

Book Reviews

Correction

In the review of *Suffren Versus Hughes: War in the Indian Ocean 1781-1783* that appeared in the print edition of vol. 34, no. 3: 415-16, the name of Admiral Suffren was misspelled. This has been corrected in the online edition. The editors apologize to Quintin Barry, the book's author, and to Helion & Company, the publisher.

Richard Blakemore. *Enemies of All: The Rise and Fall of the Golden Age of Piracy*. New York, NY Pegasus Books, Ltd, 2024, 352 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. US \$29.95, HC, ISBN 978-1-63936-633-0.

Enemies of All is a complex account of the adventures, misadventures, and politics concerning the rise of piracy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The definition of piracy evolved over time to becoming the act of taking a vessel on the high seas from those lawfully entitled to it according to the accepted declaration of the International Law of the Seas. However, powers in a condition of war who have declared a state of blockade can proclaim a justifiable reason for detaining of any ship suspected of carrying contraband, whether neutral or belligerent. Without that legal right, any seizure or sinking of a vessel would be considered an act of piracy. Before the formation of state navies, piracy was pervasive among all seafaring nations. Early in maritime history it was recognized and agreed that pirates were enemy of all nations and could be punished by the competent courts of any country.

The author explores the debate centered around the interpretation of these laws that governed the act of piracy and international efforts to suppress the maritime crime as it tumbled into the eighteenth century. Blakemore composes complex narratives, many of which encompass the escapades of Francis Drake, Henry Morgan, Anne Bonny, Mary Reed, Henry Every and William Kidd, among countless lesser-known others. Britain, France, Spain,

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Portugal, and the Netherlands had colonies in the Caribbean and in North America that were plagued by piracy, but Blackmore's work is truly more global. The multiple stories take place in London, Paris, Amsterdam, Curaçao, Port Royal, Tortuga, Charleston, and send the reader to Jamaica, Cuba, the Yucatán, Ireland, Mediterranean ports, Madagascar, and India, as well as the Arabian Gulf and the Pacific Ocean: a dizzying world tour.

Blakemore explores many languages including Greek, Latin, English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, and even Ottoman Turkish, Chinese, and Hindi to discuss the definition of pirate in various cultures. But more important are the distinctions between a buccaneer, freebooter (*vrijbouter*; *flibustier*), and privateer. The author recounts how Emmanuel Heath, then rector of London's Saint Paul's Cathedral, used the latter term to replace the previously common "private men of war," an appendage of a nation's naval force. When they were deemed lewd, rogue privateers, guileless lawbreakers, they became known as pirates. The distinction in some societies, however, was ambiguous, not cut and dry. As Blakemore points out, one nation's outlaw can be considered an entrepreneur by a competing nation.

In constructing his narrative, the author admirably brings to life the rather complicated story of Henry Morgan's relationship to piracy and politics. This book provides a detailed history for this colorful reprobate, military officer, and distant colonial governor, that is not found in the usual profile of this flamboyant rogue. Morgan and his men are credited in forming what Blakemore termed "Jamaica discipline," a kind of slavery pursued by socially respectable planters. This unique relationship inflicted brutal cruelties on enslaved people, but these were deemed locally legal. Thus buccaneering and slavery became closely intertwined.

Blakemore describes the history of many well-known pirates, but his portrayals of the female pirates Anne Bonny (Ann Fulford) and Mary Read are especially well done and likely to change the reader's view of their lives and, particularly, the role of women during the age of piracy. This is the first surviving evidence of the most famous partnership of female pirates in history. Their true story, however, remains an intriguing mystery since almost nothing certain is known about these now-mythical women. The author identifies several more women who crossed-dressed to go to sea, serving as both soldiers and sailors aboard vessels of several nations. Among the most interesting was a woman called Elizabeth Watson, another Maria van Antwerpen, and the third Hannah Snell. All served within a man's world effectively and memorably.

Blakemore's central theme emerges that "condemning some plunderers as 'pirates', claiming they were 'enemies of all' and therefore outside politics is itself a political move. Without pirates there would have been no empires, and without empires there would have been no pirates" (296). He cautions his

reader when reading a history about pirates or piracy that one should ask who should be called pirates and how were they defined as such.

The scholarly book contains a large section devoted to “further reading,” giving primary source material and printed sources, but the author spends many pages referring to, and usually refuting, Charles Johnson’s 1724 book, *A General History of Pyrates*. In writing an academic thesis in history, it is well-advised to touch on every pertinent event and its historical primary or secondary source reference. Sometimes it is like an exercise of trying to count sheep in a distant pasture while riding on a rapidly moving train. Writing a book for more popular consumption, however, is more effective if its characters and interactions are limited and clearly drawn. Richard Blakemore appears to have revised his Cambridge University PhD thesis into a more readable work. He presents many fascinating episodes and thoughtful character analysis of men and women who were accused of being pirates and those who applied contemporary law against the maritime criminals. Unfortunately, in several instances, there are so many minor characters mentioned and only briefly explored in the book that a reader may have difficulty following the stories.

Enemies of All is a dynamic account of “The Golden Age of Piracy,” a rich and detailed history of piracy around the world in the twilight of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century. Over time, the facts about piracy have been altered by an abundance of myths. Blakemore’s scholarly work is thought-provoking and useful to readers interested in how this rogue enterprise was able to change the world, perhaps in what will be to some unexpected ways. I recommend this book to maritime historians who are interested in the evolution of piracy and privateering throughout the world during this time.

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Bowers, Ian (ed.). *Coalition Navies during the Korean War: Understanding Combined Naval Operations*. London and New York: Routledge, 2024. xiv+126 pp., tables, notes, index. US \$180, hardback; ISBN 978-1-032-62652-9. (E-book available.)

Coalition Navies during the Korean War, edited by Ian Bowers, is a surprisingly slim volume, fitting eight essays and an introduction into fewer than 150 pages. It is unrealistic to expect a book this length to provide a comprehensive overview of naval operations in Korean waters from 1950-1953, and one of the major strengths of the volume is that it does not attempt this. Instead, the volume takes a forward-looking perspective, with each contributor choosing a

single "lesson" around which to base their national narrative.

It is not entirely surprising that *Coalition Navies* takes a lessons-to-be-learned approach given that it is sponsored by the Korean Institute for Maritime Strategy, a non-profit organization established in 1997 with funding from the South Korean government to pursue research on the importance of the sea and to propose relevant policies and strategy. This mission clearly provided the framework for the volume, where the contributors have described various national naval contributions to the Korean War in light of politics and policies which have continued resonance for modern political and naval strategies. While writing history to address present concerns can sometimes lead to polemic rather than history, the brevity of the chapters prevents this issue, and the authors generally handle their topics deftly. Each chapter is only about a dozen pages long, leaving little space for detailed argumentation or extended narrative. This approach, however, becomes one of the strengths of the volume as the authors instead prompt the reader to consider the choices made (or not made) in national capitals and within the coalition framework.

The volume opens with an introduction by Bowers that explains why the coalition naval operations during the Korean War continue to have relevance and outlines several key ideas necessary to understand coalition operations. This is followed by a theoretical chapter by Deborah Sanders that discusses the differences between large and small navies in coalitions. Perhaps controversially, the Royal Navy is classed as a small navy in this context because of the resource limitations that were imposed on it. Somewhat unfortunately, the chapter on the Royal Navy by Tim Benbow later in the volume does not engage with this theoretical framing, something which would have further strengthened Benbow's discussion of the interplay of personality and command relationships. Neither does Corbin Williamson's chapter on the United States Navy, although it is clear from Williamson's narrative how dominant the influence of the USN was in all aspects of the naval effort. Such are the perils of edited volumes.

In addition to Benbow's discussion of the Royal Navy, additional chapters by Richard Dunley, Steven Paget, and Timothy Hiu-Tung Choi look at (respectively) the naval contributions of Australia, New Zealand and Canada to the coalition effort in Korea. These Commonwealth navies were, by tradition and their Second World War experiences, largely interoperable with the Royal Navy. As middle powers, these three nations faced similar issues related to resourcing, naval self-sufficiency, and diplomacy. While the chapters do not engage with one another, the parallels are clear as each discusses similar issues. Quite different is the chapter on the Danish hospital ship *Jutlandia* by Anders Puck Nielsen, which puts the focus squarely on naval diplomacy and Denmark's desire not to make a military contribution, even

when pressured by the United States to do so. Also illuminating is the chapter on the contributions of the small boats and local knowledge made by the Republic of Korea's Navy by Jihoon Yu and Erik French. These two chapters provide a welcome counterbalance to the more traditional national narratives by pointing out aspects of coalition naval operations that are otherwise easy to overlook.

Despite the merits of this work, there are several issues which must be noted. There are no maps or figures to illuminate the geography. And, although they do not generally take away from the ideas presented, there are several errors in the text. For example, in the introduction, Canada's overall naval contribution is listed as eight frigates when the RCN sent destroyers (seven Tribal-class and one V-class). In terms of primary sources, all authors rely on after-action and post-deployment reports, with little engagement with other source bases. Official histories are also leaned on heavily. The chapters are also somewhat uneven in terms of their depth. The chapters by Nielsen and Choi, for example, are much less densely footnoted than some of the others. While there are likely reasons for this related to the available source bases and the nature of the policy choices discussed, the difference is still notable.

On balance, this is a well-presented and intriguing volume. The chapters are very readable on their own and manage to come together as a coherent volume. Those seeking a detailed blow-by-blow account of the naval operations themselves should look elsewhere. Where the volume shines is in using the Korean War as a way of prompting deeper thinking about the impact of national policies and international diplomacy on coalition operations. Because of this, it would be of interest not only to those seeking to know more about the Korean War, but also to readers and students of naval policy, the projection of power, and the various dynamics of coalitions at both the political and the working levels. The price of the hardback is considerable, but it is available, more reasonably priced, as an e-book.

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Gordon H. Boyce. *A History of British Tramp Shipping, 1870 - 1914, Volume 1: Entry, Enterprise, Formation and Early Firm Growth*. Liverpool: Research in Maritime History No. 57, Liverpool University Press, 2024. 303pp., illustration, figure, tables, notes, appendices, bibliography, indexes. UK £95, hardback; ISBN 978-1-80207-466-6

This is the first of a projected four-volume study of British tramp shipping between the opening of the Suez Canal, which was coincident with the rapid

rise of tramp shipping, and the First World War. It was, as Boyce calls it, a golden age. The author is a professor emeritus in business history. He has been writing about the business of shipping and shipping companies for more than thirty years.

Boyce examines how the tramp shipping business sector functioned, beginning with how men became ship owners and tramp operators and learned the business. To look at such a large sector over nearly half a century, he has developed a framework or structure, based obviously on extensive knowledge of shipping as shown by his previous works. Boyce stresses the importance of networks both for business contacts and for trade intelligence. Not surprisingly, he identifies a business culture which defined the way things were done and which had to be learned. Ethical and moral behaviour was essential given that the paperwork normally trailed behind the business handshake. To a chronological historian, at first glance it may seem a bit “jargon heavy.” However, it is useful and makes sense. What I know of the tramp shipping firm, Glover Brothers, established by three of my great-grandfather’s brothers, fits easily into Boyce’s structure. John Glover, who went to London to work as a clerk in a shipping office, started the firm as shipping brokers with his brother Robert in 1858. He became the chairman of Lloyd’s Register of Shipping from 1899 to 1907. Septimus, the third brother, joined the firm in 1870 from Sunderland, where he had been involved in banking and was a ship owner. He became the chairman of the Baltic Exchange (1898 – 1900) and oversaw the merger with the London Mercantile Exchange. These institutional networks were very important. In 1871, they acquired a small fleet of ships and established the Mercantile Shipping Company. The role of networks is also evident in the list of names of early investors.

