as additional reading to provide readers with resources to obtain additional background. The examination of how the details of these events changed as researchers learned more, illustrate that the accounts of these battles, and how they were discussed was somewhat fluid, at the time the initial accounts were being written.

In selecting the battles of Midway, Coral Sea, Java Sea, Guadalcanal, and Leyte Gulf, Grehan uses Admiralty accounts to highlight some of the most pivotal battles in the Pacific during the Second World War. Readers are able to reexamine events without the benefit – or complication – of seventy-five years of subsequent research. The original documents may not be readily accessible to all, thus offering an interesting and fresh look at key events and opportunity for future study. Admiralty reports offer a fresh resource for examining other sea battles and engagements.

Michael Razer
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Leon Hopkins. *The Pirate who Stole Scotland. William Dampier, and the Creation of the United Kingdom.* Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen and Sword, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2023. xi+228 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, US \$49.99, cloth; ISBN 978-1-3990-9-364-4.

Occasionally, a mariner who becomes obscure over time, has a literary rejuvenation. The late- seventeenth century, multi-faceted William Dampier who, under sail, circumnavigated the globe three times fills this bill. He functioned under a huge variety of divergent guises: a common sailor, adventurer, navigator, naturalist, explorer, entrepreneur, schemer, slaver, rogue, ship captain, privateer, pirate, noted author, and respected member of the scientific community. As well, Dampier was likely the most traveled man of this period.

Born in England in 1651, the son of a Somerset tenant farmer, Dampier chose a life at sea, rather than being bonded to the land as an agrarian. By the time he reached his twenties, he had successfully voyaged across the Atlantic to what is now the Canadian maritime provinces, and then south to the West Indies, at a time when ships had difficulty making long journeys and returning with a healthy crew.

William Dampier was a brutal man with copious character flaws. He often appeared without empathy for his fellow voyagers, yet as a studious chronicler, he was unusually sensitive to his environment's ecosystem. Dampier was also a seventeenth-century huckster. Along with some shady cohorts, he managed to persuade influential wealthy men to underwrite reckless and what proved to be futile merchant ventures. An arrogant leader, Dampier failed to gain the

respect and deference of many of those under his command. He was intolerant of those whom he considered fools and was quick to display a fierce violent temper. Too volatile to successfully command a ship, he, nevertheless, had a good reputation as a navigator. Therefore, he was asked to join several expeditions because of his knowledge of waters that would likely be quite lucrative.

Upon return from his first Atlantic foray, he enlisted in the Royal Navy during the Third Dutch War, fought at two battles of Schooneveld, but became incapacitated. Upon his recovery, he sailed for Jamaica and found employment as a logwood cutter in the Bay of Campeachy. While there, working alongside many other adventurers, he discovered the potential for riches to be made as a British privateer. Dampier started out preying upon Spanish ships, but later this endeavour evolved into outright criminal piracy. He and a small band of fellow buccaneers crossed the Isthmus of Darien into the Pacific to attack and capture Spanish warships and ravage coastal Spanish settlements in Peru. Recrossing the Isthmus, he continued to make largely unsuccessful raids on its Atlantic side in the Gulf of Mexico. Dampier finally set out on a piratical voyage through the South Pacific, a trip that would eventually take him around the world. During this time, he diligently kept a journal that he wax-sealed in the hollow of large piece of bamboo. This was the basis of his subsequent book titled *A New Voyage Round the World*. This work had an impact in England and has been reprinted at intervals ever since. At the time (1697), it was not particularly notable for the actual count of his voyages, but more for his observations on the winds and tides as well as the flora and fauna of the places he visited. The book also recounted the voyage's hardship, of starving men, drunkenness and general debauchery that occurred upon several South Pacific Islands. He and some of his crew managed to briefly land at China, the Philippines, the so-called Spice Island, Nicobar Islands and, most important, New Holland (the Australian mainland). The recounting of these often-disparate adventures was sometimes confusing, usually exciting, and frequently disturbing. The erstwhile buccaneer returned to England in 1691, completing his first global circumnavigation and managing to avoid being punished for his many acts of piracy. The penalty for piracy was being hanged by a short rope producing slow strangulation. The body was then left by the water's edge to be washed by three successive tides, then tarred and subsequently hung by chains to decompose for all to see, a gruesome warning to all who were tempted to espouse a pirate's life.

Dampier's book brought him to the notice of the British Admiralty. In 1699, he was given command of HMS *Roebuck* for an exploration voyage around Australia. He surveyed much of the west coast of the continent, then sailed for Timor and New Guinea. Dampier's many character flaws inevitably

led his crew to mutiny, largely because of his harsh treatment of them. He managed to make his way back to England but in 1701 was court martialled for his behaviour on board *Roebuck*. Convicted, he was fined his entire pay for that voyage and was declared unfit for further employment in the Royal Navy.

Although deemed deficient in command leadership qualities, Dampier's reputation as a navigator was exceptional. In 1703, he joined an expedition of two ships for a privateering voyage in the Pacific. Inexplicably, he was given command of the small ship *St. George*. As one might have predicted, the voyage proved to be disastrous because of his autocratic behaviour toward his officers. He was also quite indecisive regarding attacking possible targets where the rewards might have been considerable. This led to another mutiny, leaving Dampier with a skeleton crew. *St. George* ultimately foundered in the Gulf of Panama, but Dampier returned to Britain in 1707 in small Spanish ship they were able to capture. Eventually the two ships parted, and Dampier managed to bring his vessel back to the East Indies by way of the Cape of Good Hope. Completion of Dampier's second voyage around the world brought to life the story of one of his former shipmates, Alexander Selkirk, who had been marooned on Juan Fernandez Island. The account inspired Daniel Defoe to write the novel *Robinson Crusoe*. Dampier's extraordinary voyages were later edited by poet and writer John Masefield in 1906.

Shortly after his return, Dampier settled on another privateering voyage to the Pacific, not in command this time, but as a navigator. This was a financial success, and he returned to England in 1711 having completed three circumnavigations of the globe.

Alongside Dampier's extraordinary adventures, author Hopkins concurrently interjects a history of the Scottish throne, and its relationship with Britain, particularly in the second part of the book. Dampier's frequent involvement in largely unsuccessful schemes included one with colourful coconspirator "doctor" Lionel Wafer, who cropped up in the narrative time and time again. The most notable and consequential scheme involved Dampier and William Patterson in an ill-conceived plan to develop and exploit the resources of the Isthmus of Darien. Instead of making Scotland a wealthy, independent nation, the plan proved to be a financial disaster. In order to survive, Scotland was forced to form an alliance with Britain, but basically in a subservient relationship.

The Pirate Who Stole Scotland adeptly recounts the journeys and unlikely escapades of a fascinating author-seafarer who has again become rather obscure in maritime history. For a non-British reader, the details of the religious and royal power struggles of seventeenth-century Scotland was illuminating, but to put it bluntly, a dry and sometimes a confusing read. Still Leon Hopkin's

admirable book exhumes a fascinating, largely forgotten story. It is an excellent contribution to maritime history literature.

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John Knight. *The Magnetism of Antarctica—The Ross Expedition 1839-1843*. Caithness, UK: Whittles Publishing, www.whittlespublishing.com, 2023. 256 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. UK £18.99, paper; ISBN 978-1-84995-501-0.

The historiography of Antarctic expeditions includes an abundance of scholarly publications on the so-called heroic age of Antarctic exploration, yet is surprisingly limited when it comes to any expedition that set sail towards the Southern Ocean and Antarctica prior to the last decades of the nineteenth century. Therefore, John Knight's new book on James Clark Ross' and Francis Crozier's 1839-1843 expedition closes a substantial gap in the historiography of early Antarctic research and exploration.

Moreover, the book does not limit itself to a traditional historical report on the expedition but provides carefully researched biographies of the members of the expedition and, thus, helps explain who explored those parts of the Southern Ocean that today still carry the names of Ross and Crozier. Finally, with the Ross/Crozier expedition of 1839-43 being the first expedition of the Royal Navy to this part of the globe since James Cook circumnavigated Antarctica seventy years earlier and the last prior to the heroic age, it helps us understand why the Royal Navy did not engage more actively in Antarctic research throughout the nineteenth century.

Divided into three main sections, Knight's book opens with a carefully researched history of Ross' entire expedition as well as its aims and goals: namely, research into the magnetic field of the Earth and its effects on compasses. Knight follows Ross and Crozier from Madeira to St. Helena, Cape Town, Kerguelen Island, New Zealand, Australia, the Falkland Islands, the Ross Sea and the Erebus and Terror volcanoes in Antarctica, and deep into the Weddell Sea. He describes clearly what it meant to explore these areas with two, comparably small, wooden sailing ships without any auxiliary engines. For every reader fortunate enough to know these waters firsthand, it is obvious what an achievement this expedition was. For those unfamiliar with the region, Knight makes it abundantly clear that this was not just an average expedition, but a major breakthrough for navigation and Antarctic exploration.

The second part of the book is devoted to the sailors participating in the expedition. Unlike many authors, Knight does not limit himself to Ross and

Crozier as the commanding officers of the two expedition vessels, but provides carefully-researched biographical sketches of many of the participants. This help readers understand why every journey to the far south was (and is) dependent on the entire crew, not just the leader.

The third section of the book titled 'The Ships and their Sailors' is a unique attempt to link the expedition to the Royal Navy (RN) at large. Although Knight does not use the term, he provides a quasi-network analysis of the ships and sailors by listing not just the names of the crew but all the RN ships they had served in. While casual readers might find the first two sections more enjoyable, this third part has the greatest analytical depth for the professional maritime and/or polar historian. It illustrates that it was not necessarily the well-known naval ships that were the breeding grounds for the successful exploration of uncharted territories and scientific work carried out by the Royal Navy.

No matter one's interest – in the history of the expedition itself, the stories of the crew members or the network analysis of ships and their crews within the context of the Royal Navy, Knight's book does not disappoint. As a professional polar historian, I find it closes an important gap in the existing historiography by drawing the expedition out of the shadows of the better-known expeditions of the period. Maritime and/or naval historians will gain an appreciation of how the Royal Navy contributed to the development of navigation and, especially, the use of the magnetic field of the Earth in this context. Finally, the armchair traveller will enjoy exploring one of the last uncharted corners of the globe.

Knight's new book can easily be recommended to anyone reading for business or pleasure. A few months prior to reviewing this book, I was fortunate enough to sail more or less precisely on the same course as the last leg of the expedition in the Weddell Sea, south of Snowhill Island. After reading how Ross and Crozier sailed these waters 180 years before in small wooden sailing ships instead of a modern expedition vessel, I have the utmost respect for their crews. I am also grateful to the author for bringing details of the expedition to light and adding Ross and Crozier's names to the list of worthy Antarctic explorers such as Amundsen, Scott, or Shackleton. It might be too much to expect that Knight's new book will make their names as familiar, but at least it will help to change the perception that "heroes" of Antarctic research existed only during the "heroic" age. It should also help us understand that a "hero" always required a crew, whose names might be forgotten, but without whom the objective could have never been achieved.

