

Book Reviews

Przemyslaw Budzbon, Jan Radziemski, and Marek Twardowski. *Warships of the Soviet Fleets, 1939-1945. Volume II: Escorts and Smaller Fighting Ships*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, www.seaforthpublishing.com, 2022. 304 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £45.00, hardback; ISBN 978-1-39902-277-4.

This work is the second entry in a multipart tabulation of all known Soviet warships from the era of the Second World War, including civilian conversions and Lend-Lease vessels. This particular volume addresses escorts and smaller warships, with Volume I having covered major combatant vessels and the succeeding Volume III focusing on auxiliary craft. Less a traditional book and more an extremely detailed database, this compendium by Budzbon, Radziemski and Twardowski offers researchers and readers a comprehensive English-language source on the myriad array of often-forgotten vessels that were fielded by the Soviet Union during the war years. Surviving period photographs placed throughout the work, alongside new outboard profile and top-down renderings, help expand the information's effectiveness, with a quick-reference index at the end to aid in location of individual ships.

As stated earlier, this is not a traditional scholarly work, so it begins without preamble or analysis. Instead, two key maps are printed on the work's endpapers illustrating the main Soviet naval bases and shipyards and an extensive alphabetical acronym guide provides both the Romanized Russian words and English translations. From here, the authors delve into the eleven warship categories discussed in the work, continuing from Volume I by having the first section, "Escort Ships," labeled as section 11. Each section is further divided into subsections such as Soviet-built vessels, civilian conversions, Lend-Lease ships, and war prizes, with each class entry largely following the same layout. The layout begins with a statement of the name of the class or converted vessel, along with any relevant Soviet Project Numbers. Basic data

The Northern Mariner / Le marin du nord 34, no. 2 (Summer 2024), 279-319

on displacement, dimensions, machinery, armament, and crew complement are then provided, followed by a tabulation chart of all relevant vessels with their name, builder, yard number, fleet assignment, key dates, and fate. In the case of smaller vessels or civilian conversions, this is often reduced to name or number, commissioning date, fleet assignment, and remarks, with similar variance for Lend-Lease ships and war prizes. Depending on factors like size, class, and service, these tables may then be augmented with reference images and profile renderings to increase visual understanding. For the large escort ships, a textual breakdown of ship-type history, wartime modifications, and brief ship histories are provided. Smaller but equally important vessels, such as submarine hunters, receive a simpler text entry, while the smallest and most obscure watercraft must rely on the "Remarks" section of their data tables to provide additional information.

For the "Smaller Fighting Ships," the level of detail applied by the authors is impressive, as they cover a wide assortment of ship types that are commonly overlooked in wider narratives of naval and riverine warfare. These include floating artillery batteries, anti-aircraft ships, net vessels, and landing craft, with designs as small as landing tenders (motorboats that are sometimes akin to the Higgins craft produced in the United States). These uniquely Soviet designs can then be compared to the larger American LCIs and LCTs to understand the Soviet's general lack of vital amphibious landing vessels and the resulting effects on their forces, a fact further highlighted by the work's last two photographs, which illustrates some of the countless civilian sail and rowboats impressed into service for this task (p. 296).

In terms of possible improvements, few come to mind. An expansion of the textual information provided for some of the smaller vessel types would be appreciated, although it is understandable that there may be minimal sources available on the subject. Similarly, a brief introductory analysis for each section touching on Soviet doctrine regarding the discussed ship types would further aid in the work's effectiveness by providing context for the numbers, deployments, and general fates. Finally, given that some images mention Soviet camouflage and paint patterns in their captions, it might be informative to have an appendix or future volume address the standard painting conventions of these ships with colorized versions of the outboard profile renderings created for this work. These are, of course, merely suggestions for how to expand upon an already solid work, and their absence is by no means a detraction.

All in all, *Warships of the Soviet Fleets 1939-1945 Volume II* is an excellent resource for those interested in researching the lesser-known vessels of the Soviet Navy during the Second World War years. Budzbon, Radziemski and Twardowski have done an impressive amount of research into a variety of small, sometimes obscure, craft. They have presented their technical and

service information in an easy-to-access English-language source, furthering the historiography of the subject, and expanding access to data that is otherwise difficult to find. Combined with the other two volumes in this series, *Warships of the Soviet Fleets* is a fine technical database for those studying the various naval assets deployed both on the Eastern Front and in the final days of the war in the Pacific Theater.

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Theodore Corbett. *A Maritime History of the American Revolutionary War: An Atlantic-wide Conflict Over Independence and Empire*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword Maritime, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2023. 224 pp., illustrations, maps, index, etc. UK £25.00, US \$34.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39904-041-9.

The American Navy during the Revolution was not very effective as a fighting force, but it did its job by existing. In contrast to Britain, a lack of naval infrastructure and industry, as well as martial tradition and discipline, hampered the nascent nation's ability to effectively contest the seas. Theodore Corbett's monograph *A Maritime History of the American Revolutionary War* provides thirty-four short chapters divided among ten chronological and thematic sections that present a cogent, although cursory, representation of the maritime conflict along the shores of North America and beyond.

The first two thematic groupings are a worthwhile comparison and contrast of general naval and maritime development of the two antagonists, the American Colonies and Britain. After reading of the deep disparity between the British naval experience, traditions and capacity, versus the vastly underdeveloped state of American shipbuilding and their lack of naval experience, one would not be surprised by the comment of Samuel Chase of Maryland, who thought that forming a Continental navy to fight the most powerful maritime force of the day was "The maddest idea in the world."

While a blue-water navy was being considered and developed by the colonial government, there were other maritime concerns. Not all British North American colonies, such as Quebec, were eager to split from their mother county. Part 3 of the text relates the contest for the control of Lake Champlain that necessitated the development of lacustrine navies for both belligerents. The next two parts are again a great contrast between the British and American strategies during the war. With overwhelming superiority, the British enacted a blockade on North America that was at times effective

and brutal. In contrast, the anemic colonial navy could not go broadside to broadside with their adversary with any chance of success. It was a numbers game that the Americans would surely lose. As necessity is the mother of invention, the colonists turned to raiding along the British Isles. The limited success of these operations was overblown by the propaganda value and the numerous chapters devoted to John Paul Jones exemplify this.

The following two parts acknowledge the French entry into the war and the potential threat their fleet offered. However, until the Battle of the Capes in 1781, the British, for the most part, could sail along the southern and New England coasts with little naval interference. In fact, they destroyed American squadrons at both Charleston and the Penobscot, which was then part of Massachusetts, all the while defending their base in Halifax from Rebel incursions. Spain too comes in for examination in the next part of the text, with Gibraltar as their goal in the conflict. The British defended Gibraltar better than its other trans-Atlantic colonies.

The final parts of the text concern the conclusion of the conflict. After the debacle at the Penobscot and the Siege of Charleston, the American navy was severely limited in its numbers. American privateering, both Patriot and Loyalist, were the main maritime activities for the duration of the war. Unfortunately for the Rebels, the Loyalists had support and cover from the British. In contrast, the French fleet's exploits during the autumn of 1781 assisted in bringing the war to an ultimate close. This denouement was a long time in being realized and the British had revenge on the French and Dutch for their support, tacit or explicit, of the rebelling colonists.

A limited number of black-and-white maps are contained within the text with an additional mid-book insert of other black-and-white images, mostly of historic figures and a limited number of battles. End notes for each of the short chapters are helpful for a deeper dive into the sources. An index rounds out the research tools. However, in such a survey of the conflict, the provided information may not be enlightening for a serious student of the subject.

The American Revolution was a worldwide conflict. Focusing on the maritime aspects of the Atlantic theater, Corbett does a credible job of introducing the uninitiated to this aspect of the war. A broad survey of such a contest in only 200-plus pages is necessarily limited in the information that can be transmitted. The book may be fine for those interested in the Atlantic aspects of the war or the general reader in naval or eighteenth-century history. It may even be useful as a college text for an introductory survey of the Revolution. However, those familiar with the conflict, especially its maritime dimensions, may not find the volume as useful.

That said, it is a fine introduction to the topic.

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Christopher Deakes. *A Postcard History of the Passenger Liner*. Essex, CT: Lyons Press, www.lyonspress.com, 2023. 160 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, US \$29.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-4930-7761-8. (E-book available.)

Originally published in 2005, and again in 2012, this is an unaltered republication of Christopher Deakes' exploration of the history of passenger liners through the postcards created to advertise and immortalize the ships of the various shipping companies. Heavily illustrated (bordering on overwhelmingly so), this book takes the reader through the developments within the passenger liner mode of travel from the 1880s to 1980s. Evolution of ship design, changes in size, routes, and passenger numbers, the role the ships played in colonization and troop transport during wartime, and the effects of international air transportation are laid out in six short, detail-packed chapters. It is a marvelous use of postcards as a research tool and creates an aesthetically pleasing volume.

The use of postcards as artefacts of the past has picked up significantly since the first publication of this book. They have been employed in the study of institutions, such as asylums, orphanages, and hospitals. Postcards sent between soldiers and their families in the First World War are used to provide insight into war's personal impacts. They have even appeared in research on anthropology and colonialism, urban histories, and West Yorkshire canals. The first picture postcard appeared in 1870, in France. The early cards had a picture on one side, with a boarder for any message the sender might like to include. The reverse side was for the address only. Between 1902 and 1907 various countries passed postal legislation allowing for the address side to be divided in two, with one half for the address and the other for the message. The image on the front then consumed the entire side.

The postcards in this volume are from Deakes' personal collection of cards depicting artists' paintings of ships, destinations, and onboard activity. There are no photographs or hand-painted photograph postcards. Some of the cards were created from company advertising posters or artwork commissioned by the companies, while others were specifically painted for the postcard market. A few were done by individuals who later arranged to have postcards made, with or without the shipping company's involvement.

The postcards largely served as advertisements for the companies and their various routes. Cards were left in accommodations aboard ship, could be a tear-off feature on the ship's menu, and were found in tourist and news agent shops. Some cards were maps of routes, or had the company name in large type, with a ship as a background feature. Postcards were a cheap and easy way to communicate, and collecting them was a major hobby in the early twentieth century, known as deltiology. The collection includes early steamships, which retained sails to assist the steam power or replace it if it failed. Technological innovation is depicted across the sample. Ship size increases, coal-fired ships with three and four funnels give way to larger oil-fueled vessels with just one or twin funnels for exhaust. Pools, gyms, restaurants, and accommodations are all rendered on postcards. Every improvement or innovation provided an opportunity to advertise what one company offered that others did not and attract more customers. More could be said about the impact of the passenger industry on postcards and vice versa.

If the reader is looking for exact representations of what a ship looked like at a particular point in time, this is not the place to look. The artists used their license to paint as they saw. Colors did not always accurately reflect how the ship was painted, and artists often elongated the ships. Some ships were painted once and then, with a change of the name on the card, the image reused for other similarly designed ships in the company's fleet. Deakes relates how one artist painted a passenger ship before it was constructed. The postcard was produced and circulated, but the ship was converted to a troopship while still under construction and was sunk during the First World War. More details appear in the earlier images, but over time take a back seat to a more expressionist take on the ship's size, the allure of sailing, or the destinations.