Religion offers an additional network, which gets little attention here. The Union Chapel of Upper Street, Islington, London was an important centre. It is where John Glover met Frederick Bolton, initially an underwriter at Lloyd’s and also mentioned in this book. Boyce identified an important Bristol connection but was not clear how it came about. My great-grandfather, the youngest of eight sons, was the first minister of the Tyndale Baptist Church in Bristol (1869 – 1911) and became a prominent figure there. If time and resources permitted, a review of church membership could be fruitful.

The book is naturally strongest where Boyce has archival material to use. The discussion of how men became involved and learned the business relies heavily on the papers of the Bates and Runciman families and their businesses. (Sir Edward Bates, the founder of that firm, was vilified by Samuel Plimsoll in his famous outburst in the House of Commons.) Sadly, many company papers (including GloBros) are gone. Boyce is clear that his data is limited to the records available.

The book is perhaps weakest on the matter of ships and fleets, where Boyce frequently relies upon a secondary source that is not well regarded by those with that subject expertise. Boyce is also let down by another secondary source. On the question of insurance, Boyce makes the statement in a footnote (217n54) that Lloyd's Insurance customarily had a maximum of three-quarters of a vessel's value. Fortunately, he provided his source, which regrettably is unavailable to me. However, that seems to be nonsense. It is not mentioned in Wright and Fayle's *A History of Lloyd's*. Nor is it mentioned by Lowndes in his 1881 *Practical Treatise on the Law of Marine Insurance*, and it is implicitly contradicted by much of the evidence before the Royal Commission on the Loss of Life at Sea, established by Chamberlain following his personal defeat on the merchant shipping bill. Were this the case, Plimsoll's anti-insurance crusade and Joseph Chamberlain's 1884 shipping legislation would have lacked a rationale. The bill was abandoned because of stiff opposition from insurance and shipping circles. (John Glover had a major part in this.) However, these are little quibbles that do not, I believe, impact in any way on Boyce's exposition of how the tramp shipping business worked.

Notwithstanding what I can only describe as the book's obscene price, I enjoyed it and I look forward to the subsequent volumes.

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Iver P. Cooper, *Poseidon's Progress: The Quest to Improve Life at Sea*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., www.mcfarlandpub.com, 2024. vii+257 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. US 49.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-4766-9446-7 (print); ISBN 978-1-4766-5202-3 (ebook).

For those who went to sea from the seventeenth through the early twentieth centuries, the prospect of a rough life aboard ship was often confirmed by bad air between decks, foul water, poor nutrition (for at least part of the time), illness from contagious disease, injury, collision with ship or shore, and the threats of fire and drowning. Iver Cooper's book addresses the many technical advances that attempted to make a life at sea safer and more comfortable. It is an interesting foray into these many developments and will certainly promote further research.

Cooper divides the problems and their various solutions across nine chapters. The topics covered include air quality aboard ship, drinking water and purification, nutrition, the watch system and bedding, staying dry and afloat, lifesaving gear, safety at night, fires and contagious disease, and heating, cooling, and waste disposal (of all kinds). Brief synopses are given of incidences that led to the innovations being discussed or of ships in which

they were employed. They provide just enough information to indicate the problem or the attempted fix. One example is the deaths of more than seventy passengers among the 200 aboard the *Londonderry*. The space in which they were confined while the ship weathered a storm did not have enough oxygen. Another concerns the use of a flush toilet for the seamen on the USS *Monitor*, which acted like a torpedo tube. Located below the waterline, a sailor who mistakenly turned the valve controlling the outward flow to the inward direction was blown off the seat of ease upon flushing. These vignettes, although sometimes too short, add to the reader's engagement with the more technical elements in the book.

Within each chapter Cooper reviews the issue and then the (often) multitude of attempted solutions. One terrific set of innovations concerns potable water sources and desalination technologies (pp. 30-47). While most of the approaches mentioned are British or American, Cooper discusses other European and Asian techniques for desalination. His discussion of reverse osmosis desalination does take the topic beyond the book's stated time frame. Inboard ship lighting is another example of myriad approaches being taken to solve the issue at hand, including paint colour, skylights, self-wiping portholes, and various forms of artificial lighting (pp. 173-90). Before batteries were improved, the future of acetylene gas lighting looked bright, but the mishandling of the calcium carbide necessary to generate the acetylene led to at least one ship's destruction. Cooper's description of the various efforts to invent machinery to remove water from the hold covers familiar ground (pp. 129-40).

In part, this book resembles an encyclopedia with short simple descriptions or explanations. There are many interesting factoids in the book, such as the use of life preservers made from kapak, which consisted of the fibres from the Kapak tree. Numerous black-and-white illustrations or photographs of the different pieces of technology help the reader visualize the item being described. Most of the technical writing is very clear, making it easy to grasp what is being discussed. There are, however, a couple of sections that some readers might skip through because they are not clear. Transverse (roll) stability is discussed in the chapter on keeping dry and afloat. A vessel's centre of mass (centre of gravity) and centre of buoyancy are important pieces of knowledge needed to keep a ship from rolling so much that it takes on water or capsizes. The two graphs given to assist in explaining the concept are challenging, in part because of the absence of two letters marking the ultimate influences of the ship rolling too far to one side. The same difficulty occurs in the discussion of the lack of oxygen within confined spaces. The percentages and measurements of room volume in his examples are not for the novice. These parts are overly complicated compared with the approach taken in rest

of the book to the various technical elements the author explores.

What the book is missing is the tension between developers of the different approaches within the various areas Cooper examines. The length of time and struggle to get from concept to implemented innovation would be interesting to investigate. Neither are the political debates and forces for change in safety aboard ship explored, a missed opportunity that could be someone's dissertation. He does occasionally mention legislation, ranging from 1852 through to the twentieth century, but any discussion of the struggle to get that legislation passed and to improve it is omitted.

Cooper has assembled a mass of information on the development and improvement of technologies to make sailors more comfortable and safer. The book's encyclopedic nature will make it a good reference for those interested in the evolution of life aboard ship in the modern era.

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Tom Cooper, Sirous Ebrahimi, and E.R. Hooton. *Iran-Iraq Naval War Volume 2: Convoy Battles 1981-1984*. Middle East @ War No. 63. Warwick, UK: Helion, www.helion.co.uk, 2024. 72 pp., illustrations, maps, biography, notes. UK £19.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-915070-80-7.

This work is the second installment of Tom Cooper, Sirous Ebrahimi, and E.R. Hooton's study into the often-overlooked naval side of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980 to 1988. Along with the four-volume study of ground operations previously produced by Cooper, Hooton, and Farzin Nadimi, this text seeks to shed light on the reality of the "Tanker War" and examine the many firsts of modern warfare seen during this dedicated assault on national import/export infrastructure. Divided into four chapters, the work uses unprecedented access to Iranian state archives alongside interviews and period photographs to build its narrative and analysis, with new map renderings and color profile illustrations of both aircraft and surface vessels provided to further understanding. Sources and notes are provided at the end as well for those seeking to carry out their own examinations.

In the pages leading to the Introduction there are a few points of note, mainly a map of the region to give a basic understanding of the discussed area, an explanation for the Romanized naming conventions used throughout the text, and a guide to common abbreviations found in the work. This is followed by a summation of sources and a basic outline of the war's initial moves, which led to the development of Iran's "Caravan" convoy system and the covert purchasing of American aviation materials and foreign oil to keep the nation afloat during wartime. The relatively calm period of early 1981 is

covered fairly quickly, with the work hitting its stride in Chapter Two.

The early deployment of the French-designed AM.39 Exocet missile by Iraqi air assets in 1981 is covered in detail and bolstered by a detail page on the weapon itself. Coverage of key engagements and ship losses often includes translations from Iranian sources, with maps used to show convoy routes and key airbases throughout. Iraqi overconfidence in their newly acquired French and Soviet airframes is examined, with the lack of air superiority being noted as leading to the “first clear-cut Iraqi defeat in this war” (28). Losses on both sides during the “Year of the Caravans” is covered with a relatively high level of detail, with the authors detailing many ship losses and nearly averted catastrophes when attacks almost set off nearby explosives and fuel. This section also contains detail inserts on Iraqi-flown SE.3200 Frelons and Iranian attempts to counter Exocets with floating missile decoys, as well as an impressive collection of color profiles of key naval and air assets for both sides. Iranian statistics for convoys and losses from 21 March 1981 to 8 January 1983 are provided to lead up to the evolution of warfare in 1983, with the implementation of heavily armed convoys, changes to Iraqi leadership allowing for better combined arms approaches, and the Iraqi deployment of Super Etendard anti-ship missiles concluding the volume.

In terms of possible improvements to the volume, a few come to mind. While most of the maps do have scales, two maps detailing the approaches to Khowr al-Moussa do not (20, 35). The colour ship and aircraft profiles also lack scales, and the addition of such features would both improve the uniformity of the maps and the effective visualization of the profiles. Finally, a simplified chronology might be useful to include as a quick reference, listing key convoys, losses, and weapon introductions free from the overall analysis. These are mere suggestions for future editions or a likely compendium upon the completion of the multi-volume work, and their absence does not detract from Cooper, Hooton, and Nadimi’s current text.

All in all, *Iran-Iraq Naval War Volume 2* is a solid English-language resource for an often ignored or oversimplified aspect of the devastating Iran-Iraq War. The unprecedented access to Iranian documentation and the interviews of Iraqi sources conducted by the authors offers a level of detail and understanding not previously possible for Western academics, allowing for the work to function both as a primer on the subject and a valuable citable resource at the same time. Modelers may also find the color profiles and photographs useful in recreating examples of combatant vessels and vehicles, allowing even more to learn from this work.

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Mick Davis. *The English Convict Hulks, 1600s-1868: Transporting Criminals to Australia.* Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword History, www.pen-and-sword.com, 2024. 224 pp., illustrations, etc. UK £25.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39905-449-2. (E-book available.)

During the Revolutionary War Philip Freneau, the editor of Philadelphia's *National Gazette* and *Literary Register* during the 1790s, endured six weeks of captivity on board two British hulks stationed in New York's harbor. The conditions within the rotting prison ships he experienced inspired a 1781 poem titled "The British Prison Ship." Although it is not referenced in Mick Davis's book *The English Convict Hulks*, in the poem Freneau poignantly captured the essence of Davis's treatise.

These Prison Ships where pain and horror dwell
Where death in tenfold vengeance holds his reign,
And injur'd ghosts, yet unaveng'd complain;
This be my tale-ungenerous Britons, you
Conspire to murder those you can't subdue—

In the seventeen through the nineteenth centuries, most British convicts were from the working class and were sentenced by middle- and upper-class judges who largely held this segment of society in contempt. Besides imprisonment, the common sentences of the day were the hangman's noose, public whipping, time in the stocks, fines, and branding irons. Incarceration was not a frequent option because the number of prisons was few as they were expensive to build and maintain. Hardly anyone wanted one nearby. Public executions, however, were gruesomely popular. Ironically, at such events pickpockets and thieves turned up in droves. The public deaths were intended to be a deterrent, but, on a few occasions, felons approached their executions as "moments of triumph," fleeting instants of notoriety in their shrouded low-class society. Some in the judiciary therefore advocated making executions private.