It could be argued that many recent publications on Antarctic history have contributed little new to the existing body of knowledge of Antarctic research and history. Fortunately, *The Magnetism of Antarctica* opens up a new perspective on Antarctic exploration and thus, it should have a place in every

library dealing with the history of Antarctica, whether institutional or personal.

Ingo Heidbrink
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Angus Konstam. *Warships in the Baltic Campaign 1918-20: The Royal Navy takes on the Bolsheviks*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2022. 48 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. UK £11.99, US \$19.00, CDN \$25.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47285-166-6.

This work is the 305th volume in Osprey Publishing's New Vanguard Series and author Angus Konstam's 83rd contribution to the Osprey catalog in which Konstam seeks to offer a concise examination of the Royal Navy's participation in the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War's Baltic theater. This is done in a manner similar to the Osprey Campaign series, examining the background of the conflict, a summation of the campaign itself, and an overview of the British and Soviet warships involved. Period paintings and photographs are used to depict the various commanders and warships, backed up with modern ship profile and digital image renderings. The work does not have a traditional analytic conclusion but offers a further reading style bibliography and a quick reference index at the end.

The first half of the work is largely a chronological study, following the background of the collapse of the Eastern Front, the Soviet push into the ancient Estonian and Latvian states, and the resultant naval aide from the Royal Navy. It then flows into a discussion of the campaign itself, with a discussion of both major naval actions and land actions which directly or indirectly affected the actions of the Royal Navy. Examples of the latter include the actions of still operational German military units fighting in the Baltic region and attempts to relieve targets besieged by Soviet ground forces via bombardment. Operation RK, a daring strike on the Soviet naval base at Kronstadt by British Coastal Motor Boats, is given suitably detailed coverage, with the resultant hesitancy of the Soviets from carrying out sorties from the base reminiscent of the German High Seas Fleet after Jutland just a few years before.

This timeline approach then shifts to examinations of the Soviet and British fleets present in the Baltic. While this does result in the retreading of some earlier information from the background and campaign sections due to the discussion of vessels' service history, it does provide more detail into the conditions of the warships involved, the support facilities, and, in the case of the Soviets, the perceptions of their British opponents on the eve of hostilities. Profiles are provided for ten of the warships involved, offering digital reconstructions of their wartime appearances in a way not achievable

with period black and white photographs. A table is provided for the Soviet vessels noting the home ports of the vessels operating from Kronstadt and Petrograd, while no comparable chart is present for the British.

In terms of possible improvements, a few come to mind. One of the full color illustrations mistakenly describes the image as “Clash between British and German Destroyers,” despite the subject matter and text description making it clear that the warships were Soviet (14). The outboard profile renderings, while detailed, lack a scale to illustrate the size difference of the vessels. For example, the dreadnought *Petropavlosk* and cruiser *Oleg* are rendered as the same size on a shared page, with nothing to note that the former was 154 feet longer (27). The layout itself also feels to be slightly inverted, with the campaign covered first before the discussion of the two fleets. Given the fact that the British and Soviet fleets are integral to the campaign itself, it would help with the work’s flow if these vessels were discussed first, or if the text was integrated into the campaign narrative. This would reduce some repetition and prevent the jumping around of the work’s chronology. The accounting of the raid on Kronstadt could also be improved with the inclusion of a map of the strike detailing the locations of Soviet vessels and the routes taken by the British CMBs. As it stands, a small aerial photograph and the one rendering are present to offer visual representations of the raid’s target and enactment, so any expansion would further highlight the significance of the attack. Also, some form of discussion regarding the Royal Navy Mutiny of 1919 that occurred as a result of ships being ordered to the Baltic would be appreciated, as it would reflect more of the average sailors’ mindset at the time. Finally, a table of technical information on the major ships involved would be appreciated, so as to better compare the size, crew compliments, armaments, and other features of the combatants via a quickly referenceable means.

All in all, *Warships in the Baltic Campaign* serves as a solid introductory overview to the conflict between British and Soviet forces operating in the waters off Estonia, Latvia, and Russia in the chaotic days following the 1918 Armistice. Konstam provides an accounting of the major naval players and actions within the confines of a New Vanguard pattern Osprey book, with illustrations and images to allow for better visualization of the forces involved. While the work could be aided via expansion or possible conversion into a volume of the Campaign series, it is a fine exploratory work for those wishing to learn more about the Baltic Campaign, early Soviet naval operations, and the Royal Navy’s fight against Bolshevik forces during an often-overlooked period in world history.

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Angus Konstam. *Naval Battle of Crete: The Royal Navy at Breaking Point*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.co.uk, Campaign Series no. 388, 2023. 96 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, charts, index. US \$33.00, ISBN 978-1-47285-404-9. (E-book available.)

The book is a brief, highly graphic account of the action of the Royal Navy in the battle that occurred on the sea and in the air surrounding Crete during the invasion of the island by airborne German troops and the subsequent evacuation of the island by Allied forces in late May/June 1941. The stories of major personalities and events of the campaign are presented, focusing largely on the British and German forces and using British sources. The book is built around a range of innovative graphics, while the text is subsidiary. The striking cover illustration is the first of three “full-colour battlescenes,” which epitomize the conflict. It shows an onrushing British cruiser at the instant a bomb explodes on the bridge, while above Ju 87 Stukas are pulling out from their dives amid flak bursts. On the horizon, another ship is on fire. Along with photographs, maps, and diagrams, graphics include innovative “battlescenes” and “3-dimensional ‘bird’s eye-views,’” which are large-scale maps with a chronology that plots the action hour-by-hour.

In the introduction there is a brief sketch of the strategic situation in the theatre introducing the Italians with “Mussolini’s unprovoked aggression” (8) and a description of the raid on Taranto by the Fleet Air Arm and events of the Battle of Cape Matapan in which major units of the Italian fleet were disabled. The Luftwaffe announces its arrival by damaging HMS *Illustrious*, which reduces the air component of the Allied defence for the Crete campaign and sets the stage for the conflict between ships and aircraft. Already the Luftwaffe is rated as “far more effective than their Italian counterparts” (8).

“Opposing Commanders” are the flag officers of the Royal Navy and commanders of the Luftwaffe. Admiral Andrew B. Cunningham’s counterpart (nemesis) is given as Wolfram von Richthofen, with a supporting role for Kurt Student, two leaders of the Luftwaffe in charge of the air assault. No German naval officers make the cut. Cunningham eventually is conflated with the RN and the numerous references to him become tedious. His Italian counterpart, Admiral Angelo Iachino of the *Regia Marina*, appears only once, to withdraw his damaged flagship to safety prior to the Battle of Cape Matapan.

“Opposing Forces” opens with a paragraph on the land battle unfolding and directs the reader to number 147 in the same Campaign series, which reminds us that the publisher’s main objective is to sell books. Specifications of vessels and aircraft are described only in the briefest-possible terms. The Axis order of battle includes only German aircraft. The names of the officers commanding the vessels that were part of each RN task force and the Luftwaffe

air formations are listed concisely. Somehow the ubiquitous Savoia-Marchetti SM 79 aircraft is omitted while there is a photograph of a Do 17 and two of a Ju 88. The poster child for the Axis air forces is the Ju 87 Stuka which is literally splashed across the cover and in full-colour “battlescenes.”

The Italian effort gets short shrift: the only good-sized photograph of Italian warships (30) shows the three heavy cruisers (*Pola*, *Zara*, and *Fiume*) on their way to being sunk at the Battle of Cape Matapan. An extensive caption summarizes the Italian effort: “The Regia Marina could have intervened in the Crete campaign to add even more pressure on Cunningham’s fleet, but despite German urging, it avoided repeating its sortie of the previous month” (30). This theme is echoed throughout the text. The only other illustration of Italian warships is a photograph of an untitled and uncredited painting showing the action at Cape Matapan a few weeks before the Battle of Crete. The scene is lurid as with the same three ships, now unsuspecting quarry, begin to explode under searchlights. The caption reads: “A depiction of the night action off Matapan, 28 March 1941, showing Cunningham’s battleships destroying a force of Italian heavy cruisers. The victory helped ensure that the Regia Marina’s battle fleet would not sail in support of the German invasion of Crete, or risk another surface clash with the British in the same waters” (8). Two cutaway diagrams (of a Dido-class cruiser and a “J,K,N-class” destroyer) are too small to be readable or useful.

In “Opposing Plans,” Cunningham is ubiquitous, the master-strategist directing operations. He is mentioned six times on page 26 alone, setting plans and organizing his formations. Summing up the long piece on the admiral, the author concludes: “Cunningham was the right man for the job. It would be hard to think of anyone better qualified to lead the Mediterranean Fleet in time of crisis” (13-14). Certain passages of Cunningham’s speeches, such as that on the role of tradition in RN and it needing 300 years to repair are echoed throughout the text, which constitutes a form of padding, though serving to underline the reader’s positive feelings toward British leadership. The reference to Cunningham’s “bullying side” (13), in the context of the RN during the Crete campaign, is curious if not amusing. As late as the 1920s, there were “boys” and midshipmen, who now would be called child soldiers, who would be liable for corporal punishment for misdemeanors. Truly, in the case of Cunningham, the winner writes history. His autobiography, *Sailor’s Odyssey* (Hutchinson, 1946), is monumental at 716 pages, illustrated with coloured charts and graphs as well as many full-page photographs of himself, singly and with a parade of powerful contemporaries, like General Eisenhower and HM King George VI. ABC’s tome would provide most of the detail about the RN needed to write the work being reviewed.

In “The Campaign,” the action of major engagements is described. In

the first such, King's Force C is "spotted by Italian reconnaissance planes flying from Rhodes ... followed by an air attack by three SM 79 and four SM 84 torpedo planes" (38). In the prelude to the attack on the *Sagittario* convoy, Force C is attacked by Italian MAS boats at 1050 on 20 May. The accompanying "full colour battlescene" depicts the action above, as Force C encounters the troop convoy escorted by the torpedo boat *Sagittario* north of Crete on 22 May 1941. *Sagittario* is seen tearing through the destroyer screen with cruisers looming up. Somehow, with all this action on the part of the Italian navy and air force, other than this dramatic depiction, they are omitted entirely. Two of the three "battlescenes" depict the Ju 87 Stuka.

The photographs from the period are of varying quality. All photographs are credited to "Stratford Archive", which is presumably the publisher's shorthand for the British National Archives at Stratford. Some are so dark they could be omitted (8, 76).

The text is concise, dramatic, and mostly focused on the action. All headlines are in the present tense to heighten the sense of action and immediacy. Chapter headings include, "The Fleet Deploys," "The Luftwaffe Strikes," and "Black Thursday." The most important feature of the text is that accounts of the movement of the opposing forces (at the task force level, down to the level of the individual vessel of the Allied navy and air group for the Luftwaffe), assign a precise location and time for each operation, so that the reader can follow hour-by-hour.