Art deco paintings appear in the 1930s. The postcards through the 1950s and 1960s had a mixture of styles, with a fair number returning to the realism of earlier cards. Deakes discusses the various artists and printing houses that were involved in the postcard trade. Some well-known artists, such as William Wyllie, Charles E. Turner, and Robert Schmidt-Hamburg, were hired to paint pictures of ships for the shipping companies. These paintings were then printed as posters and postcards, with the artist's name seldom appearing on either. Many artists have largely disappeared from art history. Thus, Deakes does a great service by bringing their names forward and giving the reader a glimpse of their work. The final chapter consists of a list of artists with brief bios and provides an excellent resource to begin further research. The bibliography provides sources on art history and deltiology, although it is now somewhat dated.

The messages on the postcards capture a moment in the sender's life. Deakes gives examples of the sorrow at departure, the excitement of coming home, and the call of duty for the colonial administrator and the soldier. Apparently, army censors did not delete words from postcards, even when they revealed unit location or destination. Many cards featured passengers' experiences aboard ship. We read of dancing and games, even shipboard romance, but also the complaints of boring activities, poor food, and for one person of a sea too smooth (they wanted more waves). Those travelling from northern Europe to tropical areas found the heat to be oppressive. One writer noted, "I am nearly a grease spot" (p. 17). Other tropical travelers griped about having to sleep on deck or their profuse sweating. This section reveals the worth of postcards in digging into people's experience aboard ship.

Five hundred and twenty-six images fill this book; a few appear in each chapter, while 500 are arranged over 125 pages in sets of four to a page. The images in the first twenty-five pages illustrate the surrounding textual content. For each card image in the later groupings of four, the name of the ship, the company, and artist (if known) are listed, and a crisp description is provided of the key elements or unique aspects of the card.

The descriptions include information about the ships, such as, "The liner (*Infanta Isabel de Borbon*) and her sister-ship *Reina Victoria Eugenia* were famous Spanish steamers, much larger than any previous vessels" (p. 91). In one description, the public dislike of the card is noted. Deakes draws the reader's attention to detail such as companies that did not put the ship's name on the image, the card's role in the effort to secure immigrants as passengers which was a "big business in the first decades of the century" (p. 71), and impact of the collapse of empire long routes.

This is a book that depends on the images to convey much of the story. It certainly underlines the research potential of postcard images of ships, ports, sailors, and passengers. It will appeal to those interested in the history of passenger liners, maritime art and artists, the role of advertising in passenger shipping, and maritime postcard collecting. Christopher Deakes has curated a dynamic collection of postcards that provide an interesting perspective on the passenger liner industry. The republication of this book brings this fine work to a new audience, which is a very good thing.

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Eric Jay Dolin. *Rebels At Sea: Privateering in the American Revolution*. New York, NY: Liveright (imprint of W.W. Norton), www.wwnorton.com, 2022. 352 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, notes, index. US \$32.50, paper; ISBN 978-1-324-04744-5.

During the American Revolution, the rebel fleet of privateers was a controversial maritime weapon, and there has been scholarly debate about its effectiveness since that time. *Rebels at Sea* explores the use of privateers, their abuse, shortcomings, and their tactical significance during the conflict for American national independence.

A privateer was a privately-owned armed vessel that operated in wartime against the trade of an enemy, and the term embraced both the ships and the men who sailed in them. Dolin notes two types. The first were heavily armed vessels with large crews whose purpose was to locate and capture enemy ships. The second, and most numerous, were merchant ships. These vessels were commissioned by letters of marque, a license that permitted them to take prizes and served both as official letters of reprisal and bonds of good behavior. These letters of marque were issued by the federal or, more commonly, individual state governments. When a privateer's prize was deemed legal by an admiralty court, the seized vessel and its contents were auctioned and sold, with the proceeds distributed amongst the privateer owners, captains, and crews according to a predetermined share agreement. Privateersmen killed or maimed in a battle were usually provided for by way of a reimbursement / health scheme somewhat reminiscent of a pirate classic pact.

The author pointedly reminds the reader that the American colonists were British citizens, and most were loyal to King George III. Their initial grievance was with Parliament's policy of taxation coupled with what they considered a harsh military occupation. At the time, Britain had the largest navy in the world and used it to control most of the world's oceans and seaborne trade. The nascent Continental Army was undertrained, poorly equipped, and dependent upon locally manufactured arms and munitions, those purchased in the West Indies, or weapons captured after battles. At sea, Congress cobbled together vessels, mostly converted merchantmen, that became the Continental Navy. These ships added up to roughly 60 during the war. All the colonies except Delaware and New Jersey created some sort of state navy, seaborne militia, or "sea fencibles" that patrolled and defended their coastal enclaves. Congress then decided that privateers harassing or interdicting British merchant shipping on America's east coast, in the West Indies, and around the British Isles could bring financial pain to Britain by damaging commerce.

As a result of American privateers, British merchant ships were essentially required to travel in convoy. Thus, part of the Royal Navy was forced into

escort duty, as well as serving its more traditional military role. An important side effect was that marine insurance rates dramatically increased, followed by inflation at home in Britain. This was the main impetus for the birth of the substantial American letter of marque fleet, which included whaleboats, sloops, cutters, brigs, and full-rigged ships. Numbering 66 ships in 1777 and swelling to 550 by 1781, the numbers had dwindled to 22 by the war's end. They constituted a major weapon.

Dolin leads his reader through a quick hindsight history of the Revolutionary War, mainly from a metaphorical privateer's point of view. In doing so, the author recounts the rebellion's origins, then presents arguments that the maritime enterprise of privateering was not only needed, but perhaps vital to the insurgency's success. The next few chapters deal with historical accounts of a privateersman's life at sea, often in some detail and through individual privateering adventure tales. This section was followed by a segment showing how this enterprise dovetailed with French strategies in its recurrent struggle against the British and how this was coordinated by envoys Benjamin Franklin and Silas Dean. Dolin's chapter titled "Hell Afloat," which is concerned with the experiences of seamen captured by the British, is exceptionally graphic and made especially emotive by his inclusion of verses from Philip Freneau's poem "The British Prison Ship" describing his ordeal as a captured privateer.

The author devotes a great portion of his book to discussing the efficacy of privateering. It was accused of degrading American morals by offering men the opportunity to place profit over patriotism. Also privateering was castigated for draining off manpower and ammunition from the Continental Navy and Army. However, privateering greatly affected British commerce and helped the rebels to persevere. It may not have been a decisive factor in the defeat of the British, but Dolin argues that the privateer fleet was an important cog in the martial machinery of the Revolutionary Wars.

Rebels at Sea is a worthwhile and thought-provoking addition to Eric Dolin's small library of works. But there were a few minor shortcomings. There is an extensive account of the Penobscot Expedition, but it was not a privateering mission. Conversely, he did not mention Lieutenant Henry Mowat, whose three British-armed vessels were considered a threat against landing American troops at Bagaduce (now Castine). The chapter on American mariners who became French privateers failed to cite Nathaniel Fanning, a former junior officer of the *Bon Homme Richard*, who was ultimately awarded a French naval commission. During the American Revolution privateers did not regularly capture slave ships or raid plantations, yet a small number of enslaved individuals found themselves as "prize cargo" during the conflict. The role privateers played in relation to the slave trade and its consequences in North America and Britain regrettably was also not addressed. Those points

noted, Dolin does not claim this work to be comprehensive.

In summary, *Rebels at Sea* is a broad and well-researched examination of the role of letter of marque vessels and privateering during the American Revolution. This new work should be welcomed by maritime history and Revolutionary War scholars.

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Mark L. Evans. *USS Enterprise (CVN-65): The First Nuclear Powered Aircraft Carrier*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishing, www.mcfarlandbooks.com, 2022. 360 pp., illustrations, notes, appendices, index. US \$49.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-47668-686-8. (E-book available.)

Mark Evans's book is not a typical academic publication. The author does not try to argue anything about the carrier, but provides a well-written, detailed account of the eighth USS *Enterprise* over the past decades. It also comes with 170 photographs related to the *Enterprise*.

Speaking of USS *Enterprise*, many naval historians or enthusiasts of Second World War history would probably think of the Yorktown-class carrier (CV-6) that bore the name and fought gallantly in the Pacific War. However, the next carrier to bear the name, CVN-65, may be more familiar for others. Those who grew up in the late twentieth century. At first encountering the book, the first question for ordinary readers may be: why is it necessary to read the book?

As the title suggests, the ship's story is important: *Enterprise* was the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in the world. Even for a non-expert, Evans explains throughout the book how important the carrier was. After being commissioned in 1961, *Enterprise* would serve the USN for half a century. It would witness almost every major conflict and confrontation in the Cold War: the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, the Vietnam War, US bombing of Libya (Operation El Dorado Canyon), the Tanker War, the two Gulf Wars, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The book describes *Enterprise's* contributions during all these events and how important CVN-65 was to the US Armed Forces.

Writing a biography of a ship is a difficult challenge for any author. However, Evans handled the narrative in a rather wise way. Instead of dividing the contents according to major conflicts or events, he organized the book into fifty small chapters. Readers will find that the 50 years of the story become easy to handle under such arrangement; it is possible to simply read a chapter in leisure, put it down, and come back a little bit later. However, others may argue that this structure damages the continuity of the narrative. For myself, I found it easy to read.

It is worth noting that Evans manages to account for the ship's design history and the modernizations received through the years. These accounts, of course, are not as professional as a ship design history written by Norman Friedman. However, it is clear enough for readers what was done to keep the carrier up to changing combat requirements and why. Another advantage of the book is the coverage of operations throughout the several major conflicts mentioned above. The Cuban Missile Crisis, for instance, has been recounted in the book excitingly. Once finished reading the chapters, the reader can understand how important the USN capability to deny Soviet forces at sea was for saving the United States, and possibly the world, from a possible disaster. The book clearly demonstrates the fact that it was the blockade that forced the Soviets to step back from Cuba. It is an example of what sea power, and a strong navy can do.

Navies are not only responsible for controlling the sea through naval battles, but also by various non-battle operations. During the Cold War, one of the important missions of the navy was to be a deterrent. For instance, *Enterprise* was deployed to the Mediterranean Sea and went on exercises in Northern Pacific and against Iranians in the Northern Arabic Sea during late 1980s. Another overlooked yet important example was the ship's deployment to the Second Indo-Pakistani War in early 1970s. This was an operation that deployed the *Enterprise* to the Indian Ocean with no advance warning. These relatively less-known actions are part of the story of the carrier and demonstrate again the flexibility of aircraft carriers as quick response forces. These events also shed light on the Cold War at sea.

While a ship's actions are important, the crew on board are also an important part of history that is sometimes overlooked by modern authors. But Evans did not forget them. While narrating the combat history of the carrier, for instance, Evans also writes about the naval pilots captured during the Vietnam War and how they suffered while being prisoners-of-war. Evans certainly understands that they mattered.