The British possessed the world's largest navy and some vessels were converted to floating prisons known as "hulks," a Royal Navy term meaning a vessel incapable of full service through damage or from non-completion. By discarding their masts and rigging and reconfiguring their internal decks into prison-like compartments with iron bars over the portholes and bolted hatches, these hulks became crude penal institutions. This was an economical way of repurposing existing government property that could be moved just offshore and away from population centers. In addition, the inmates could be employed as virtual slave laborers. Davis graphically describes the horrible life these prisoners endured. Prisoners slept in groups in tiered bunks, each only 18 inches wide. They subsisted upon meagre rations. None of the vessels had

adequate quarantine facilities. There was an ever-present risk of contamination from the flow of excrement from the sick bays. These deprivations fostered a variety of diseases, many of which were deadly. These passages are disturbing to read but necessary to show the evolution of this cruel form of incarceration and the exploitation of the prisoners.

At that time, Britain was a major colonial power and its colonies needed workers to clear the land, produce marketable commodities, and generally populate these far-away outposts. This led to an alternative form of punishment: transporting and exiling convicted criminals, both male and female. Some portions of America, particularly Georgia and South Carolina, the eastern provinces of Canada, Bermuda, and Jamaica, became destinations for “transportation” of this less desirable population. After Britain was defeated in the “American War,” Australia became a favorite dumping ground, the center for transportation from the 1780s through the 1860s. Unfortunately, many lives were lost or disabled in the process.

The book’s story is basically presented chronologically. The first two chapters set the scene for the use of the hulks as floating prisons and then delve onto a series of personal stories, details of hardships of life onboard these miserable rotting ships and the seemingly endless work of the convicts. The book ends with the description of the sailing of the first of many fleets to the new continent of Australia and finally the end of the “hulks and transportation.” Few maritime histories on transportation to the colonies mention their relationship to the hulks. Those who were transported were largely illiterate and lacked the ability to record their experiences. The vessels’ masters had very little interest in recording shipboard activities as they largely wished to keep their ugly enterprise out of the public eye. For many incarcerated in hulks, transportation may have been a welcome release from the horror of the hulks. For those transportees who survived the arduous journey and tolerated their initial period of punishment under new controllers after disembarking, there was an opportunity for redemption, freedom and unexpected prosperity in the colonies.

A major part of Davis’s book consists of biographies of various men who were administrators of these floating prisons and controlled operations throughout the penal law’s formative and middle years such as Duncan Campbell, George Barrington, Aaron Graham, and the Capper family. Even Captain William Bligh makes a few cameo appearances in the saga. These stories, plus the Transportation Act and Hulk Parliamentary Acts that appear as Appendices in the latter part of the book, are enlightening but tedious.

American readers may be disappointed that the infamous hulk *Jersey* is barely mentioned with no allusions to the incarcerated Revolutionary War notables. Also, there is no reference to the other fifteen hulks, some serving

as hospital ships, that were anchored off the American coast. A few of these vessels were famous in their day before being converted, such HMS *Bellerophon*, the ship upon which Napoleon surrendered, and the USS *Essex*, a famous veteran of the Barbary Pirates War.

The English Convict Hulks is not “a page turner,” but a scholarly work focused on a rarely discussed and unpleasant period of British maritime history, an awkward time when British citizens displayed cold-heartedness to their fellow humans and disposed of them in disparate places.

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Gerard de Lisle. *The Nile Campaign 1884-1885: The Letters and Sketches of Rudolph de Lisle RN*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen and Sword Books Limited, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2024. 166 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £35.00 US \$70.00, hardback; ISBN 978-1-39905-836-0.

Following an earlier volume focused on the Peruvian-Chilean War, this work is a compilation of research, transcriptions, and reproductions of original artworks that document the service of Royal Navy Lieutenant Rudolph de Lisle throughout the Nile Campaign’s effort to rescue General Charles Gordon in Khartoum.

Offering a first-person insight into the riverine expedition of Sir Garnet Wolseley prior to the Battle of Abu Klea in January 1885, *The Nile Campaign* additionally provides the context of de Lisle’s life and of contemporary remembrances held after his death in combat, offering an additional perspective on the effect of the war against the Mahdi from the perspective of one family. An initial section of more modern scholarship on de Lisle is followed by his eighteen Nile Campaign letters, with his sketches and some of the resulting *Illustrated London News* renderings interspersed. Additional letters and funerary materials are then covered, along with five appendices of sources from the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries related to de Lisle’s life and service, followed by a brief biography and index.

As noted, the first half of the text compiles secondary source research on de Lisle’s life and experiences, leading in with a 2016 biographical examination by retired police officer David Howell and followed by brief biographical entries on de Lisle’s relatives and maps of both Egypt and Sudan. Howell’s section is essentially self-contained, featuring its own independent footnotes, source list, and author biography, whereas the “Who’s Who” and map sections are more linked to the provided sketch list and explanation of Gerard de Lisle’s Principles of Inclusion. De Lisle’s service history is rendered in this section as

well, with a list of his education, duty stations, awards, commemorations, and the editions of his posthumous memoirs.

The letters themselves include the core eighteen initially published by Reverend Henry Nutcombe Oxenham as part of his posthumous memoir of de Lisle, as well as a further five letters written by de Lisle in his younger years, two campaign-era letters written to de Lisle, and one written to his family after his loss. The eighteen “Nile Letters” naturally receive the bulk of the work’s focus, with the Principles of Inclusion noting the preservation of de Lisle’s grammatical and spelling errors, the occasional presence of language often offensive to modern audiences, and notations for illegible words. Interestingly, Gerard de Lisle has opted for a hybrid approach to note inclusion, with contemporary references from Reverend Oxenham’s publication rendered as footnotes and modern citations from de Lisle rendered as endnotes. Sketches, watercolors, and completed newspaper illustrations naturally form another backbone to this section of the work, allowing readers a glimpse through de Lisle’s eyes and sketchpad as he wrote home to his family. This is followed by a series of shorter supporting matter, most notably a contemporary newspaper account of the Naval Brigade, the funeral sermon for de Lisle, and his 1884 will, which was written in Abka and mentioned in the transcribed letters. Additional appendices offer one contemporary and several additional modern sources related to de Lisle’s death and commemoration, with an image of the Abu Klea cairn rounding out the appendices and leading into the work’s bibliography and index.

In terms of possible improvements, a few come to mind. There are some places where seemingly unrelated information is presented, such as a footnote on page 13 stating how much a Nile Campaign soldier’s medal sold for at auction, images of swords belonging to De Lisle’s later namesake, and information on the acquisition of de Lisle memorabilia. The inclusion of the two letters from de Lisle when he was seven and eleven years old do not seem to add much to the work either, and their placement immediately after de Lisle’s Nile Campaign letters does not aid the work’s chronology. Removing this information or placing it in appendices might aid the flow of future editions. Similarly, some of the post-Nile Letters material would likely serve better as appendices or sources, notably the two separate source lists regarding accounts of de Lisle’s death, which at the very least could be combined into a single entry.

All in all, *The Nile Campaign 1884-1885* is a solid combination of primary and secondary sources offering insight into the expedition to save General Gordon through the eyes of one of its junior officers. The unique nature of de Lisle’s artistic works synchronizing with the content of his letters home allow for the creation of an illustrated journey down the Nile with the Naval Brigade, offering researchers and historians a unique and multifaceted view into the

conflict. Combined with the more modern scholarship, funerary orations, and period reports, this work allows one man's life and experiences to further modern understanding and perceptions of the Nile Campaign.

Charles Ross Patterson II
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Stefan Dрамиński. *The Destroyer USS Kidd*. Series: *Anatomy of The Ship*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2024. 336 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. UK £45.00, US \$60.00, CDN \$80.00; hardback; ISBN 978-1-47282-741-8. (E-book available.)

This work, the eighth entry in Osprey Publishing's *Anatomy of the Ship* book series and the sixth by author and artist Stefan Dрамиński, examines the United States Navy Fletcher-class destroyer DD-661 *USS Kidd*. This is the first examination of an escort-type vessel in the series, as the previous seven books have all covered capital ships. One of only four surviving examples left out of a class of 175 vessels, Dрамиński has recreated the *Kidd* through both line drawings and three-dimensional renderings, allowing readers to examine the vessel in various configurations throughout her service life and in ways not possible even on a visit to the ship itself. A textual service history and component information section is followed by full-colour primary renderings from key points in the *Kidd*'s service, general arrangements, sectionalized structure views, armament and mechanical component detail renderings, and examinations of common fittings and standard boats carried aboard. The work additionally contains a brief bibliography of books and websites at the end for further reference.

As with previous entries in the series, this work is largely divided into text and rendered images. The forty pages of the initial text can be further divided into twenty-four pages of discussion and analysis and a sixteen-page timeline of the *Kidd*'s service history focused on her wartime service. Both components are accompanied by period and contemporary images of the *Kidd* to aid in visualization and understanding of past and present configurations. Coverage is given to the evolution of the Fletcher-class design as a whole, followed by discussions of the general arrangements, machinery, armaments, fire control, specialized equipment, and camouflage patterns employed on the *Kidd*. Data tables on the ship's principal characteristics, weapons systems, and radar arrays are all provided with many tables offering comparative data between key points in the ship's service life when applicable. As mentioned above, the service timeline largely focuses on the *Kidd*'s active role in World War II, with the key date of 11 April 1945 highlighted minute-by-minute to

fully document the striking of the *Kidd* by an A6M Zero kamikaze plane.

The bulk of Damiński's work is naturally focused on the renderings of USS *Kidd*. This begins with thirty pages of showing the various camouflage patterning and paint schemes for the ship's exterior through both outboard and top-down views as well as close ups of key details and representative angles. From there, the work transitions to 1:250-scale general arrangement drawings with ship frames listed, using line drawings alongside three-dimensional renders throughout the remainder of the section. The drawings in the hull structure section are of particular note for showing a colour-coded plan of hull and main deck plating, an additional detail which would not be as effective in text form alone (108-109). Damiński also renders multiple views of the ship's structural framework, allowing for visualization of the destroyer's skeletal framework, something that is often hidden by plating and bulkheads. Some line plans are side-by-side with renderings of key components numbered and labeled, allowing for better visualization and comprehension of a blueprint's translation to reality aboard ship. The frame cross-section renderings help illustrate the cramped nature of a Fletcher-class destroyer while also allowing for better visualization of details such as the staggered propeller shafts which would not otherwise be as visible on pure deck plan drawings. The *Kidd*'s superstructure, rigging, armaments, and fire control sections all cover the various key modifications from initial construction through her wartime and postwar overhauls. The armament section in particular is notable for rendering not only the *Kidd*'s turret exteriors and internal layout, but both the 5-inch gun assembly and mount shield separately, as well as showing them with cross sections of the integral ammunition handling rooms (247). This allows for visualization of the key components to the main offensive gun battery in a more complete way than is normally possible, taking into account ammunition supply and traversal mechanisms often neglected in favor of the gun tube and mount alone. Finally, Damiński rounds out the work with detail examinations of standard ship fittings and carried boats, bringing focus to often-overlooked details aboard warships similar to the *Kidd*.