The book perpetuates and propagates the post-Second World War British view of the Italian effort as being generally ineffectual and its leadership diffident, which is expressed many times in different ways without further exploration. Individuals like Lt. Fulgosi, however, are permitted to be gallant as in the "battlescene" depicting him attacking the entire formation of cruisers and destroyers and buying time for the convoy to escape: "In the end, thanks to Fulgosi's bravery, only two of the small transports were caught and sunk by Force C" (54). Had there been a *Regia Marina* intervention, "operating under the air umbrella of the Luftwaffe might have made a difference" (24).

The text shows some confusion about the Italian vessels involved. *Jane's* 1944 has an index listing for *Lupo* in the Italian war loss section (617) but no record, which is common for such a chaotic time. *Sagittario* (described as a "Spica-class torpedo boat commanded by Lieutenant Guisepppe Fulgosi" (51), is listed in *Jane's* 1944 as a Sirio class torpedo boat with a complement of 94, displacing 652 tons. It was a modern vessel completed in 1937 and capable of 34 knots. The same *Jane's* lists *Pica* as a torpedo boat of the Ariete class slightly larger than the *Sagittario*. They were modern, fast, and well-armed for such small vessels. *Sagittario* is listed in *Jane's* 1961 as displacing 1,000 tons standard with a complement of 110, so was obviously a successful design

with a long service life. The bare specifications of the “MAS boat” alone are intriguing: *Jane’s* 1944 lists *Motoscafi Anti-Sommergibili* 500 series at 20-23 tons displacement, gas powered with two 18” equivalent torpedoes.

On several occasions, the author broaches the question of cooperation, between the Italians and Germans, but is content to dismiss the Italian effort thus, “The Kriegsmarine commander had a few Italian ships “grudgingly supplied by the Regia Marina” (23) and “naval commitment to the operation was limited to a pair of Spica- class torpedo boats (*Lupo* and *Sagittario*) and a half flotilla of MAS motor torpedo boats” (24). By not pursuing the topic, the author misses the big story of cooperation (or lack thereof) among Axis forces at a high level and at the interservice level, which, as he points out, might have spelled success.

As Italian Foreign Minister, Count Ciano’s diaries give insight at the top-most level: on Italian interservice relations and attempts to cooperate with the German high command. In the context of cooperation between the Germans and Italians, the battle occurs at the end of Blitzkrieg with the Luftwaffe’s and, especially Reichsmarschall Hermann Goring’s, star at its apogee with the Fuhrer. A year later he would be still having his way, insisting that Stalingrad could be resupplied by air. His exaggerated ideas did not admit of a need for cooperation, the attempts at cooperation deserve some attention, because cooperation did take place.

What were the specifications and armament of the “Pica-class” torpedo boats and the *Motoscafi Anti-Sommergibili*, which figure in several engagements? *Regia Aeronautica* aircraft figure heavily in the text in most engagements but are not represented or discussed except to be shown as ineffective. The ubiquitous SM 79 is not represented in the text or illustrations, whereas the marginal Luftwaffe’s Do 17 is. Likewise, the few aircraft on the allied side also seem to operate from nowhere. Some detail on radar and communication technology is necessary, given their key role in events.

This work may appeal to younger, graphically-oriented people weaned on action movies. The detailed treatment of the names of vessels and German air units could be of use in tracing one’s forbears through the conflict, that is, for genealogy or family history enthusiasts. This work may also be of interest to simulation game enthusiasts, who can use it to recreate events (on the British side at least) with some accuracy.

The book would hold more general interest with more detail on the *Regia Marina* and *Regia Aeronautica* structure and well as RN Fleet Air Arm and RAF participation. Along with more information on Italian ships and aircraft would provide more balance as would graphics, like a cutaway diagram of a MAS Boat and torpedo boat as is done for Dido class and J/K/L destroyers.

The lack of a bibliography and references is more than an inconvenience.

It produces a homogenized history and makes following up and fact-checking difficult. Use of a wider group of sources would give a less-biased result. All titles are shown as published in the UK. It excludes Cunningham's memoir, *Sailor's Odyssey*, while quoting from it in summing up the battle. Konstam includes three Norman Friedman titles, on radar, British cruisers, and big ship gunnery, but excluding his (much more germane) *Naval Anti-Aircraft Guns and Gunnery* (Seaforth, 2009). At thirty-three dollars Canadian, the book is pricey. The physical product of the paperback volume is close to a magazine format, with high gloss, kaolin paper in a rugged "perfect" binding, which makes it durable. The book is part of Osprey Publishing's integrated website that presents and markets the Campaign and other series. On the back cover there are three miniature photographs. The top one is of Cunningham. The accompanying text makes me wonder whether the person who wrote it had actually read the book: "world-leading maritime historian Angus Konstam tells the fascinating story of how Allied ships failed to repulse Axis convoys," when it is the story of how troop convoys successfully driven off during the period covered.

The book would hold more general interest with more detail on the *Regia Marina* and *Regia Aeronautica* structure and well as RN Fleet Air Arm and RAF participation. Along with more information on Italian ships and aircraft would provide more balance as would graphics, like a cutaway diagram of a MAS Boat and torpedo boat as is done for Dido class and J/K/L destroyers.

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Mark Lardas. *South China Sea 1945: Task Force 38's bold carrier rampage in Formosa, Luzon, and Indochina*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.bloomsbury.org, 2023. 96 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography. CDN \$33.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4728-5311-0.

In *South China Sea 1945*, Mark Lardas explores the carrier campaign led by United States Navy Admiral William Halsey and Task Force 38 in 1945. TF 38's objective was to destroy Japanese military installations and shipping in the South China Sea by disrupting supply lines, severing Japan's access to vital resources, and isolating the majority of the Japanese Army deployed in China. Halsey's campaign proved the versatility of carrier operations, neutralizing both seaborne and land-based opposition. While the author of numerous Osprey publications, Lardas is not a trained historian. Nor does the strict format of the series allow for much historical analysis. This has led to many flaws within the text such as a disreputable bibliography, the absence of citations, inconsistent nomenclature, and copious amounts of superfluous information without

adequate context.

The most serious problem plaguing this text is the ineffective bibliography (93). Why the author feels the need to justify certain sources is unclear. He describes having to go on a scavenger hunt to find missing details but fails to mention the sources he claims to have found on websites and in print. He does not identify the websites properly, making it difficult for the reader to validate his information. Finally, there are no citations, making it impossible to confirm the material, for example a quote attributed to Admiral William Halsey (7). Footnotes and other academic tools may not be part of the Osprey format, but their absence decreases the credibility of this text.

Even in a small book like this, consistency is important, especially when dealing with what would be a good introduction to the Second World War in the Pacific. Regrettably, the text is full of conflicting and confusing nomenclature. While it is understandable that certain terms change over time, it is important to refer to those terms and names by what was historically accurate at the time of the event, in this case, the island of Formosa.

At the beginning of the text in a small paragraph on the back of the title page, Lardas states that he would be using historically accurate terms, especially regarding locations. Then, instead of calling the island of Taiwan Formosa, as promised, he constantly refers to Formosa as Taiwan, as well as calling the Formosa Strait the Taiwan Strait. When speaking to the land surrounding the South China Sea he describes “the island of Borneo to the south, and the Philippines and Taiwan (Formosa) to the east.” (42) Similarly he writes, “The most vital convoy routes crossed the South China Sea, converging on the Taiwan Straits before crossing the East China Sea to Japan.” (27). The author seems unaware that the country of Taiwan did not exist in 1945. I found this geographical confusion most annoying.

Lardas claims that the waters and harbours throughout the South China Sea were shallow enough to protect Japanese shipping lanes from submarine attacks. As most naval specialists know, submarines did operate in the South China Sea. In fact, by 1945, their impact on Japanese shipping was so significant that they were running out of targets.

He is also consistently inconsistent when it comes to units of measurement. For example, after several references to depth in feet, he states “While merchant ships could comfortably travel in waters as shallow as 10 fathoms, it took a bold submariner to penetrate the 20-fathom line” (28). Nor does he explain what a fathom is. A reader unfamiliar with this old naval terminology could be confused by such niche vocabulary.

Another example of the author’s erratic use of measurement involves his descriptions of armament used by both the Americans and the Japanese.

Lardas breaks down the weapons used by the Japanese to defend against TF38, firing a barrage of information regarding guns, their calibre, the ammunition used, and how they compared to American weapons (28-30). On the same page, he refers to Japanese guns, cannons, and shore-based artillery pieces in millimetres. Halfway down the page, he switches to Japanese anti-aircraft artillery measured in centimetres, and then again in inches, all in one paragraph. The confusion and irritation caused by this issue was enough to make me put the text down and walk away from it several times in frustration.

I had two other concerns with this text. The first is the overwhelming amount of information regarding aircraft and their weapons as well as shore-based installations, such as anti-aircraft guns. Lardas goes into unnecessary detail when describing the technical aspects. Why it was important to know that the “5in./38cal gun ... had a shell weighing 55lbs of which 7.1-8.5lbs was the bursting charge. It could fire 15 rounds per minute and had a 37,200 ft ceiling and had a distance of roughly 8.5 miles” (19). Information such as this is strewn throughout so much of the text that it becomes less about TF 38 and instead, has become a quick but unnecessary reference of the military capabilities for both the American and Japanese forces. In such a short book, the amount of information is overwhelming, especially without any historical analysis.

Task Force 38's contribution to ending the war in the Pacific is a history that has extraordinarily little written about it and Lardas should be applauded for writing such a text where sources are extremely limited. Unfortunately, his fixation on technical minutia has severely restricted his examination of the true impact of TF38's efforts to retake the South China Sea.

Among the drawbacks to this text are the absence of a bibliography, the omission of citations, inconsistent nomenclature, and too much extraneous information that has no bearing on the study of TF38 and its importance to the war effort. Moreover, it lacks the kind of in-depth historical analysis that would be considered valuable to an academic study of TF38. I feel that Lardas' *South China Sea 1945* has missed the mark on what could have been a great resource for academics and general readers alike.

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Jean Leclerc. *Le Saint-Laurent et ses pilotes 1805-1860*. Ottawa, ON: Leméac, www.lemeac.com, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1990. 232 pp. illustrations, maps, tables, appendices. CDN \$32.95 paper; ISBN 2-7609-1934-x.

At more than 13,000 kilometers, Quebec has the third longest coastline,

after Newfoundland and Labrador and British Columbia, of all the Canadian provinces. In spite of significant stories to tell concerning resource development, transportation, marine safety, and other aspects of nautical history, Quebec and its relation to the sea has not been a major subject for historians. Further, what research and writing that has taken place is almost exclusively in French, so it is not surprising that so few volumes have come to the attention of Anglophone nautical historians. This is unfortunate as Quebec maritime history has great importance for the whole country, not just Quebec.

