

## BOOK REVIEWS

Klaus Barthelmess. *The Arts of Modern Whaling*. Sandefjord, Norway: The Whaling Museum, Publication 32, museene@sandefjord.kommune.no, 2007. 58 pp., illustrations, bibliography. ISBN: 978-82-993797-5-5.

This publication, accompanying an exhibit, was published on the occasion of the nintieth anniversary of Commander C.R. Christensen's Whaling Museum in Sandefjord, Norway. With his keen interest in cetology, biology, art and history, combined with his talent for writing, Klaus Barthelmess from Cologne, Germany, seemed to be the ideal candidate to bring together a wide array of artefacts – at first glance, with no apparent interrelationship other than whaling. Barthelmess creates categories along rather unconventional lines and his catalogue presents the reader with a colourful bouquet of topics, materials and data regarding the artists. The author discusses sixty-six objects and paintings, gathered from various collections in Norway and abroad. Among these collections are his own.

The Whaling Museum in Sandefjord was founded and financed entirely by local entrepreneur Lars Christensen. In his introduction, Barthelmess captures the essence of both the man and his museum collection: "At an early age, he [Christensen] had accumulated immense wealth from whaling, which was then expanding at a numbing speed across all the world's oceans. A keen-eyed entrepreneur, he saw the need to base the booming industry's development on sound research: research

concerning the biological parameters of the raw material, the whales, about the history of their products on the world's markets and about the industry's technology and history. He envisioned his whaling museum as a research institution about the beginning of the Norwegian whaling industry, at its scientific foundation, rather than at its end, as a memorial to a whaling industry that had long declined to insignificance, as is the whaling museum in New Bedford, America's once-leading whaling port." (p.5)

Apart from being an entrepreneur, Lars Christensen was an art connoisseur. His interest in architecture is reflected in the museum building. Given the breadth of Christensen's interests it is perhaps fitting that the author's lengthy introduction frequently reaches beyond the particulars of the exhibit to discuss the broader historical development, and issues of style, regarding the "arts of modern whaling." This is what this reviewer expected to find in the introduction to a catalogue bearing this very title. In the first of many very short chapters, Barthelmess discusses the various types of artists: professionals who did not have first-hand whaling experience, professional artists who did, amateur whalemens-artists and so on. In this case the text relates to the artefacts presented in the catalogue.

In other introductory chapters the link to the exhibit is not nearly so clear. The breadth and depth of Barthelmess' knowledge is impressive – but his willingness to share this knowledge is overbearing. This is unfortunate because

he is impressively concise and yet still highly informative in the specific treatment of the sixty-six objects in the exhibit. He is meticulous in his references and truly manages to capture and hold the interest of the reader— whoever this reader may have been in the minds of the author and the editors.

Much to my regret, however, the author's solid expertise in the subject matter stands in dramatic contrast to the weak organization and presentation of the data. There seems to be no thematic or chronological order in the arrangement of objects and paintings. If this had been the case, the artefacts could have served as points of reference for his compelling story, and Klaus Barthelmess could have saved himself the trouble of presenting a rather confusing introduction that seems to attempt to tell "everything you always wanted to know about modern whaling but were afraid to ask."

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Richard W. Blumenthal (ed.). *With Vancouver in Inland Washington Waters: Journals of 12 Crewmen, April-June 1792*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co. Inc., www.mcfarlandpub.com, 2007. 230 pp., maps, bibliography, index. US \$39.95, paper; ISBN 0-7864-2669-0.

This book reproduces selected portions of the logs and journals of twelve of the officers and men who accompanied Captain George Vancouver in his survey work charting the continental coast through the Strait of Juan de Fuca and into Puget Sound. It is a sequel to an

earlier book, *The Early Exploration of Inland Washington Waters: Journals and Logs from Six Expeditions 1786-1792* (2004), which included excerpts from Vancouver's journal from 27 April, near the mouth of the Columbia River, to 23 June at Birch Bay, immediately south of the Fraser River estuary. These books are intended for readers wanting to learn what the original European explorers had to say about the Puget Sound country and its inhabitants on first contact, and to follow in the explorers' wake.

Puget Sound was the first place where the survey was conducted primarily from small boats rather than from the ships, which remained at anchor. The front cover of the book is graced with a delightfully evocative watercolour painting by Steve Mayo depicting HM Brig *Chatham* entering Cattle Pass in the San Juan Islands, led by a small boat crew – capturing the quintessence of the Vancouver expedition's coastal survey. Brief biographies are included for all the contributors, and there are five page-sized charts of Vancouver's original charts, with major place names superimposed. One covers the coast from the Columbia River to Puget Sound. The others are enlargements of Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands. Virtually all of the places named by Vancouver and his crews still exist on the maps and charts mariners use today, a tribute to the dedication, fortitude and character of these early explorers and hydrographers.

With so many contributions (over twenty logs and journals), there is bound to be some repetition, particularly in the copying of log bearings, depths, speed (knots), wind and weather conditions. The editor has omitted much of this

information in the interest of brevity, relying primarily on secondary sources and microfilms of the originals where he was able to find them. For the most part, he has not included the footnotes of previous editors, substituting his own where deemed necessary.

It is only in the log remarks and the private journals that the personality of each contributor comes to the fore. The most notable contributions are those of Peter Puget (2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., HMS *Discovery* in 1792), Archibald Menzies (surgeon, naturalist), Thomas Manby (midshipman, and later in 1792, master of *Chatham*), and William Broughton (Lt. Commander, *Chatham*). There are four different journal accounts of encounters with a skunk. Manby's account is quite amusing: "I killed a remarkable animal about the size of a Cat, of a brown colour, with a large bushy tail, that spread over his back. After firing I approached him with all speed and was saluted, by a discharge from him the most nauseous and fetid, my sense of smelling ever experienced. My gun and cloaths were so impregnated with the stench that tho' boiled in many waters, the cursed effusive could never be eradicated. A skunk is the name of this diabolical animal, ... (and) I promise faithfully never to disturb another on any consideration." (p.186)

Broughton's contributions were based on a "rough" journal transcribed from microfilm, keeping the columnar format while the ship was underway and using only the remarks while at anchor; and a one-week fragment describing the charting of the San Juan Islands. This fragment is the only part of Broughton's journal known to have survived. It is also the only significant exploration carried out

by the Vancouver expedition that is not dealt with by Vancouver himself in any detail. This is most likely because Vancouver was totally (some say obsessively) focused on his orders: to chart every nook and cranny of the continental coast to determine if there was any truth to the fabled existence of a Northwest Passage to the Atlantic that would be navigable by ocean going ships. This is why he seemingly ignored the shallow and sometimes dangerous entrances to major rivers such as the Columbia and the Fraser.

It is curious that the accounts of the charting of Gray's Harbour by Joseph Whidbey (Master, *Discovery*), and the charting of the lower 100 miles of the Columbia River by Broughton, in October 1792, were not included in this or the previous edition. These were included in Vancouver's account based on Whidbey's and Broughton's journals. Both these journals have now disappeared and the journal of Edward Bell, clerk of the *Chatham*, seems to be the only surviving account that chronicles the exploration of the lower 100 miles of the Columbia River. It appears as a separate chapter in volume two of W.Kaye Lamb's monumental four-volume edition: *The Voyage of George Vancouver 1791-1795*, published by the Hakluyt Society in 1984.

This book, with its inclusive bibliography and index, should serve as inspiration to learn more about Vancouver, his officers and men, and their epic voyage – the longest continuous voyage under sail in history – both in time and in distance covered.

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Tom Docherty. *Dinghy Drop; 279 Squadron RAF 1941-46*. Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk), 2007. xi + 259 pp., illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. UK £19.99, cloth; ISBN 978-1-84415-482-1.

This smallish book, although closely related to the sea, will be of considerably more interest to air force readers than to those involved with matters maritime. It tells, sometimes in exhaustive detail, the full history of the Royal Air Force's Search and Rescue 279 Squadron, formed in November 1941 and fully operational from January 1942 to January 1946. The squadron was one of two specifically created and equipped to search for, and where practical, aid in the rescue of airmen down at sea, whether due to enemy attack or aircraft failure.

At first, naturally, this involved aircraft that ditched or crashed around the British Isles, mostly in the North Sea and English Channel. But as the war spread, and in particular as the RAF, USAF, RCAF and others implemented major raids on occupied Europe, the scope for rescue expanded. There was a sub-flight based on Iceland and one even in Burma late in 1945. The major squadron effort was in the area from southern Norway to the Bay of Biscay, and was concentrated, if the author's comprehensive individual stories are fully representational, between eastern Scotland, the Dutch coast and the north-eastern English Channel.

Docherty has told the day-by-day, sometimes hour-by-hour stories of seemingly all the search and rescue flights. He compiled this material from

squadron operational logs, letters and interviews with crew members. Much of it consists of details of searches for known or suspected downed aircraft, and, after locating survivors in their tiny rubber dinghies, dropping supplies and larger inflatable or solid life boats. In many cases squadron aircraft then located and vectored high speed rescue launches or even fishing trawlers to the survivors. There is no specific index item, but, as memory serves, there are only one or two references to this squadron's assistance provided to seamen in lifeboats from sunken merchantmen in the Atlantic battle, although other histories provide many instances of aircraft succouring such survivors.

The squadron began with slightly modified Lockheed Hudson bombers of various improving marks, and only later progressed to Hawker Hurricane fighters for searches, and Avro Lancaster and finally Vickers Warwick bombers to deliver survival equipment, the latter being especially modified to carry and drop the inflatable Lindholme dinghy and the more rigid Cunliffe Owen life boat. The technology of air-dropped assistance was by no means simple. There seem to be rather a lot of cases when the parachutes of the dropped dinghies failed to open properly, and, when survivors were able to board them, they had problems getting the engine to start or keep running.

A large part of the challenge was the weather. Often conditions were foggy at the least, and often stormy, when returning aircraft crashed. The more general reader might find it interesting to note the number of aircraft crashes that occurred due to weather, and also

mechanical failure, or navigation difficulties (some at least of these resulting from bad weather) not only among bombers and fighters returning from combat missions, but among rescue aircraft as well. Docherty lists the 62 crew killed between February 1942 and November 1945 from 279 Squadron alone. The appendices are comprehensive, listing every single aircraft and every crew member on five occasions of the squadron's existence, a comprehensive medical summary report, as well as all the sub-bases and main operating locations.

The book suggests some intriguing questions. It seems remarkable that it was not until late 1941 that the RAF appreciated that search and rescue units were necessary. Until then, the fighting squadrons were expected to search for their own downed aircraft. But, as with the Merchant Navy, it soon became obvious that both for morale reasons and the need for experienced crews, a determined and visible rescue service was necessary and quickly instituted. It is a bit puzzling why the squadron was only ever equipped with one Sea Otter (a sister to the famous naval Walrus), and thus could never land on the sea even in good weather to pick up survivors. Perhaps Sunderlands or Catalinas were too valuable in their anti-U-boat roles or some such. It may be other squadrons were so equipped, and 279 was more a search and first succour unit.

They did well, and the tale is interesting and rather unique, worth its place on a wartime maritime history bookshelf, like Arnold Hague's *Convoy*

*Rescue Ships, 1940-1945* (Gravesend: World Ship Society, 1998).

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Peter Elphick. *Liberty: The Ships That Won the War*. London: Chatham Publishing, [www.chathampublishing.com](http://www.chathampublishing.com), 2006. 512 pp., illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. UK £15.99, paper; ISBN 1-86176-276-3.

Peter Elphick argues that the contributions of the Allied merchant fleets in the Second World War have been "largely ignored by historians and almost wholly forgotten by the man in the street." (p. 3) With the present book Elphick hopes to correct that oversight. A retired Master Mariner who served on Liberties in the post-war period, he certainly knows the ships and brings an admirable passion to the work. Adding extensive research in archival sources, personal recollections of those who served on Liberties, and an impressive command of the secondary literature to his personal experience, Elphick has produced an exhaustive study of these important vessels.