Evans started writing the book while he was writing a history of the carrier for the Naval History and Heritage Command. He humbly states that this is a popular history of CVN-65. Certainly, he achieves more than a simple popular history. Readers get not only the history of a combat vessel, but also an explanation of the significance of *Enterprise* in both naval history and modern international politics. The book demonstrates the supercarrier's important diplomatic role. It shows the power of strategic deterrence and the power projection capabilities enjoyed by the United States as a result of these super carriers. This is a book anyone interested in naval affairs should read.

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John Hattendorf. *HM 30: Reflections on Naval History: Collected Essays*. Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College Press, www.usnwcpress/nwcpress, 2023. xiii+501 pp., notes, appendix, bibliography. Paperback, free download available; ISBN978-1-935352-81-5.

Title Number 30 in the Naval War College Monograph Series (1973-2023) is a collection of essays by John Hattendorf. The sheer breath of this collection commands attention. In his Introduction, Hattendorf sets the theme. "Reflecting on history," he writes, "is a basic function for an academic historian." The six parts – "Maritime History and the Historical Perspective"; "Early Modern Europe"; "The New Republic"; "The World Wars"; "Maritime History of, at, and near Newport, Rhode Island"; and "Naval Theory" – together comprise thirty essays spanning a period of four centuries. Hattendorf takes the reader on an extraordinary historical voyage beginning with "Ubi Sumus? Twenty-Five Years Later," a review of the expanding nature of maritime history. The collection concludes near the present moment with "Naval Power and the Multidimensional Roles of Naval Power," a paper delivered at the Third International Symposium on Security and Defense held in Lima, Peru.

For the most part, Hattendorf argues that traditional naval history has been written "from the limited viewpoint of a specific nation's history or through the biography of national naval histories." While recognizing the importance of this approach, it is, in his view, too narrow. To fully understand the role of the sea in human history, historians need to embrace a variety of disciplines, "including science and technology, industry, economics, trade and business, art, literature, military and naval affairs, and international relations." To be sure, this presents a daunting task, yet, despite the challenge, Hattendorf is optimistic as scholars move beyond battles and heroes, working to gather these disparate elements into the wider world of naval and maritime history.

While all thirty essays in this collection are well documented and elegantly written, "Part 2: Early Modern Europe" best captures Hattendorf's approach: an interdisciplinary analysis emphasizing technological developments guided by sophisticated organizational structures. The first essay in this section, "Navies and Naval Operations, 1400-1815," sets the stage with a wide-ranging historiographical analysis of "Naval power and Naval Operations, 1400-1815." During the first part of this period, until 1650, navies moved from a freebooting, somewhat unorganized style of warfare into more organized national fleets employing recognized tactics and coherent strategic goals. In the period following, 1650-1815, the evolution continued as navies, serving the interests of powerful "Fiscal-Bureaucratic States," contended for domination in Europe and elsewhere. Central to this period was the "Anglo-Dutch Rivalry." Between 1652 and 1676, England and the Dutch Republic

fought three naval wars. Each side, well led by experienced officers, focused on an offensive strategy deploying heavily armed, technologically advanced ships, directed by well-organized administrative structures, which were called to address complex logistical challenges. The remaining essays in this section touch on the continuing wars of the eighteenth century with one notable exception. While it fits into this time period, Hattendorf alters course slightly here, offering a well-crafted essay on the extraordinary career of Admiral of the Fleet James, First Baron Gambier, GCB.

In Part 5, “Maritime History of, at, and near Newport, Rhode Island,” Hattendorf displays his talents, not only as one of America’s premier naval historians, but also as a scholar closely attuned to his community of Newport, Rhode Island, and the institution he has served so well, the United States Naval War College.

While most of these essays have been published elsewhere, the Naval War College Press has done an extraordinary service bringing them together in one place. Beyond this collection, Hattendorf has been central to the Press’s overall success in this series, serving as editor for seven previous volumes. Indeed, recognizing his role, Volume 26 in the series bears his name, *The Hattendorf Prize Lectures*. While impressive, *Reflections on Naval History* represents only a portion of Hattendorf’s work, and, according to the bibliography, at least two more essays are forthcoming.

Since all reviews need some modicum of criticism, maps and illustrations would have been useful.

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Thomas C. Hone and Curtis A. Utz. *History of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1915-2015*. Washington, D.C.: Naval History and Heritage Command, Department of the Navy, www.history.navy.mil, 2023. xxiv+649 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-1-943604-02-9 (cloth). (Free PDF download available)

Official history occupies a specific place in the institutional and corporate memory of governmental organizations. Like most of the US armed services, the United States Navy (USN) has an established historical branch, staffed by professional and contract historians, with a long record of publishing official histories on a wide variety of administrative, industrial, and operational topics. Official histories are usually long in gestation and benefit from privileged access to permanent government records. The centenary of the USN’s top leadership position – the Office of the Chief Naval Operations (CNO) – is a

worthy occasion to reflect on the organization, its development and travails, and the admirals who have filled that post since its creation in 1915. The book is divided into twenty chronological chapters, with appendices giving a table of the persons occupying the positions of secretary of the navy and CNO over the years, and a list of abbreviations. Organizationally, the CNO performed a planning function. From modest beginnings, its organization and purpose evolved depending on need, the personalities involved, and dynamics inside and outside the Navy. Individual chapters are organized around the person or persons holding the navy's top position set in the context of restructuring and organizational changes, relations with engaged secretaries of navy and defense, presidential administrations, and prevailing strategic and fiscal environments.

Hone and Utz are careful to point out exactly what the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations was meant to do at a given time, in particular with respect to procurement and strategy. The actual execution of operations resided elsewhere. The CNO was responsible for making sure the navy was in fighting form with the right ships and people to protect the nation and face the dangers of the day, increasingly as a globally deployed force. Soon after the creation of the office by legislation in March 1915, the US joined the First World War, and the first CNO appointee, William Benson, tackled the tremendous expansion in numbers of ships and personnel once the country went on a war footing with only limited staff. He also had to manage the relationship with Secretary Joseph Daniels, who himself held strong views on running the Navy. In the interwar years that resulted in the "Treaty Navy", Robert Coontz, Edward Eberle, Charles Hughes, William Pratt, and William Standley steered the US Navy through naval arms limitation, tightening fiscal restraint and retrenchment, development of war plans (called fleet problems), and replacing older warships with newer, adequately manned vessels. In the 1940s, William Leahy and Harold Stark enjoyed good relations with President Franklin Roosevelt and mobilized the Navy following the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Ernest King was the irascible and efficient head of the US Navy during the Second World War, combining the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Fleet (COMINCH) and CNO positions. He later sparred with Secretary James Forrestal over materiel, organization, and other matters. During the postwar years, Chester Nimitz, Louis Denfeld, and Forrest Sherman handled demobilization, legislative proposals for service unification, the onset of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, and the conflict in Korea.

The presidency of Dwight Eisenhower and his "New Look" strategy brought a build-up of nuclear retaliatory capability to offset conventional deficiencies and another round of reorganization initiatives, challenges faced head-on by CNOs William Fechteler and Robert Carney. Arleigh Burke brought the US Navy into the missile and digital age, serving three terms as CNO and

putting his own stamp on the organization in a very energetic fashion. Greater rigor in programming and budgeting brought on by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and his whiz boys brought about assertion of civilian control; this taxed George Anderson, David McDonald, and Thomas Moorer to the upmost and almost uprooted the traditional naval establishment. The divisive Elmo Zumwalt promised change in the organization and largely delivered with reinvestments in personnel and by addressing longstanding inequities. James Holloway III undertook fleet modernization despite a deep inflationary crisis and instilled a new sense of purpose with the Maritime Strategy, which saw the US Navy taking the fight right to the doors (naval bases) of the Soviet Union. The realignment continued under Thomas Hayward. The challenges continued under James Watkins, Carlisle Trost, and Frank Kelso as the Cold War drew to a close with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. Kelso also shouldered much of the public and political disquiet over the shocking revelations from the Tailhook scandal. After Michael Boorda's efforts to refashion and improve many navy processes were cut short by his suicide, Jay Johnson took over and filled the role with remarkable competence and forbearance.

As Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld pushed modernization and business practices onto the services through "transformation," Vernon Clark made sure the navy was ready for action after the terrorist attacks on American shores in September 2001, supporting special operations and land campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, and maintaining the American naval presence around the world. This was made harder by increasing technology costs, which forced Michael Mullen to make hard choices about force levels, which he attempted to offset by encouraging greater cooperation with allied navies through the "1,000 ship" navy concept. Gary Roughead emphasized information in operations and joint capabilities that ran up against economic downturn and intractable acquisition problems, with littoral combat ships and the latest destroyers the most egregious and costly. In a bid to stay up-to-date technologically and streamline the procurement process, the US Navy actually went down rabbit holes that imperiled its status as a superpower. Jonathan Greenert, the last CNO covered in the book, handled political uncertainty within the corridors of power, persistent problems on the shipbuilding front, keeping the Marines on board and satisfied, growing cyber warfare threats, and a hidden sexual assault crisis amongst the ranks. Of note, but not covered in the book, was the August 2023 appointment of Lisa Franchetti as the first woman to hold the post of CNO, a landmark and overdue appointment.

Official histories are necessarily geared toward an institutional audience and are products of the sponsoring organization. Hone and Utz have done their best to make the text readable and comprehensive in detail and context. The decision to focus on the personalities and organizational changes wrought

is appropriate for this particular official history. *History of the Chief of Naval Operations* is a large book, running to nearly 600 pages of main text. Accompanying photographs of the individual CNOs, plus tables and diagrams provide some respite from the dense narrative, which is divided by bolded headings. A very useful index appears at the end. The book is recommended for readers interested in the history of administration and planning within the US Navy. Take advantage of the free text-searchable PDF download available on the Naval History and Heritage Command website.

Chris Madsen

North Vancouver, British Columbia

Angus Konstam and Edouard A. Groult (illustrator). *German High Seas Fleet 1914-18: The Kaiser's challenge to the Royal Navy.* Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2023. 80 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, index. UK £15.99, US \$23.00, CAN \$31.00; ISBN 978-1-4728-5647-0 (softcover), ISBN 978-1-4728—5645-6 (Ebook), 978-1-4728-5644-9 (PDF).

Imperial Germany's High Seas Fleet (*Hochseeflotte*), which Winston Churchill derisively called the Luxury Fleet, failed to reach its full potential during the First World War. It had been built up under the tutelage of Kaiser Wilhelm II and Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz to secure Imperial Germany's colonial possessions and its "place in the sun." The *Kaiserliche Marine* overtook France as the second ranking navy in Europe behind Great Britain's Royal Navy and, with introduction of the revolutionary dreadnought battleship, the two navies tried to outbuild the other in a naval arms race. Navies of the time were heavily influenced by Alfred Thayer Mahan, who stressed the importance of the decisive battle. Maneuvering for this blowout battle proved elusive in the war, the closest being the Battle of Jutland/Skagerrak. The naval war settled into a Royal Navy blockade to cut off vital resources and supply to Imperial Germany and a counter-campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare by the *Kaiserliche Marine* to do the same against Great Britain. Angus Konstam, a former naval officer and curator of the Royal Armouries turned historian, authors the second contribution in Osprey's Fleet series focused on the ships, organization, and operations of the German High Seas Fleet. Edouard Groult, a London-based illustrator and graphics designer, provides commissioned original artwork in colour.