Central to this shared legacy is the St. Lawrence River, which was, and continues to be, the gateway to the continent with water connection deeply into the central and mid-western areas of both Canada and the United States. Donald Creighton's *Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence* set the tone for economic history for more than a generation of historians.

The Gulf and estuary gave the appearance of safety for ships and passengers. During the golden age of passenger steamers, some lines would advertise that their ships from Britain to Quebec would spend only four days at sea. The other two days of the voyage were spent in the supposedly safe and sheltered Gulf and River Saint Lawrence. What that message concealed was that the last two or three hundred miles of the voyage would be spent in a dangerous river channel with tricky navigation, strong tides and currents, imperfect navigational aids and concerns with ice and fog. This area, the gateway to a marine route deep into the North American continent, is the subject of two related and important volumes which have, to great measure, been overlooked in the marine literature of North America.

The author, Jean Leclerc, was, until recently, a professor of history at Laval University in Quebec City and the two volumes represent an impressive grasp of the importance of the river below Quebec, but more specifically, how the mechanisms leading to the safe navigation of the river have developed between the first arrival of settler societies and the mid-twentieth century. A third volume by the same author covers the development of pilotage between Quebec and Montreal in the nineteenth century.

The first volume noted here, *Le Saint-Laurent et ses pilotes 1805-1860*, covers the period beginning with the establishment of Trinity House of Quebec, an establishment modeled on the similarly named British organization which provided safe navigation services in the British Isles. Trinity House Quebec regulated the traffic on the St. Lawrence, looked after light houses and other aids to navigation, served as a court for criminal matters on the river, and issued pilots licenses. The volume has excellent coverage of the development of these obligations but ends prior to 1886, when many of the responsibilities were re-assigned to the Quebec Harbour Commission and others assumed by the Dominion government. The treatment of the technological development

of light houses and improvements to other aids to navigation is a fine study of an important subject in its own right. The early to mid-century period under examination in this study is also one in which the port of Quebec made the transition from sail to steam and also developed as both a commercial and ship-building centre. The story of the physical evolution of the port underscores the importance of an approach from the perspective of historical geography which often characterizes the writing of history in Quebec and which is frequently overlooked in the rest of the country. The latter part of this volume, as the title suggests, concentrates on the development of pilotage on the river. Here Leclerc traces the evolution of pilotage from a loosely regulated collection of individual service providers to a professional organization. He minutely examines the establishment of “La Corporation des Pilotes pour le Harvre de Québe et au-dessous” which serves as the bookmark closing the volume. The story of the evolution to greater management and self-regulation of pilotage provides the core of Leclerc’s study and is a precursor to the second book.

The second volume, published almost a decade and a half after the first, expands the period covered to two centuries but reduces the scope of study to focus more on the development and management of pilotage, rather than a general overview of commerce and shipping. After a brief discussion of pilotage in the French period, the intensive analysis begins with the enactment of legislation in 1762 controlling pilotage. This concentration on the organizational history sets the theme for the rest of the 856-page volume. It is, however, far from a narrowly prescribed corporate history. Leclerc dives deeply into the lives of the pilots themselves, examining just how they did their work, the pilot stations from which they operated, the vessels they used, the training they received, and the waters on which they sailed. No detail, it seems, is too small to be included. As with the first of his volumes, *Les Pilotes du Saint-Laurent*, contains an impressive quantity of tables and appendices. At times, the detail seems to overwhelm the analysis and the book is intimidating in its specificity.

Although aged, the two books are not dated, nor has there been any significant research in this area since their publication which would supersede Leclerc’s work. A comparable volume might be Theodore Karamanski’s 2020 volume, *Mastering the Inland Seas*, which discusses some of the same historical developments with reference to navigation on the Great Lakes but pays lesser attention to the role played by pilots. Leclerc’s works remain the authoritative coverage of the link between the ocean and the river and the role pilots played in making Quebec and Montreal leading Canadian ports. The 2004 volume appears to still be in print but there are other modes of access. The two volumes reproduce, without significant alteration, the master’s and doctoral dissertations of the author and in fact the two are easily available

in their pre-publication format at the Canadian theses site of the Library and Archives Canada, [Theses Canada](#).

These volumes bring together an impressive compilation of information from primary sources, so impressive as to have use as reference works. One barrier to their use as such is the absence of an index in either volume. This lack is offset to a limited extent by the use of a very detailed outline / table of contents which eases the task of finding where a particular aspect might be found.

Overall, these two studies should be considered among the more important works published in any language on the maritime history of Quebec. Their rich detail enables the reader to use them to move far beyond the concentration on pilotage and they provide, as does the river St. Lawrence itself, a channel leading to a better understanding of the nautical history of the entire region.

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Frederick C. Leiner. *Prisoners of the Bashaw: The Nineteen-Month Captivity of American Sailors in Tripoli, 1803-1805*. Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, www.westholmepublishing.com, 2022. x+311 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$35.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-59416-386-9.

For nineteen months between 1803 and 1805, over 300 American sailors and marines were held captive in Tripoli as a result of their frigate, the USS *Philadelphia*, running aground at the entrance to that port's harbour, and its eventual surrender, amid a conflict referred to as the Tripolitan War or First Barbary War. Though this long-forgotten struggle in America's early days as a naval power has attracted recent attention from scholars, the experiences of these captives have gone largely untold. Engagingly written and thoroughly researched, this book has much to offer. It vividly reconstructs the events leading up to the captain's momentous decision to give up his ship, its crew's lives in captivity, and their various outcomes, all within a broader consideration of the Barbary War and nineteenth-century American foreign policy and seaborne power.

A primary attraction of this study is its well-seasoned author, for Leiner demonstrates a clear command of the topic and source materials. His second study to focus on America's conflict with the Islamic Barbary powers, this latest contribution nicely complements his previous scholarly treatment of America's return to North Africa in 1815 in a successful campaign to end once and for all what had become a decades-long struggle. This examination provides additional context for the latter episode, while delving deeper into

the story of America's first hostage crisis. It is further informed by Leiner's important work on America's Quasi-War with France that took place a few years prior to the events covered here. That conflict resulted in a shift to a more aggressive foreign policy that led to America's navy-building program, and opposed, at least in principle, the payment of tribute and ransoms. Among this book's strengths is its questioning the accuracy around the oft-cited statement that "the United States does not pay ransom for hostages," as it examines the policy within the context of the first test case presented to the nation: the surrender of one of the subscription warships commissioned in 1798, the *Philadelphia*. Leiner clearly reveals that, although the United States negotiated a peace with the Bashaw that did not require the payment of an annual tribute, ransom money indeed played a significant role in that negotiation and the eventual release of the captain and his crew.

Another significant feature of this study is its critical yet evenhanded analysis of the ship's captain, William Bainbridge, and his conduct prior to the decision to surrender his ship to the enemy. Though ultimately cleared of negligence in a naval court of inquiry following the war, his actions are shown to have not been in keeping with standard operating procedure, nor were many of his sailors pleased with his performance. Leiner questions, for example, Bainbridge's inaction when kedging was posed as a possible way to pull the ship off the reef, or his decision not to stand firm and use the ship's defensible position and several hundred well-armed crew to buy time, or the failure by Bainbridge to destroy his sailing orders and letter book before being boarded. His capitulation to the Bashaw of Tripoli was to be sure a difficult choice, but hindsight also allows historians to place this decision within a broader context of Bainbridge's woeful maritime service record and reputation. This was not the first time Bainbridge had surrendered his ship, in fact he held the rather ignominious distinction of being the first officer of the United States Navy to do so when forced to give up the schooner *Retaliation* to the French off Antigua in 1798. Bainbridge, quite simply, had friends in high places, as well as the shrewdness and political acumen necessary to ascend the naval chain of command. His officers tended to side with him rather than become his enemies, but what appears certain is that he held much less respect and loyalty among those of the lower deck.

Of most value to maritime historians is this study's focus on those held captive in Tripoli, for it was the accounts of imprisoned American sailors circulating far and wide in the United States that helped propel the nation to go to war against the Barbary powers in the first place. Such narratives continued to rivet the public's imagination during the war, particularly after the *Philadelphia* was lost. Leiner powerfully relates how enlisted American sailors were treated as slaves while in captivity, performing forced labour, suffering

beatings and some perishing. Due to the existence of seamen's protection certificates, we only know the identities of about a dozen of these sailors, all American citizens and all white. It is a useful reminder that the vast majority of captives were foreign, foreign-born, or Black, a reflection of the typical composition of early- nineteenth century American naval crews. Finally, Leiner demonstrates that it was the published tales of the captive sailors' lot that served to not only further galvanize American sentiment against North Africa, but also fuel calls among some to recognize the absolute hypocrisy at home regarding the institution of African slavery.

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John Quirk. *Quirky History: Maritime Moments Most History Books Don't Mention*. Leamington Spa, UK: Fernhurst Books, www.fernhurst@fernhurstbooks.com, 2022. 128 pp., illustrations. UK £17.99, cloth; ISBN 978-1-91262-142-2. (E-book available.)

Funny, informative, and above all quirky, the artist, raconteur and certainly opinionated illustrator, engineer, and world traveler, John Quirk, invites us behind the stage and into the wheelhouse of 25 maritime events in his new book *Quirky History: Maritime Moments Most History Books Don't Mention*. He prods, entertains, and startles us with implausible stories which he manages convince us were not altogether impossible. His vignettes are particularly rich with geographic diversity and humour.

Quirky, as he calls himself, manages to give readers the sense that rather than simply being served venison, we have been invited to stalk, flush, hunt, shoot, dress, carry, prepare, marinate, spice, cook, and serve the deer. Herein you will find tales of Viking long ships, botany, plague ships, submarines, espionage, honeyed arrow-heads, French ships invading France, humble plans that become grandiose and the inverse, and staples such as stout rowboats, hardened pilots, and of course, adverse currents and fog.

The layout of the book is straight-forward and clearly designed to hold the attention of readers young and not-as-young. Each of the twenty-five chapters includes three to four pages of text, and each page has a colour illustration. These images are action-packed, highly imaginative, and often suggestive – even the medical section shows partially-clad patients being cured using milk from Blossom, the cow.

Quirk's childhood wonderment at the planet, followed by a down-to-earth career as an engineer lends the book credibility, even though he takes us behind the scenes to D-Day on a four-poster bed, by oxen and barge across the East African plains to Lake Turkana, and tells us how to hide the Suez Canal and Alexandria from German bombers. There are forays into medical science, the

arts, the Spanish Armada, the fledgling American navy having to sell most of its fleet, and lifeboat rescues off his native England. His coverage of engines includes steam, Merlins, Rolls-Royces, Packers and Diesels, motorbikes, Lawrence of Arabia, sports cars, and racing boats. Quirk even manages, however tenuously, to connect Emperor Napoleon with both Martinique and via Josephine, to Quirk's adoptive continent, Australia.