Elphick divides his subject into three sections. Part one covers the genesis of the Liberty design, the British Shipbuilding Mission to the United States in 1940, and the building of the ships. Part two covers the employment of the ships during the war, and part three completes the journey by examining their post-war usage.

Although the shortest part of the book, part one is perhaps the most satisfying. It is here that Elphick sketches in the "big picture." In an easy, readable

style, he locates the genesis of the Liberty design in British efforts to revive their shipbuilding industry during the Great Depression. Their efforts focussed on designing a new class of cargo vessel featuring improved performance and reduced production costs. Dramatically escalating shipping losses following the outbreak of war forced Great Britain to turn toward America for aid. To that end, the British government recruited Robert Cyril Thompson of the Joseph L. Thompson shipyard to head a mission to convince the Americans to build ships for England. He was successful and placed an order for sixty ships based on designs developed by his firm. Following America's entry into the war, US planners adopted the Liberty design and embarked on a massive shipbuilding program. Eighteen shipyards, mostly new themselves, built 2,710 Liberties before war's end.

The book is as much about those who built and operated the Liberties as it is the ships themselves. Part one includes chapters about the shipyards, the shipbuilders, and the wartime crews. Henry J. Kaiser, who introduced mass production to shipbuilding, usually receives credit for the success of the Liberty program. Elphick recognizes Kaiser's contribution, but adds needed perspective. To his considerable managerial talents, Kaiser added a prodigious ego and a flair for self-promotion. While undeniably important, Kaiser controlled or had an interest in only six of the eighteen yards that built Liberties.

Staffing the ships presented as great a challenge as did building them. At one point, an average of four new

ships were added to the American Merchant Marine every day, requiring some 200 additional seamen. The US Maritime Commission could not fill the demand. Elphick cites this shortfall as the "principal reason behind the ... decision to transfer Liberty ships to other allied merchant fleets." (p.110) This statement serves as the launching point for an extended discussion of the many Allied nations that operated Liberties and the polyglot nature of the crews.

In part two, Elphick devotes a chapter to the ships' wartime service in each of the various theatres: the North Atlantic, the Murmansk run, Operation 'Torch', the Pacific, etc. Each chapter follows the same pattern, essentially a series of vignettes that illustrate the experiences of the men and their ships. Emphasis is really on the crews' experiences and is illustrative of the experiences of the larger merchant fleet. These brief stories, rarely more than two short paragraphs, follow a common pattern. Ship \_\_\_\_, under the command of \_\_\_\_, was torpedoed by U-boat \_\_\_\_, commanded by \_\_\_\_, and a summary of the crew's fate. While these accounts reveal intensive work in British, German, and US archives, they quickly become monotonous. A few longer accounts, especially those that include survivors' reminiscences, help alleviate the tedium.

The last section of the book covers the Liberties in the post-war period. Elphick again uses the experiences of a few ships and their crews to illustrate the larger story. Where part two is a story of heroism and perseverance in the face of great odds, part three is a sad story of decay, neglect, and the increasing marginalization of

these once-vital vessels. The book ends on a hopeful note with the successful efforts to preserve the *Jeremiah O'Brien* and the *John W. Brown*, the last surviving examples of the once-numerous class.

Elphick has largely achieved his goal. *Liberty* should appeal to both popular and scholarly audiences. Specialists and non-specialists alike will find the work easily accessible due to the virtual absence of jargon and his careful explanations of technical issues. Scholars wishing to build on Elphick's work may be disappointed by the lack of documentation. Citations are sparse and there appears to be no pattern determining which items merit a reference and which do not. While Elphick includes an extensive bibliography and useful appendices, the lack of citations makes it difficult to tie specific quotes or facts back to a source.

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W. Craig Gaines. *Encyclopedia of Civil War Shipwrecks*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, www.lsu.edu, 2008. 256 pp., maps, illustrations, bibliography, index of shipwrecks. US \$ 39.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-8071-3274-6.

Gaines has compiled a remarkable listing of Civil War shipwrecks. It is arranged alphabetically by state and is truly comprehensive. By his own count, there are well over 2,000 wrecks, from the Great Lakes, Atlantic, Gulf and the Pacific. He drew from official records, newspapers and other

contemporary accounts as well as archaeological meeting proceedings and dive-hobbyist magazines. The final work is a compendium of most known vessel losses.

Gaines is an engineer and this is evident in the meticulous attention to detail throughout the text. His sense of organization makes the *Encyclopedia* easy to search, provided one knows the rough sinking location. Once "on site," the information conveyed is useful for identification purposes as it contains vessel type and tonnage, and often, length, beam and depth. Key propulsion elements, sail or steam, paddle wheel or screw, are usually present. A short sketch of the sinking is present as well.

For many vessels, there is considerable information presented in the text, especially if the vessel was later inspected by salvage crews. In some cases, the vessel was captured and entered service on the other side. Both its capture and its ultimate sinking are included as part of the entry. If a vessel wrecked and was then recovered, that is reported, including where it eventually sank.

Most important, there are citations for every entry. These are easily identified and chased down for those seeking more details. The citations represent a wide range of sources that are not critically evaluated. In a work of this sort, that is not a problem because many non-academic sources represent research on vessels that is notably absent from the more official records. In his desire to be complete, Gaines utilized some resources that are often treated with disdain by academics. While this might be due to his lack of formal, academic historical training, it is more likely because he

wished to identify every site possible. For this he is to be commended.

There are some lapses that are puzzling. In North Carolina, he missed at least two vessels. The blockade runner *Star* has long been known locally along Pamlico Sound but was only recently (2004) investigated by trained archaeologists who found it referenced in the Naval Official Records of the War of Rebellion. A similar omission is a Confederate gunboat wreck near Grimesland, NC, that was reported in one of the *Society for Historical Archaeology Proceedings* cited elsewhere in the *Encyclopedia*. It may be that there was difficulty in recognizing this latter vessel as a Civil War wreck because work on it was funded by a Revolutionary War Bicentennial Grant, and was never commissioned. That only a very few vessels could be identified as missing from the text for one state suggests that the *Encyclopedia* is reasonably complete for other locations as well.

Most encyclopedias are useful mainly as starting points for additional research. That may not be the case here. Gaines' labour of love has provided a level of detail that makes it of special value; State Historic Preservation Officers charged with inventorying and evaluating archaeological sites, for example, will find the book to be especially helpful. The information on each sinking provides a rough location and some evaluation of the vessel's condition after abandonment. In many cases, ultimate removal or destruction is also mentioned.

Since the sinking location is included, GIS applications are readily apparent, especially with the layering

information supplied such as the type of hull, propulsion, draft and cargo. By incorporating the information Gaines compiled into a GIS, a state survey for the years 1860-5 could easily be generated. The interpretive potential of such a data base is immense, both from management and research perspectives. It is in this way that this text is so important. In one fell swoop, Gaines has made it possible roughly to identify locations where shipwrecks are likely to be found and he has provided the means to identify those wrecks from a specific period.

This book ought to be on the shelf of every Civil War historian, avocational or professional, as a research tool. It is a must-read for state underwater resource managers, including those involved in fisheries and other renewable resources, because these wrecks are often prime fishing sites. Heritage tourists can benefit from this work because it will flesh out and provide context to areas they have visited. Finally, as a teaching aid for showing how research is done and what it can lead to, this text would benefit graduate level instructors.

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Howard D. Grier. *Hitler, Dönitz and the Baltic Sea, The Third Reich's Last Hope, 1944-1945*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2007. xxii + 287 pp., maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$ 31.46, cloth; ISBN 978-1-59114-219-5.

The name Karl Dönitz still resonates in Germany. On the one hand, his daughter, Ursula, was invited to launch Germany's newest submarine in mid-2005, underlining her father's reputation as the forceful and charismatic driving force behind the formidable U-boat arm of the Second World War. On the other hand, a public campaign the same year to raise funds to restore a cross on the grand admiral's vandalized grave outside Hamburg proved too politically charged for two organizations whose members are mostly naval retirees. The *Marine-Offizier Vereinigung* (Naval Officers' Association) and the *Verband Deutscher U-Boot-Fahrer* (German Submariners' Association) both declined to support the campaign in their journals on the grounds that Karl Dönitz was not a suitable role model for today's generation. In *Hitler, Dönitz and the Baltic Sea*, Howard Grier, an American academic, examines Hitler's strategic decisions in the last eighteen months of the Second World War regarding holding onto the southeastern Baltic and the role of his trusted Naval C-in-C, Admiral Dönitz, in influencing the Führer's decisions.

Post- construction testing and operational training were the core of the German submarine command. They were conducted from several ports as bases in the southeastern Baltic, safe from Allied aerial mining until the war's final months.

Rigorous training was one of the key reasons why German submarines remained operationally efficient right to the end. Even during the last phase of the war, the period covered by this new study, commanding officers had six months of specialized training. This culminated in an intensive four- to six-week commanding officer's qualifying course run by veteran U-boat skippers which included handling a boat against live convoys. Each newly commissioned boat progressed through at least six months of rigorous tests and workups. Exacting standards came at a price - thirty boats and 856 submariners were lost in wartime training and trials. A large organization was involved; in fact, between forty and sixty percent of the over 400 boats in commission in 1944-45 were undergoing trials and training.

Grier writes that Germany's strategy in 1944-45 has been incorrectly described as one of blindly refusing to give up ground with consequently unnecessary losses. He argues that many in the Third Reich leadership actually believed that new weapons such as jet aircraft, the V-weapons aimed at southern England and greatly improved U-boats would turn the tide. Indeed, Grier cites the fact that until March 1945, weeks before the surrender, about half of POWS still told Allied interrogators that they had confidence in Hitler and believed that Germany had decisive secret weapons. (p. 211) Hitler's aims were strategic as he was attempting to hold onto critically important assets such as oil fields in Romania and his U-boat testing and training areas. The new ocean-going type XXI and smaller type XXIII - both known generically as "Electro-boats" because of their increased battery capacity - were

famously assembled in a few yards using hull sections built in several locations inland. The ambitious production targets were not realized, however, and ninety-one of the type XXI's delivered by the end of the war were still on trials and workups. The author stretches reality in order to build his scenario that, until the summer of 1944, the German leadership, still saw the war as winnable. (p.213)

The narrative is more convincing in tracing Admiral Dönitz's interventions in favour of holding territory in the Baltic, initially on the Leningrad front, and then over successive months in Courland (western Latvia) and Prussia and Pomerania – then German and now mostly in Poland. The author's assessments of Hitler's fascination with U-boats, the potential promised by the new classes of far more capable boats and his strategic emphasis on holding the area are not groundbreaking. Australian journalist Chester Wilmot drew the same conclusions in his seminal *The Struggle for Europe* (1952). What is new in *Hitler, Donitz and the Baltic* is a detailed description in English from a German perspective of the fighting retreat in the Baltic, largely a land battle with several shore bombardments by German fleet units. The book is based on prodigious archival research from mostly German sources and is backed by several admirably clear maps. There is, however, a lack of analysis about the priority the Soviet high command placed on progressively clearing the Germans first from Gulf of Finland and then from the eastern Baltic coasts. Nor does the author say anything about the U-boat training infrastructure which was so important if Germany's endgame strategy was to

succeed. In any event, mines dropped by Bomber Command successively closed areas of the southeastern Baltic to submarine training starting in late 1944. By the war's final weeks, even as Soviet armies overran ports in the southeastern Baltic, testing and training had been shifted back to the western Baltic using deep water off Bornholm – the area which had been vacated back in 1940 when British aerial mines had first caused too much disruption.