The book follows the standard format for Osprey's new Fleet series at 80 pages in length with four unnumbered sections, a list of further reading, and an index. Black and white photographs and colour reproductions of oil paintings

by Claus Bergen accompany the text. Tables give detailed information on changes to the fleet over time and its organization. Diagrams and plots for specific movements, tactics, and actions, some rendered three dimensionally, appear alongside explanatory shaded textual boxes. Shaded textual boxes are also used with the commissioned artwork for further background and context behind the topic represented. The combination of historical narrative and visually appealing content is really the signature feature of the Osprey series. The book organizes and simplifies the information into an easily digestible format.

The German High Seas Fleet was predicated on Tirpitz's Risk Theory, which held that Imperial Germany's navy did not seek a war with the Royal Navy but had to be strong and capable enough to deter one or pose a necessary risk should fighting occur. Unfortunately for Imperial Germany, alliances with Japan and France allowed Great Britain to concentrate its naval strength in the North Sea into the Grand Fleet which, combined with a naval construction programme that outstripped German shipbuilding, conferred a more or less permanent advantage over the German High Seas Fleet. The only way that calculation could be changed was if the Germans inflicted serious losses on the Grand Fleet either through a major engagement or attrition. Neither side seemed willing to take the risk for the most part and adopted cautious strategies throughout the war.

On the whole, German ships were better armoured and protected, a bit under-gunned with good fire control and optics, and were lacking in speed compared to British counterparts. Command was exercised by a commander-in-chief reporting to a higher navy command and ultimately Kaiser Wilhelm himself, within the limitations of communications and intelligence at the time. In terms of logistics, the German High Seas Fleet was essentially short-legged, operating from a full-service main base at Wilhelmshaven facing the North Sea and various advance bases. The Kiel Canal connected the Baltic Sea and another naval base at Kiel with additional services and facilities for maintenance and refits.

The last parts of the book are devoted to analysis of the German High Seas Fleet in combat and to naval battles of significance. The Battle of Heligoland Blight in August 1914 resulted in the loss of three German light cruisers. Scouting groups were sent to bombard Hartlepool, Scarborough, and Whitby and lay mines off the coast later in the year. At Dogger Bank on 25 January 1915, a running fight between battlecruisers saw the armoured cruiser *Blücher* sunk and the rest of the German squadron able to get away only a little mauled and bruised, the larger British fleet not taking the bait to come out in force. That was not the case at the Battle of Jutland/Skagerrak on 31 May 1916, when the two fleets clashed in the closest thing to a decisive battle at sea in

the First World War. After a series of engagements between battlecruisers and detached battleships, the two opposing columns of dreadnoughts bore down on each other, the Germans finding themselves in a disadvantageous tactical position because the British were “crossing the T,” which allowed them to fire full broadsides with all guns while not under the full weight of opposing fire. Sensing a trap, the German Admiral Reinhard von Scheer ordered the High Seas Fleet to turn away that put distance between them and the Grand Fleet while the battlecruisers and torpedo boats attacked in mass as cover. The German High Seas Fleet survived to remain a fleet in being but never really sortied again in force. The naval war instead shifted to submarines on the German side in 1917 and 1918. Maintenance of the German High Seas Fleet in a state of readiness until the end of the war tied up scarce personnel and material resources, and finally, in the face of defeat and starvation, German sailors mutinied in 1918.

This offering in Osprey’s Fleet series provides a very readable and visually pleasing primer on the German High Seas Fleet. A number of key battles are highlighted in text and graphics. The affordable book is recommended for readers interested in First World War naval operations, German naval developments pre-1918, and as a naval history reference source for wargaming and scale modelling.

Chris Madsen

North Vancouver, British Columbia

Xiaobing Li. *China’s New Navy: The Evolution of PLAN from the People’s Revolution to a 21st Century Cold War*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2023. xv+285 pp., maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$34.95, hardcover; ISBN 978-1-68247-775-5.

The People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), like China itself, has been an enigma for western scholars and analysts. Today, it is the largest navy in the world by number of ships, and is steadily growing to match China’s ambitions as a regional and global power. Tensions over Taiwan and territorial disputes in adjoining waters demonstrate China’s willingness to employ maritime and military power to back up diplomacy and policy, even when the United States, with its technically advanced and globally deployable fleets, draws a line in the sand. Since its official founding on 23 April 1949, the PLAN has evolved from a modest riverine and coastal naval force of cast-off warships into a balanced navy suited to a great power with nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers, and a multitude of missile-carrying surface ships. Indeed, the United States Navy (USN) considers the PLAN a worthy rival and potential enemy in terms of

capability, strong on sea denial, and defensive offence. Xiaobing Li, a former Chinese army officer and history professor holding a chair in international studies at the University of Central Oklahoma, traces the PLAN's operational history by drawing on extensive research in several Asian countries, including China, Chinese-language publications, and interviews with top officials, naval and military officers, and analysts. The book represents a rare glimpse into the mindset of China's navy and how it might fight based on its historical origins and evolution.

The book follows a basic chronological framework divided into six chapters dedicated to particular periods of time important to China's national development and the PLAN. It begins with an introduction giving a literature review and ends with a conclusion bringing the narrative up to the present regime of Xi Jinping. Communist China's early naval forces were born out of the civil war against Chinese nationalists when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) required support for amphibious landings and a number of crews and officers brought their warships over to the Communist cause. In the midst of China's participation in the Korean War, leader Mao Zedong only wanted a limited navy for coastal defence and other tasks related to the army, leading to it being described as an army at sea. The PLAN's first three-year plan accorded priority to naval aviation, conventional submarines, and torpedo-carrying speedboats. The Chinese sought and received training and technical assistance from the Soviet Union. Fights and skirmishes around islands off the coast gave the PLAN its first operational experience.

Until the late 1950s, Mao pursued limited wars in the Taiwan Strait that saw the PLA and PLAN working together to contest several offshore islands through bombardments and landings, avoiding actions that might invite intervention from the United States. The PLAN performed badly during a first crisis, but additional Soviet aid in terms of equipment and advisors and greater attention to organization and professionalism meant a little better showing in the second crisis, although their performance is still described by Li as mixed. Mao's Great Leap Forward and the Sino-Soviet split impacted the PLAN directly and indirectly, by purges within the naval ranks and wholesale withdrawal of Soviet advisors and material assistance. Nonetheless, improvements in the command structure, land-sea communication, battle coordination, and offensive tactics led to successes employing small boats in close combat at night against Taiwan's higher-class naval forces. As China was consumed by the Cultural Revolution, the PLAN arranged the shipment of supplies by sea to Communist military forces in Vietnam and provided air defence, both artillery and interceptor aircraft, against American bombing attacks. Capture of the disputed Paracel (Xisha) islands from the South Vietnamese in the South China Sea in January 1974 signified the first time the PLAN conducted operations

away from the Chinese coast and against another foreign (non-Taiwanese) navy. China began producing its own indigenously designed warships and weapons that incorporated Soviet and Western influences and technology, with the first blue-water nuclear attack and ballistic missile-carrying submarines arriving in the late 1970s.

The reforms of Deng Xiaoping brought stability back to China, ending the divisive Cultural Revolution, and laying the basis for diplomatic rapprochement with the United States and opening the country up to the world for economic trade. The PLAN's chief, Admiral Liu Huaqing, envisioned a new ranking and role for the navy in China. Liu introduced a three-step plan for development of a true blue-water navy able to secure China's immediate sea space and expand outward to protect vital sea lines of communication in peace and war. Chinese technological advances and training approached those of other comparable navies. Liu gained notoriety by suppressing pro-democracy demonstrations at Tiananmen Square in May 1989, thereby proving his loyalty and commitment to the Chinese Communist Party.

Changes in the strategic environment after the demise of the Soviet Union as well as China's growing global stature and economic might generally favored the PLAN, which received a greater share of China's annual defence budget and laid down an ever-growing number of ships and submarines. Naval reforms emphasized educational credentials, greater professionalism, and proficiency in joint warfare amongst personnel. The PLAN deployed naval forces to push Chinese interests during the lengthy third Taiwan Strait crisis, to face off with Japan over disputed islands, and to combat pirates off the coast of Africa and in the Gulf of Aden. By 2009, the PLAN was one of the most modern and capable navies in the world, imbued with a fighting spirit and doctrine that aligned with China's political ideology and global aspirations. China renewed ties with Russia for military and economic exchange, including direct purchase of Russian aircraft and other wares. Chinese naval planning and exercises focused on maritime active defence against the USN or any other comer who might threaten Chinese territorial and resource interests. As Li states, the PLAN has a long history in defensive offence and could be counted on to fire first if necessary.

The book provides a solid overview of the PLAN's operational history and mode of operating from the Chinese perspective. Li provides considerable background details on otherwise obscure individuals and draws extensively on interviews and firsthand professional opinions, some of which are quoted directly. Six maps grace the pages but there are no photographs except the colour one gracing the front cover. The endnotes and bibliography identify Chinese sources in characters with English translation in square brackets. *China's New Navy* appeals to professionals seeking a better understanding of

Chinese naval developments and readers interested in the historical background behind contemporary Asian military affairs, as China and the United States once again dance over Taiwan.

Chris Madsen

North Vancouver, British Columbia

Brett Mason. *Saving Lieutenant Kennedy: The Heroic Story of the Australian who helped rescue JFK*. Sydney, AUS: University of New South Wales Press, www.unsw.press, 2023. 272 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. AUS \$34.99, paper; ISBN 9781-74223-787-9. (E-book available.)

On the evening of 7 August 1943, two Allied naval officers met on the shoreline of Gomu Island, in the Solomon Islands, and shook hands for the first time. One was a middle-aged Australian coast-watcher, operating behind enemy lines providing information to the Allied forces then locked in bitter fighting with the Japanese. The other was a young United States Navy lieutenant whose PT boat (PT 109) had been rammed and sunk by the Japanese destroyer *Amagiri* in Blakett Strait a few days before. At the time, both men had no inklings of the importance of this meeting. The Australian was Royal Australian Navy Lieutenant Arthur “Reg” Evans, and the other was Lieutenant John Fitzgerald Kennedy—a future President of the United States of America.