His artwork deftly toes the line, and he crosses his text with hale opinions—the last chapter depicts Russia versus the East in their 1904 defeat at the hands of the Japanese. Many readers will have read books or cartoons and seen videos of compilations of naval blunders. Yet this book is different. It walks us through the importance of the *Notraships* fleet of 1000 Norwegian merchant vessels in the Second World War, and how Herr Diesel met his unfortunate demise at sea with full pockets yet empty bank accounts. There is enough intrigue to fill a James Bond film, and indeed Bond's clever inventor, Agent "Q", is often cited. There is a lot in these few pages, including a German U-boat surrendering to men on camels, and classic battleship-versus-lighthouse-keeper confrontations, played out in the Bristol Channel and off California.

This compendium has so many factoids and datasets that it would be impossible for an author and editors to get every one right. One understandable *errata* is the assertion that Franklin Delano Roosevelt "had been Secretary of the Navy for 13 years" (47). This is a two-pronged exaggeration, since Roosevelt was an Assistant Secretary of the Navy (not the Secretary) from 1913 to 1920, half of the stated time. More engaging is the recognition of Hubert Scott-Paine for his extraordinary innovations with aircraft, seaplanes, and his unsung inventions, including the PT-boat.

Quirk, who writes under aliases, including J. Alan Williams, clearly has led fascinating lives, emphasized most in his years in East Africa making game lodges, during which he met extraordinary people and heard compelling tales of Germans and Britons. He describes stubborn colonials dragging vessels from the Cape of Good Hope to the lakes of Central Africa to combat the Germans in the First World War who had previously carted and created a fleet there.

Each chapter opens with a short, and often funny, introduction providing readers with an explanation and connection to the material Quirk is about to exhibit. For example, Chapter 25 "Russian Roulette," on page 123: "It was late April and I was editing this manuscript when the editor asked if I could add a story reflecting on the current Russia-Ukraine crisis. This is meant to be a humour book and it is hard to find levity in the psychopathic genocide....." This bluntly direct tone keeps the audience ready for the next hairpin turn. Like those taken by the horses and 100 men, women, and children accompanying the lifeboat from Lynmouth on 11 miles of mountainous turns, urgently trying to get over hill and dale to stand by to rescue the ship *Forrest Hall* in peril on

12 January 1899.

The illustration of a large thirty-four-foot, twenty-ton lifeboat parked before the Blue Ball Inn to repair a wheel, is captioned: “So that’s 114 pints, 300 packets of chips, 200 pies, a dry sherry for the vicar... and who is the Diet Coke?” In the following pages, we learn that shovelers cleared the way for the boat, shaving the corner off a house, knocking down walls, and widening roads. Although the boat made it to the ship, there were no rewards. Fortunately, the shipowner “shelled out twenty-seven pounds five shillings and sixpence to repair all the damage to walls and buildings. Sadly, four horses died during the event.” (35-36)

This book is highly entertaining and the information is easily accessible. There are no indices, only a half-dozen short footnotes. Geographically, the reach is vast – two nodes being the UK, with northern Europe, and the Antipodes and southeast Asia. South America and the polar regions receive less coverage. Thankfully, the reader is provided with five colourful maps, several original documents like the original plans for D-Day which were to have been destroyed, and even one photograph. There are three inset boxes with sub-stories. The autobiographical portions are light and generally sweet, often referring to a star-struck boy or boys staring at nautical ephemera.

Eliciting a chuckle from readers is not usually achieved by staying safely within the lines of convention, and few would accuse Quirky of being boring! Despite covering serious topics like disastrous ship and air wrecks, brutal battles, and seaborne hardships, the author retains the buoyancy of a kapok life vest, keeping us feeling safe and dry, though his humour is neither.

If this enjoyable book had a central theme, I feel it would be “laugh and learn.” A pleasant adjunct to Quirk’s frivolity is his modesty. He encourages readers: “Keep reading this book—you will always learn something useless” (50). And that is really the joy of this book – it is like a fortune-cookie that feels deliciously naughty, but has wisdom inside of it.

Eric Wiberg
Boston, Massachusetts

J. W. Richardson. *In The Treacle Mine, the Life of a Marine Engineer*. Dunbeath, Scotland: Whittles Publishing, www.whittlespublishing.com, 2021. 256 pp., illustrations, appendices. UK £16.99, paper; ISBN 978-184995-488-4.

In the Treacle Mine: The Life of a Marine Engineer is the professional autobiography of J.W. Richardson in which he describes his career as a marine engineer from his early beginnings as a junior grade engineer to his time as Chief Engineer. Considering the number of such memoirs or autobiographies

published in recent years, is this necessary? Is there something that makes this book different and therefore, worth reading either by a professional maritime historian, or even someone interested in maritime history in the post-Second World War period?

Firstly, this book is written by an engineer rather than a nautical officer, and thus sheds light on the daily life, work and experiences of engine crews rather than the numerous naval officers who have published their autobiographies recently. Secondly, and equally important, J.W. Richardson's perspective is a strictly personal one. He does not attempt to provide a history of marine engineering, but rather shares with the reader his personal experiences, regardless of whether or not they are typical for the profession at large.

Arranged chronologically, the autobiography accompanies the author not only on his way up through the ranks, but also over the various ships in which he served. These vessels range from a large steam turbine ship, to the next one equipped with a traditional triple-expansion steam engine. Technical details of the various engine plants are discussed in great detail, mainly from the standpoint of what different technology meant for the people tending and handling the various plants. Richardson fills substantial space with an in-depth discussion of the equipment. While some readers might find it boring, those who are interested in marine engineering and machinery will definitely appreciate his highly detailed descriptions that provide a much better picture of the actual handling of the equipment than any technical jargon. Most importantly, the author explains why engine crews preferred certain types of machinery over other, sometimes more modern, types of equipment. Living conditions aboard the ship are discussed in comparable detail, providing an insight into a time when going to the crew mess still required changing from a boiler-suit to a more or less complete uniform. Richardson describes the meals provided by the respective shipping companies as well as offerings from the crew bar to illustrate the important role food and drink played in the daily life of a marine engineer. Most intriguing are the descriptions of his various ship mates. Even while admitting that he often cannot even remember the name of a particular crewman, Richardson describes them in such detail that their personalities come alive, a feature understood by anybody who has served on board a ship. Finally, having mainly sailed aboard tankers, his descriptions of ports like Kargh Island in the Persian Gulf offer a unique glimpse of places few sailors outside the enclosed world of tanker shipping have ever visited. A marine historian will appreciate these details as they demonstrate how and why the experience of crews on oil-tankers was completely different from other merchant marine crews in the post-Second World War period.

A selection of private black and white photographs accompanies the text and adds another layer to the world of the modern merchant marine crew. The

photos are useful not only for what they illustrate, but for what they indicate was important (or not) to the owner. The presence of many photos of off-watch situations and shore liberty indicates that, while brief, these moments were often more memorable than the actual work.

Having spent some of his younger years as a professional mariner, this reviewer recognized many aspects of life at sea from his own experience, making the review particularly interesting. Even though Richardson tells his own unique and authentic story as a marine engineer, at the same time, his history is the story of all merchant marine engine crews during the second half of the twentieth century.

In The Treacle Mine reads like the transcript of an extended oral history interview, making it an authentic primary source for maritime social and labour history research. It can be easily recommended to any historian interested this topic for the post-Second World War period. It would also appeal to anybody who served in the maritime industries during that time. Many would find their own memories fitting into a broader perspective shared by fellow mariners throughout the industry. With a comparably modest retail price, the book might even be considered as additional reading for a university class studying the maritime history of the second half of the last century, if only to provide students with access to an authentic set of experiences by a professional mariner during that period.

Ingo Heidbrink
Norfolk, Virginia

Ray Solly. *The Development of Crude Oil Tankers. A Historical Miscellany.* Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen and Sword, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2021. 186 pp., illustrations, ship index, general index. UK £30, US \$60.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-52679-241-9.

This richly illustrated history compiled by a recognized tanker-ship officer, educator, and author, vividly informs us about 160 years of specifically the tanker ships carrying the basic feedstock of our petroleum-reliant world: crude oil. Unlike most other ships, tankers are limited to only those ports globally with the complex technology and storage to handle that volatile and valuable liquid petroleum. Crude oil is the building block for those many other products it can be refined into—motor gasoline (mogas), aviation fuel (avgas), jet fuel, diesel, kerosene, and myriad other products. Under the tanker umbrella there are many variants, from products to chemical, edible oils and gas carriers. Crude is the thick, sandy sludge from the bowels of the earth; the ultimate raw

product, sometimes so thick it requires heating to flow. That creates unique challenges for tank cleaning.

Solly's study focusses on the larger ships serving the roughly 50 major oil terminals globally (per the CIA), and which the Global Energy Observatory expands to a total of 325 "oil ports" in 80 countries. Jessica Aizarani states that "as of April 2020, there were 810 very large crude carriers (VLCCs) worldwide ... having a storage capacity of around two million barrels of crude oil. In 2020, seaborne transportation of crude oil amounted to 1.86 billion metric tons" (Statista.com).

This book is a comprehensive and readable amalgam of fact-sets on the technical development of these ships from the first in 1861 named the *Elizabeth Watts*, which brought barreled oil on a sailboat from USA to the UK, under the command of Captain Charles Bryant. Some of the early vessel names were *Mobilite* (a canal barge in the US and UK), *Narragansett*, *Nike*, and *Conch*—owned by Shell. The book shares many images of the Suez Canal, the English Channel, Euro Port in Rotterdam, North Sea shuttle tankers, Asian shipyards, ports in the US, France and UK. We are shown Kuwaiti Oil Company's *Al Rekkah* and *Sea Serenade* of 357,000 DWT (Deadweight Tonnage or carrying capacity) after it was hit by an Exocet missile in the Persian Gulf tensions of the 1980s and written off.

Exxon Valdez's catastrophic voyage is catalogued mainly for its relevance in leading to OPA90 (Oil Pollution Act, 1990), but the *Braer*, *Amoco Cadiz*, and most of the other major environmental catastrophes in this sector are simply left out. Although the innovative ice-breaker *Manhattan* is misspelt *Manhatten*, China and Taiwan are conflated, and the Bahamian flag is spelt *Bahaman*, this book admirably and succinctly informs as well as entertains. The book fills its 200 or so pages with five sections, starting with 1861 to 2021; the early period, then a single-hull motor phase, the ultra-large crude carrier (ULCC) epoch, a double-hull VLCC section, and finally a tribute to the North Sea Oil trades. The fulcrum of the book is the *Jahre Viking* of 564,765 DWT, built in 1980. This historic behemoth merits its own highly-illustrated 8-page chapter, an honour only allocated to one other ship, the *Arosa*.