The detailed narrative recounts how and when Hitler summoned senior commanders to discuss specific operations. The author's focus is generally on the situation on the ground but these conferences do cast light on how the Führer conducted his war. Grier writes that Hitler came to rely on a few trusted operational commanders who were personally loyal, ruthless and militarily effective. Generals Schörner and Rendulic were shuffled between critical areas on the eastern front to stabilize situations which threatened to turn into disasters. The hard-bitten Ferdinand Schörner, eventually a field marshal, had stood out early as an outstanding commander and had won Germany's highest honour in the First World War. In the Second World War, he acquired a fearsome reputation for summarily executing soldiers found behind German lines and was tried by the Soviets for war crimes. His sentence was eventually commuted and he died peacefully at age 81. In fact, Schörner was one of the few field commanders who disregarded orders from Hitler not to give up ground and conducted successful retreats. He also disregarded Hitler's "scorched earth" instructions to destroy

infrastructure and housing. The author places Dönitz in this tight circle of trusted supporters of the Führer and argues that the grand admiral's undisputed influence helped to shape key decisions about the military campaign in the east. In his view, it was Donitz's tenacity, unwavering personal loyalty, force of personality and acceptance of National Socialist ideology that made him Hitler's choice as his successor as head of state.

Grier did research in Sweden and his discussions of decisions by its government and that of Finland cast light on an aspect of the war seldom covered in general histories. He traces how Swedish policy changed as German fortunes ebbed. His coverage of the "Courland pocket" – western Latvia – in the last winter of the war when its only connection with Germany was by sea, is interesting as this is a chapter of the war which has not received much attention from historians.

This book includes 36 pages of useful endnotes and a comprehensive bibliography. There is a very helpful "*Dramatis Personae*" at the front of the book which lists names of various senior personnel found in the narrative along with their responsibilities; this helps the reader sort out unfamiliar names. It's in a robust US Naval Institute binding; there are a few grainy rather standard photographs of U-boats. The chapter headings include a gloomy stylized Nazi eagle superimposed on a collage of a map and a U-boat under air attack. This tawdry design belies the scrupulously academic nature of the text. *Hitler, Dönitz and the Baltic Sea* is an account from a German perspective of the land campaign in the Baltic in 1944-45. It demonstrates

that German strategy was to hold territory to preserve the U-boat test and training areas in the southeastern Baltic. Recommended for those interested in a detailed account of this campaign and of the interplay between Hitler and his senior commanders as seen from the German point of view.

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John Jordan. *Warship 2007*. London, UK: Conway Maritime Press, www.anovabooks.com, 2007. 208 pp., illustrations, tables. UK £30.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-84486-041-8.

This issue of *Warship* follows the pattern we have come to expect, with a principal feature and articles that can be considered loosely related to each other. The centrepiece of the 2007 issue is an article by Enrico Cernuschi and Vincent P. O'Hara on the Italian navy's efforts to acquire an air arm. This began in 1907 with the experimental use of an observation balloon, towed by an old cruiser, to detect mines, and later attempts in 1911 to use a balloon for gunnery spotting. In 1913, Italy created a small naval air service using float planes which saw action in the First World War.

After that war, the Regia Marina wanted a real aircraft carrier. Between 1919 and 1943, they considered many proposals for either new construction or the conversion of liners, but none came to fruition, although work on the liners *Roma* and *Conte di Savoia* was fairly well advanced at the time of the Italian Armistice in September 1943. As in the

case of the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm, progress and the provision of suitable aircraft was hampered by opposition from the Air Force.

In the post-war period, the ever increasing use of anti-submarine helicopters carried by cruisers, destroyers and frigates culminated in the construction of small and medium carriers and air-capable landing ships. In 1989, the Italian Parliament finally repealed a 1937 law which confined the operation of fixed-wing aircraft to the Air Force, and in 1991, the navy received its first Harrier jets which operated from the *Giuseppe Garibaldi* and the new *Cavour*.

All issues of *Warship* feature design histories of ships and classes. New *Warship* author Jon Wise deals here with the Royal Navy's missile trials ship *Girdle Ness*, which was converted in the 1950s from a Canadian-built wartime maintenance ship. Trials of the Sea Slug missile were conducted by *Girdle Ness* between 1956 and 1959 and they became an integral part of the British fleet's armament in the County class destroyers from 1962, finally seeing action in the Falklands war.

Two classes of destroyers are described; the large French *Mogador* class from just before the Second World War, and the Japanese *Hatsuharus*. Only three of the French ships were ordered and two completed. On paper, they were the most powerful destroyer-type ships in the world, but problems with their complicated armament were never sorted out in their short life. *Mogador* and her sister, *Volta*, were both scuttled at Toulon when it was occupied by the Germans in November 1942. This article was contributed by *Warship* editor John

Jordan, and is the last in a series on the interwar *contre-torpilleurs*. As described by Hans Lengerer, Japan's six *Hatsuharus* had stability problems on completion and had to undergo major alterations. By the time Japan entered the war, however, they were effective ships, and like all Japanese destroyers, fought a hard war, all becoming casualties.

Two battleship losses separated by 48 years are the subject of other articles. There is no mystery concerning the loss of the French battleship *Iena* in 1907. Like a number of casualties in several navies in the early twentieth century, she blew up because of the instability of cordite when it is old, or subjected to high temperatures, or improperly stowed. The Soviet battleship *Novorossiisk* sank in Sevastopol harbour in October 1955, apparently due to a mine that might have been there since the war. In this case, there could be a mystery, for she was formerly the Italian warship *Giulio Cesare*, handed over as war reparations. There is a persistent rumour that she was sabotaged by former wartime divers working from an Italian submarine. The article, by Phillippe Caresse and Stephen McLaughlin, analyses all the possibilities but does not come to a firm conclusion.

Three articles relate to the First World War. David Hobbs looks in detail at the planned 1918 air attack on the German High Seas Fleet by torpedo-carrying Royal Naval Air Service airplanes (the war ended before it could be carried out). CNRS member William Schleichauf describes the post-war gunnery trials using the former German battleship *Baden* as a target. The third article is an ingenious identification

exercise on a 1918 aerial photograph of a large number of destroyers berthed at the Port Edgar destroyer base on the Forth. From an earlier period, there is a profile of the nineteenth-century constructor Nathaniel Barnaby by David K. Brown.

As usual, there is a review of world navies and events in the previous year (2006) followed by a section containing short notes on miscellaneous naval matters; then a book review section which includes *Observed Secretly - Northern Window* by late CNRS member, Daniel G. Harris and Philip Chaplin (also deceased). Finally, the usual photo gallery appears: this time, Soviet cruisers before and during the Second World War. A complete collection of *Warship* volumes would contain a huge body of technical and operational naval history by the most respected marine historians.

C. Douglas Maginley  
Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia

Benerson Little. *The Buccaneer's Realm. Pirate Life on the Spanish Main, 1674-1688*. Sterling, VCA: Potomac Books, [www.booksinternational.com](http://www.booksinternational.com), 2007. xvi + 343 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, US \$29.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-59797-101-0.

Early modern pirates seem to hold a great allure for us. This has only been enhanced by the recent success of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies. Simply put, pirates are “hot,” and it should come as no surprise that this is reflected in a seemingly endless array of

new publications aimed at scholarly readers, as well as the general public.

Benerson Little's new book, *The Buccaneer's Realm: Pirate Life on the Spanish Main, 1674-1688*, is an incredibly detailed snapshot of a brief but vibrant era in the history of piracy. It boasts an impressive range of anecdotes which will entertain “armchair adventurers” as well as provide them with a treasure trove of information. Those looking for swashbuckling tales will not be disappointed. It is not, however, a book for readers looking for a long-term analysis of piracy.

*The Buccaneer's Realm* purports to describe pirates' cultural and physical environments. It does a fine job in this regard, but it would have been more helpful if some of this vivid description could have been placed in a larger and longer historical context. For instance, a number of the points the author makes about pirates would hold true of other members of the maritime community, and in some cases, of the land community as well. In terms of gauging the atypicality or typicality of the pirate lifestyle, it would be beneficial if Little made more of these connections for his readers. We might also wonder about the interplay between piracy and other forms of maritime employment. In earlier periods, men moved from more legitimate forms of seafaring to piracy and then back again. Was this the case in this era, or did the men who crewed pirate ships live exclusively outside the law? Little's work doesn't really address this issue comprehensively, although he does rightly suggest a close relationship between piracy and privateering.

The strength of the book is the large number of engaging anecdotes about many colourful characters. It is evident that Little is charmed by his subjects – sometimes too much so. He asserts that the real pirates of the Caribbean “surpassed anything in fiction or film” and that “from 1674 to 1688 reigned the boldest, truest and perhaps greatest pirates of the Caribbean...” (p. 12) These are grandiose claims indeed. While Little clearly revels in pirates and piratical feats during this important 14-year period, he seems to ignore the fact that many of the acts and attitudes he extols can also be attributed to men of earlier eras.

Other strengths of the book include some interesting appendices which cover varied topics such as buccaneer organization and planning a boucanier barbecue. There are maps and several diagrams which illustrate some of the most common types of ships and weapons of the period. Such material is informative as well as entertaining, particularly for readers who are not specialists in the field.

Arguably, the great weakness of the book is that the author likes to make bold assertions and sweeping generalizations which he does not back up with adequate proof or references. For instance, the “The Torrid Zone” chapter on sex and romance on the Spanish Main, is largely based on limited evidence and anecdotes. Early modern historians usually complain about the lack of information about the sexual habits of our ancestors and, as a result, this confines them to rather tentative conclusions. Little shows no such caution. His analysis of the sexual practices of the

land community rests largely on Lawrence Stone’s controversial *The Family, Sex and Marriage* and Antonia Fraser’s *The Weaker Vessel*. From these works, he makes the debatable (and possibly anachronistic) claim that “Sex itself in the seventeenth century was little different from sex today...Bathing, oral hygiene, antibiotics, and contraceptives... are the major differences.” (p.168) Furthermore, in the past, sodomy was typically a capital offence, so those wanting to conduct homosexual acts were risking death by doing so. These are significant differences in my estimation. Although Little uses B.R. Burg’s provocative work, *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition*, he does not directly tackle the thesis that homosexual acts among pirates were widespread, habitual and acceptable. Little goes on to claim that “Adultery and premarital sex was as common as it is today,” yet he does not explain that, if this were so, why illegitimacy rates remained extremely low in the early modern world, which lacked effectual birth control. (p.170) Sadly, the book is marred by such assertions which are not borne out by the evidence provided.

Although Little has consulted a range of primary and secondary sources on his topic, his bibliography lacks some key sources, such as the works of Marcus Rediker and David Cordingly. Little’s perspective would have been enhanced by incorporating and perhaps refuting some of their findings.

Stylistically, Little’s prose is somewhat choppy at times. He begins a story, veers off into a thorough explanation of some aspect of pirate life, and then returns to his tale. This jarring

quality detracts from the “flow” of the book as well as readers’ capacity to absorb the reams of information in this detailed work. Overall, *The Buccaneer’s Realm* is a panorama that reveals a vast number of aspects of the pirate world during a colourful 14-year period. Although Little makes certain statements which will make some cautious historians uncomfortable, it is evident he can spin a riveting tale and sweep away readers to the glory days of the Spanish Main.

Cheryl Fury  
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Granville Allen Mawer. *South by Northwest. The magnetic crusade and the contest for Antarctica*. Edinburgh, UK: Birlinn Limited, [www.birlinn.co.uk](http://www.birlinn.co.uk), 2006. xii + 319 pp., maps, illustrations, appendix, bibliography, glossary, notes, index. UK £ 25.00, CDN \$ 55.95, cloth; ISBN 978 1 84158 5 017.

A small library of books has been written about the search for the geographic South Pole, i.e. the southern end of the Earth’s axis of rotation, but Mawer’s is the first to focus on the search for the South Magnetic Pole, i.e. the location where a dip-needle (a freely suspended magnet on a horizontal axis) points vertically downwards.