In terms of possible improvements to the book, a few come to mind. While frame numbers are present with most deck plans and most sections have a written scale, the inclusion of a scale bar showing the corresponding feet/meters on renderings would be appreciated, especially for the more uncommon scales such as 1:37.5 and 1:50. This would further aid in visual comprehension of the size of the warship, equipment, and compartments. The inclusion of images of the USS *Kidd* in her current configuration as a museum ship in the initial text section are appreciated, though a rearrangement of some of the later images to more closely align with the pages containing the most relevant analysis and future inclusion of interior shots would help strengthen

their effectiveness. Additionally, the use of footnotes or endnotes in the text related to upgrades and modifications would make the work more effective as a research tool. As a final note, the work does state in a few places that the ship is currently restored to her September 1945 appearance, while the museum itself and commemorative plaques at the ship's berth state that she has been restored to her August 1945 appearance (7). These do not diminish the effectiveness of Dramiński's work and such alterations would only improve upon future editions.

All in all, *The Destroyer USS Kidd* is an excellent addition to the *Anatomy of the Ship* series, providing truly detailed insights into the construction and modifications of an important class of destroyers which saw service in fifteen navies across much of the latter half of the twentieth century. Dramiński's renderings of the *Kidd* at various points during her service life make this a solid tool for examining the evolution of the Fletcher class through World War II and into the postwar period through the use of the *Kidd* as a representative example, a fact bolstered by the use of records from the USS *Cassin Young* aiding in the digital reconstruction of some of the typical rooms present on the *Kidd*. As such, this work is an excellent resource and reference for those studying 1940s American warship construction, vessel modifications in wartime and from postwar lessons, those interested in the USS *Kidd* specifically, and modelers seeking to best represent Fletcher-class destroyers.

Charles Ross Patterson II
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William F. Fowler Jr. *Commanding Old Ironsides: The Life of Captain Silas Talbot*. Latham, MD: Lyons Press and Mystic Seaport Museum, www.lyonspress.com, 2024. xxi+231 pp., illustrations, notes, index. US \$24.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-4930-7788-5.

[Note: Book is a republishing of the 1995 book titled *Silas Talbot: Captain of Old Ironsides*, cloth covered, 1995, ISBN 0-913372-73-0. The new edition has a different cover and an added forward by Anne Grimes of the USS *Constitution* Museum.]

Silas Talbot was an extraordinary man whose biography parallels many of the historic steps that led to the Revolutionary War. He was heavily involved in the war's aftermath, the disquieting politics of building a nascent federal government, the genesis and early stages of the American navy, and, finally, the hardships involved in the nation's westward expansion. Rising from obscurity as an orphan apprenticed to a brick layer, Talbot became an army officer, a navy captain, a politician, a landed pioneer/farmer, and an entrepreneur partly

engaged in the slave trade. His life was one of a series of heroic deeds, recovery from personal injury, and overcoming self-doubts and frustrations by proving himself while facing multiple challenges in disparate endeavors.

Talbot was born in Dighton, Massachusetts, in 1751 as part of a large rural household. Leaving the family farm, he became a seafarer at twelve years old as cabin boy onboard a coasting vessel. Later he returned to land to become a stone mason's apprentice. By age twenty-one, Talbot had saved up enough money to buy a modest property in Providence, Rhode Island, and as a skilled mason built a stone home and set out on a quest for social and financial advancement.

His first foray into the community's society was his election as an officer in the local militia. Although he had little formal education, Talbot's peers recognized his natural leadership qualities, and in the early days of the American Revolution he became an officer with the Second Rhode Island Regiment, later serving as the commander of troops in Boston under General Washington. Under Lafayette's Continental Army's command at Newport, the young Rhode Islander captured the British schooner *Pigot* and employed it to help free Narragansett Bay for American shipping and commerce. As a sort-of hybrid soldier/sailor Talbot continued to volunteer for hazardous missions. He later took command of a fire ship on the Hudson River whose mission was to set ablaze and destroy a British warship. He failed in this attempt but, with his clothes afire, was the last to abandon the ill-fated ship. Talbot suffered serious burns but recovered enough to resume command of his Continental troops. He also had the misfortune of spending time as a prisoner of war, first on the infamous prison hulk *Jersey* and later at the Old Mill Prison near Plymouth in Britain, before being released in a prisoner exchange.

On the negative side, Talbot was both a slaveholder and a slave trader as a partial owner of two slave ships engaged in transporting human cargo from the Guinea region to Charleston, South Carolina. Rhode Island was a major center for the slave trade. In 1786, one of his vessels lost almost half of its bondage cargo, thus producing a severe financial loss to its owners. This evidently contributed to Talbot's abandonment of investing in the slave trade.

After serving in the Revolutionary War, Talbot purchased an estate in Johnstown, New York, and later became a New York State assemblyman. In 1793, Talbot was elected as a Federalist New York Congressman in the third United States Congress, serving from 1793 to 1794. His political career ended when President George Washington chose him as third in a list of six captains of the newly established United States Navy in 1794.

He was tasked with supervising the construction of the 44-gun frigate *President*, but it was not completed because of funding issues. Although pugnacious at times, Talbot did manage to tactfully avoid a duel, but went on

to make enemies of two distinguished fellow naval officers, Joshua Barney and Thomas Truxtun. (Ironically, Talbot's eldest son Theodore went on to marry Truxtun's daughter, much to Talbot's displeasure.) Finally achieving his greatest claim to fame, he was named the second captain of the frigate *Constitution* in 1799. His primary mission was to patrol the Caribbean to protect American trade interests. One time he spent 347 days at sea and underwent a supply replenishment at sea to keep his vessel on station, a novel idea at the time but one that has since been widely accepted in most of the world's major naval services.

Talbot served during the quasi-war against France but essentially saw no naval action and ended his naval career. He then decided to take advantage of land offered to veterans of the Revolution in the newly opened lands largely in Kentucky. Traveling there and then back to his family residing in the east was often a harrowing trip. The beauty of the wilderness and accompanying hardships of life there led to the closing chapters of his life back on the East Coast. Even in death, Talbot managed to climb a small notch in his quest for social acceptance. The final resting place of this complex Presbyterian patriot is in the more voguish burial ground of New York City's Trinity Church,

Talbot had many virtues arguably but offset by many vices. His three marriages (the last extremely trying) and successfully providing for a diverse and widespread family were to his credit. The Revolution made him a hero and his subsequent service merited him communal rewards as well as reasonable financial stability. In post-Revolutionary War America, he took risks and sensed opportunity. He pretended to be landed gentry, but those investments waned. Talbot's claim to fame was as a seaman and a naval officer and Fowler argues that, as a seaman, he was best remembered as a skilled and effective privateersman.

The author brings to life a biography of a flawed yet heroic man in an engrossing literary style. Although this is a re-issue of a 1995 book, it is very worthwhile to read about a complex figure who faced hardships, achieved triumphs and inevitable disappointments, largely in a maritime history context, in pre- and post-Revolutionary War America. I highly recommend *Commanding Old Ironsides*, an excellent book by Bill Fowler, who this reviewer feels is among the best scholars and gifted storytellers in the field of maritime history.

Louis Arthur Norton
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Andrew W. German. *The Charles W. Morgan: The World's Last Wooden Whaleship*. Essex CT: Lyons Press and Mystic Seaport Museum, 2024. 173 pp., illustrations, appendixes, glossary of terms, sources, further readings, index. US \$24.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-493-084432.

Andrew German's latest work is, in essence, a memoir of a specific whaleship, the *Charles W. Morgan*. The book, however, is much more. It is a multifaceted story of the whaling industry, largely of the nineteenth century. The author introduces his audience to the men, women, and families that owned and/or sailed the vessel and the many ethnic peoples of the world who served onboard. German guides his reader through the physical evolution of this vessel with time, while providing a study of the nature of the various leviathan species and their varied environments, the variety of implements used to capture whales, and the occupation of whaling during the ship's various voyages, which covered nearly a million miles. Finally, the author devotes a large section to the vessel's preservation as Mystic Seaport Museum's exhibition flagship, through which it was remarkably restored to functionality.

University of Connecticut English professor and Melville Scholar Mary K. Bercaw Edwards, who worked for many years as an interpreter onboard the *Morgan*, wrote the book's forward. She noted that the ship "now serves as a link to the whales, the people, the cultures, and the world encountered by whalers" (viii). The vessel is a typical wooden whaleship of the day, and that makes it an impeccable model to better understand the commercial history of the whaling industry and those interconnected with it whether ashore or upon the oceans the *Morgan* traversed.

The book commences with a treatise about whaling in general, introduces the reader to the prey, some of the pioneers who opted to catch these illusive and dangerous creatures, and then the genesis of the whaling fishery. This is followed by a description of how a whaling vessel was constructed, and why and what distinguished it from other sailing vessels of the time. Next is an account of the first owner and captain and the birth of the book's true protagonist, the *Charles W. Morgan*. This is followed by a series of chapters outlining its voyages from 1841 through 1913. German provides the reader with details about the ship's modifications over time, its voyages to exotic places around the world, the variety and ethnicity of its crews during this time, and the ship's productivity in the changing market for its products: largely oil for lubrication, spermaceti for candles, ambergris for perfumes, and baleen, the bones and teeth of various species of whales used in a variety of products, many of which were common implements in a nineteenth-century household. Whale baleen was the 1800s predecessor of what is today plastic. The author describes the ethnic and age composition of the crews and the quasi-domestic evolution that allowed women and occasionally children on these very long

passages. Additionally, he explores the methods employed by various captains to maintain discipline among sometimes violent crews under challenging circumstances. He also describes how the vessel almost miraculously avoided becoming a victim of the Confederate raider CSS *Shenandoah* as it hunted defenseless whaleships during the Civil War by being partly frozen in ice while pursuing prey in the Sea of Okhotsk.

The final portion of the book describes the return of the vessel to New Bedford, Massachusetts, shortly after the turn of the twentieth century and its last days of whaling under sail from 1916 through 1921. Ultimately the ship became an occasional movie set, then was placed in a coffer dam as a museum of a bygone era to rest upon the sands of Round Hill on the shore of Buzzards Bay southwest of New Bedford. In 1922, she was refloated and shipped to Connecticut's Mystic Seaport Museum. In a strategic gamble, in 2009 the ship was completely refurbished and modernized to Coast Guard standards to have its thirty-eighth "storybook rebirth voyage" in 2014. Now moored at the museum's Chubb Wharf, it welcomes visitors who wish to relate to the vessel's glory days of whaling, allowing people to perhaps imagine themselves thrust into Melville's *Moby Dick* or other similar adventures.

German's richly illustrated book summarizes the completion of the *Morgan*'s thirty-seventh whaling voyage. The United States then spanned the North American continent with a population of over 106 million people. "Eighty years earlier, when the *Morgan* was launched, the nation lighted its homes with spermaceti candles and whale oil lamps, lubricated its machinery with whale oil and used baleen for its elastic properties. Whaling was considered the nation's fifth most important industry. During the vessel's eighty years of sea, nineteen presidents had served, twenty-two states had joined the union, and the population of the United States had grown by seven hundred percent. The nation was now an industrial giant rather than a maritime power" (107).

The last wooden whaleship, *Morgan* is more than an historical artifact of the craft and business of whaling. It is the last living example of what it must have been like to take part in the now oddly romanticized but brutal and dangerous occupation. It is also monument and cenotaph to the diverse people who laboured and died in this industry. *The Charles W. Morgan* is a third and final volume about this iconic ship written by the talented and articulate Andrew German, the former Director of Mystic Seaport Museums Publications Department. This relatively short but meticulously researched work is just one more of his many erudite contributions to maritime history, a substantial and extremely valuable work.