Evans had seen the explosion on the night 2 August when PT 109 was rammed, and the next morning dispatched groups of Solomon Islanders to investigate. Meanwhile, Kennedy and his surviving crew members swam to a nearby island with Kennedy, a strong swimmer, towing one of his badly injured crew members behind him. Eventually, on the morning of 5 August, two Solomon Islanders (Eroni Kumana and Biuki Gasa) found the survivors of PT 109 on Naru (Gross) Island. Kennedy scratched out a message on a coconut and requested this be delivered to Allied forces. This coconut with the words “Nauro Isl Commander. Native knows Pos’it. He can pilot. 11 Alive. Need small boat. Kennedy.” It later sat on Kennedy’s desk in the Oval Office as a reminder of his service in the Southwest Pacific.

On the morning of 7 August, Evans sent another Solomon Islander who spoke excellent English, Benjamin Kevu, to Gross Island with a note for the Senior Officer – Gross Is. On arrival, Kevu met the tired and dishevelled Kennedy and handed him Evans’s note detailing the rescue plan with the polite words, “I have a letter for you sir.”

Lieutenant Evans arranged for Kennedy to be brought to his island hideout and the two men then discussed the details of the plan to have the survivors extracted by PT boat. On the morning of 8 August, PT 157 rescued

Kennedy and his surviving crewmen. Kennedy was later awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Medal (the highest non-combat USN decoration for heroism), and continued to serve in the USN until he was medically discharged due to injuries he suffered when PT 109 was sunk.

Kennedy's political career took off in 1947 when he entered the House of Representatives (Boston) and by 1953 he was a Senator for Massachusetts. When he became President in 1960, his wartime exploits came to the fore and a search began for his wartime saviour. Eventually, Evans and the Solomon Islanders were located and Evans and Kevu later visited Kennedy in the White House in 1961-62. The men who saved Kennedy and his crew were later immortalised when the movie *PT 109* was released in June 1963. Kennedy also met with the commanding officer of *Amagiri*, Lieutenant Commander Kohei Hanami during a visit to Japan in 1962.

The book, however, does not just cover the lives of Kennedy and Evans or the tactical events involved in the rescue of Kennedy and his crew. Woven throughout the book is the higher-level story of Australian and American relations from 1941 onwards. Before Pearl Harbor, the average Australian knew little about the United States other than imported vehicles and what they saw in the movie theatres. This was all to change in early 1942, when the first US soldiers arrived in Brisbane in a troop convoy diverted from the Philippines. The men were the first of many thousands of US service personnel who arrived in Australia from 1942-45 and changed the strategic focus of the country from Great Britain to the United States. Author Brett Mason, a former Australian Senator, diplomat and academic, has done an excellent job detailing the shift in Australian foreign policy through the lens of the fighting in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea, where the Australian and American forces fought side by side to defeat the Imperial Japanese forces. That road was not always smooth, either tactically or strategically, but it was a path that both nations willingly chose.

My only concern with the book was the vague or poor use of some military and naval terminology, but overall it is a very good read, especially for those seeking a better understating of the background of the creation of the Australian-United States strategic alliance.

Greg Swinden
Singapore

Andrew Monaghan and Richard Connolly (eds.). *The Sea in Russian Strategy*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk, 2023. 272 pp., illustrations, index. UK £14.99, paper; ISBN 978-1-5261-6878-8.

This compact book is a collection of seven papers that examine Russia's resurgent maritime strategy from several angles. The writing is succinct and cogent. The authors are subject experts from the United Kingdom and United States. They include naval historians Geoffrey Till and Andrew Lambert, and American military analyst Michael Kofman, who has become a familiar commentator on the war in Ukraine but in this book writes about how Russian naval doctrines have evolved from Soviet roots. Andrew Monaghan and Richard Connolly are British analysts who have been studying modern Russia for decades. They provide impartial discussions of issues from a Russian perspective based on systematic study over time of media and other sources. The use of Russian material is impressive. Another seasoned US analyst, Dmitry Gorenburg, describes current naval shipbuilding programs and missile development. This is a book about strategy and how it is manifested in the types of new weapons being produced. It does not examine training or speculate about tactical proficiency – or how capable contemporary Russian submarine and warship crews might be.

So, what are some of the take-aways from this book? Since around 2000 the sea has become more central to Russia's grand strategy. In part this is due to the effort to develop natural resources in the Arctic, which involves increasing use of the Northern Sea Route, and ongoing efforts to pivot to Asia. Till and Connolly forecast that Russia will also assert its interests in the Pacific over the next decade (p. 68, p.125). The Russian state has always prioritised security. Despite the decade-long chaos that followed the collapse of the USSR, the percentage of GDP allocated to defence has never dropped below 2.5 percent. In terms of purchasing power parity, Russia's naval expenditure is probably the third- or fourth-highest in the world (p. 141). The Russian navy and merchant fleet are a shadow of their Soviet predecessors; however, over the last two decades there has been steady investment in shipyards and the development of new classes of civilian and naval ships and types of naval technology. As the book comments, "Together, the combination of thirty to forty small combat ships (frigates and corvettes) and fifteen to twenty nuclear-and diesel-powered submarines – all armed with cruise missiles – will allow the Russian Navy to maintain its ability to protect its coastline and to threaten neighbouring states. While it will not be able to project substantial combat power globally, Russia's naval capabilities will be sufficient to achieve its main maritime goals" (p. 171). By the mid- 2030s, "we should expect to see a confident, capable and competitive actor in large parts of the world's oceans, including the Arctic, the Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific, as well as closer to Russia's borders such as the Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas" (p. 161). It is only fair to note that Richard Connolly wrote this before Russian aggression caused Sweden and Finland to abandon their traditional neutrality and join NATO, and before Russia largely

lost its dominance of the Black Sea to Ukraine.

While it now has a capitalist economy, a state-owned firm operates the bulk of Russia's merchant ships. The merchant fleet is a shadow of its Soviet predecessor, but over half of its vessels are ice-class. Overall, less than 10 percent of the fleet is Russian built (p.146). The shipbuilding industry is also state-owned (p.129). A noteworthy development here has been the expansion of the Zvezda shipyard northeast of Vladivostok, now the largest in Russia. This is the yard where Soviet nuclear submarines were dismantled in the 1990s under a program financed in part by the US and Canada. Zvezda is now building Arctic Liquid Natural Gas Carriers and icebreakers, including a nuclear-powered one. The other major Pacific yard is the Amur Shipyard in Siberia, which, as in Soviet times, builds warships. But it no longer builds nuclear-powered submarines, which are now constructed only in the Arctic at Severodvinsk on the White Sea.

It is predicted that "Submarines will remain the strength of Russia's naval force for the foreseeable future. The renewal of the nuclear submarine fleet has been the highest priority of the Russian navy throughout the post-Soviet period" (p. 171). Ballistic-missile submarines carry close to one-third of Russia's strategic nuclear warheads. The current force structure of the Russian navy is intended to protect its coastline and the strategic missile submarine "bastions." Among its missions in war would be attacks on enemy infrastructure and carriers (pp. 210, 212). Russian warships are multi-mission platforms. Cruise missiles have given the Russian navy a land-attack role against critical infrastructure. The best-known of new post-Soviet weapons are Kalibr cruise missiles, which have been in service since 1994. They come in three types: land attack, anti-ship, and anti-submarine. They are fired from vertical launch tubes fitted across a variety of warship and submarine classes. Before the Russian full-scale assault on Ukraine in 2022, its navy projected power during the intervention in Syria. Corvettes in the Caspian Sea fired Kalibr missiles across Iran 1200 km away at targets in Syria in 2015 and 2017. There were further attacks from missile-armed conventional submarines in the Mediterranean. In July 2024, the Russian navy claimed that submarines and ships in the Black Sea had fired land-attack Kalibr missiles at 200 targets in Ukraine over the previous 12 months.

There is a useful index, and the text is buttressed by useful tables and diagrams. Having said this, because the newer types of ship and weapons discussed are probably unfamiliar to the reader, the lack of photographs or graphics is a real limitation. Russia, which once again has become a disruptive adversarial power, is described by Andrew Lambert as "an empire of anxiety" (p. 50). It views geopolitical issues through a lens shaped by its own history. Dispassionate analyses based on Russian perspectives is a hallmark of this

book. *The Sea in Modern Strategy* is recommended as an accessible and authoritative outline of why the Russian regime is developing its maritime capabilities.

Jan Drent

Victoria, British Columbia

Hanne Elliot Fønss Nielsen. *Brand Antarctica: How Global Consumer Culture Shapes our Perception of the Ice Continent*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, www.nebraskapress.unl.edu, 2023. xiv + 250 pp., illustrations, notes, index. US \$60, cloth; ISBN 978-1-4962-2121-6.

The name Antarctica evokes more or less immediately a wide range of stereotypes and perceptions ranging from an ice-covered continent to penguins and heroic stories of exploration. Marketing specialists have successfully used these stereotypes for more than a century to develop marketing campaigns for all kinds of products as well as to fundraise for Antarctic research and exploration. In addition, Antarctica has become a synonym for pristine and clean wilderness, regardless of whether this is really true. Hanne Elliot Fønss Nielsen's new book *Brand Antarctica: How Global Consumer Culture Shapes our Perception of the Ice Continent* provides for the first time an analysis how Antarctica has been used in the context of branding and marketing, and has become a brand in and of itself and an integral part of modern-day consumer-culture.

Divided into six main thematic chapters, the book covers topics from sponsorship during the heroic age of Antarctic exploration, via cold-weather branding, ice-washing and protection of penguins, to Antarctic tourism of today. Altogether Nielsen is telling a carefully researched and convincing story about how Antarctica itself has been developed into a brand despite the no-commercial-activities goal of the Antarctic Treaty. Of course, the commercialization discussed is mainly taking place outside Antarctica, and thus it might be argued that the regulations of the treaty do not apply to this type of commercialization or even that the no-commercial-activities approach for Antarctica itself is part of the commercialization of Antarctica in the rest of the globe.

While the chapters on sponsorship during the heroic age of Antarctic exploration and cold weather branding provide a conventional history of advertisement related to the seventh continent, the following chapter on ice-washing and penguins provides a novel and convincing approach by discussing how the continent has developed into a symbol of pristine nature and purity, and how penguins developed into a universal symbol with a variety of meanings

that are not always directly related to the reality of the birds. The chapter on modern tourism in Antarctica finally showcases how the international tourist industry has managed to develop Antarctica, not only into a successful tourist destination with more than 100,000 visitors per year, but into a destination that is an integral element of bucket lists for people from all over the world.

While the book provides a new and refreshing take on Antarctica, it needs to be mentioned that the examples chosen for the analysis are more or less exclusively taken from Anglo-America. It can be assumed that Nielsen's finding will be valid for most other Western industrialized nations too, but this would need to be confirmed by future research, and it would also need to be asked if the conclusions are also valid for other cultures, especially Asian and African cultures. With Nielsen's book being the first to deal with the topic of Antarctica as a brand, this is by no means a critique of Nielsen's pioneering work, but an observation and a recommendation for future work.

For maritime historians without a direct interest in the polar regions and Antarctica, the main importance of Nielsen's book might be the observation that the commodification of geographic areas is by no means limited to their actual resources but often includes a commodification of the perception of the respective part of the world too. It is hoped that some maritime historian or social scientist will take the book as a stimulation to carry out comparable research on the societal meaning of the oceans in the future.