Once Commander James Clark Ross had located the North Magnetic Pole on the west coast of Boothia Peninsula (in what is now Nunavut) on 1 June 1831, it was only natural that attempts would be made to locate the South Magnetic Pole, although at the time the existence of the Antarctic continent was only suspected,

rather than established. Remarkably, three competing expeditions practically overlapped in the Antarctic, and were at least able to narrow the focus of the search. In January 1840, a French expedition under Jules-Sebastien-César Dumont d’Urville, in *Astrolabe* and *Zelée*, reached the coast of Adélie Land, and deduced that the South Magnetic Pole must lie south of that location, probably on land. At exactly the same time, the ships of the United States Exploring Expedition, under Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, were also off this coast, and one of his ships, *Porpoise*, even met *Astrolabe* and *Zelée* on 30 January 1840. Wilkes, too was able to deduce that the South Magnetic Pole must lie south of Adélie Land and the Wilkes Coast. A year later, in January 1841, James Clark Ross, in command of *Erebus* and *Terror*, was the first to penetrate into the Ross Sea, and was able to determine that the South Magnetic Pole must lie some distance to the west, thus getting a cross-bearing on its location. While all three expedition leaders suspected that they were seeing the coasts of a continent, they could not be entirely sure of this.

The first party to reach the South Magnetic Pole (or at least its close proximity) was the northern party of Ernest Shackleton’s *Nimrod* expedition in 1907-9, consisting of Douglas Mawson, Alistair Mackay and Edgeworth David. Starting from Shackleton’s base at Cape Royds, they man-hauled north along the west coast of the Ross Sea, then up a series of glaciers onto the Antarctic Ice Cap. On 16 January 1909, at 72° 25’S; 155° 16’E, they calculated that they had reached the Pole. Their return trip to the Ross Sea was a brutal race against time,

and they came within an ace of literally “missing the boat” when *Nimrod* steamed past their campsite without spotting it.

The next attempt at pinpointing the South Magnetic Pole was made by a three-man party from the Cape Denison base of Mawson’s Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-14. On 12 December 1912, having sledged 3,480 km south across the Ice Cap, Robert Bage, Frank Hurley and Eric Webb were forced to turn back at 70° 36½’S; 148° 10’E by dwindling food supplies. At that point, Webb calculated that the Pole lay some 80-100 km further south, i.e. that it had moved a substantial distance north in the intervening four years.

Mawer has described all five of these expeditions in considerable detail, and what is strikingly apparent is that the hardships and drama of the latter two sledge-hauling expeditions match anything experienced by the better-known attempts at reaching the geographic South Pole, such as those of Scott, Amundsen and Shackleton.

Apart from fairly detailed descriptions of the expeditions mentioned thus far, together with a great deal of technical detail, Mawer also engages in lengthy discussions of the controversies that arose from them. The first of these is the controversy between Wilkes, Ross and Dumont d’Urville as to the accuracy of their respective cartographic depictions of the land they claimed to have seen. The second deals with the later disputes over territorial claims. Douglas Mawson’s BANZARE (Britain, Australia, New Zealand Research Expedition) was dispatched south primarily to establish the Australian claim to the “Australian quadrant” (45° to 160°E). That claim

was disputed (at least in part) by France on the basis of Dumont d’Urville’s discovery, and by Norway. Mawer’s handling of these topics is comprehensive. These claims (and all other territorial claims in the Antarctic) have been in abeyance ever since the Antarctic Treaty came into effect on 23 June 1961.

Mawer’s accounts of attempts at tracking the South Magnetic Pole, which has now moved well offshore, off Adélie Land, come to as close to the present as the year 2000. On 23 December 2000, Dr. Charles Barton, of the Australian Bureau of Mineral Resources, on board the MV *Sir Hubert Wilkins*, determined that the ship was only 1.6 km from the pole, at 64° 40’S; 138° 00’E, i.e. off Adélie Land.

The major weakness of the book, and it is a serious one, concerns the numerous maps and charts. Without exception, Mawer has opted to reproduce contemporary maps and charts, most of which have had to be substantially reduced to fit the page size, to the point where the place names and details are largely illegible. To make matters worse, they are all printed in a grey tone, which simply exacerbates the problem. Inclusion of a set of maps specifically drafted for the book would have been enormously better. A map showing the migration of the South Magnetic Pole since its first discovery would also have been useful. The author has included an excellent bibliography, but has overlooked (or opted to omit) a recent and important source; namely, Nathaniel Philbrick’s book on the United States Exploring Expedition (*Sea of Glory*, 2003).

These points notwithstanding, Mawer has contributed a serious study, long overdue, of the history of the search for the South Magnetic Pole that matches the best examples of the literature on the parallel search for the geographic South Pole.

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Adam Mayers. *Beyond Endurance*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart. www.mcclelland.com, 2007. 250 pp., photographs, maps, appendices, bibliography, CDN \$ 36.99, cloth; ISBN 978-0-7710-5755-7.

Subtitled “300 boats, 600 miles and one deadly storm,” this book is a fascinating account of the 1979 Fastnet Race. Some 3,000 yachtsmen, most of whom were amateur ocean-racing enthusiasts in their mid-thirties, raced from Cowes on the Isle of Wight in the English Channel to the Fastnet Lighthouse, off the south coast of Ireland, and back to Plymouth. The two previous Fastnet Races had been uneventful and the 1979 race started calmly enough, until the yachts left the shelter of the Cornish coast and were hit by a Force 10 storm.

Adam Mayers is a Canadian journalist and sailing enthusiast who was living in Cornwall, England, in 1979. His first book on ocean racing, *Sea of Dreams*, was about the 2002 Around Alone global yacht race which nearly cost the life of Canadian Derek Hatfield after a five-cent screw came loose and drained the yacht’s batteries.

The competing crews in the 1979 Fastnet Race expected a challenge, an exhilarating ride and three days of top-flight competition. Unfortunately, what resulted was the worst tragedy ever to befall an ocean-sailing race. Twenty-four boats were abandoned, nineteen men died and 136 had to be rescued. This book looks at the race through the eyes of a handful of sailors on four of the yachts whom the author interviewed about what they still call “that night.” It describes their optimistic camaraderie at the start and recounts their descriptions of terror, courage and split-second decisions in ferocious seas.

Until now, the one best-selling book about the Fastnet tragedy was a first-person account by a sailing journalist. Mayers’ dramatic narrative gives his readers a frank and objective summary of ocean racing. He makes the point that his eyewitnesses encountered neither bad weather, nor even rough weather, but a killer storm and he pays his respects to Sebastian Junger’s *The Perfect Storm* with vivid explanations of knock-downs. He has traced the origin of the storm to Minnesota via Georgian Bay in Lake Huron, Ontario, where, within 24 hours, it struck a farming community, killing two people, injuring 130 more and destroying dozens of homes and farm buildings. The storm arrived in Nova Scotia on the opening day of the Fastnet Race and then swung out into the North Atlantic. Once the race started, the French weather forecast proved more accurate than the British one used by the race officials. Staff at the British Meteorological Office later admitted that they did see the storm, but with the tools they had at hand, they could not assess its

severity. Search-and-rescue officials were unable to launch an effective response because the fleet was so large that the location of most of the yachts was unknown.

Mayers makes an excellent analysis of “accident theory” in ocean racing where, in a tightly coupled environment with many things connected, the smallest thing can lead to catastrophic failure. On a boat, mechanical systems are in constant motion, twisting and bending, straining their fastenings and fittings. No one knows when a piece of equipment will break until it breaks, but there is the ever-present consequence of small problems growing into major catastrophes. After the 1979 Fastnet race, Adlard Coles updated his yachtsman’s guide, *Heavy Weather Sailing*, due to log-book recordings of cyclonic gusts where wind speeds varied by more than twenty knots within a few miles.

The book’s contribution to maritime history is Mayers’ practical knowledge of ocean-sailing, combined with his journalistic ability to portray the participants’ characters. He has skillfully organized his material into chronologically divided chapters that include exhaustive details known only to the competitors he has traced. These interviews are mixed with realism and sympathy as participants shared the intimate details of those intense, dramatic few days in the Irish Sea thirty years ago. Some of the recollections differ in detail, though rarely in substance. For many, reliving the race was not easy, but the author makes it clear that, without exception, they came away from it feeling more alive and more self-aware. Despite the hallucinations suffered by many of

the participants, their extraordinary strength and skill kept them alive.

The reader does not need to be an ocean racing enthusiast to enjoy this adventure story. There are ample illustrations, mainly from the personal collections of those interviewed. In a short afterword, their subsequent sailing exploits are recapped, along with what has happened to their yachts. Maritime historians might find that the book’s lack of an index and its very brief bibliography limits its usefulness. The Fastnet Lighthouse is known as the teardrop of Ireland, as it was the last point seen by emigrants, and it lived up to its name for the nineteen men who died in the 1979 Fastnet Race.

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Roberta M. Styran and Robert R. Taylor. *The Welland Canals Corridor; Then and Now*. St. Catharines, ON: Looking Back Press, [www.lookingbackpress.com](http://www.lookingbackpress.com), 2004. 128 pp., photographs. CDN \$ paper; ISBN 1-55068-932-0.

Madeleine Muntz. *John Laing Weller: “The Man Who Does Things”*. St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell Publishing Ltd., [www.vanwell.com](http://www.vanwell.com), 2007. 150 pp, illustrations, CDN \$ 22.00, paper; ISBN 1-55068-984-3.

While Vanwell Press (and its Looking Back Press imprint) have a St. Catharines address, they are perhaps best known for their national and international book list. Here, by contrast, are two very local titles. So local, in fact, illustrations

in both volumes cover the area where Vanwell's corporate headquarters now stands. (Styran, p.111; Muntz p. 63)

*The Welland Canals Corridor* is an example of what has become a staple of the market for illustrated histories: the "then and now" volume. Find a reasonable selection of historical images; stand in the same location and take a modern photograph; place on facing pages. It is a simple formula and it sells. Do it well enough, and you can go back twenty-five years later and use the "now" pictures as "then." Part of the fascination of the genre is recognizing the survivors from "then" in the "now." Sometimes the clue is a road or a rail line or an early hydro corridor. In this book, the connecting theme centres on the multiple canals that have crossed the Niagara Peninsula closing in on two centuries, and the communities that have grown up around them.

This volume breaks with the standard formula in that the juxtapositions are often more thematic and less specific location. Divers from different eras stand at different points on the canal (pp.118-9) while the gardens are at opposite ends. (pp.122-3) Often scenes match, but imperfectly. The two aerial views of Port Colborne (pp.16-17) are taken from different angles, with one taking in much more of the community. The Henley Regatta has eights in the old photo and fours in the new, rowing in different directions on different sections of the course. (pp.102-3) The scenes of the second canal in St. Catharines are particularly awkwardly matched. One spread appears to be deliberately back-to-back, and really fails to convey the

change inherent in building a four-lane highway over the course of the canal.

Occasionally the pictures fit together perfectly; for example, the *Pic River* and *Margaretha Green* upbound with the Queenston Street bridge open and the Garden City Skyway in the background. Images of downtown Merritton (pp.62-3) even match to the season. That said, the general sense is that the modern pictures were taken first and then complementary historical ones were tracked down.

In general, *The Welland Canals Corridor: Then and Now* works at a simple level and being 128 pages, mostly with full-page illustrations (a reasonable number of which are in colour) it is a reasonably inexpensive collection. Nevertheless, from a historian's perspective, there are other titles that supply illustrations with a stronger historical context than this title, which like most of its counterparts, confines most of the storytelling to the captions.