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Augustín Guimerá and Richard Harding (eds.) *Sailors, Statesmen and the Implementation of Naval Strategy*. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, www.boydellandbrewer.com, 2024. 216 pp., illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. UK £75.00, US \$115.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-83765-120-7. (E-book available.)

Sailors, Statesmen, and the Implementation of Naval Strategy explores the relationship between civil authorities and naval strategists to offer new insights into how naval policy has been made in the past across a range of nations and situations. Nine authors offer their research in different civilian-naval policy interactions from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries in the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Spain. Editor Richard Harding highlights a tension between naval experts and civilian policy makers who can be thrust together in time of war or have to interact in the overall planning of national naval policy but otherwise operate in vastly different worlds and know little about the expertise and experience of their counterparts. Career politicians often have difficulties understanding the needs of their nation's navy, and naval leadership has historically struggled to "ensure a long-term focus on their needs by political leadership" (11).

Though Harding states that this collection does not seek to answer any single question, the authors show the successes and failures of this tricky naval-civilian policy relationship in several case studies. Alan James explores this relationship in seventeenth century France, where the centralizing state under King Louis XIV largely allowed the navy operational independence, but also neglected the naval force as an instrument of power projection, opting instead to make the navy a reflection of royal power and priorities. For example, officer appointments went to men who demonstrated great loyalty to king and church. Ivan Valdez-Bubnov examines the efforts to build a professional navy in Bourbon Spain, demonstrating that a political administration with a long-term dedicated interest in naval affairs could reform a navy from a decentralized force to one that could serve the national interest in versatile ways and in multiple theatres within a century.

Harding's own chapter on 1740s Britain shows how a navy with significant political influence can overplay its hand and lead to an overconfidence of government in the navy, which was sharply reversed by a series of strategic setbacks that the Royal Navy could not handle. Agustín Guimerá argues that the close relationship between naval and foreign policy decision-makers in late-eighteenth-century Spain enabled its navy to meet the policy needs of a global empire. Olivier Chaline shows the opposite naval-political relationship in Bourbon France, where the reliance on allies with varying objectives, differences among court decision-makers, and lack of naval expertise caused

France to often lack direction for its naval strategy, even in wartime.

Agustín Rodríguez examines how a Spanish naval officer in the mid-nineteenth century could combine tactical and political savvy to provide his country with a hero and figure of stability during a national crisis. Andrew Lambert writes on Julian Corbett's role as a naval strategist in early-twentieth-century Britain, where the Royal Navy sometimes had difficulty communicating its expertise to the government. Corbett's legal and civilian background enabled him to communicate strategic ideas in ways that both naval officers and policy makers could understand. Adolfo Morales Trueba demonstrates that when a civilian policy maker dedicated time and effort to understanding naval affairs, as was the case with Spanish Republican Navy Minister José Giral Pereira, civil and naval experts could create a robust plan for a nation's navy. John Hattendorf applies the civil-naval problem to the United States, showing how over the course of the U.S. Navy's history, the service rose from a fledgling outfit mistrusted by the nation's republican culture to having a respected culture of leadership refined by incorporating other disciplines into its education programme through institutions like the U.S. Naval War College.

Together, the authors demonstrate not only the number of different strategic situations that navies have encountered in the last four centuries but illustrate a wide range of ways states have used and neglected their navies within larger national strategy. The research presented in this collection shows that both the culture of a government and a navy can promote or undermine a sound naval strategy. Some navies have made efforts to better understand the government under which they work, and some navy ministers and policymakers have given naval experts a greater platform to voice their thoughts, but these two groups have to communicate effectively.

This volume addresses the issue of civil-naval relations in light of growing geo-political tensions between China, Russia, and the West, but lacks the perspective of non-Western experiences. Although the four nations discussed in this book are among those with the richest naval history, one or two chapters exploring the relationship between the government and the navy elsewhere (Japan, China, or Russia, for instance) could have offered a more global picture of civil-naval relations for academics and more relevant context for contemporary naval experts. Despite this shortcoming, this volume's contributions provide fresh ways of looking at the relationship between governments and navies, and *Sailors, Statesmen, and the Implementation of Naval Strategy* would be a welcome addition to the libraries of both naval historians and officers alike.

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Olive Heffernan. *The High Seas: Ambition, Power and Greed on the Unclaimed Ocean*. London, UK: Profile Books, www.profilebooks.com, 2024. 368 pp., notes, bibliography. \$42.95 CAN, \$32.95 US. Hardback; ISBN 978-1-77164-588-1. (E-book available.)

This is not a book for pessimists. *The High Seas* is a volume of recent history and focuses on the often-unnoticed activities on, in, and beneath waters which are not only out of sight, but often out of mind. In the first part of the book, author Olive Heffernan moves quickly over the development of international rights and claims over the seas from the establishment of the three-mile limit, through the extension to twelve miles, the subsequent 200-mile zones of economic control, and ultimately to the extended continental shelf claims. The introduction to the attempts to nationalize the seas is a short but valuable preamble to the core of the author's concern.

Foremost in her analysis of recent and current activities is the lack of balance between the perceived rights to high seas resources and the frequent abdication of any responsibilities in these same seas. This is a depressing recounting of the tragedy of the commons wherein the resource either belongs to everyone or to no one, resulting in a failure to manage it for the good of all. Heffernan is not an academic but an established and respected science journalist. The book is well researched and written, and benefits from the journalist's ability and skill in allowing those working on the unclaimed oceans to tell their several stories.

Some of the topics in this omnibus of marine abuse will be familiar ones for anyone following the current direction of environmental history: the great gyres of plastic garbage, sea-bed nodule mining, predatory fishing fleets, and the creation of marine dead zones. While Heffernan covers these expected areas, the value in the publication lies in the less-familiar types of destruction and overuse. She covers, for example, the discovery and potential exploitation of fishery of the "twilight zone," an area between the maximum depth for photosynthesis at about 100 meters and the beginning of almost absolute darkness at 1000 meters, an area which may contain billions of tons of fish. The author explores the value of this resource but stresses the danger of exploitation without an understanding of the ecological role of these creatures. In addition, this is a completely unregulated area and a potential source of conflict between states seeking to exploit the space.

Another seldom-cited value of the high seas is the genes and drugs found, and yet to be found, in marine flora and fauna. While some attention has been paid to the potential of areas such as the Amazon rain forest, the un-owned oceans also have great potential as the source of additional genetic resources. Here, too, owing to the lack of agreement and control, there is inequality of

access and development between those nations who can afford to explore and exploit and those who cannot, not to mention the un-regulated exploitation and damage that can result.

While most readers may have a passing acquaintance with the impact of climate change on the ice coverage of the polar regions, this volume goes beyond the loss of habitat for sea creatures, the rising water levels, and changing ocean currents. Heffernan details efforts of pioneering scientific initiatives to cool the ocean to fix the climate. She details many fascinating initiatives, such as the work of one scientist who is experimenting with increasing the reflective capacity of snow and ice through the use of minute glass silica beads to reduce heat absorption and reduce melting in key areas of the Arctic. There are other ocean-based climate interventions, but increasingly the danger is that, as with so many things in connection with the high seas, there is limited international cooperation and an almost total lack of governance of these initiatives.

Heffernan's final chapter, "Hope for the High Seas," attempts to be a seemingly obligatory positive conclusion for the volume, citing a number of instances where yet-to-be accepted international agreements and treaties for such things as marine protected areas show how things could change. However, the muted optimism of the final chapter does little to stem the tide of damage flowing from the wave of abuses against the resources of the majority of the earth's surface. In ringing the alarm bells loud and long, Heffernan almost deafens the reader to anything but a doomsday scenario. She has done her work too well and the ordinary sailor or fishermen or scientist may feel defeated by the evidence she presents. There is marine history aplenty in the volume, but it makes for uncomfortable reading and, like a poorly written detective novel, the identity of the criminal is evident from the very beginning. Heffernan argues that we have all taken, and continue to take, so much and our assumed entitlement will destroy the seas in the same way as we have critically damaged the land and atmosphere.

And yet, this is a book that should be widely read, both by those who treasure the seas and those who do not. It is not an alarmist tract and, unlike some recent volumes on how we have abused our environment, it is interesting, well-reasoned, and rational rather than inflammatory. The reader will come away with a heightened sense of what is happening in, on, and under the seas. It is an important volume and shows not only how we got here, but where we could well be going.

H.T. Holman

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Alexander Hill and Paul Wright (illustrator). *Soviet Cruisers 1917–45: From the October Revolution to World War II*. Oxford, UK: www.ospreypublishing.uk, 2024. 48 pp., illustrations, tables, bibliography, index. UK £12.99, US \$20.00, CDN \$27.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47285-933-4. (E-book available.)

In the early decades of the Soviet Union, the Red Navy – or the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Fleet – went through revolution, civil war, limited fiscal and industrial circumstances, purge, invasion, desperate defensive actions, victorious offensives, and the ambitions of a ruthless dictator. By most measures, the Soviet navy was more makeshift, extemporized, and lacking in capability than other major and minor navies of the period. Always in the shadow of the Red Army, the Soviet navy essentially performed coastal defence and a multitude of tasks thrust upon it by circumstances. The constraints of geography meant concentration of developed bases and units in the constricted Baltic and Black Seas close to the Russian heartland and population, even though the Soviet Union also had access to the Arctic and Pacific Oceans, where infrastructure was rougher or non-existent. Attention was given to building destroyers, submarines, and torpedo boats, and repairing or finishing existing warships left from the Imperial Russian Navy and obtained from foreign sources. Alexander Hill, a Cambridge-trained military historian and professor at the University of Calgary, focuses on one particular type of warship – cruisers, in the Soviet inventory from the Russian Revolution up to the end of the Great Patriotic War as no. 326 of Osprey’s New Vanguard series, which puts particular emphasis on technical aspects and operational history. Original commissioned artwork in the book is provided by Paul Wright, a well-respected marine artist and graphic illustrator.

The small book, coming in under fifty pages in length, follows the standard format for the series and provides a richly illustrated and engaging narrative introducing select cruisers employed in Soviet service up to the conclusion of the Second World War. The Bolsheviks gained control over Tsarist cruisers and used them to seize and consolidate power in Petrograd and defend their position against White and foreign interventionist forces during the ensuing civil war. The *Aurora*, among the most famous warships in the world and now preserved as a museum ship in St Petersburg, fired the shot that started the revolution while anchored in the Neva River and the rest, as they say, is history. A fine colour three-dimensional cut-away shows internal and external features of the cruiser as configured in 1917. Sailors from the *Aurora* guarded the Petropavlovsk fortress and fought the Whites during the civil war, with the cruiser eventually relegated to training and diplomatic duties, surviving merciless German bombing and shelling in the Second World War and later

restored. The *Oleg*, another former Tsarist protected cruiser operating in the Gulf of Finland and sunk by a British motor torpedo boat on 18 June 1919, also gets a full-colour side profile. The Tsar's former imperial royal yacht, laid down in Denmark as a cruiser auxiliary, became the minelayer *Marti* and survived the German siege of Leningrad to be used as a target for training in 1943. A colour side profile of the converted cruiser at the start of the war depicts its dramatic change in appearance and functionality.