An index and a bibliography complete the book and allow it to be used as a reference for any research into the complex history of commodification and commercialization of Antarctica, both the real icy continent and the imaginary.

Given the plethora of illustrations available and the high quality of the design of many Antarctica-related advertisements, it is unfortunate that the book includes only a very limited number of reproductions of such advertisements and illustrations. Of course, the book is a scholarly book and not a coffee-table book, and thus an overly rich number of illustrations should not be expected. But for a book focusing its analysis on the history of branding and marketing, some more reproductions would have been helpful.

Overall, the book can easily be recommended to any historian with an interest in Antarctica, as well as everybody else with an interest in the ice continent, regardless if they are an armchair traveler or one of the limited number of people actually having the chance to travel to there. It is a welcome reminder that even the seventh continent is not isolated from global consumer culture and commodification. Furthermore, the book is a strong reminder that commodification is not limited to the actual resources of a certain area, and hopefully will become a stimulus to carry out comparable research on other parts of the globe too.

This reviewer needs to disclose that he has been travelling to and working in Antarctica on a regular basis for more than a decade and thus might

have a different view on the continent than most other readers of the book. Nevertheless, it was an eye-opener and reminder as to the degree Antarctica has become a brand in itself and how perceptions of the icy continent are an integrated part of our modern-day consumer culture. It is hoped that the book will serve as an example that historical and social-scientific research on Antarctica is by no means limited to the traditional canon of topics, but that novel approaches can connect the ice continent directly with the modern consumer society outside Antarctica.

Ingo Heidbrink
Norfolk, Virginia

David Lee Russell. *USS Bogue: The Most Successful Anti-Submarine Warfare Carrier in World War II*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., www.mcfarlandpub.com, 2023. ix+197 pp., illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$35.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4766-9203-6. (E-book available.)

The Battle of the Atlantic was not won in one decisive moment or in one place. It was a campaign fought on tens of thousands of fronts, over thousands of days, in a succession of battles. It was waged across the vast expanse of the Atlantic, and decided the fate of not just England but arguably the western world. Given its complexity, it should not surprise the reader that there are always aspects of this struggle that are not commonly known. Yes, airpower played a significant role in the defeat of the U-boat threat, and a significant aspect of the air-submarine dynamic was the story of the escort carrier. Sometimes referred to as the “jeep carrier” or “baby flattop,” escort carriers were initially produced by converting a merchant hull by adding a flight deck and related equipment. Eventually there were purpose-built ships, still based on merchant-size hulls, for use supporting merchant shipping and naval operations. Lacking the size and armour of larger fleet carriers and having fewer aircraft to operate, these escort carriers could be built rapidly and proved to be an important asset in defeating U-boats.

One of the most impressive of these ships was the USS *Bogue*. A purpose-built escort carrier, it was launched in January 1942 and was the lead ship in its class. Capable of carrying up to 24 aircraft, the *Bogue* had an effective career. Between May 1943 and January 1945, it was credited with an impressive total of ten German U-boats and 2 Japanese submarines. The *Bogue* and its sister ships played a major role in shutting down the German submarine threat and, in the process, not only saved the lives of many merchant sailors but likely helped to shorten the war. However, very few people know of the history of

these tough little ships.

David Lee Russell, a retired Naval Air Intelligence officer and author of books on the American Revolution and a history of Eastern Airlines, has taken a big step forward in expanding our knowledge regarding the *Bogue* and its sister ships. In *USS Bogue: The Most Successful Anti-Submarine Warfare Carrier in World War II*, Russell provides a fascinating history of the *Bogue* and its impact. In sixteen chapters spanning 197 pages, he provides the story of the *Bogue* from construction and commissioning through daily operations. In the process, he helps to break down how the presence of escort carriers changed anti-submarine operations and allowed the development of escort carrier operational doctrine. This provides us with a fascinating window into the process of bringing such a ship to operational readiness, and tells us a great deal about a side of the anti-submarine war that is not often discussed.

In many ways, the text is a fascinating look at the history of one ship and how it shaped events. The first two chapters on the birth of the *Bogue* and its operational training are especially fascinating as they show how much work went in to getting even a small escort carrier up to speed for operations. They also reveal many of the small day-to-day aspects of the training and preparation of new ships for service. Seeing the complexity of such efforts gives the reader a sense of how much more work was needed to prepare larger, more complex combatants for their first operations. Chapters three to fourteen follow the operational cruises of the *Bogue* to the end of the war. The final two chapters examine the *Bogue's* role as an aircraft ferry and its overall legacy. The seven appendices back up the text very well covering a wide variety of information.

While a fascinating read at many levels, and certainly a good history of the *Bogue*, the text is at times a bit strained. The author provides incredible detail to the reader, and that is both a bonus and a negative. Since most history tends to fixate on combat – and, let's face it, that is the sexy and exciting part of naval warfare – the inclusion of the mundane details regarding training and the daily life of the ship provides an excellent reality check to remind the reader of the vast efforts needed to keep a warship running and ready to fight. This is really a positive for the book in a lot of ways. However, while much of this information is fascinating, it can be monotonous. The identification of specific berths the ship was anchored in, etc., becomes a bit taxing at times. Although some may find that information useful, I, however, found it distracting, little bits of record-keeping that had no real bearing on the tale of the *Bogue*. Overall, I recommend this text to anyone interested in aviation history, naval aviation history, or the history of the Battle of the Atlantic. It generally is an enjoyable read with a lively text that most people just getting into the field will likely enjoy. It will also be useful for some academic work as it provides

a wealth of information supported well by citations and bibliographical sources. Certainly, it was an enjoyable read.

Robert Dienesch
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David Sears. *Duel in the Deep: The Hunters, the Hunted, and a High Seas Fight to the Finish*. Annapolis, MD: US Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2023. xiv +346 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, glossary, index. US \$34.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-68247-560-7.

This history of the United States Navy's (USN) anti-submarine operations during the Second World War in the Atlantic Ocean focuses on the sinking of the destroyer USS *Borie* in November 1943. As far as possible, the author's story of the ship is told by crew members in their own words. The story of the *Borie* begins in the emergency building program of the First World War. The book follows the history of the US Fleet from the pre-war period, showing their extensive presence in Central America in the form of bases.

Chapter titles show the prose style to be punchy and action-oriented. The author combines a lively, personal "oral history" of crew members of the *Borie* with an account of the highest levels of strategy, technical advance, and intelligence. Chapters are short – four to six pages – with titles like "Shove off," "Four-stackers," "Scratch One Pigboat," "One Gung-Ho Guy," and "On Borrowed Time," which convey immediacy and action. The same personal style is assumed to tell the story of the major figures through published sources and some archival material (letters). Major themes are presented in alternating chapters to provide the context for the *Borie*'s "duel in the deep," including strategy, technical advances, intelligence, and communication. Strategy, especially the "special relationship" and the personal relations between Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, is portrayed as "hands-on."

"Wizard War" is the chapter beginning with the technical mission to North America headed by Henry Tizard in August 1940. With this began the transfer of technology in the form of working versions of radar and sonar to be studied at MIT and Cal Tech for mass production. The human and technical side of code-breaking recurs throughout and the mass production of primitive computers used to decrypt Enigma signals (Bombes) and work of keeping them running requires many chapters. The role of great universities in improving and adapting these technologies received from the UK is outlined. The convoy system and especially the controversy over it after the US entered the war is another theme.

The transcendent theme is the account of the USN's taking over from the British navy, a story which is traced largely through the relationships between Admiral Ernest King with his British opposites and with Franklin Roosevelt. On one occasion, the discussion strays into the Pacific Ocean to make the point that Roosevelt and King were not interested in assisting the British to regain their empire.

As an oral history, the author extends the normal boundary to include next-generation accounts from relatives of the deceased crew members as well as popular magazine articles from the time. The result is that the authenticity of some stories is questionable.

Beginning with chapter 18 ("The Land of Improvisation") the action shifts largely to the air with the introduction of small, escort aircraft carriers built on merchant hulls, beginning with HMS *Audacity*. In later chapters, more technology is introduced like homing torpedoes (*Zaunkonig* and *Fido*) and ship-mounted HF/DF. Above all, winning the industrial race to improve the "Bombes" was reducing the time to read messages, which were routinely shared by US and Commonwealth navies.

By book's end, the USN eclipses the Commonwealth navies for the first time in destruction of U-boats, thereby assuming the mantle of leadership. The author concludes "America's industrial juggernaut had taken time to gather momentum, but now the Arsenal of Democracy ran at full throttle... Evidence of America's ascendancy was global" (p.233).

This is a wide-ranging and refreshing attempt to present some aspects of the history of the submarine war in the Atlantic. The author's approach is trying to cover the widest possible swathe of individual stories at a personal level. Subjects covered include the roles of communication, technical advance, and intelligence-sharing, and are deeply fascinating. Technical advances, initially the transfer of crucial technology from the UK like computers used in cryptanalysis and centimetric radar, are followed by home-grown advances in aviation, especially carrier-borne aircraft, escort aircraft carriers, and long-range patrol aircraft. Bad news is in the use of formal sources, which are selective, and a lack of a bibliography. Important individuals get to pronounce upon themselves, as is the case with Winston Churchill. In addition, the Canadian effort is absent to the extent the Canada is all-but rendered invisible. There is also only a single general reference to the US Coast Guard and their neutrality patrols before and during the war.

Ian Dew

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Rebecca Simon. *The Pirates' Code: Laws and Life Aboard Ship*. Chicago, IL: Reaktion Books, www.pressuchicago.edu, 2023. 300 pp., illustrations, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. US \$22.50, paper; ISBN 978-1-78914-711-7. (E-book available.)

Pirates hold their place in the sagas of the sea. *The Pirates' Code: Laws and Life Aboard Ship* sweeps away the fog of legend to uncover the life and structure of pirates' existence. The Golden Age of Piracy is defined as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and is a largely West Indian phenomenon, although it extended throughout the Western Hemisphere and beyond. Just as it is said there is honor even among thieves, so pirates had codes by which they lived. Cognizant of the maxim, "If you will steal for me, you will steal from me," *Northern Mariner* readers might be inclined to think piracy was an undisciplined industry and wonder why anyone would undertake it. Author Rebecca Simon devotes an introduction, eight chapters and a conclusion to refuting such presumptions.

Operations of pirate ships frequently were governed by "Articles" which were similar to a modern partnership agreement. The Articles of Captain Edward Low and his Company are offered as an example. The Articles set the distribution of loot: "The Captain shall have Two full Shares, the Master a Share and a half, the Doctor, Mate, Gunner, Carpenter and Boatswain a Share and a quarter." Presumably other crew members received one share. Infractions included "striking or taking up any unlawful Weapon"; "Cowardice in the Time of Engagement"; failure to deliver "any Jewels, Gold or Silver ... found on board a Prize to the Value of a Piece of Eight ... to the Quarter-Master in Twenty-four Hours Time"; "Gaming, or playing at Cards, or Defrauding or Cheating one another to the Value of a Royal of Plate"; "Drunkenness in the Time of an Engagement." Those found guilty were made to "suffer what Punishment the Captain and majority of the Company shall think fit." Provision was also made for compensation to pirates suffering serious injury while "working."