The coverage is international, including as it does oil majors Saudi Aramco, Exxon-Mobil, Chevron, Shell, PetroChina; other others in France, Russia and the UK. Shipyards in Sweden, the US, UK, South Korea, Japan, Denmark and beyond are covered as though they were the maternity wards for ships. Solly mentions shipowners from all of these nations plus Greece, Hong Kong, Monaco, Norway, Singapore and beyond, and the flags of Marshall Island, Bahamas, Panama, Liberia and more.

The author covers fairly technical material, seamlessly illustrating it with

over twenty-five diagrams and schematics and 175 photographs, from how horses carried the first oil to ships, to how tanks were fitted into sailboats. Then we learn about the construction innovations enlarging bulk tank ships with engines like the *Gluckauf*, reaching 6,000 tons deadweight. Solly reminds us of the Plimsoll Line and Lloyd's of London insurers, along with modern arbiters of global marine safety, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which he lauds for its regulations. Then there is Sir Joseph Isherwood (1870-1937) and his transverse system of stiffeners to maximize cargo capacity, and minimize non-cargo spaces like cofferdams, slop tanks and ballast tanks, all of which revolutionized design up to today.

Although early in the book readers may feel left in irons and struggling not to lose headway against a tidal flow of jargon, the author quickly lifts the fog on complex industry terms like COW (crude oil washing, for cleaning tanks), and IGS (inert gas system), or SBT (segregated ballast tanks). For some, these terms can also conjure up tank cleaning in humid Keppel Harbor, Singapore, pulling up sacks of sludge by hand, or watching fish swim in the beams of sunlight in the opening of a ballast tank; to others, dreary afternoons learning tank safety, tank washing, and flashpoints. There is plenty of detail in this book, from engine and deck systems, steering, rudder and propeller placement, bridge configurations, gangways, bollard strengths, tug boat assist, gravelling docks, double-hull capabilities, steel renewal, and safety.

Typically, a photo caption will comprise year built, engine and speed details, trading history, ownership and name variants, plus any other items of interest. One such example is the case of the *Sirius Star* of 318,000 DWT, a very large crude carrier, that was held for ransom by Somali pirates in 2008. USD \$3 million cash was dropped on deck and the crew were saved. On escaping the tanker, however, five of the pirates had their boat swamped by waves and drowned—one man's body washed ashore with his loot tied to his corpse. Some ships don't lead long or blessed careers; the *Globtik London* and *Globtik Tokyo*, for example, each about 484,000 DWT, lasted less than a decade or so before being scrapped. That's a huge engineering investment for ships which usually last beyond 20 years of age. One disturbing image depicts half a dozen mega-tankers, of 550,000 DWT each simply rafted up to each other in 1985 in a Norwegian fjord. This explains old timers saying that during that severe market downturns one could walk across a harbour or fjord on the decks of laid-up ships.

Coverage of developments such as the phaseout by 2003 of all single-hull oil tankers is made to seem innocuous, and almost fun. You can tell how the author has deftly navigated bridge decks as well as lecture halls; he reads the audience with this self-styled *Historical Miscellany* to deliver a highly readable, very well-illustrated and explained compendium of a sector which

may have faded from the frontal lobes of much of the public, yet crude oil tankers remain the work horse of liquid energy globally. After all, if it can't be driven, piped, sent by train or plane, then chances are the energy we use was delivered on a crude oil supertanker chronicled in this book.

Eric T. Wiberg
Boston, Massachusetts

Mark Stille. *USN Submarine vis IJN Antisubmarine Escort*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.bloomsbury.com, 2022. 80 pp., illustrations, bibliography. US \$22.00, CDN \$30.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47284-305-0.

This booklet is one of an apparently popular series with the general public regarding combat between two opposing entities. The range is wide, with some topics very much “what if” and others, such as this, an historical struggle that fits in well with more comprehensive accounts of the topic in question. Here we have an examination of the United States Navy submarine force against the Japanese navy's (IJN) anti-submarine escorts or destroyer force. The author, Mark Stille, is a retired commander, USN, with a number of Osprey Publishing titles to his credit, many of like vein to this one.

The superficial understanding of the Pacific War tends to be one of aircraft carriers and island invasions, a naval war in which the combatants rarely saw each other and fought at long range with aircraft. Often overlooked is the devastating, unrestricted submarine campaign conducted by the USN against Japanese shipping, against which the IJN was ill-prepared. Indeed, so successful was the American campaign against the seaborne trade on which Japan's economy depended, that it had virtually ceased by the early months of 1945 and hence, the territories seized from the imperial powers (US, Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands) so swiftly and easily in late 1941 and early 1942 were rendered valueless.

The booklet is organized into a first section that explores the development and employment of submarines and escorts as conceived by the two nations prior to and during the war. With this foundation in place, separate sections then examine the strategic environment in which the campaign was fought, a relatively lengthy section as to the technical specifications of the various classes of vessel used by both sides, a short review of the personnel and their training on both sides, a thumbnail sketch of the American campaign against shipping and the ineffective Japanese countermeasures, and a conclusion.

The production quality of the booklet is very high, with a large number of photographs as well as diagrams and illustrations of the various classes of vessels involved. Every effort has been made to be even-handed in this approach, which succeeds quite well in that regard. Accompanying the illustrations are

tables of typical data, such as performance parameters, weapons and dates of construction and similar aspects of relevance and interest.

This is absolutely not an academic book, but it can serve as a rough and ready sketch of the American submarine war against Japan. Its small bibliography can at least initiate the exploration of more comprehensive accounts, but it only represents a start. The analysis provided is high level and is fine as far as it goes but is limited with little nuance. Its merits include brevity and can serve as a quick introduction and overview to the subject. The booklet is also well produced as is typical of Osprey Publications and will find a ready audience attracted to such offerings.

Ian Yeates

Regina, Saskatchewan

Mark Stille. *Leyte Gulf 1944 (2): Surigao Strait and Cape Engaño*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2022. 96 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. US \$24.00, CDN \$32.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47284-285-5.

The October 1944 showdown between the United States (USN) and Imperial Japanese (IJN) navies in and around Leyte Gulf enjoys the distinction of being the largest naval battle in human history. The scale of it was so vast that, in writing about it for Osprey's Campaign series, Mark Stille needed two volumes to cover properly its various aspects. Whereas the first volume focused on the attempt by the warships of IJN's First Diversion Strike Force to sink the American amphibious forces stationed off of the eastern coast of the Philippine island of Leyte, the volume under review addresses the destruction of the Second Diversion Strike Force in Surigao Strait and the annihilation of the remnants of the IJN's carrier arm at Cape Engaño.

Both battles reflected the complex nature of the IJN's plan. Known as Operation *Sho-I*, it was an attempt to defend the Philippines from invasion with a single massive effort by the Combined Fleet. Though crippled by the lack of aircraft and experienced pilots, Japan's aircraft carriers were key to the plan, as they were deployed as a lure for the numerically superior American forces. Once William Halsey's Third Fleet was drawn away from the amphibious forces, the First and Second Diversion Strike Forces would converge on Leyte Gulf to destroy them. Stille is highly critical of the plan, noting that by the time the Japanese fleet was scheduled to arrive, the American troops would already have been landed on Leyte, leaving only empty ships to sink. Even if it had achieved that result, the Japanese would then have been trapped between the USN's Third and Seventh fleets and faced almost certain destruction. In this respect, the operation was more about creating "a glorious opportunity

to go down fighting, thus defending the IJN's peculiar brand of honor, than a possibility to affect the outcome of the war" (37).

Stille's focus in this volume on the ancillary aspects of the plan underscores his argument. Not only were the carriers of the deceptively-named Main Body intended as little more than targets for American airpower, but the Second Diversion Strike Force commanded by Shoji Nishimura was so small that Stille argues that it was also effectively a sacrificial decoy. Its claim to fame came in the manner of its sacrifice, as it was destroyed in the early morning hours of 25 October in what proved the last battleship duel in history. The Japanese battleships *Fuso* and *Yamashiro* that made up the core of the force were not only outnumbered by the six battleships of Jesse Oldendorf's Task Group 77.2, but they lacked the fire control radar that proved so effective for the Americans in the darkness. After running a gauntlet of torpedo-launching PT boats and destroyers that knocked out *Fuso*, it was left to *Yamashiro* alone to face the American battleships, which achieved every surface warrior's dream of "crossing the T" and subjecting Nishimura's remaining vessels to the full firepower of the battleships' main guns, as well as those of the accompanying cruisers and destroyers.

In doing so, Nishimura's force served its purpose by occupying the Seventh Fleet's capital ships, just as Jisaburo Ozawa's Main Force accomplished its mission by luring Halsey's carriers and battleships north. Here Stille engages with one of the great controversies of modern naval history by evaluating Halsey's decision to leave the amphibious ships unprotected by pursuing the carriers with his entire force. He points out that Halsey had been directed by his superior, Chester Nimitz, the commander-in-chief of the US Pacific Fleet, to make the destruction of the enemy fleet his primary goal should the opportunity present itself, an instruction the aggressive Halsey hardly needed. Stille also notes that the Americans had no knowledge that the carriers were no longer a threat, and that they believed that the Main Force's destruction would provide the decisive victory many felt had been missed at the battle of the Philippine Sea four months earlier. Yet after presenting the case for the defense, Stille renders his judgment by deciding that Halsey should have divided his forces, even though doing so flew in the face of USN tactical doctrine because it left the fleet vulnerable to defeat in detail. Nevertheless, Stille concludes that for all of the lack of imagination displayed by Halsey, the United States Navy did indeed win a decisive victory at Leyte Gulf by inflicting a "calamitous" attrition on the IJN that ended their ability to conduct large-scale operations.

Stille's book is an impressive exercise in concision, as he compresses into less than a hundred well-illustrated pages two important components of a massive naval clash. He presents the details of it with an assuredness that reflects his considerable experience writing about the Pacific war for

Osprey's various titles. Yet most scholars already familiar with the battle will find nothing that is new within its pages, as the author's bibliography consists entirely of a collection of the "greatest hits" published about it over the past 75 years. While he uses these to write a work that is a good introduction for someone new to the subject, anyone who has already read the fine books published about the battle by Samuel Eliot Morison, C. Vann Woodward, or H. P. Willmott can afford to pass on this one.

Mark Klobas
Phoenix, Arizona

Keith Thomson. *Born to be Hanged: The Epic Story of the Gentlemen Pirates, Who Raided the South Seas, Rescued a Princess, and Stole a Fortune.* New York, Boston and London: Little, Brown & Company, www.littlebrown.com, 2022. 371pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$32.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-3167-0-3611.

Although there have been many nonfiction books about the pirate era, occasionally one work sets a new standard for this genre. *Born to be Hanged* achieves this benchmark. It is maritime history, almost written in the style of an adventure novel. The vivid narration features graphic accounts of sea and land battles, treasure seeking, fierce storms, perilous jungle treks and river rides, mutinies, and improbable plot twists.