Influenced by Italian design and assistance, the Soviets embarked on building their own cruisers in the Kirov class, two ships the namesake *Kirov* and *Voroshilov* under Project 26 and the remaining ships *Maksim Gor'kii*, *Molotov*, *Kalinin*, and *Kaganovich* of the improved Project 26-bis. These warships were split between the Baltic, Black Sea, and Pacific fleets, where, in the first two theatres, the Germans inflicted a heavy toll during operations in support of the Red Army and protection of the seaward flank. Two side profiles note the differences between two representative Project 26 and Project 26-bis ships. Under the terms of the August 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact, the Soviet Union purchased the Admiral Hipper-class cruiser *Lützow* in an incomplete state with plans to finish it at Leningrad and incorporate it into the Red fleet. German prevaricating and Adolf Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 meant the now-renamed *Petropavlovsk* was no more than an immovable floating battery served by electricity from shore, but its guns fired to stem the German advance on the city. Bombardments from German heavy artillery ranged in on the unfinished warship, which sank at its moorings after being abandoned by the crew. Refloated, the *Petropavlovsk* participated in Soviet offensive operations against the retreating Germans in January 1944. A number of Project 68 cruiser hulls under construction at the start of the Great Patriotic War were subsequently completed after hostilities as the Chapaev-class. Other post-war cruisers were gained as war reparations from division of the German and Italian fleets amongst the victor powers.

Soviet Cruisers 1917-45 continues the high standard in format and illustration found in other Osprey titles. Accompanying photographs in greyscale and colour are well-chosen and relevant to the text. Fifteen tables give valuable information and specifications of individual ships and classes of cruisers in the Soviet navy during this time period. The artwork by Paul Wright, including the *Aurora* fatefully firing its gun on 25 October 1917 and loading of army artillery onto the *Krasnii Kavaz* using the ship's aircraft crane, are nicely done. As is common with other Osprey titles, the text has no references, but a select bibliography of entirely Russian-language sources is included at the end, which might have been made more accessible by including at least a few English-language books and articles. In particular, John Jordan's *Warship* annual has contained over the years a number of related chapters on

Soviet technical developments and warships. This Osprey offering provides readers with a basic summary of some technical aspects and operational histories of early Soviet cruisers, which can be placed in the context of wider naval developments before and during Admiral of the Fleet Nikolay Kuznetsov's tenure as People's Commissar of the Soviet Navy. Kuznetsov's main achievements were outlasting Stalin and sheltering the naval service from the worst ravages of the regime, thereby laying the basis for the remarkable reforms and expansion under Admiral of the Fleet Sergey Gorshkov at the height of the Cold War.

Chris Madsen

North Vancouver, British Columbia

Angus Konstam, illustrated by Adam Tooby. *British Lend-Lease Warships: The Royal Navy's American-built Destroyers and Frigates*. Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 2024. 48pp. New Vanguard Series no. 330. Photographs, maps, tables, charts, further reading.

This book is a concise, highly graphic account of the acquisition and modification of US-built destroyers and escort vessels under the US Lend-Lease Program and their operation in the British Navy in the Battle of the Atlantic in World War II. The book is built around a range of innovative graphics. The striking cover illustration is one of two artist's representations that dramatize important actions. It shows an onrushing destroyer at the instant a depth-charge pattern explodes in the defence of Convoy HG 76. The vessel is HMS *Stanley*, one of the 50 four-stack destroyers transferred in 1940 to become the Town class in British service. The second shows HMS *Trollope*, a Captain-class frigate, in action with E-boats in defence of shipping off the Normandy beachhead in 1944. The Captain-class frigate is the other major class covered, which was made up of ships of USN's Buckley and Evarts classes of destroyer escort.

The "Design and Development" section traces the history of the vessels. Most coverage is of the "Four-stackers" throughout their early history in the USN and mothballing following World War I to final disposal. There is a description of the development of specifications for modern escorts which had similar characteristics: 280 to 300 feet in length, 20 knots plus, and modern anti-submarine armament. This was the Destroyer Escort in USN classification and became the frigate in British service.

"Royal Naval Employment" details the modifications made to adapt the Four-stackers for convoy escort work and their disposition among escort groups. Full-paged, coloured diagrams show the evolution over time from fleet destroyers into escorts or, for a few, to long-range escorts. A full two-

page cutaway drawing shows HMS *Campbelltown*, the best-known of these due to its role in blowing up the dry dock gates at St Nazaire. There are detailed descriptions of the propulsion systems in the frigates and the evolution of armament and especially electronic systems, radar and sonar.

In “Escorts in Action,” the action of some major engagements is described. The approach produces a homogenized history. It omits consideration of one major group of vessels built to similar basic specifications: the Colony class of 21 frigates, constructed by Walsh-Kaiser in Providence, RI. The Colony class was a US “knock-off” of the specifications of the River class

It is galling when limited text space is used to advertise other books by the same publisher: writing of *Campbelltown*, “Her story has already been described in detail (See CAM 192...” (35), and of the battle surrounding Convoy HG-76, “the convoy battle that followed has already been described in detail in Osprey *The Convoy*” (35)). That in “Further Reading” all titles are shown as published in the UK is remarkable given that the Lend-Lease Act was American legislation. This story is told in a highly selective way, which cannot simply be ascribed to the compact format of the work. Use of a wider group of sources would give a less-biased result.

This work may appeal to younger, graphically oriented people. The physical product of the paperback volume is close to a magazine format, with high-gloss paper in a rugged “perfect” binding, which makes it durable. Photographs are mostly miniature and of varying quality; some are high resolution, which can be magnified. The lack of a bibliography and references makes following up and fact-checking difficult.

The author dismisses USN attempts to grapple with the questions of classification and nomenclature of the new vessel, the destroyer escort, that became a frigate in RN service, as a “disregard for the niceties of grammar” (16). By excluding the Colony class and at least mention of the River-class frigates, the author misses a big piece of the story of Allied shipbuilding interrelationships during World II in terms of tonnage and numbers of ships. The story misses the value of that effort and lessons for the future: that the effectiveness of the common naval strategy was based on a degree of interconnectedness among US, Canadian and British shipyards and that building and transferring escort vessels as needed among the Allies was dictated by strategic concerns.

Ian Dew

Thunder Bay, Ontario

Arthur MacGregor. *St. Helena: An Island Biography*. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, www.boydellandbrewer.com, 2024. GBP80.00, USD\$110.00, hardcover, ISBN 978-1-83765-088-0.

This biography of the remote island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic appears as promising as the 2,700-foot-high Diana's Peak on the 47-square-mile craggy and impervious island. The 500-year history of this foreboding and often neglected British protectorate, which can be seen by shipping at 20 leagues distance, delivers much of what it promises. It covers even more than we might expect about St. Helena's biodiversity and the challenges always faced by inhabitants on an island that is 1,200 miles west of Africa and 1,800 miles east of South America. Its nearest neighbor is Ascension, 807 miles to the northwest.

The cover shows ships sailing past St. Helena's settlement of Jamestown, which clings to the base of red-brown hills, and glorious fortresses crowning the heights like an Aden.

Today, almost exactly 202 years after Napoleon arrived, the airport is opened to civilians. Less frequently, freighter ships call there and the Cape Town-to-Rio de Janeiro yacht races past. If forced to divert to St. Helena, you will want to have read this book. The island has been visited by many scientists and explorers, among them Joseph Banks, Charles Darwin, James Cook, astronomer Edmund Halley, William Bligh, William Dampier, and Frederick Marryat, the author and illustrator. Many of these were navy men.

This island has been forced to play host to enslaved persons from Africa, Burma, India, Java, France, the Maldives, Portugal, and Madagascar. There were also prisoners of war, including from Zulu chiefs and Boers, some as young as 14. Some of these were put to work in the malodorous rendering of whale blubber. Japanese sailors visited as early as the 1700s, and other prisoners include Bahrainis. Plans for Irish revolutionaries to be imprisoned on St. Helena were deemed too expensive and abandoned.

Islanders themselves were faced with the problems of feeding, watering, and exercising the existing population. Water was variously described as plentiful and flowing in brooks and brackish. Morale, even among those in power seems to have been low, with the reputation of St. Helena Infantry "perpetually blighted by discontent and indiscipline in the ranks, periodically boiling over into mutiny." In 1787, "a full-scale fire fight [erupted] in which 103 mutineers were eventually taken prisoner and 99 of them sentenced to death" (72). Other engaging topics are garrisons, troops, and, of course, Napoleon Bonaparte, without doubt the most notorious "visitor" to the island. He was exiled there after his 1814 banishment to Elba Island, his escape, then his surrender to the British in the French Bay of Biscay in mid-1815. He was shipped to St. Helena, a 67-day voyage that even his French surgeon refused

to undertake. MacGregor's writing is formal, yet also wry and humorous, as evinced in this passage: "Fearing that the vanquished emperor would become 'the object of curiosity' and 'possibly a focus for continuing ferment in France' – the government ...concluded that St. Helena would be 'the best place in the world ...for the confinement of such a person.'" Their reasoning included that St. Helena was "particularly healthy [with] only one place where ships can anchor, and the power of excluding neutral ships altogether.... Intrigue will be impossible and, being so far from the European world [Napoleon] will soon be forgotten." MacGregor adds sardonically that, "Few prophecies can ever have been so comprehensively unfulfilled" (151). He substantiates this with 15 pages of readable narrative showing how an Austrian botanist from the Viennese royal court smuggled messages from a mother to her servant son on St. Helena, and how the governor in charge, named Lowe, cut Napoleon and his retinue's rations of wine and food so steeply that they were forced to sell embossed silver to obtain wine and food. Predictably, the emperor fell badly ill and died – the intrigue regarding retrieval of his remains dragged on for years.

St. Helena was never classified a Royal Navy "stone frigate" or depot ship, like *Ascension*; nor did it play significant roles in World War II or the Falklands War of 1982. The book draws its strength from its organization and highly detailed research, covering initial contact with Portuguese and Dutch, defense, culture, danger, survival, and ironies such the sinking of a British transport tanker during World War II in James Bay by the German submarine *U-68*, which for 75 years seeped oil into the island it was meant to protect. The author seems happiest conveying observations of the island's natural offerings; with the most page citations falling under "animals, birds, fish, invertebrates," and "plants."

Readers will marvel at the author's photos taken hiking on the island and extraordinary charts showing shipping traffic past St. Helena over the centuries. An initial primer – in very simple and clear maps and terms – would have been helpful about where the islands are, how many have lived there, and why they matter, placing St. Helena in a global context. To some readers, footnotes clutter or push out the core information, while to other readers, footnotes provide needed information clearly and easily: this book is of the former footnote variety, with half a page or more devoted to them in some cases. Many readers will be drawn to this book and St. Helena because the subject matter is so obtuse. After enjoying this richly illustrated and informative text, readers will know a great deal more about St. Helena, and may be inclined to learn more and perhaps to attempt field research of their own on one of the most remote islands on our planet.

Eric Troels Wiberg
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Malyn Newitt. *Navigations: The Portuguese Discoveries of the Renaissance*. London, UK: Reaktion Books, www.reaktionbooks.co.uk, 2023. 351 pp., illustrations, maps, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, cloth: ISBN 978-1-78914-702-5.

Malyn Newitt's *Navigations* focuses on the role of the Portuguese maritime explorers from the fifteenth century through what is known as the voyages of discovery, advances in ship design and navigation knowledge. The Avis dynasty established itself between 1385 and 1460 when maritime explorations reached their first stage of development of the west African coast in the second half of the fifteenth century. This ultimately led to Portuguese involvement in the lucrative but reprehensible slave trade. These expeditions included famous names in voyaging history such as Prince Henry "The Navigator," Vasco de Gama, Pedro Alvares Cabral, Duarte Pacheco Pereira, Amerigo Vespucci and, finally, Ferdinand Magellan. Their ventures are covered in detail along with their many human failings.