The Vanwell offices are located in that part of St. Catharines known as Port Weller, a community named for Peggy Muntz's grandfather, J. L. Weller. Not many government canal superintendents have communities named after them, and the circumstances of this decision aren't well addressed in this title. More than just a professional biography of Weller, this book approaches a family memoir with significant background on Weller's father (stagecoach magnate, William Weller) as well as his children and their spouses. Grand-daughter and author, Peggy Muntz, is now in a retirement facility and the manuscript reached publication thanks, in some part, to people associated with the

St. Catharines Museum, including, among others, Roberta Styran who was the lead in the other title in this review. This reviewer suspects that Appendix B (Family Experiences, 1912-19) was lifted out of the original manuscript and the sections on the creation of the Fourth Canal that remain (chapters six and seven) were extended with their help. That said, there are some substantial quotes (pp.57-60 and 66-70) that pad out what was left behind.

Those caveats aside, the volume provides some insight into the character and the activities of the government engineer who designed the Fourth Canal and who worked tirelessly in supervising its construction right up until the altered priorities of the First World War forced a halt to activity. All of this had to be done while the traffic of the Third Canal flowed past sites where the new steam-driven devices worked alongside equipment hauled by mules. That Alexander Grant, the engineer who supervised the completion of the task through the 1920s, gets more credit is one of the things that Muntz routinely alludes to, even as she draws on the family scrapbooks to show instances where her grandfather was given his due, or when more acknowledgment was deserved.

*John Laing Weller* is well illustrated from the author's collection donated to the St Catharines Museum, with some additions from the author's niece. Additional photographs highlight the strengths of the museum's collections. The title succeeds as a family memoir, and provides another point of entry into an understanding of the history of the canal in the twentieth century. While reasonably well footnoted, many of those

references are to the family scrapbooks and papers. Some additional material is incorporated but not enough to take it far beyond its beginnings.

Walter Lewis  
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Carla Rahn Phillips. *The Treasure of the San José. Death at Sea in the War of the Spanish Succession*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, www.press.jhu.edu, 2007. xiii + 258 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$ 35.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-8018-8580-9.

In 1989, the government of Columbia invited the author, a professor in early modern history at the University of Minnesota, along with other scholars to advise them on the possible salvage of the shipwreck of the Spanish galleon, *San José*, near the port city of Cartagena off the Columbian coast. The ship, part of a Spanish fleet and heavily loaded with gold, silver and other valuables, went down in a battle with a British squadron under commodore Charles Wager in June 1708. The ship's riches, already famous at the start of the voyage, have since grown ever larger through rumour and legend. The Columbian government wanted to salvage the wreck, if it could be found, as part of the country's colonial and maritime past. The wreck, however, has never been located.

After her visit, the author took the fortunate decision to search for every document about the legendary treasure ship she could find. And lucky she was! She has unearthed large quantities of fine

material during her time-consuming and painstaking research in Spanish archives and in collections in Great Britain and the United States. As a result, she is now able to tell the story of the galleon, from its construction and outfitting, to its fatal journey and wreck, and even up to and including the aftermath in which widows and other relatives of the deceased seamen and soldiers succeeded in getting back pay or compensation from the Spanish king. In all, the story encompasses almost two decades, from the start of the ship's construction in 1697 to the closure of the books of back pay and compensation in 1716. The author has used this wealth of documents to write a marvellous book, fascinating from beginning to end. And what is more, there is no "fiction," "docu-fiction," or other postmodern niceties, just pure and simple history in which the actors in the drama can be followed on the basis of their often conflicting testimonies, logs and recollections. Phillips also knows how to successfully combine the micro-history of the ship with European political history at large during the eventful years of the Spanish succession in the early eighteenth century.

The main chapters of the book deal with the shipwreck in June 1708 and with the ship's officers, seamen and soldiers. As to the wreck during the battle, the author offers a reconstruction of what happened using the many personal accounts and logs of the crew members of other ships who escaped unharmed, or were captured by the British and made statements later. British officers and seamen, too, for whom the sinking of the *San José* was, of course, not what they had intended to achieve and

to whom the escape of a second treasure ship was an outright blunder, have described what happened according to them and how the *San José* went down. This reconstruction makes fascinating reading and illustrates how much can be achieved by the clever use of sometimes complementary, but more often, contradictory and conflicting sources. Many witnesses attempted, of course, to clear themselves from possible future accusations by giving accounts that were favourable to their own conduct. The chapter is preceded by two informative chapters on the crew and soldiers aboard the *San José* and on the commander of the fleet, Count Casa Alegre, and his second and third officers, Don Miguel Augustin de Villanueva and Count Vega Florida, respectively.

Incidentally, the author discusses many other aspects of Spanish and European politics as well as the workings of the colonial empire. Through focussing upon the family background and careers of the first officers of the fleet, she comments upon naval service and upward social mobility in Spain's multi-layered aristocracy. The dire financial straits of the Spanish monarchy are discussed along with the practice of lending money to the crown. Merchants and naval officers saw it as a way to advance their careers, although it brought some of them to the very brink of bankruptcy. By discussing the preparations made for the return fleet, Phillips shows the importance of patronage in the administration and economy of the empire. Throughout the book, the reader is made to realise how long, drawn-out and time-consuming the decision-making process in the empire

was, due to long distances, uncertain circumstances, the threat of war at sea, personal choices and slow bureaucratic procedures.

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Marcus Rediker. *The Slave Ship. A Human History*. New York, NY: Viking, Penguin Group, [www.penguin.com](http://www.penguin.com), 2007. 434 pp., illustrations, notes, index. US \$ 27.95, CDN \$34.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-670-01823-9.

Too frequently, the ships, captains, crews and cargoes physically enabling the overseas trades of the early modern period are absent from conventional narratives. This conspicuous void in the historiography leads one to presume that the process of moving people and cargoes from port to port was more or less a routine activity, with little real significance or consequence for the development of trade and society. As Marcus Rediker demonstrates in convincing and terrifying fashion, however, one must appreciate the maritime dimension of the Atlantic slave trade to achieve a fuller understanding of not only the creation and continuance of an over-three-hundred-year-old trading system, but also the rise and movement of capitalism around the world. Rediker's focus is the slave ship, an instrument, he reveals, that was nothing less than crucial in establishing and sustaining this brutal process of forced migration. Indeed, Rediker places the ship alongside the plantation as a formative institution of slavery, while arguing that the horrors

experienced on board were central to the making of global capitalism.

The appearance of this book is timely, as the world observes the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in Britain (1807) and in the United States (1808). Rediker's focus is the so-called "golden age" of Atlantic slavery for these two nations, the beginning of which he dates to 1700. It was in that year that the first slavers sailed from both Rhode Island and Liverpool, the eventual centres of these countries' slave trades, to participate in the highly risky yet phenomenally lucrative trade in human beings. Many of us are familiar with the numbers. Over twelve million people were collected in Africa to be shipped to New World destinations, with a mortality figure of about five million between the initial stage and the slaves' first few years in America. An estimated 1.8 million died en route to auction while experiencing the Middle Passage. These statistics, though expressions of the numerical loss, are in their coldness and rationality very much an abstraction from understanding the full magnitude of suffering and torment spawned by this trade and those who profited by it. Statistics, Rediker explains, hide the names and identities of slaves, as well as the inhumane nature of the trade, for part of the enslavement process was in the numbering of people and record keeping in the ledgers and account books generated to organize and administer the trade. Rediker's study is invaluable for its ability to make readers care deeply about this subject beyond the numbers. He personalizes this massive tragedy, as he relates the trade in African slaves in human terms with truly staggering and

unforgettable accounts of men, women and children being torn from their homes, shackled in chains aboard floating dungeons where they faced torture, beatings and rape, to experiencing further horrors at shipboard auctions and a lifetime of subservience. While the ship was the setting for considerable violence and terror, it also provided the environment for slaves to create novel means of communication, knowledge gathering, and a culture of resistance, which enabled the majority of them to survive the ocean passage and their bondage in America.

Rediker, an eminent Marxist historian of maritime life and labour, describes the slave ship as: “a strange and potent combination of war machine, mobile prison, and factory.” (p.9) He structures his book into four distinct narratives, being the interaction between captains and crews; the relationship between crews and slaves; the resultant cooperation between slaves; and finally the gradual success of abolitionists, such as Thomas Clarkson, in using the image of the slave ship to convince a great many people that this barbarous trade had to end. By focusing on all of the actors in this human tragedy, including the hundreds of thousands of non-slaves comprising ships’ captains, skilled officers and sailors, Rediker thereby enlarges the historical drama. As previously explored in *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (1987), the familiar tensions between merchant capital and the labour of the proletariat are at the forefront. Unlike that study, here Rediker’s conclusions about the profundity of violence found in this trade and the system that encouraged it are

much more difficult to deny. He is writing history from below, meaning from the perspective of the lower class, and in this case, those captive below deck. Indeed, it is difficult to recall a time in which humankind sank so low for so long on such a massive scale.

Rediker provides maritime historians with numerous insights into seafaring and the shipping industry with respect to the slave trade, but could do more to compare the experience of this trade with that of others. With a mortality rate of one in five and an even greater risk of contracting serious illness, combined with rigid discipline, harsh punishment and the possibility of being dumped in the West Indies prior to the return voyage to England, by far the worst berth a sailor could take was on a slave ship. Rediker spends little time examining the methods of recruitment employed by slavers or the pressures on ship owners to man their vessels throughout the eighteenth century. Instead, we are often provided with a description of the common sailor, based mainly on his earlier study, to represent the entire period under review. More could have been said on the relationships linking owners, merchant investors and suppliers, as well as the particular networks found in the chief slave trade ports of Liverpool, Bristol and Newport.

*The Slave Ship* is a valuable companion to Emma Christopher’s *Slave Ship Sailors* (2006) and Jeffrey Bolster’s *Black Jacks* (1997), and should be regarded alongside other groundbreaking works by historians of the slave trade, such as those by Philip Curtin, John Thornton, and David Eltis. Several clearly labelled maps and well-chosen illustrations further strengthen this study.

Inclusion of the various renditions of the slave ship *Brooks*, used to turn the tide of public and political opinion against the trade, is particularly effective in reminding readers that the ship and the maritime dimension in general cannot be divorced from examinations of the Atlantic slave trade and the legacy of racism, exploitation and inequality it was instrumental in creating.

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William H. Roberts. *Civil War Ironclads: the U.S. Navy and Industrial Mobilization*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, (Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Technology), www.press.jhu.edu, 2007. xi, 285 p. Illustrations, tables, appendices, notes, sources, index. US \$ 55.00, paper; ISBN 978-0-8018-8751-2.

The book is a tightly focused examination of shipbuilding and industrial mobilization during the American Civil War and its aftermath. In ten compact chapters, the story unfolds of the challenges faced in building monitors in the interior of the country, in cities such as Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. The work covers the construction of the five classes of monitors following the prototype of the USS *Monitor*, and in particular, the *Casco* class of light draught monitor. The period covered is from early in the Civil War until 1918, when the last appeal from a civilian contractor for payment was turned down by a US court.

The author sets the stage by outlining the revolutionary design of the iron-clad steamers. The rules of shipbuilding changed overnight with the special nature of this new type of warship. The author's central thesis is that failure of the monitor program, the epitome of the boondoggling and war profiteering in the popular consciousness and press of the time, had its deepest roots in the program itself, and particularly in the nature of the Navy's contracts.

The style is immediate and highly readable. A passionate interplay develops among the major figures early in the book, focusing on the general inspector of ironclads, Alban Stimers. The book is based largely on primary sources, particularly the correspondence of Gideon Welles, secretary of the Navy; Gustavus Fox, assistant secretary; John Ericsson, inventor and shipbuilder; and engineer Stimers. The monitor project organization, headed by Stimers, was meant to capitalize on the strengths of private industry and break the technical and bureaucratic logjam presented by the US Navy bureau system of administration. In this, it presaged the modern Special Projects Office structure used to produce the Polaris missile system in the mid-twentieth century.