The book is divided into three sections: "The Sacred Hunger for Gold, The South Seas, and Straits." The main protagonist is Basil Ringrose, supported by many colourful characters such as Bartholomew Sharp, Lionel Wafer, William Dampier, Edward Cook, John Cox, William Dick, and "a cameo" featuring Henry Morgan. Ringrose was a surgeon who joined a buccaneer band led by Sharp in 1679. They crossed the Isthmus of Darien to attack Panama, and later, seized a ship to cruise the eastern Pacific. Leadership disputes erupted and the pirate alliance broke up. Ringrose and Sharp continued on sailing around Cape Horn for the first time from west to east. They journeyed to the Caribbean, and later arrived at Dartmouth, England, in 1681. As the tale unfolds, Thomson ponders the character traits of these unusual and complex characters. This account was largely based upon Ringrose's supplement to John Esquemeling's 1685 book *The Buccaneers of America* and influence by Dampier's *The Campeachy Voyages* and *A New Voyage Round the World*.

The first part introduces the maritime adventurers in the quest for riches, largely gold and silver, valuable commodities believed to be found on the isthmus of Panama in the Darien jungle. Much of this section involves the search for a kidnapped indigenous Kuna princess, and a wild trek across the jungle and tempestuous rivers from the East Coast to the west ending in the

Pacific. This is followed by a peripatetic, wide-ranging south sea adventure more focused upon the search for treasure on remote Pacific islands and settlements, but certainly piratical in nature. The pirate code “politics” allowed for the election of their captains and the distribution of wealth or bounty, which often led to untimely and unexpected leadership shifts. The buccaneer band covered a vast amount of uncharted ocean and encountered many clashes with the Spanish and some native people. The last section is a homeward bound tale where the motley band became the first documented mariners to successfully sail from the Pacific to the Atlantic around “The Horn” and ultimately to England. Their next problem was that as survivors, now criminals, they had to face Admiralty law justice. The result was an unexpected conclusion under the Admiralty Court’s iconic “Silver Oar.”

Thomson’s book contains instances of exceptionally graphic and moving prose. Although it is unusual to include long quotes in a review, the following samples will hopefully capture the tone:

The Darien jungle ... instantly cut off from the rest of the world by throbbing, fecund darkness. Sixty feet overhead, branches, leaves, and vines grappled with one another, in a competition for sunlight, forming a veritable ceiling. Every so often a speck of blue sky appeared through this canopy, illuminating a galaxy of flowers on his underside.... The men were concerned with bongos, squat trees, whose roots spread across the forest floor, like tentacles, and pochotes whose trunks were coated with thorns, bigger, and sharper than goat’s horns.... Worse were the Chunga palms, whose long spines appeared designed to pierce human flesh, and deliver a dose of infectious bacteria when they did.... [Also] manchineel trees, known for the dangerous fruit [that] ‘smell and look like a pleasant apple, small and fragrant, but of a poisonous nature’.... Its bark was also to be avoided on account of its milky white toxic sap (22).

As the whiskey took hold, the surgeon opened his instrument case, which was, pragmatically died red. Beside the sailcloth-draped platform that would serve as the operating table, he laid out his instruments, including an ‘amputation knife’ that resembled a curved dagger, along with a scissors-handled ‘crow’s beak’ clamp used to constrict blood flow, and, for the same purpose, several metal cauteries that he would heat in his fire pot.... [A] wooden rod or stick [was] given to the patient to bite down on during the operation so that it ... could curtail screams that might interfere with the surgeon’s focus. And if ever a surgeon needed focus, it was during a shift forward above-the-knee amputation, which was analogous to carving a large rib roast while it was still attached to a living cow” (105-106).

The medical profession has been aware of scurvy—the name is derived from the word *scurf*, meaning scaly, skin, or lesions.... [In the advanced]

second stage of the disease, the gums turn purple and soften to the consistency of a sponge, causing teeth to loosen, if the disease persisted for two more weeks, the symptoms would also include ecchymoses, enormous purple-blue bruises on the skin that develop into open sores and ulcer. . . . [The body] begins to deteriorate, leaving the body like a brick building suddenly without mortar. Blood vessels tear, bones easily break, and the wounds cannot heal” (186 -188).

In summary, Keith Thomson’s *Born to be Hanged* is an extraordinary book. It is very well written and among the most readable maritime histories focused upon the late-seventeenth-century pirate era. I unreservedly recommend the work to maritime scholars as well as lay readers interested in the life and times of this period and the many colourful characters that populate this complex, exciting tale.

Louis Arthur Norton
West Simsbury, Connecticut

Guy Warner. *Atlantic Linchpin: The Azores in Two World Wars*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, www.seaforthpublishing.com, 2021. 160 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £24.97, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39901-090-0. (E-book available.)

In *Atlantic Linchpin: The Azores in Two World Wars*, Guy Warner explores the role that the islands in the Portuguese archipelago of the Azores played in the First and Second World Wars. He also briefly discusses relevant events before, between, and after both conflicts.

Wasting little time, the author examines the importance of aviation in the First World War, focusing on how both the United States and the United Kingdom developed air bases on the islands. He also explores the activities of the various units stationed on the islands, including anti-submarine warfare and search and rescue. Of note is the role of United States Marine Corps in the Azores, a seldom-discussed aspect of aviation history. Following a brief discussion of expansion and development on the islands between the conflicts, the author moves on to the Second World War, with the United States Navy and the Royal Airforce Coastal Command providing search and rescue support, anti-submarine warfare, convoy escort, and ship replenishment and maintenance. Warner then discusses the fate of various airfield once the islands transitioned back to civilian life after the war.

Accessible to both students of naval aviation and first-time readers, the book reads like a unit or instillation history, focusing on the activities of units and missions conducted from the various airfields, rather than a single unit or individual – a book about places rather than people. Readers unfamiliar with the role of the Azores, or even Portugal, during both world wars will find

this a good entry point. Aviation buffs will enjoy a little-known history. The author's prolific use of period photographs provides his text with both depth and context.

One of the more useful contributions of this work is the author's use of sources. He draws heavily from published secondary sources, providing an extensive bibliography for those wishing to learn more. Warner also makes excellent use of British archival documents, which add academic value and depth to his work. Nor does he neglect websites which will help those with limited access to archival sources. Unfortunately, there are few comparable Portuguese sources, which perhaps explains the book's certain lack of depth in places. Given that Portugal was officially neutral in both of these conflicts, the absence of official documentation is understandable. This may also account for the lack of historical treatment of the Azores during the wars. Warner's work covers a period of over thirty years which gives his work breadth if not depth. While this keeps readers moving through the text, the occasional gap makes the work feel rushed in places.

Nevertheless, Warner's *Atlantic Linchpin* is a welcome addition to the historiography of both conflicts. He sheds light on a lesser known subject while encouraging further research by readers of military history into the role of Portugal as a neutral nation making aviation history in both wars. Casual readers may find a new twist to a history they thought they knew.

Michael Razer
Ward, Arkansas

Gordon Williamson. *Hitler's Navy. The Kriegsmarine in World War II.* Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.bloomsbury.com, 2022. 256 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, bibliography, index. UK £30.00, US \$40.00, CDN \$55.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-4728-4792-8.

Hitler's Navy explores, the actions and composition of Germany's Kriegsmarine during the Second World War. Author Williamson begins with a very brief discussion of the development, doctrine, and organization, of the Kriegsmarine following the First World War, before transitioning into an overview of Germany's naval mission and operations during the Second World War. Without discussing specific events in detail, he offers a complete overview of German wartime operations. Following this is a comprehensive examination of the ships of the Kriegsmarine by type then class, allowing readers to quickly find reference material for both specific classes of vessel and individual ships. He provides technical details for each ship class as well as a brief operational history for the major vessels of the Kriegsmarine, ranging from the better known ships such as the *Bismarck* and *Graf Spee*, as well as lesser-known smaller

cruisers, destroyers, auxiliary cruisers, and raiders. Finally, Williamson wraps up his examination of the Kriegsmarine, with torpedo boats, coastal security vessels, minesweepers, and auxiliary ships. . Williamson concludes his work with a brief examination of training, and service in the Kriegsmarine, taking time to examine lesser known branches and organizations like coastal artillery.

Hitler's Navy. The Kriegsmarine in World War II provides a solid and comprehensive overview of both the activities and ships of the German navy without delving into detail about specific ships or events. While this provides little new information for those already familiar with the material, it remains a useful reference while serving as gateway for new readers. The technical details and illustrations allow for a quick examination of the ships discussed in a compact and easily accessible volume. There is also a comprehensive bibliography providing individual works for each type of ship discussed, as well as books that explore tactics and events in greater depth. If there is a deficiency in the bibliography, it may be due to the fact that the large number of sources are provided by a comparatively limited number of authors. While not a failure of the work, it does limit the diversity of opinion and perspective.

In conclusion, *Hitler's Navy* is a useful resource for information regarding the full spectrum of ships and personnel attached to the Kriegsmarine, including types of ships and units not often discussed in depth. The bibliography is especially valuable for readers interested in the German navy and the history of the Second World War at sea

Michael Razer
Ward, Arkansas

Marc Wortman. *Admiral Hyman Rickover: Engineer of Power*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, www.yalebooks.press.edu, 2022. 328 pp., illustrations, notes, index. US \$26.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0300-24310.

Admiral Hyman George Rickover, the father of America's Nuclear Navy, had a remarkable engineering career. His personality was famously confrontational, but he was instrumental in keeping world peace from the first use of nuclear weapons that ended the Second World War, to the present. An atypical naval academy graduate hero (for some, a rogue), he performed active duty for 63 years, the longest-serving naval officer in U.S. history, focusing on rigorous reactor safety and searching for insightful innovations among his staff.

Born in the tiny Polish shtetl of Maków-Mazowiecki, the bright non-athletic five-foot-eight Jew was born Chaim Godalia Rykower, anglicized to Hyman George Rickover. His father was a tailor who immigrated with his family to America for its promise of opportunity. Assimilating into his new country, the young Hyman passed the admissions examinations and earned an

appointment at the United States Naval Academy. Although a perfectionist, he was far from a military martinet. Antisemitism was common in the United States, and especially within the august naval officer ranks. Rickover tolerated abuse, particularly during his years as a midshipman. One of 17 Jewish classmates (2%), only Rickover and six other classmates would survive: he graduated a respectable 107th in the 540 members of the class of 1922. Like most newly commissioned ensigns, he aspired to a line officer's post, one that would advance a career. He soon was assigned to the submarine service and displayed talent as an engineering officer. He later became the skipper of the USS *Finch*, an antiquated mine sweeper at the beginning of the Second World War, but this did not work out well. His arrogant ways and antisocial nature alienated many, which did not help foster his career as a line officer. Rickover finally opted to become an Engineering Duty Only (EDO) officer which, at the time, was a difficult route to high naval command.