Why would anyone enlist in a pirate enterprise? Chapters are devoted to food and drink, safety, weapons and battle tactics, and entertainment and culture. Pirates were better paid, better fed, were healthier, received better medical treatment, and were offered more economic advancement than other available careers, including naval or commercial maritime ones. Captives were sometimes lured by promises of mercy and shares of the loot. Yes, it was a dangerous occupation and pirates were often hanged, but various wars did provide periodic opportunities for the granting of pardons. Think Andrew Jackson and Jean Lafite in New Orleans.

This work addresses many stereotypes of piracy. Condemned pirates did

walk the plank, but rarely, given the tight labor market for pirates. Contrary to legend, they distributed their treasure, rather than burying it. Tattoos were common, although more for identification of bodies than as works of art. Pirates were an ethnically diverse group, with French, Dutch, English, and Blacks mingling and fighting against each other. At their peak, the pool of pirates probably numbered in the low thousands.

I particularly enjoyed the discussion of legends known by name, but, to me at least, little understood. The *Flying Dutchman*, a ghost ship doomed to sail the seas for eternity, may have had its origins in a man-o'-war sunk off the Cape of Good Hope. The origins of "Davy Jones' Locker" are more obscure, but theories are advanced. Of particular value for students of the colonial era in general is the explanation of the distinguishing characteristics of the three types of colonies in British North America. Royal colonies, such as Virginia, were run by Crown-appointed governors with legal structures mimicking those of England. Proprietary colonies, such as Pennsylvania, were established by land grants to wealthy investors to attract settlement for the production of goods. And Charter colonies, such as Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, had residents who were tied to English law while having the freedom to create their own governments.

The Select List of Pirates is a valuable aid in keeping individuals straight. Maps, drawings and paintings supplement the text. References are well footnoted. The index helps readers find specific topics, and the bibliography is a useful guide for future reading.

With just 300 pages, this is an easy but informative and entertaining read. It dispels some myths without stripping pirates of their mythical lore. The book makes its subjects real people, who lived real lives, without resorting to glamorization or condemnation. This work places pirates within their milieu, amidst the wars, colonies, and commerce of their age. I recommend *The Pirates' Code* to those seeking to understand the Golden Age of Piracy.

Jim Gallen
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William Smith. *Churchill's Arctic Convoys: Strength Triumphs over Adversity*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen and Sword, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2022. 247 pp., illustrations, appendix, tables, notes, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, US \$42.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39907-229-8.

This history of the Arctic convoys from Britain and America to the northern ports of the Soviet Union during the Second World War is focused on the logistical effort to supply the Soviets within the context of political and

diplomatic decision-making. The history depicted is top-down: the decisions as recorded in original documents direct the resulting action at the operational level. It details also how the strategy and tactics of the naval forces escorting the Arctic convoys were affected by events in the wider war.

The book is based mostly on archival records, like the minutes and reports of the various committees and especially correspondence of major participants like Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, and tother top-level diplomatic and naval decision-makers. These include ambassadors and foreign ministers like Stafford Cripps, British ambassador to Moscow, and Anthony Eden, British foreign minister, and their Soviet and American opposite numbers, including Ivan Maisky and Vyacheslav Molotov. Senior naval officers are mostly British, such as Admiral Dudley Pound, given that the naval effort was mostly British. The German air and naval effort to stop the convoys is gleaned from the Fuhrer Directives and Conferences on Naval Affairs, German Naval Staff Operations Division War Diaries, and the pronouncements of *Kriegsmarine* Commanders-in-Chief Erich Raeder and, later, Karl Doenitz.

The bulk of the work consists of the texts or extracts of the original communications in the form of telegrams and letters amongst the participants with the author's commentary on them and the events described. This format of interspersing the documents and analysis lends immediacy and detail to the decision-making process on both sides and links it with the action as it occurred. Many exchanges are between Churchill and Roosevelt since the British were involved in all aspects of supply initially, as well as the task of escorting convoys throughout. Both leaders had a deep understanding of naval affairs and grasp of the strategy of fighting the war globally.

The work opens with the events surrounding the attack by Germany on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 and Churchill's radio announcement to the nation of his intention to support the Soviets by sending war material of every kind by a series of convoys to the northern ports of Murmansk and Archangel. In a letter to Stalin, he optimistically declared, "We intend to run a continuous cycle of convoys leaving every ten days" (p. 11). Following this is an account of the Anglo-American (Beaverbrook/Harriman) Mission to survey requirements for assistance to the Soviet war effort.

Chapter 2, "The German Response," shows the growing realization on the part of the German High Command that the supplies carried by the convoys materially affected the Soviet ground campaign with a resulting pivot away from the Atlantic to Norway of aircraft, submarines, and major surface units, especially battleship *Tirpitz*, resulting in the scattering and destruction of convoy PQ17.

Two chapters are devoted to shipping and logistics, given that most of

the materials and weapons originated in North America and their transport across the Atlantic needed to be coordinated with the largely British escorting forces. The disposition of warships, in turn, is shown to have depended on the requirements of other theatres, notably the landings in North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy, and, most particularly, the Battle of the Atlantic.

This book is written in a concise but highly readable style. Themes covered in detail include vital information not usually reported on, like: communications, including mail service as well as radio; attempts to provide air cover based in Northern Russia, including fighters and torpedo bombers; and the treatment of Allied personnel, including sailors and aircrew. The amount of logistical and operational detail makes for slow going for the general reader, who particularly would benefit from a list of initialisms and acronyms. A list of code names for operations exists in the index, and a note on the naming of convoys is in the Appendix.

The Bibliography and Notes are very brief, and citations are extremely cryptic. It is often unclear from the note the citation reference. Secondary sources include a restricted set of the most important published works, like Churchill's *History of the Second World War*, Roosevelt's *Papers*, and Roskill's *The War at Sea, 1939-45*. Photographs are mostly formal, staged shots of senior officials in full uniform, showing lots of gold braid. Churchill appears in eleven of a total of fifty photographs. A few are well-known group photographs of Allied leaders at conferences like Casablanca and Tehran.

The author has a 42-year career in "Royal Navy, Joint Service, and NATO logistics," so detail of the loading, routing, and handling of the cargoes of the merchant ships is the strong suit of the work. Operational history is sketchy. A common problem is the mis-designation of surface ship types. "Battleship *Renown*" (p. 181) was a battlecruiser; *Scharnhorst* is listed in the index as a "KMS Cruiser" when it was a battlecruiser; also, USS *Augusta* is listed as a battleship, whereas it was a cruiser.

I have to reserve judgement on the analysis because I am unable to decipher many of the too-cryptic citations that should link to original sources. But the work repeats the common prejudice that Soviet treatment of Allied service people ("vexatious formalities") was partially due to paranoia. A reading of the correspondence of the Bentham family would show this paranoia to be well-justified in an earlier period and likely since, as the naval personnel of all nations, but historically and notably Britain, have been involved in spying. The work is very Churchill-heavy. For example, the five-page index has one page devoted to him.

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James Stavridis. *The Sailor's Bookshelf: Fifty Books to Know the Sea*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, <https://www.usni.org/press/books>, 2021. 232 pp., bibliography, index. US \$26.95, hardback; ISBN 9781682476987. (E-book and audiobook available).

Of all contemporary writers publishing on maritime topics, possibly none are more qualified than Admiral James Stavridis USN (ret'd) to compile a list of books which faithfully introduce the reader to the true nature of the sea. In *The Sailor's Bookshelf: Fifty Books to Know the Sea*, Stavridis introduces the reader to what he believes are the best literary works that ought to bring a comprehensive understanding to even the most uninitiated landlubber. While the book does not focus on deep explanations or through reviews of each literary work, it does point the reader to the important connections between the books' topics and draws comparisons in an effort to help the reader understand the ocean from many perspectives.

Stavridis organizes the work into four thematic groupings: Oceans, Explorers, and Sailors in Fiction and Sailors in Nonfiction. The book does not pretend to be a meticulous dissection of the books in these categories. While Stavridis would likely excel in such an endeavour, his work here is designed to connect a broader audience with the building blocks necessary to appreciate the ever-complex ocean in a manner both approachable and digestible. While any audience could thoroughly enjoy this book, the primary targets are beach-goers, tropical cruisers, nature lovers, amateur naval historians, and sunny-day sailors. Really the book is for anyone interested in the sea who might wish to broaden their knowledge and would prefer a focussed selection of personal recommendations from an incredibly qualified source.

The topics are wide-ranging and broadly encompassing, and Stavridis touches on many areas of interest. Some of his selections are strictly practical, aimed at true sailors who wish to sharpen their craft. These include *Dutton's Nautical Navigation* (15th edition); *Naval Shiphandler's Guide*; or *Watch Officer's Guide* (16th edition). Selections like this aim to familiarize the reader with the real day-to-day operations, skills, and standards of those professionals who work on the world's oceans. Other books are surgical examinations of very specific aspects of the ocean world, such as *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World*; *Deep: Freediving, Renegade Science*; *What the Ocean Tells Us About Ourselves*; and *Kon-Tiki: Six Men Cross the Pacific on a Raft*. Stavridis chooses these books because they not only speak to the diverse relationship humanity has with the ocean, but also because he believes the books cannot be outmatched in literary excellence. He is concerned not just with how well each book explains the ocean world, but the manner in which each author elucidates the subject matter. Each book, no matter how technical

or niche, is chosen because it eloquently engages the reader and facilitates a deeper understanding of our blue world.

What would be a collection of stories about the ocean without a few disaster tales? Stavridis includes several books which detail the dangers on the open ocean, including *The Outlaw Ocean: Journeys across the Last Untamed Frontier*; *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex*; and *The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men against the Sea*.

Stavridis also understands the important relationship that humanity has fostered with the oceans and is keen to demonstrate to the reader how important conservation and environmentalism are to protecting and preserving the health and natural beauty of the ocean. Several books have been selected because they speak to the great danger human misuse poses.

Other literary works are chosen because they accurately depict the influence the ocean has had on the fine arts. The best fiction, poetry, and short stories about the sea written by some of the most prominent authors in history make the list. Such additions as *Moby Dick*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and others will surely please any connoisseur of fine literature. Another noteworthy category is that of maritime history, of which Stavridis is a devout student. Stavridis gives his opinion of many historical works on a variety of topics, such as US naval history, the history of exploration, and even maritime racial and ethnic history.

The Sailor's Bookshelf: Fifty Books to Know the Sea is a very worthy addition to any bookshelf. Even the most ardent devotees of writing on the world's oceans will be interested in debating Stavridis's selection of choices either with themselves or with others. And few readers will fail to find a gem on the list which they have hitherto overlooked and now feel the need to track down and get busy reading.