Various aspects of the failure of the light draught monitor program and of Stimers are analyzed throughout the book. The fact that the already ambitious design, overloaded with changes and improvements, would not float when launched was a testament to the pace of technical change, which had outstripped the constructors' ability to perform calculations. It was also a symptom of a

dysfunctional organization which would not, or could not, provide oversight to the monitor program. Lessons learned in combat were incorporated into ships already under construction or already on active service at great cost in time and money. The author uses the phrase “better is the enemy of good enough” to characterize continuous improvement, which was the most essential problem with the program. Building times for the later monitors, especially the light draughts, stretched from six months to over three years.

For a work dedicated to contracts and economics, it is also a wonderfully enlivening look at the people and the politics who served Fox’s desire for perfection. Stimers, in particular, hoped that by fulfilling those ambitions he would set his seal on history. The part played by passion and human nature as dynamic generators is also depicted in the senior levels of the US Navy bureaux. The monitor is described as the site of the social struggle between the line officers of the sailing navy and the engineering officers of a new, mechanized navy represented by Stimers.

The deep problems faced by civilian contractors are described and analyzed with supporting detail in charts and tables, illustrating the economic environment in which the program functioned. Basic problems included shortages of material and skilled labour, and inflation. To these were added the disadvantages of river-based construction, such as, currents, ice and water levels, all of which forced launch schedules and necessitated expensive workarounds for fitting out. Added to the myriad problems faced by the contractors was the singular

nature of the shipbuilding enterprise. The inability to put precious shipyard space to profitable use once it was dedicated to building and reworking the monitors virtually ensured the business failure of each contractor.

The monitors, once built, were indeed “good for fifty years” in the words of John Ericsson, the genius behind the early ironclads. Although the light draught monitors were completed too late for the war, they spent their service lives quietly along the coasts and in the river systems of the United States, effectively underlining the power of the federal government into the 1900s.

In the last chapter, entitled “Additions, Alterations and Improvements,” the long, bitter history of the attempt to reckon the cost of the continuous modifications and of the contractors’ attempts to be paid is followed in some detail. It would have been helpful if the author, in tracing the long term effects of the monitor program on the US Navy, had defined the concept of the “reverse salient” for the benefit of non-engineers.

This study of the logistics of shipbuilding is a re-examination of a classic case of shipbuilding gone wrong. This work should be of interest generally with a special appeal for readers interested in coastal and riverine warfare. It should be of interest to any student of warfare in coastal and interior waterways. *Civil War Ironclads* could easily be a case study to accompany any text in the history of technology or management. Anyone concerned with managing complex technology, of which building warships is still among the most complex, will be able to apply lessons learned. Any harried or

overworked project manager plagued by specification creep or feature bloat will be repaid many times over by reading this work.

Kathy Crewdson and Ian Dew  
Thunder Bay, Ontario

Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, Alexander Keyssar. *The Way of the Ship: America's Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600-2000*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., www.wiley.com, 2007. xv + 521 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, appendices, glossary, bibliographic essay, notes, index. US \$ 35.00/ CAN \$ 41.99, cloth; ISBN 978-0-470-13600-3.

If you purchase only one book on maritime history this year, buy this one. There has been a deluge of books on many aspects of American maritime shipping, but what appears to have been lacking is a comprehensive, single volume chronicle of the history of the subject since its beginning in the early seventeenth century to the end of the twentieth century. The authors have sought to fill this gap by retelling the rich history of American maritime shipping from new perspectives. First, they view the story from a global perspective, and second, they incorporate the crucial contributions of coastal, riverine and Great Lakes shipping into an up-to-date account of oceanic shipping. "America is a brown-water nation with a blue-water consciousness," claim the authors. They present a unique, refreshing, authoritative total picture, drawing some significant conclusions that differ from the usual

ones found in more traditional accounts of the decline of American shipping since the Civil War. This is a brilliant work of synthesis in which the authors offer their unique interpretation of the past based on much of the most recent scholarship.

Each author is a distinguished historian: Alex Roland has written several books and teaches the history of technology and military history at Duke University; Jeffrey Bolster, a professor of maritime history at the University of New Hampshire, is the author of *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: 1997); and Alexander Keyssar, a prize-winning historian of several books, is Stirling Professor of History and Social Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Benefactors from the American Maritime History Project, Inc. sponsored the authors' research and writing.

*The Way of the Ship* is divided into five parts, each containing eight to eleven well-crafted, short chapters that make for easy reading and comprehension. Rather than write as a committee (never a good idea), each author appears to have taken responsibility for one of the sections: Bolster for part one, Roland for parts two and five, and Keyssar for parts three and four. Part one is an excellent, up-to-date synthesis of the history of American colonial shipping to the end of the American Revolution. It argues that the great wealth of American colonists, made in large part by shipping and especially its invisible earnings, played a key role in creating the new nation. Part two, covering the period from the creation of the United States of America to the Civil

War, incorporates the golden age of ocean sail, but instead emphasizes the rise of coastal and inland shipping. It presents a different view of American maritime history when domestic, waterborne commerce exceeded the value and volume of ocean trade by a factor of three and four. Part three treats the rise of marine industry and labour in the gilded age, and part four examines the weight of war on shipping between 1905 and 1956. Among many insightful observations is one pointing to the unintended consequences of the decision to build navy ships in government-owned shipyards. This fact, combined with Americans' love of wood and sail, long inhibited technological transfer to commercial yards in the new age of iron and steam. The great surge in shipbuilding during the First and Second World Wars did little for American shipping. Part five, which deals with the rise of the megaship and the worldwide transformation of shipping and ports brought about by changes in ship technology, telecommunications and markets reflected in globalization, is perhaps the most challenging part of the book.

The authors employ five analytical threads in each part — economics, policy, labour, military, and technology — to pull their history together and to move it forward. This has allowed them to focus on the continually changing nature of cargoes and of ships, from tobacco exports to oil imports, and from the 30-ton pinnaces of the early colonial period to the Ultra Large Crude Carriers (ULCC) capable of carrying more than 300,000 tons of oil that have shaped the history of American shipping. The weight and importance given to the

place of maritime labour from the colonial period to the present is another important feature of the book, as is the place reserved for brief, engaging sketches of some of the most interesting innovators, businessmen, politicians, and labour leaders in American history, from Robert Fulton to Malcolm McClean. One could go on, for there are other praiseworthy contributions.

The book's greatest strength, however, is the reasoned discussion of the failure of American policy makers to find a way to support a sustainable American oceanic shipping industry during the last third of the nineteenth and all of the twentieth century. A large part of the answer lay in the subordination of economic considerations to false arguments about the need to support vital links between shipping and national security. Preferences and subsidies also had a way of setting one interest against another, so that the maritime industry never spoke with one voice. But this is a history. The authors remain analytical and eschew advocacy and nostalgia. Four appendices will aid in making their work a ready reference tool, and colour reproductions of sixteen maritime paintings by John Stobart will delight fans of one of America's great marine artists. *The Way of the Ship* allows readers to enjoy, to consider, and to appreciate the richness of American maritime history in ways that are fresh and intellectually challenging.

James Pritchard  
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Roy E. Schreiber (ed.). *Captain Bligh's Second Chance. An Eyewitness Account of his Return to the South Seas by Lt. George Tobin*. London: Chatham Publishing, 2007. www.chathamublishing.com, 184 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, index; UK £ 19.99, cloth; ISBN 987-1-86176-280-1.

William Bligh achieved in his second voyage to Tahiti what he had so memorably failed to accomplish in his first trip in 1789, to transport breadfruit tree to the West Indies as cheap slave food. The present account, completed off the North American coast in 1797 and unpublished until now, was penned by Bligh's third lieutenant, George Tobin. Tobin, the son of a Nevis planter, was born in Salisbury, Wiltshire. His formal education abruptly ended when he entered the navy on HMS *Namur* as a captain's servant in 1780, not yet aged twelve. An unemployed midshipman at the end of the American war, he was a newly-promoted lieutenant when, in April 1791 at Deptford, he joined Bligh's 400-ton West Indiaman HMS *Providence*. In the intervening years he had sailed once to the Far East. (p.55)

The *Providence* took him first to Tenerife and Cape Verde for fresh water and provisions. At Cape Town, Tobin found slaves at work in a limestone quarry (p.34) and noted Robben Island housing convicts. In the matter of domestic slaves, he wrote of "an unrestrained manner between the owner and the slave ... The Cape Town slaves appear cheerful and content ... In the evening they commonly resort to the dancing houses, where the master does not feel his dignity wounded by

frequently mixing in the dance or being the musician to his own slave." (pp.36-7) Still he looked forward to the amelioration, especially in the lot of the West Indies' slaves, even as he correctly predicted that once they were freed, sugar production would decline. He also remarked that several French slavers, flying the *tricolore* arrived with full cargoes. So much for "Liberty and Equality"! (p.38) With the vessels refitted and re-provisioned, the expedition departed Africa shortly before Christmas 1791, making Tasmania on 9 February 1792, before shaping a course south of New Zealand. On 1 April, the ship veered north to Tahiti, which welcomed the visitors a week later, thirty-six weeks from Spithead. (p.71) After five months at anchor off the island, the expedition headed homeward west into the Indian Ocean, and thence to the West Indies, where the precious cargo of breadfruit trees were principally destined.

There are several curiosities to be noted in Tobin's account; the first relates to Bligh. Captain Bligh, known by the lower deck as the "Bounty Bastard," is scarcely mentioned, not even a word of his ungovernable temper and inability to get the best from his crew, which formed part of the background of the first voyage. In Tobin's account, Bligh was a reformed soul. He praised Bligh's seamanship and noted his role as master on Cook's third voyage to the Pacific in 1776. (p.55) He particularly admired Bligh's behaviour among the Tahitians, and his concern for the health of those who served under him. Tobin remarked that before paying off his ship, Bligh thanked all hands for their conduct during the voyage, promising them his interest

for their advancement in the sea service. As it turned out, such patronage counted at first for little as Bligh's popularity, during his two years' absence, had evaporated. According to the newspapers, the crew received his thanks with cheers and applause.

Those unfamiliar with the balance of Bligh's career should know that he was involved in two later mutinies. The first of these was the great naval mutiny of 1797 and the second, when he served as governor of New South Wales in 1808. In 1797, he played a key role in helping to confine the mutiny to Spithead and the Nore, while in 1808 he was imprisoned by the military mutineers for two years, and was exonerated from any share in the blame. On the high seas, under Duncan, Bligh's ship was involved in the naval victory over the Dutch at Camperdown in 1797, where the Dutch flagship struck to him. In 1801, at the dishonourable battle of Copenhagen, under Nelson, he commanded perhaps the most lethally armed warship in the line.

By far Tobin's most interesting comments concerned the people of Tahiti. He was greatly impressed with the sexual freedom he observed among Tahitians. "If frail, yet do they largely teem with charity and benevolence." (p.77) He admired the girls' contempt for pain when being tattooed. "The deeper the wounds, the greater the triumph, the more their boast, nor is persuasion at all required to gain an exhibition of their proud stains." (p.78) He wondered how much more attractive such tattoos would be on the white flesh of English girls, even on their "most ignoble parts." He frequently compared behaviour and attitudes to that of the English who thought themselves to

represent good taste. He was struck by their cleanliness, when English personal habits were still at their most foul. He came quickly to admire the Tahitians and correctly feared their future harm from both the activities of missionaries and the vices of men who made their living at sea.

As the manuscript was largely completed while Tobin was serving on the North American coast, he makes several references to Nova Scotia. Perhaps one worth relating arose during a swimming party near Halifax, where one of Tobin's fellow officers left his pocket watch on a flat rock a few steps from the water's edge. When he emerged from his swim, he found a snake curled around the watch lulled to sleep by its soft vibrations. (p.51) It put him in mind of an incident with a snake near Cape Town in 1791.