One chapter of Newitt's book centers upon the influence of the often under-appreciated royal women in these discoveries and, of special note, the Muslims and particularly Jews (Sephardim and New Christians or *conversos*) who affected both scientific undertakings and the subsequent success of Portuguese commerce. One Jew, cartographer Jácomo de Maiorca, was included in Lisbon's Monument to the Discoveries. This Jewish diaspora was vital in the great economic influence of the Portuguese. However, without an accepted international currency, a bizarre barter system developed such as a horse could be worth an arbitrary number of African slaves. Also, a consequence of sailing for long periods of time away from land was malnutrition, most frequently "the scurvy," a disease that caused fever, rotting teeth, bleeding gums, general weakness and, if untreated, death.

Newitt relates the history of the more famous Portuguese explorers placing them within the context of real people with human flaws. The first was Infante Henrique, better known as Henry the Navigator. He was neither a geographer nor a mathematician and did not introduce navigational skills to his followers. Henry was peripherally responsible for exploration of the islands of the west coast of Africa, but he was considered rash, blood-thirsty and careless about administrative details. His main contribution was the establishment of a center at Ceuta on the north African coast. The author argues that Henry became famous based upon a myth that he founded an academy of navigation and mathematics at the small Algarve town of Sagres where leading scholars of the day were trained as navigators. Yet on Lisbon's Monument to the Discoveries commemorating Portugal's age of exploration, he is the lead statue-figure in the riverfront memorial ... perhaps a national epoch in search of a hero?

The book has chapters largely devoted to da Gama, Magellan, Cabral, Cao, Dias, Zarco and Teixeira, Vespucci, and Pereira, many of which chapters shed light upon the myths that have been generated about those men over four centuries. Cao is depicted as one of history's heroic adventurers, roughly mapping approximately 2000 miles of the west African coastline and exploring the Zaire River by sailing almost 100 uncharted miles inland. Yet he is presented as more of an entrepreneur than a methodical plotter of scientific information. Cao and Bartolomeu Dias were somewhat typical of the early Portuguese navigators as minor members of the royal entourage but without any distinguished parentage. Although not especially learned, they knew how to use the primitive navigational instruments of the day and made charts of their discoveries. Da Gama embodied the culture and ideology of the vanishing past by displaying violence and recklessness during his bold voyages. Yet da Gama's first voyage and the subsequent voyage of Cabral, in which the coasts of Africa were explored and mapped, greatly contributed to geographic knowledge. Cabral went on to discover the coast of South America and Brazil. This led to the Treaty of Tordesillas, which divided newly discovered lands between Portugal and Spain (Castile). This unfortunately produced violent political conflicts that projected European power and saw rulers competing for social control over indigenous populations, often by brutal attempt to quell potential threats. Pereira produced a detailed map guide for navigators sailing the coast of Africa, but these charts, in turn, made it easy for those who followed to engage in the shameful business of slavery. It was claimed the Africans they encountered were cannibals, and therefore less than human – black commodities. Finally, circumnavigator Magellan is depicted as an unsympathetic character. To maintain the discipline needed to assert his leadership and dominance, he was quite cruel to his men. These many exploratory voyages failed to reach boundary agreements due to the inability to accurately calculate longitude before the invention of an accurate chronometer.

An unusual but important chapter is “Portuguese Royal Women in the Age of Discovery.” The women of the Avis Dynasty played central roles in political affairs. They were the mothers of princes, advisors to their royal husbands, and settlers of claims made during disputed rules of succession. Most importantly, their arranged marriages created alliances and resolved international disputes to bring peace, such as the 1449 internecine conflict. (Of interest, Queen Philippa was given a place alongside the great navigators and conquistadors on the iconic Monument to Discoveries.)

The author notes that these explorations had a secondary effect of spreading of flora and fauna that changed the native ecosystems of many places and spread human, animal and plant diseases. Portuguese explorers encountered

the endemic diseases common among some African tribes. Ironically, the African natives who were exploited as slaves generally fared better with these novel diseases, which was not the case for the indigenous civilizations in America.

Finally, the influence of the discoveries changed classical writings that circulated across Europe. New information derived from genuine experiences challenged and gradually replaced the folklore and some religious traditional beliefs that led to the Portuguese Renaissance, Newitt's recurrent underlying theme.

Navigations: The Portuguese Discoveries of the Renaissance is a highly rewarding but at times a challenging read with the appearance of many unfamiliar Portuguese terms. Fortunately, the book's glossary is helpful. A rigorously scholarly work, it recounts the most important portion of Portuguese maritime history while exposing many myths that have been propagated by them in a historical context and modern perspective. This reviewer recommends Newitt's book to all historians interested in this dynamic period of discovery.

Louis Arthur Norton
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Matthew Richardson. *Manxmen at Sea in the Age of Nelson, 1760-1815*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword Maritime, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2024. viii+168 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £22.00, US \$42.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39904-449-3. (E-book available.)

Thanks to its geographical position off the coast of England, the Isle of Man was well suited to be a haven for skilled seafaring men operating in both legal and extralegal capacities. Matthew Richardson seeks to analyze this plethora of seafaring talent in the context of the Age of Nelson and the scientific and military expansion of the British Empire. By the 1750s, the vast majority of the Manx, as they are properly called, drew their livings from the sea and its trades in some fashion. For some, this took the form of fishing for herring in the Irish Sea, where weather and tide constantly tested a sailor's worth, while others engaged in the merchant trade, both legal and illegal. On the proper side of the law, Manxmen were well regarded within the triangle trade and, as such, were frequently sought out by Liverpool traders for their Guineamen as crew and shipmasters.

Conversely, the precarious waterways of Liverpool and Morecambe Bays and Solway Firth provided ample opportunity for Manxmen to use their sailing skills as smugglers to avoid the taxes of the British crown. In turn, British Navy officials were frequently posted to the island with hopes that they could,

at a minimum, curtail smuggling operations, thereby forcing some additional revenue into the royal coffers. Of course, the naval presence on the Isle of Man was not solely a response to the threat of smugglers, no matter how serious the King's Revenues might have felt such a threat was. Rather, the Navy recognized the importance of the placement of the Isle when it came to protecting the growing empire and projecting its authority. Here, they would oversee not only Royal Navy-centered operations relating to intelligence and supply, but they could as needed impress masses of skilled sailors for their warships when the specter of war did loom. Indeed, Richardson highlights that the Manxmen were so valued for their skills at sea that, during the Seven Years' War, their coastal waters were almost constantly filled with Royal Navy and privateer ships seeking more sailors to press into service.

Necessarily central to the story of the Isle of Man in the expansion of British might is the presence of famous or infamous figures. For example, William Bligh and the story of the *Bounty* Mutiny both connect back to the island. While not a Manxman, Bligh had married Elizabeth Betham, whose father was a customs collector at Douglas on the Isle of Man. Their marriage saw William move to the island and engage with many of the area's prominent families. In turn, when the *Bounty* sailed, it sailed with a crew filled with Manxmen, and the ensuing mutiny would feature numerous men whose families the Blighs had engaged with socially. The mutiny itself, in turn, would be decried by some as a "Manx plot," although this would never be proven in any fashion. By threading in such well-known figures with ties to the Isle, Richardson adds a layer of credibility to his view of the centrality of the island in British maritime interests of the period. Not only were Manxmen serving onboard ships as nameless tars, but they were in various fashions the main, or at least supporting, characters of many a soon-to-be well-trod tale. Additionally, with an eye toward drawing in less scholarly eyes, adding these stories makes the book as a whole more intriguing and accessible.

The Isle of Man historically shares many traits with two islands that may be more familiar to North American maritime scholars: Nantucket and Newfoundland. Those traits include an insular local population that is difficult for outsiders to communicate with but skilled in the arts of sailing and fishing, and an unforgiving local geography that ensures a level of independence that may not have been allowed elsewhere. Most of all, these islands all saw their populations become significant parts of the expansion of the empires to which they belonged, while also often being undervalued due to their insularity, independence, and distance from the halls of government.

While by no means a long book, Richardson has written a book that highlights several of the contributions of the Manx and opens up new lines of possible inquiry. Further, its chapters are well suited for use as shorter

secondary readings for many upper-undergraduate maritime history classes. While not intended to be all-encompassing, this book certainly is not lacking.

Michael Toth
Fort Worth, Texas

Nicholas Rogers. *Maritime Bristol in the Slave-Trade Era*. Martlesham, Suffolk, England: Boydell & Brewer, 2024. 262 pp. US \$115.00, hardback; ISBN 978-183765151-1.

Discussion of the role and place of Great Britain and of specific maritime-focused cities in the Atlantic slave trade has been a growing topic of interest in recent years. Protests and demonstrations have occurred across Britain as citizens wrestle with the ongoing legacies of the business of enslavement, both publicly and privately. Key to these discussions has frequently been not only a recognition of the histories that exist but a recommitment on the part of historians to delve into the topic and bring it into the light and part of broader discussions of the development of many communities. Much as Anthony Tibbles did in 2018 with his book *Liverpool and the Slave Trade*, Nicholas Rogers picked one of the prominent maritime trade towns of Great Britain (in this case Bristol) and dug deep into how the enslaving trade was woven into the fabric of not only business but also day-to-day life for many of its residents. Over the course of nine collected essays he outlines the shape of Bristolian society from multiple vantage points while also pointing to potential future lines of research.

Rogers's first area of focus is not the slave trade itself, but rather the question of freedom and liberty as it was perceived by the sailors of Bristol. A lieutenant under the command of Captain William Hamilton impressed several local river pilots by aiding others to escape the press gang. In retaliation, the remaining river pilots refused to guide ships through the tricky waters, and Hamilton was forced to gain permission to un-impress those pilots. This process reaffirmed to the sailors of Bristol the importance of maintaining one's liberties. Adding to this, in the next chapter Rogers shows that Bristol sailors were well aware of the variety of dangers they faced in the trade, particularly in the form of ship-board revolts, fears of which added to their desires to strongly limit the liberties of others onboard ship. Rogers contends this brutality was further shaped by the sociology of the crew members themselves, both in how they were often drawn from specific communities within Bristol and how they were "seasoned" for the trade by those who had come before them. Through the perpetuation of certain rituals and rules, as well as the careful selection of specific men, slave-trade ships

were able to formulate a specific culture and attitude among their sailors. An unfortunate side effect of creating these kinds of shipboard societies was their innate violence, which in turn presented numerous opportunities for abuses such as those experienced by Robert Baker, whose memoir Rogers devotes a chapter to highlighting. Paired with this is a chapter on the dangers of murder and mutiny on board ship and how the threat of mutiny was addressed in the contracts of sailors, mitigated onboard ship, and, when necessary, punished by authorities.

Building from this, Rogers moves into a look at the actions of Bristolian privateers during the Seven Years War when they were at their peak of profit and plunder, demonstrating how they generated profit and glory for the town through initial outfitting and subsequent prize trials. While not directly tied into the slave trade, these moments of profit and glory occurred at the same time and in their own way demonstrate how the depredations of the slave trade were tied into a larger system of maritime commerce and engagement. The book ends with two chapters that focus on the political side of Bristol during the American Revolution with Edmund Burke and the rise of Abolitionism. Across these two chapters it becomes clear once again that, for many in Bristol, there was a strong devotion to the importance of maintaining liberty and a recognition that the slave-trade, which had helped to make the city so prosperous, was based on denying those liberties to a group of others. While some would make their opposition to the slave trade known, there were many who either genuinely did not care or for whom the best politics were seen as those which were kept quietly private.