Nevertheless, the book, while quite comprehensive in scope, does suffer from the same weaknesses that any such work is inherently prone to. In aiming to be broad, it often leaves the reader feeling unsatisfied with the level of the author's analysis. In some instances, a more complete and in-depth report from Stavridis would have been appreciated. Additionally, Stavridis has designed the book in some ways as a reference manual, which can be disruptive to the reading experience. For example, he has the tendency to re-state himself or reiterate a point he already made in an earlier synopsis of another book. If each chapter is read in a stand-alone form, this is barely noticeable, but when the book is read cover-to-cover in its entirety, the redundancy becomes more irksome.

Overall, however, this is truly a superb book that fulfills its mission with focus and nuance. As an avid sailor myself, I thoroughly enjoyed the book and have already made some new purchases. I cannot recommend this book enough

as light bedtime reading or as a fun addition to any library. The audiobook version, narrated by Robert Fass, is also very well done and available for those who may prefer it.

James Fowler
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Mark Stille and Jim Laurier (illustrator). *Japanese Combined Fleet 1941-42: The IJN at its zenith, Pearl Harbor to Midway*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2023. 80 pp., illustrations, tables, maps, reading list, index. UK £15.99, US \$23.00, CDN \$31.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4728-5643-2. (E-book available.)

The Combined Fleet, the striking force of the Imperial Japanese Navy, almost appeared unstoppable in the early parts of the Second World War. Through a combination of guile, superior training and organization, and extreme risk-taking, Japanese naval forces bested the Americans at Pearl Harbor, secured access to the rich resources of the southern region in the Pacific, hit the northern Australian port of Darwin and bases on Ceylon, and forced the British fleet in the Indian Ocean to retire. Few other fleets in history had enjoyed such success and notoriety against the odds until their major losses and defeat at Midway. Therefore, it is fitting that the inaugural offering in Osprey's Fleet Series belongs to the remarkable run of the Japanese Combined Fleet at the height of its achievement. Naval historian and former intelligence officer Mark Stille, one of Osprey's most prolific authors, is paired again with artist and graphic designer Jim Laurier, who specializes in military aviation.

The book establishes the basic format and content for the new series with four sections focused on the fleet's purpose giving background information, the types of ships comprising the fleet and their technical attributes, operation of the fleet in terms of organization, command and control, doctrine, intelligence, and logistics, and finally a combat analysis of the fleet in battles and major engagements. A list of further reading has no fewer than seven books by Stille.

According to the first section, the Combined Fleet dated back to 1903, just two years before the Imperial Japanese Navy announced its capabilities to the world by handing the Russian fleet a crushing defeat at the battle of Tsushima in 1905. For the Japanese, this success apparently supported naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan's ideas about the concept of decisive battle to gain command of the sea. By the interwar years, the United States Navy was identified as the most likely enemy. Design and construction of Japanese warships conformed to negotiated treaties, although the Japanese regularly built above limits and eventually withdrew from the accords entirely. Despite

the prevalence of decisive battle doctrine centred around the battleship, the aircraft carrier and naval aviation received greater attention once Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku took charge.

The second section gives details on the fleet's fighting ships through text and comparative tables. Offensive-minded, the Japanese perfected the use of torpedoes, longer range guns, the massing of strike aircraft trained intensely in dive bombing, and low-level launching of torpedoes. Despite these obvious strengths, Stille argues that deficiencies in command and control, air defences, intelligence, and logistics hampered the Combined Fleet once war began. The Japanese never developed pre-war bases, even at strategic places under their direct control like Truk atoll, which could accommodate and protect the ships of the Combined Fleet. Although somewhat better situated after the capture of Singapore from the British, the Combined Fleet sent ships suffering from battle damage, wear, or in need of repair back to shipyards and naval facilities in the Home Islands, thereby limiting effective strength at crucial times.

The fourth section analyses the Combined Fleet in combat from December 1941 to June 1942, covering the major operations planned and undertaken. The surprise attack on Pearl Harbour was certainly audacious, but it was hardly the crippling blow imagined because the Japanese missed the American aircraft carriers and land-based fuel storage tanks when the last attack waves were cancelled. The combined fleet helped to roll up American forces by invading Guam, Wake Island, and the Philippines, before turning to the real prizes in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, which were a principal source of desperately needed raw resources. During the Battle of Java Sea on 27 February 1942, the Combined Fleet inflicted real and psychological losses on British, American, and Dutch naval forces with long-range torpedoes and guns, in accordance with pre-war doctrine. Japanese and American aircraft carriers later clashed in the battle of Coral Sea, each losing one sunk and another badly damaged necessitating withdrawal for repairs. The Combined Fleet felt those losses dearly as Yamamoto planned to employ its full strength in a major operation centred around Midway in an attempt to lure the American fleet into battle on unequal terms. Problems with the plan dispersed forces so that they could not support each other. American signals intelligence and codebreaking helped lead to the sinking of all four Japanese aircraft carriers on the day of battle. This derailed Japanese ambitions and forced a decisive shift from the offensive to the defensive for the rest of the war. The Combined Fleet never recovered.

The illustrated book includes original commissioned art, three dimensional diagrams of fleet formations and deployments, and maps, all in full colour. Accompanied by explanatory text boxes, Laurier depicts scenes from several pivotal moments: planes launching from the carrier *Hiryu* for the attack Pearl Harbor, Japanese destroyers during the battle of Badoeng Strait, and the

response of US Marine batteries to Japanese cruisers at Wake Island. *Japanese Combined Fleet* is a fine contribution to a new series and sets the standard for other historical Fleet books to follow. This small primer is packed with information and will appeal to readers interested in the opening months of the Second World in the Pacific and the rise and fall of Japanese naval power.

Chris Madsen

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Henry Willis Wells, edited by Robert M. Browning Jr. *I Am Fighting for the Union: The Civil War Letters of Naval Officer Henry Willis Wells*. Mobile, AB: University of Alabama Press, www.uapress.ua.edu, 2023. xxix+334 pages, illustration, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$43.95, paper; ISBN 978-0-8173-6105-1. (E-book available.)

This is a collection letters written by Henry Willis Wells to his family during the American Civil War while serving in the Union navy. This robust collection offers a rare insight into a junior officer's experience of the war, the men he served with, and the ships in which he sailed. The letters highlight social dynamics, both of a son gone off to war relating to his family, and life aboard the smaller vessels in the Union navy. The letters are arranged in chapters based on the ship Wells served in, and where that ship was located. Browning's brief annotations give short bios of people, provide appropriate contextual background, and define unique terms. His introduction lays out Wells' biography, describes the larger collection from which these letters were drawn, and remarks on the editorial process for the collection.

A Massachusetts native, Henry Willis Wells was 20 years old when he joined the Union navy as a masters' mate, with five years of service in merchant ships. Upon joining the navy, Wells worked hard for promotion. His first ship, the screw-propelled *Cambridge*, spent time patrolling in the Chesapeake and off the coast of North Carolina. While attempting to retrieve stranded sailors, Wells was captured, passing through Libby Prison before being paroled and exchanged. Returning to service on the USS *Ceres*, he fell seriously ill, requiring hospitalization at Norfolk. Three months later he arrived in Florida serving in the *Gem of the Sea*. This six-and-a-half-month period in Key West was perhaps the most trying as the ship rarely left its anchorage. The boredom, heat, and mosquitos were relentless. For a young man seeking glory and promotion, inaction was more than irksome.

There are glimpses of Civil War battles, such as the *Merrimack's* attack on Union ships and the battle between it and the *Monitor* (pp. 71-4) and some details of raids in which Wells was involved (pp. 157-59). But his letters are

far more personal and family-focused. Most are to his mother Elizabeth, with others to his sisters Louisa and Eliza. There are occasionally staid letters to his father, often sending money owed for things sent to Wells.

Correspondence was critical to Wells; he apologized for gaps of two or three weeks between his letters. He chastised his mother for not writing every week and was critical of his sisters if they didn't write as often as he thought proper. He sought news of the people he knew and of family activities. The exchange of portrait photographs was significant. Wells collected and traded photos of his family, friends, and shipmates. Political discussion was limited, although he vehemently opposed the rebellion and its promoters, considering them traitors to the United States. He liked Lincoln, but not as much as some of his senior officers, whom he called "Lincoln men." Wells' mother sent clothes, books, magazines, newspapers, cakes, preserves, among other items, in a near constant stream of boxes. His father sent guns that Wells requested in one package. Considering the number of men under arms on both sides, hundreds, if not thousands, of wagons would have been needed to haul the packages to various forts and embarkation sites.

The letters indicate that Wells formed friendships with the officers in every ship in which he served, but also that there were officers and seamen that he felt did not belong in the navy (p. 149). Wardroom dramas appear to have been common. Wells condemned Captain William Parker, US Steamer *Cambridge*, as "...nice enough but in my opinion [he] is not fit to command a man of war in these times he has no energy & will take no responsibility which is not forced upon him" (p. 83). Of the captain of *Ceres* Wells writes, "Our Captain especially is about as disagreeable a man as one often meets, sweet as honey one minute & sour as a crab apple the next" (p. 155).

The ships in which Wells served were former civilian craft adapted to war. The steam ferries with iron plating bolted on for protection sailed poorly, had nearly constant mechanical troubles, and were far from comfortable. The crews were often inexperienced. Long stretches of boredom were broken with short bursts of excitement, mainly chasing a potential blockade runner, with a few riverine skirmishes. Music, singing, and dancing offset the dullness. Smoking was a major activity for many, especially for Wells, who developed serious lung issues from the amount he puffed. Alcohol appears as self-medication and a major issue for some of the sailors, though Wells seems less of a drinker than most.

On slavery, Wells was a definite abolitionist, seeing it as plainly wrong, but he was not open to accepting Black Americans as equals. Wells expresses bigoted assessments of former slaves he met during the war (pp. 21-2, 138, 229-30, and 246-48). Only a handful of the refugees he encountered were judged to be active, intelligent or worthy men (p. 57). Wells' expressed prejudice is a

stark reminder that freeing people from slavery would not end the segregation and discrimination aimed at Americans of African descent.

The last group of letters by Henry Wells concern his experience as acting ensign, commanding the sloop *Rosalie* in September 1864 and the schooner *Annie* three months later. He clearly thrived in this position, enjoying a certain independence and more action looking for blockade runners along the Gulf Coast of Florida. But this is a short section, for only a month after taking command of the *Annie*, there was a catastrophic explosion which killed everyone on board. The final chapter contains letters by naval officers answering inquiries from Wells' distraught mother seeking confirmation of her son's death and the circumstances.

The main text is unbroken by illustrations or maps. These are found in the front of the book. The maps help locate Wells' areas of activity from the Chesapeake, along the North Carolina shoreline, and in the area of Key West. The illustrations include two from his letters: one of the siege of Washington, NC, and the other the US Steamer *Ceres* (p. xxix).

This is an immensely important contribution to those studying the Union navy during the American Civil War. This collection of letters illustrates the social dynamics aboard ships and a sailor's daily life in this era. There are more letters and journals that now reside in the Library of Congress. This is a volume to have on the shelf.

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