Tobin was a skilled watercolourist and his account is copiously illustrated from paintings now in the Mitchell Library of the State Library of New South Wales, and formerly owned by Earl Spencer. In preparing his manuscript, Tobin was denied by the Admiralty Board from consulting his original lieutenant's logs, a matter which clearly rankled. The logs are now located in the National Archives, Kew. George Tobin brought his artistic talents to North America when he was appointed second lieutenant on HMS *Thetis*, a frigate commanded by Alexander Cochrane, when Rear Admiral Murray led the North American squadron. Six of Tobin's watercolours from 1794-5, principally of the capture by *Thetis* and HMS *Hussar* of a French frigate and sloop off Virginia, are held by the State Library of New South Wales, and another eight are in the collection of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. One

painting of the Halifax Naval Yard in 1797 is in the collection of Library and Archives Canada (Winckworth Collection). It was on the North American coast that Tobin was made commander of the schooner *Princess of Wales*, and in 1798, of the new Bermuda-built 14-gun sloop *Dasher*, in which he escorted a convoy to England the following year. Though connected to Nelson through marriage, he reached captain's rank only in 1802, and briefly became flag captain of HMS *Northumberland* under Cochrane, then a rear admiral and commander of the Leeward Islands station. At war's end, Tobin, now a companion of the Order of Bath, never again went to sea. Regrettably, almost none of this detail appears in the editor's introduction.

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Berwick, Nova Scotia

Hugh Sebag-Montefiore.  
*Dunkirk, Fight to the Last Man*.  
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University  
Press, www.hup.harvard.edu, 2006. 701  
pp., photographs, maps, appendices,  
notes, bibliography, index. US \$ 35.00,  
cloth; ISBN 978-0-674-02439-7.

Hugh Sebag-Montefiore, a scion of the London-based investment firm, Sebags, has delivered a wonderful account of a well known event from a relatively new perspective. I use the word “relatively,” since students of the catastrophic 1940 Allied defeats in Belgium and France are well aware of the broad outlines of the story that Sebag-Montefiore relates. Indeed, most are at

least notionally aware that behind the queues of disciplined, patient troops (itself a bit of myth) awaiting evacuation from the beaches at Dunkirk with other troops, their colleagues, fighting hopeless, but not fruitless, rearguard actions that permitted the evacuation. Their courage is eclipsed in terms of public awareness by the “miracle” of Dunkirk that saw the safe evacuation of some 330,000 men from France – highly trained soldiers saved to fight another day. Their loss would have severely weakened an already weak Britain and perhaps have led to Hitler launching his invasion, an invasion that surely would have succeeded, given the lack of troops available to oppose him. Clearly, without Dunkirk, the progress of the war would have been much different, if not the ultimate outcome.

This book is not a typical offering of *The Northern Mariner* book reviews in that it focuses on a military campaign. Dunkirk is famous, and indeed legendary, for its naval component, the deeds associated with the evacuation and the brave “little ships” that ferried over to Britain the hundreds of thousands of soldiers. The fact that the need for the evacuation resulted from military defeat in the fields of France and Belgium is often obscured by the wondrous nature of the withdrawal itself. Churchill, of course, was under no illusion on this score, remarking that “Wars are not won by evacuations.” Sebag-Montefiore, who, interestingly, had two relatives evacuated from Dunkirk, concentrates his narrative on the much less known or understood story of the rearguard forces. It is a story that deserves to be told. And, it is a story of

heroism, brutality, and horror. A worthy volume indeed to both review and for all members of the Canadian Nautical Research Society to read and ponder.

Sebag-Montefiore covers the entire campaign in Belgium and Flanders to provide context for the story. He is unsparing in his criticism of France and its generals who proved woefully inadequate in meeting the challenges presented them. That this was almost certainly yet another baleful legacy of The Great War is perhaps not adequately allowed for. The author offers useful summaries of the intelligence gathering manoeuvres that affected the campaign and how they were conducted by both sides. The well known "Mechelen incident," where the German war plans fell into the hands of the Belgians, is well analyzed, particularly how the information was digested and, ultimately, misunderstood to the detriment of the Allied defence. He also describes how intelligence received from a German traitor in the Abwehr Military Intelligence branch was misused when received through Dutch sources. This aspect of the story is perhaps less well known and understood by most.

The book is organized in four basic sections, although not so divided in formal terms. The first part describes the BEF's arrival in France and the plans developed for the defence of the West. The author develops one of his abiding themes for the book in describing the fundamentally poorly prepared British Army and its lamentable state of equipment. A critical lesson from the pre-war period is the harsh advice (as unwelcome to today's leaders as it was to those in the inter-war years) of the rough

Roman soldier Vegetius, who remarked: "Let him who desires peace, prepare for war." This part of Sebag-Montefiore's book includes a fascinating and illuminating discussion on intelligence and how information was misused and misunderstood, as well as the melancholy story of defeat and confusion in the first days of the German offensive.

The second part of the book takes the narrative to the outskirts of Dunkirk after the German early triumphs. The author notes that the fog of war affected the German Army as well as the Allies and that the occasion for more than one German "halt" order as their armoured formations romped through Northern France and Belgium was lack of knowledge and fear of the Allies. What were considered ineffectual ripostes on the part of the BEF and the French Army were, in fact, sources of great concern to the nervous German High Command. In particular, the British counterattack at Arras affected the thinking of the German High Command out of all proportion to what was physically achieved. Indeed, it can be argued that the small "victory" at Arras was a necessary prerequisite for the "success" at Dunkirk a few days later. The inverted commas are, of course, necessary as the reality of the situation was defeat.

The third part describes the rearguard actions around Dunkirk that provide the focus for the book. These involve a selection of the numerous small actions that slowed and discouraged the German advance. It also includes a number of harrowing descriptions of what can only be described as atrocities conducted by the German Army involving the massacre of surrendered soldiers and

civilians. After the war, some German officers were eventually tried for these incidents and either executed or imprisoned.

The fourth part covers the evacuation and the final rearguard actions that permitted the trapped BEF and a segment of the demoralised French army to escape to Britain. It also covers the futile sacrifice of the Highland Division at St. Valery, which performed the task of atonement for the British “abandonment” of France in its hour of need. The bitterness of Sebag-Montefiore’s account in this regard is a reminder of the troubled relationship between Great Britain and France that has its reverberations to this day.

The book concludes with a number of sections that provide information as to what happened to the principals – important and not so important – discussed in the narrative. The map section is superb and quite the best this reviewer has seen in many a volume on military matters. The photographs included are also excellent. A series of appendices provides statistical details that are usefully presented and provide a bare bones report as to what was achieved with the Dunkirk evacuation. Finally, the notes and bibliography are of a high standard. The author’s research has been exceptional and included all the archives from each nation involved, as well as a comprehensive review of the appropriate war diaries, military records and appropriate secondary sources. Veterans and their surviving families were tracked down to provide additional detail and confirmation or refutation of the accepted truth. The result of this comprehensive

analysis is a thoroughly compelling narrative that, frankly, should be required reading for anyone who wishes to understand this rather less fashionably interesting period of Second World War defeat.

Sebag-Montefiore has at least three lessons, or observations, for us. The first, already mentioned in this review, is to never permit one’s military to run down as it is a fundamentally flawed saving and policy in the long-run. The second relates to coalitions and the difficulties of the junior partner. Britain was clearly subordinate in its role of assisting the French in defending their country, yet it still needed to be far more aggressive in participating in the conduct of that defence. The British Army suffered a major defeat in 1940 and many thousands of men died as a consequence. Had a more frank and demanding relationship with the French been in place, it is quite possible that the campaign would have had a different outcome. In 1940, German victory was by no means inevitable nor the German Army invincible. British unwillingness at the highest and mid- levels to tackle the French as to plans and intentions was ultimately self-defeating. Both these lessons are highly relevant today for Canada as we have questions to answer in each case – that of the equipping and manning of the Canadian Forces, as well as our role in coalition warfare, such as that in Afghanistan. Finally, Sebag-Montefiore notes on a personal basis that had defeat been total as a result of the 1940 campaigns with the occupation of Great Britain following the capitulation of the BEF in Flanders, his Jewish family almost certainly would have been wiped

out as part of the “Final Solution.” The courage and sacrifice of those rearguard forces, therefore, was not expended in vain and enabled Britain to survive as the keystone to ultimate Allied victory after five more years of total war. For that Sebag-Montefiore is grateful, and so should we.

Is this book worth reading?  
Absolutely.

Ian Yeates  
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John Darrell Sherwood. *Black Sailor, White Navy: Racial Unrest in the Fleet During the Vietnam War Era*. New York: New York University Press, www.nyupress.org, 2007. v + 434 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$ 35.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-8147-40360-1.

Sherwood chronicles racial unrest in the United States Navy by focusing on case studies of three eruptions of tension that occurred in October and November 1972 and a series of other incidents through August 1973. The major incidents, aboard the USS *Kitty Hawk*, USS *Hassayampa*, and USS *Constellation*, occurred towards the end of the American war in Vietnam and highlight not only the institutional racism inherent in America’s long naval history, but also the effects of an arduous war in Southeast Asia that would claim as its victim two American presidents, tens of thousands of lives, and the lost innocence of a generation of its youth.

Sherwood maintains that a number of factors led to the outbreak of

racial unrest, even though tension had been present in the armed forces since their inception and, since 1948, desegregation. The main reason was President Nixon’s decision to move to an all-volunteer force, which cut back on the recruiting pool for the Navy. The Navy had been a haven for individuals who were obligated to join the armed forces but did not want to serve on the ground in Vietnam. The Nixon decision led to a change in the standards for new naval recruits. Lower test category scores for black sailors, coupled with long deployments during the Vietnam War, less than desirable assignments and fewer opportunities to advance, and the spread of black power ideology all played a role in the increased tension throughout the fleet and undermined the morale of the black personnel.

By the end of 1972, the Navy had been significantly engaged in the Linebacker air campaigns while trying to reconstitute the fleet for the post-Vietnam future. It was also working toward the integration of many unskilled black sailors who encountered the Navy’s pervasive institutional racism but now had a means to express their protest. Even so, some among the Navy’s leaders and other Americans in positions of political power were reluctant to admit that racial prejudice existed in this branch of the service. The racial unrest in the Navy during the Vietnam War era served as a dramatic backdrop for the Civil Rights struggle, which had also factionalized to include a violent alternative to the passive resistance of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sherwood brings together an extensive list of materials from the Naval Historical Center including operational

records, JAGMAN investigation reports, which detailed the incidents of alleged racism and possible corrective and disciplinary action, oral histories supplied by many of the participants, and the very little utilized, but extremely valuable papers of Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. held at the Naval Historical Center. Zumwalt, who was chief of naval operations during the period, is the main protagonist in the narrative. Although Sherwood does not use the extensive Zumwalt papers available at the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University or really go outside of the Naval Historical Center, he still provides impressive evidence to support his narrative.

It was Zumwalt who had the forethought to engage the Navy in a reexamination of its policies on race, to recognize that a dilemma did exist, and who had the courage to begin the process of rectifying the problem, often in the face of institutional and Congressional opposition. Sherwood maintains that Zumwalt had to play the role of iconoclast by confronting entrenched naval tradition but he was not a radical. He recognized that a real problem existed and understood that it needed to be fixed before the Navy suffered irreversible damage. Zumwalt is the hero in this story, although his role in reforming the navy is scrutinized. It was Zumwalt's successor, Admiral James Holloway, III, who proved more successful in correcting the disparity of black sailors in the Navy by focusing on creating more opportunities for these men to advance to leadership positions rather than, as Zumwalt had done, to try to change the racial attitudes of the institution. Sherwood correctly implies, however,

that Holloway's success could not have occurred without Zumwalt.