After the dropping of the atomic device that helped end the war, the pentagon thought that a slow response navy might be relatively ineffective and perhaps superfluous. A strong air force would be the chief national protection pillar. Rickover, however, saw this devastating weapon as an energy source, if properly harnessed. Building on the scientific breakthroughs of the atomic bomb project, he created the nuclear navy almost overnight. While nearly everyone considered this a fantasy, he built the world's first commercial atomic power station at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, astonishingly within a single decade. He was instrumental in the buildup of the U.S. nuclear submarine and surface fleet plus the civilian nuclear power industry. Uncharacteristically for a naval academy graduate, Rickover disparaged regulations, the chain of command, rank, wearing a uniform, and frequently used insulting language to senior and junior officers. Rickover challenged established authority with a ferocious will and combative disposition but encouraged innovative engineering and unmatched accomplishments of management and organization while simultaneously focusing on rigorous reactor safety and developing innovations among his staff.

Rickover's exceptional ability to accomplish formidable objectives won his Nuclear Reactor Program (NR) wide public acclaim and personal honours for himself. These included presidential citations, honorary doctoral degrees, and congressional gold medals. Despite all this acclaim, Rickover was constantly the subject of bitter controversy and twice passed over for promotions. In 1953, he was saved from involuntary retirement only by way of congressional intervention. Nearly 40 years later, when he finally was forced to step down as a four-star admiral, all three living American presidents attended his retirement party.

Admiral Rickover had a well-deserved reputation for doing whatever was

necessary to see his projects to completion, ignoring traditional naval customs and bypassing organizational hierarchies. He created his own independent power structure with the help of sympathetic members of Congress and members of the media. He demanded the highest standards, pushing defense contractors and his staff (as well as himself) to the limit. At the same time, he clashed with the establishment—many Secretaries of Defense, Secretaries of the Navy, and Chiefs of Naval Operations. A master at intimidation, the admiral would exhibit fury with anyone whom he felt was indolent or incompetent. His interviews with young officers, applying to be accepted in his program were renowned. Wanting to make sure they could adapt to whatever situation they found themselves in, he typically had them sit in a chair whose front legs had been shortened so that they had to struggle to remain seated. If they gave unacceptable answers to intimidating questions, they were summarily dismissed or sent to sit in a broom closet for long periods of time to rethink their answers. Others were assigned curious or extremely challenging tasks to test their ingenuity.

Rickover perceived his greatest failure as the loss of the nuclear-powered submarine *Thresher* that disappeared while conducting deep-sea tests. He had been on the sub during its initial sea trials two years earlier. Rickover felt that it was only fair to share the risk inherent in the first voyage of any submarine for which he was responsible. He agonized over this loss for many years, long after it was found that its loss was likely due to faulty welding during Navy shipyard repairs, and not due to his engineering design.

Wortman's book largely avoids the technical details of Rickover's work but focuses on the admiral's fight to build and extend the nuclear fleet and the often-difficult relationships in the pursuit of that goal. He documents Rickover's efforts that had far-reaching effects on the post-war world. The excellent standards he demanded were qualities that had influence well beyond the Navy. The admiral cared deeply about the United States and threats to its security, especially during the Cold War. These concerns likely made him such a taskmaster. Yet he was a man who held the strong religious values of his family of Jewish and Christian faiths, and for charity and justice. His influence continues to be felt today.

This is a very well written, thought-provoking, inspiring, and moving biography about an important figure in naval and American history. I highly recommend *Admiral Hyman Rickover: Engineer of Power* to maritime historians and lay readers alike.

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Matthew Wright. *The Battlecruiser New Zealand. A Gift to Empire.*

Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2021. 272 pp., illustrations, appendices, bibliography, notes, index. UK £25.00, hardback: ISBN 978-1-52678-403-2.

The Battlecruiser New Zealand. A Gift to Empire, by Matthew Wright explores the history of HMS *New Zealand* from its proposal to its eventual scraping, covering in the process the economics and politics of the Dreadnought Age.

Wright opens by addressing the political motivations and complexities of how, during the Imperial Period, various British dominions proposed to pay for the construction of warships, for the defense of the Empire and of themselves. He examines what prompted New Zealand's desire to have a more powerful naval presence and their proposal to build a new battlecruiser for the territory of New Zealand. Lacking the industrial capacity to build the ship in their own yards, New Zealand offered to pay for the construction of a new battlecruiser to be used in home waters. Wright discusses the economic arrangements required to budget and pay for a project of this size and complexity and its financial impact on the nation without the need for an extensive background in economics or the New Zealand economy. Finally, he explores the service history of HMS *New Zealand*, its role in the First World War, and its fate.

In this way, Wright examines the Dreadnought Age and the First World War through the lens of a single vessel. Those who have studied the period might not find anything particularly novel here, but it is a good introduction for readers unfamiliar with the material, especially in the context of sea battles like Jutland and others in which *New Zealand* was involved. Wright does a wonderful job describing the relationship between the ship HMS *New Zealand*, and the people and the nation of New Zealand, making an interesting ship's history feel more personal.

The author's use of extensive primary and secondary sources provides a wealth of context related to the career of HMS *New Zealand*. Referring to personal papers, newspapers, and oral history, Wright explains why his interpretation of events may differ from other First World War historians and either supports or dispels some of the myths and legends surrounding the ship's construction and service. His in-depth exploration of the interaction between New Zealanders and their warship transforms the ship from a construction of steel and guns into the symbol of a nation with its own distinct culture within the British Empire. The popular support for building a warship and the national fascination with HMS *New Zealand*, both when it arrived to visit, as well as its exploits during the war, set this book apart from other First World War ship biographies.

The construction of *New Zealand* highlights the rapid technological innovation and development that characterized the years prior to the First

World War, but which rendered the ship obsolete at the end of the conflict. News that the ship would be scrapped was met with sadness and dismay, illustrating the deep devotion the populace had for their namesake ship, and the cultural impacts of the ship's service and disposal.

Wright's exploration of the history of the HMS *New Zealand* captures the politics, events, and technology of the Dreadnought Age. The construction of large warships at the time demanded political motivation as well as financial commitment and indicates the lengths nations would go to in the name of national prestige. Despite their naval role, warships like HMS *New Zealand* had a cultural impact on both the nation of New Zealand and on citizens of the British Empire around the globe.

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Walter S. Zapotoczny Jr. *Crushing the Japanese Surface Fleet at the Battle of the Surigao Strait: The Last Crossing of the T.* Havertown, PA: Fonthill Media, www.fonthill.media, 2022. 238 pp., illustrations, abbreviations, appendices, bibliography. UK £25.00, cloth; ISBN: 978-1-78155-873-7.

The naval history of the Second World War is full of dramatic moments. The *Bismarck's* only sortie, Midway, the Marianas Turkey Shoot, and of course, the Battle of Leyte Gulf all stand out not just because they catch the public's attention, but because of their significance to the war in general. Surprisingly, most people think of the Battle of Leyte Gulf only in terms of the sinking of the Imperial Japanese Navy's *Musahi*, or of the epic fight of the destroyer escorts against the main force of the IJN. As incredibly heroic as that battle was, and it was essential for the preservation of the invasion force, there was another side of the fighting for Leyte Gulf that many people forget. To the south of Leyte, in the Surigao Strait, the very last major surface engagement between battleships was fought on the night of 25 October 1944. Overshadowed by the fighting the next day, the battle of the Surigao Strait saw the last time naval vessels were able to cross the T on an opposing force and played an essential role in protecting the Allied landing forces in Leyte Gulf. By preventing a southern force from breaking into the anchorage, the US Navy managed to reduce the threat at Leyte and prevented an epic disaster. Yet, the battle of the Surigao Strait is almost never talked about.

Noted historian and author Walter Zapotoczny Jr. attempts to rectify this problem. Over the span of ten chapters and eight appendices, Zapotoczny sets up the Battle of Leyte Gulf and specifically, the fight for the Surigao Strait. In doing so, he brings a wide assortment of materials together to support our understanding of the events, starting with a discussion of the importance of

crossing the T and providing a background to the reader about other notable battles in which this happened. In chapter one, Zapotoczny builds upon this starting point to relay the events in the southern Leyte Gulf. Chapter two examines the strategic situation in the Pacific by 1944. Both chapters three and five examine the evolution of naval doctrine within both the American (chapter 3) and Japanese (chapter 5) navies and how it evolved over the course of the war. Chapters four and six examine the American invasion of the Philippines and the Japanese plans to counter this invasion. The remaining chapters examine the battle itself, the battle of the Surigao Strait, the after-action reports of the battle and, lastly, chapter ten provides a battle analysis. This is supported by eight appendices that examine everything from the nature of the individual fleet units to the weapons being used. They also provide biographies of three key admirals and a discussion of ship readiness and the material conditions in the fleet.

Combined, the material presented by Zapotoczny is most impressive. Well written with a lively prose and clear focus, it is an enjoyable read that provides a unique understanding of arguably one of the most significant aspects of the battle for Leyte Gulf. His inclusion of the evolution of doctrine and, by extension, training and planning for operations provides a very valuable insight into how naval technology and thinking changed during the war. It also puts the fighting within the greater context of strategic thinking at the time, something that is often not discussed by most authors. Most readers will find that to be a unique contribution to their understanding of the naval war and as such, will broaden their grasp of the subject. Yet despite that, there is actually very little about the battle of Surigao Strait. Only one chapter really deals with the battle and, despite the incredible set up to get there, it feels like a bit of a letdown. So much more could have been said about the battle, so many aspects of the fighting elaborated upon, but the reader is left with a feeling that the account is a bit too brief. Yes, chapter 9 includes many of the after-action reports of the ships involved, but this does not really help the reader at all. While interesting and a rich source of information, the after-action reports are a bit disappointing as they are not particularly well worked into the text and are very difficult to follow if the reader has limited experience with such materials. They seem like a superfluous addition to the text, something far better suited to an appendix.

Despite how enjoyable the text is to read, and the incredible material being presented to the reader, there are some serious issues here that need to be addressed. For a book on the battle of the Surigao Strait, it offers very little about the battle itself. Since it is always overshadowed by the battles to the north, that does the reader a disservice. Rather than the after-action reports, I would have loved to see a better breakdown of the battle. Supported by the

doctrinal material in incredible appendices, a thorough discussion of the battle would really have been a superb addition to the literature on the Second World War. Without it, the book misses a grand opportunity to really make us rethink its importance. This problem is only magnified by the absence of citation. How a text with such a wealth of technical material and incredible analysis cannot have a single endnote is beyond this reviewer. Certainly, it fails to meet the academic standard there. Sadly, it also undercuts the authority of the text and raises questions about accuracy and authenticity. That is heartbreaking considering the author's outstanding research.

Overall, I recommend the book as an introduction to the study of the Battle of Leyte Gulf and the naval war in general. The discussion of doctrine and the related materials make it worthwhile. I also recommend it to anyone interested in naval history as it presents many things that they will find fascinating. The reader is cautioned, however, to back up this work with other sources to help validate and support what Zapotoczny has provided.

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