Recent events have accelerated the demand for a new accounting of history, one which encompasses not only the stories of previously overlooked populations but also those darker aspects of the known stories that may have been downplayed to date. Rogers more than meets these new criteria, and does so in a most comprehensible manner which lends to the versatility of this book. For long-term scholars, there is the promise of new lines of research and discourse, while for undergraduates the essay-like nature of each chapter allows for a piecemeal consumption of specific contents. While longevity is only provable with the passage of time, this tome promises to, if nothing else, alter the historical questions relating to Bristol going forward.

Michael Toth
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Myron J. Smith, Jr. *The Old War Horse. The USS Benton on Western Waters, 1853–1865.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishing, www.mcfarlandbooks.com, 2023. vii+256 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$49.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-4766-8689-9. (E-book available.)

By the start of the American Civil War, the Mississippi was a major conduit of the United States' internal trade, Minnesota being the last state through which the river runs to be admitted to the Union in 1858. It was, however, a temperamental and dangerous avenue of commerce. The water level of the river varied drastically by season while ice impeded navigation in the north, and in the summer diseases like malaria plagued sailors, passengers, and merchants alike further south.

Natural obstacles, from sandbars to sunken trees, were a perennial problem that contributed to the loss of many steamboats, as did fire, boiler explosions, and other accidents attributable to human error. In the 1820s, Superintendent of Western River Improvements Henry Shreve began building snagboats to dredge channels and clear logjams and rafts, the often massive obstructions of natural debris. The largest of the latter, the Great Raft, clogged 150 miles of the Red River. This made navigation somewhat safer, but losses remained all too common. Sunken boats and their cargos were rarely recovered from deeper stretches of the Mississippi and its tributaries until James Buchanan Eads began building "submarine" snagboats from which divers could descend in primitive diving bells to fasten hoists to the wrecks.

Eads launched his first submarine in 1842 and continued improving his designs through the late 1850s. The most celebrated of his vessels was *Submarine No. 7*, which featured a catamaran hull with a centerline paddlewheel and a massive superstructure rigged with pumps, winches, pulleys, and other lifting devices. When the Civil War began, Eads approached the Navy about converting the vessel to an ironclad. The transformation was complete by February 1862, when as the newly commissioned USS *Benton* it was commissioned into the Army's Western Gunboat Flotilla, which became the Navy's Mississippi River Squadron the following year.

The first four of the book's ten chapters cover the background to and history of *Submarine No. 7* through its metamorphosis into an ironclad. The last six detail the principal campaigns in which the *Benton* took part. These include the battle for Island No. 10, the capture of Fort Pillow and Memphis, the Yazoo River campaign, and siege of Vicksburg — with an entire chapter devoted to the short-lived but vexing career of the confederate ironclad

Arkansas — and the Red River campaign.

Smith has a good command of the archival record and quotes extensively from memoirs, letters, and contemporary newspaper accounts, which lends his account a water-level view of events. There were many complications of warfare on a powerful, variable river, fighting against an innovative enemy often entrenched on bluffs — the USS *Cairo* was the first warship sunk by a mine (torpedo). The material conditions for men and machines alike were dreadful. Ironclad speeds were often less than five miles per hour, coal was scarce, and in the summer up to half the crews of Union vessel might be incapacitated by malaria, heat rash, and gastrointestinal diseases.

In dwelling on particulars, however, Smith recreates the fog of war. While he reports extensively on damage to vessels, often offering up the number of shells expended as well as figures for hits and misses and casualties, the work of the Western Gunboat Flotilla/Mississippi River Squadron is not tethered to that of the Union armies, whose strategy drove the fleet's. Moreover, the accompanying maps contribute little to our understanding of the campaigns and omit many of the places discussed, like Grand Gulf, Fort DeRussy, and Fort Cobun. And none illustrate the Red River campaign.

The six maps, from five distinct sources, show the bend in the river around Island No. 10, provide an overview of naval operations on the Upper Mississippi (with a focus on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers), and there are four showing various aspects of the Vicksburg campaign. The only overview of the last illustrates Grant's four failed Bayou Expeditions between February and April 1863. These are not discussed in the text and the map is all but irrelevant to naval operations.

While Smith's writing is generally formal, the editors let stand casual abbreviations like VIP, ASAP, CO, and XO, as well as two-letter postal abbreviations for state names. Curiously, he also uses "flagboat" rather than "flagship," the term found in the relevant volumes of the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*.

These problems aside, *The Old War Horse* provides a good foundation for understanding the challenges of navigation on the Mississippi and its tributaries, as well as of the Mississippi Campaign, the successful execution of which was key to the Union victory.

Lincoln Paine
Portland, Maine

Conrad Waters (ed.). *Seaforth World Naval Review 2024*. Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Seaforth Publishing, www.seaforthpublishing.com, 2023. Distributed in North America by US Naval Institute Press. 192 pp., illustrations, tables, index. UK £28.00, US \$70.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-68247-484-6 (hardcover) (E-book available).

In an era of increasing competition and potential conflict, sea power has once again taken on greater importance. Countries keep naval forces for numerous roles and responsibilities related to national interests and international ambitions. They are valuable assets and expensive to field and maintain. The fifteenth edition of Seaforth Publishing's annual review of navies around the globe provides insights into the latest naval developments packaged in a familiar and convenient format. Since its inauguration in 2010, the *Seaforth World Naval Review* has become a go-to source cataloguing trends and additions to navies and fleets. Conrad Waters, the series editor from the start, is a lawyer with deep interests in naval affairs and the author of several technical histories. About half the book, including the reviews of world fleets by region, is authored by Waters. Various contributors add the remaining content, including both guest contributors and ones from earlier annuals.

Like the other standard-format editions, the book is divided into four primary sections, each further subdivided. The first comprises an overview with introduction and comparative tables showing the defence spending and fleet strengths of leading countries. The second section, really the book's primary purpose, gives reviews of naval developments and ships by country in the regions of North and South America, Asia and the Pacific, the Indian Ocean and Africa, and Europe and Russia. The fleets of Brazil, Great Britain, and Greece receive extended treatment in dedicated sections written by guest contributors, with added captioned photographs. The third section, titled "Significant Ships" has three subsections that highlight: France's new class of Félix Eboué patrol vessels, which were built specifically for service in overseas possessions and territories; India's Project 15A and Project 15B destroyers, which are updated and improved variants of earlier builds that incorporate significant network-centric warfare capabilities; and Spain's S-80-class large conventional submarines, which are meant for operation, intelligence-gathering, and strike missions. These all give a big boost to the local economies and the maritime manufacturing sector within the country. The fourth section focuses on technological trends with a standard chapter on world naval aviation by the regular contributor David Hobbs, another by noted authority Norman Friedman considering naval propulsion, and Richard Scott's examination of a Norwegian company's state-supported development of the Naval Strike Missile that has become the de facto NATO standard and likely

successor to the aging Harpoon anti-ship missile in western arsenals. Each of the sections is nicely balanced and informative in their own right. Common themes and observations prevail throughout and build upon each other.

In the regional overviews, the United States remains the country with the most sophisticated navy and most capable fleets by virtue of out-spending almost all the others combined. Overall fleet strength is little changed from years previous, although newer aircraft carriers, destroyers, and ballistic missile submarines are entering service or on the design boards. Withdrawal of older cruisers and amphibious support ships has been deferred by Congress until replacements are in hand. The United States Navy has decided to divest itself of relatively new littoral combat ships for possible transfer or sale to allies. It remains committed to the defence of North America, Europe, and Asia as part of bi-lateral and alliance arrangements.

China, which spends about a third as much, is next. Newer aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates, submarines (nuclear and conventional), and amphibious assault ships populate the People's Liberation Army Navy's front-line strength. The dispute over Taiwan and conflicting claims in the South China Sea figure prominently in China's maritime stance and might one day bring it into conflict with the United States. Certainly, many observers and analysts consider China as the most likely challenger to the current predominance of the United States Navy on the high seas. These assessments are largely based on open-source materials and may reflect biased assumptions in the absence of more detailed information on Chinese intentions. As Walters explains, China has progressively expanded its zone of Anti-Access Area Denial (A2/AD) outward with networked sub-surface, surface, and air assets, which makes entry very dangerous and potentially deadly. Periodic freedom of navigation operations by American and Canadian warships and aircraft test the capabilities (and patience) of the Chinese and buck up worried allies in the region.

The next tiers of navies in the regional overviews share similar characteristics and fleet mixes. The nuclear club includes Russia, Great Britain, and France with ballistic missile carrying (SSBN) and attack (SSN) submarines. India and Brazil are actively moving in that direction beyond the experimental, and Australia is dumping its fleet of existing conventional submarines and a planned French replacement in favour of promised American and British assistance to acquire nuclear submarines at some future date. Several navies are replacing older conventional standbys with newer ones, the export *Scorpène* being a popular choice amongst German and Chinese alternatives. Several countries have made targeted additions in terms of surface combatants and patrol craft. Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force, for example, is rearming as part of strategic and defence reviews that will see significant increases to principal fleet units, and the Republic of Korea has

prioritized a “Three Axis” response to a prospective nuclear attack from North Korea that bodes well for the submarine fleet and the ballistic missile defence capability resident in Aegis destroyers while aircraft carrier plans have been shelved.

In many countries, economic woes and strained finances continue to delay and inhibit planned renewals in navies and fleets. Pakistan, Egypt, Peru, and Chile have fared perhaps the best with well-conceived recapitalization plans and actual delivery or purchase of warships. At the other end, financially challenged Argentina struggles along, and South Africa has suspended normal maintenance and refits, putting into question availability of existing warships and submarines. Canada’s navy faces similar challenges with a gracefully maturing fleet that has seen delayed completion of two replenishment ships at a British Columbia shipyard, inflated costs and technical concerns over a frigate replacement, and musings about submarines capable of operating under sea ice. On the brighter side, the Canadian government has procured maritime patrol and surveillance aircraft with Boeing’s P-8 Poseidon and unmanned MQ9-B drone which should be available and operational by the end of the decade.

The war in Ukraine has breathed new life into NATO and added two new member states with the admission of Sweden and Finland. Post-Brexit, France represents Europe’s leading navy with design work started on a new nuclear aircraft carrier and newer generation strategic ballistic missile submarines, and with relatively modern frigates completed or completing. Italy likewise maintains an established fleet of conventional aircraft carriers, frigates, submarines, and amphibious ships, as does Spain, minus the aircraft carriers. Individual chapters by Richard Beedall and Guy Toremans focus on Great Britain’s Royal Navy and Greece’s Hellenic Navy respectively, each voicing cautious optimism for the future even as present realities shrink fleets and defer replacement projects. Russia has suffered some notable losses in the Black Sea to missiles and unmanned aerial and speedboat drones but remains committed to modernizing their nuclear strategic and attack submarine force, perhaps to the detriment of the surface fleet, which has proven particularly vulnerable in the modern battlespace. Use of drones is certainly revolutionizing warfare at sea and navies are looking to add that capability wherever possible.

Seaforth World Naval Review 2024 is recommended for readers interested in contemporary naval affairs and navies. It is an authoritative source that follows a proven format packed with considerable data, information, and analysis. The book furnishes a one-stop primer on the latest naval developments around the world until next year’s eagerly awaiting edition appears.

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