*Black Sailor, White Navy* is a well-constructed narrative that examines the origins and events of the naval version of the Civil Rights movement in the early 1970s. While there is a tendency to indulge in biography throughout the work, it is clear that Sherwood made his selections judiciously. *Black Sailor, White Navy* is a very valuable contribution to both our understanding of the dynamics of the United States Navy and the Civil Rights movement toward the end of the Vietnam War era.

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Peter C. Smith. *Midway: Dauntless Victory, Fresh Perspectives on America's Seminal Naval Victory of World War II*. Barnsley, S. Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk), 2007. 384 pp., illustrations, maps, diagrams, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, glossary, index. UK £30.00, US \$ 60.00, cloth; ISBN: 9781844155835.

Much has been written about the battle for Midway Island which took place between 4 and 6 June 1942. It was the subject of several major Hollywood films, mostly with complete disregard for historical accuracy, and there have been two television specials in this century dealing with the battle. This work is the latest in what seems to be an ongoing fascination with the events of over sixty-five years ago.

Midway Island was critical to the plans of Admiral Yamamoto, the Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy's (IJN) Combined Fleet and the architect of the raid on Pearl Harbor. Midway was close enough to Hawaii to provide a base for attacks and for mounting an invasion of those islands, as well as others in the South Pacific, should such a scenario have later proven feasible to the Japanese. But Yamamoto also wanted to draw out the remaining US naval forces in the region and force a decisive battle. The IJN, flushed with the euphoria of their success in the first six months of the war, naturally assumed that the US Navy would be defeated in such a battle. A large invasion force, protected by four aircraft carriers of the IJN Mobile Force, together with their cruiser and destroyer screens, set sail for Midway.

The Americans were extremely well-informed about the plans of the IJN. Led by a small cell in the headquarters of Admiral Nimitz in Pearl Harbor, the USN had broken the IJN codes and knew of the imminent attack. Nimitz deployed his forces to counter the threat, and the battle began on the morning of 4 June, when carrier-borne aircraft from each side discovered the other at long range and attacked. Neither the Japanese nor the American ships saw each other and there were no ship-to-ship engagements, although submarines from both sides did make attacks. The only successful engagement was by a Japanese submarine on the by-then crippled USS *Hornet*.

Through a combination of luck, great skill and dogged determination, the Americans prevailed and sank all four of the IJN carriers with the loss of only one

of their own. Lacking the support of the carrier aircraft, the invasion force turned around and returned to its bases. It was a decisive victory for the Americans and it marked the turning of the tide of the war in the Pacific.

This book is the author's second on Midway. His earlier work was specifically commissioned and produced in 1977 to tell the true story of the battle in the face of the fiction posing as fact in the Hollywood movie *Midway*, which came out in Britain in that year. In this work, Peter C. Smith takes a fresh look at both the facts of the battle itself and the myths and controversies that have arisen over the years. He also makes the case that it was the USN dive bombers, the "*Dauntless*" in the title, which were the key to victory, and they have not been given appropriate credit for their role in the battle.

Using an enormous variety of sources, the author describes the origins of the planning of the raid by the IJN, the development of the intelligence picture by Nimitz' staff in Pearl Harbor (including the conflicts in interpretation of that intelligence between the staff and the Naval Intelligence bureaucracy in Washington), the battle itself and the aftermath. What is fascinating is the way in which Smith weaves his analysis and conclusions into the retelling of the historic events. He concentrates on how the men who actually did the fighting — the pilots and aircrew, as well as the commanders at sea saw the battle — by using survivor accounts and contemporary operational reports. The author interviewed a number of surviving participants from both sides during his research.

Along the way, Peter Smith separates the reality from the myths, criticizes where criticism is warranted, sometimes in contradiction of accepted accounts of events, and provides very objective and astute observations of those events of more than 65 years ago. For example, the war was almost over before the well-publicised claim by the US Army Air Corps that their B-17 and B-24 bombers had been responsible for the victory at Midway was challenged by the USN. He also shows how even operational reports have been manipulated to foster particular agendas or to embellish or tarnish reputations. It is a fascinating read.

The book is well illustrated with a good selection of photographs including some previously unpublished. There are good maps but in places they are hard to decipher. Also included are damage diagrams showing the extent and effects of the hits on the ships that were sunk.

Regrettably, the author is not well served by the layout chosen by the publisher. It detracts from the cohesiveness of the text. Some of this is because the author uses footnotes and he has provided extensive biographical/service record sketches of the participants he names. These would have been better placed in an appendix. It is exacerbated by the choice of type size in which the main text is barely larger than the footnotes. In the early chapters there are several instances where much of the page is taken up by footnotes, such as page 27, where there are only six lines of text and the rest is footnotes. There are also a lot of typos which could have been detected by more diligent proof reading and editing. Most

of them are of the "Spell Check" type – right spelling, wrong word in context, such as "where" for "were" (p.176), "thee" for "three" (p.177) and "changing" for "charging" (p.335).

These minor irritants aside, *Dauntless Victory* is a major contribution to maritime history and one which is likely to add to the controversy over Midway since I am sure that not all devotees of the battle, especially those who inhabit the internet sites devoted to Midway, will agree with the author's assessments.

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David A. Taylor, *Boat Building in Winterton, Trinity Bay, Newfoundland*. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Cultural Studies Paper 80, www.civilization.ca, 2006, xxi + 164 pp., photographs, illustrations, map, notes, appendices, bibliography, CDN \$ 29.95, paper; ISBN 0-660-19599-2.

I collected this book a quarter of a century ago in its first edition because I thought it was an extremely thorough and well written study of a unique boat building micro-culture. At the same time it was also a useful manual in the art of conducting this type of field research in social and material history. Upon reading the second edition I haven't changed my mind.

In 1980, Taylor's research report was submitted as his Master's thesis for an Arts degree in Folklore at Memorial University. It was published in 1982 by what was then known as The National

Museum of Man. The museum's name has changed and, while the book is republished in almost the same large overall format, it also has changed. By resizing and combining the photographs, collecting footnotes into endnotes, and using a more compact, though clean and clearer typeface, they have produced a more attractive volume in 164 pages instead of the original 270! Incidentally, the first edition was free; values have also changed.

Taylor set out to document all aspects of traditional wooden boat building in one small community and went about it with youthful but dedicated American enthusiasm. He brought his Maine boat-building research experience to Newfoundland, expanded upon it and succeeded admirably. He arrived at Winterton at the opportune moment, as small, wooden workboat building was approaching a finite craft, time was running out, and all but one of the eight local boat-builders were over 60. All of them cooperated with him, perhaps capturing some of his enthusiasm, and perhaps appreciating the contribution they were making to the provincial folk-life archive. Whatever the reasons, Taylor examined not only the construction of the various types of boats but also the life and history of the community and the end-use of the boats.

He described the design process, the transference to the building shop, then the methods, tools and materials used. But he also described the influence and historical traditions behind the boats, and how and why they developed and changed. While Taylor's boat-building techno-naivety is apparent, his lack of experience proved to be an asset. He

worked all the harder to ferret out and understand the smallest details, construction idiosyncrasies and traditional techniques. Then he clearly presented these minutiae of information accumulated by his keen curiosity. He also detailed the variations between the builders or in their procedures.

He explored the historic designs which led to the boats then in use, though here he had less success. There has been little work on the roots and development of the traditional wooden small craft of Newfoundland, before or after Taylor's study. Many worthwhile and less worthwhile volumes have described the regional cod and its disappearance; but few words seem to have been left over for the tools used to capture the cod and their parallel decline. That decline was partially fostered by the reduction in fish but also by the arrival and almost universal adoption of glass-reinforced plastic as a boat-building material.

David A. Taylor deserves the recognition awarded Edwin T. Adney, H. I. Chapelle, Eric McKee, Christian Nielsen, David Zimmerly and other ethnologists who have researched and recorded indigenous small craft. His work was more geographically restricted though perhaps a more comprehensive and focused examination, but was no less significant for the imposed limitations.

The photographs are clear and well chosen to enhance the author's text; and the unattributed isometric sketches expand his ideas beyond the written word. The large scale fold-out lines plans at the back of the book by J. Rodger Pearson are examples of what should be the norm in this type of book. And the glossary was a delightful insight into the uniquely

picturesque yet descriptive terms Newfoundland boat builders used. Unfortunately, with the disappearance of the wooden boat, these words, like the cod, will disappear. What better word than *Dell* to describe the narrow area inside a boat at the keel, where the bilge water collects.

The second edition might have been more useful if an editor had examined and commented on the state of boat building in Winterton today and noted the changes which have taken place since Taylor's interviews in 1978/9. Has the fishery completely disappeared and been replaced by tourism? Has the Winterton Boat Building Museum succeeded, and is it a true medium of materiel culture transference? The answers to these and other questions would have made this second edition more valuable, but perhaps this criticism should only be made by those who were privileged to read the first edition. It is good that the museum has reissued this book, making all the valuable information once more available to inspire a new generation with the complexities of Newfoundland's wooden boats in their cultural context.

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Stig Tenold. *Tankers in Trouble: Norwegian Shipping and the Crisis of the 1970s and 1980s*. "Research in Maritime History," No. 32; St. John's, NF: International Maritime Economic History Association, 2006. x + 257 pp., tables, figures, bibliography. US \$ 25.00 (free to members of the IMEHA), paper; ISBN 0-9738934-2-7.

Stig Tenhold has written an authoritative study of the 1970s tanker crisis and its effects on Norwegian shipowners. *Tankers in Trouble* uses a multi-layered structure to analyze how the collapse in the worldwide tanker market led to a depression in global shipping, and in particular, how the Norwegian-registered tanker sector was all but destroyed. The author proceeds progressively in three parts from an examination of pre-1973 international shipping markets to the Norwegian shipping registry and finally, to an all-too-brief review of the strategies of four Norwegian tanker owners.

Chapter one lays out the structure and argument in a straightforward fashion. Shipping as a servant of post-war economic expansion had grown in concert with increased world trade through to the early 1970s. While this progress was not uninterrupted by downturns in the business cycle, the general trend was upward. Shipowners had made profits and continued to expect more. The author argues that Norwegian owners followed these general tendencies but they did so within a particular national pattern.

What Norwegian shipowners did do to a greater extent than competitors in the other traditional maritime nations was

to invest in large, fast, turbine-powered tankers. The increasing demand fuelled by steady oil prices led to the building of larger and larger vessels, most of which were tied to the time charter market. In the beginning, the vessels were built only to meet signed charters. As time went on, however, factors outside the seemingly simple supply and demand equation began to intrude on shipowners' calculations. Western European governments' concerns for continued viability of national shipbuilding industries led to financial incentives to build vessels. The availability of such incentives, as accelerated depreciation and direct investment grants, positively encouraged shipowners to acquire new tonnage whether or not they needed it. When this type of stimulation was added to the booming tanker market of the early 1970s, risk itself appears to have disappeared from the shipowners' calculations. While the business cycle had not been abolished, the profitability of the good times indicated to shipowners that the growth in demand would continue uninterrupted. Thus, when the 1973 oil crisis with its jump in prices destroyed the predictability of the demand equation, Norwegian shipowners were unprepared for the resulting collapse of the tanker market.

Tenhold argues that Norwegian tanker operators had become victims of their own success. Prosperity had lulled them into thinking entirely within a market box that did not extend beyond the West's never-ending demand for oil and their own tax planning. The OPEC decision to raise oil prices could not have come at a worse time for the tanker market. Not only was there a record

tonnage of vessels on order, but some Norwegian firms had ordered vessels in anticipation of future charters. One owner, Hilmar Reksten, had ordered four 420,000 deadweight Ultra Large Crude Carriers (ULCC) just before the market collapsed. He did so without long term charter cover! These steam-turbine-driven ULCCs were ordered, not as a mad gamble, but as part of a rational economic equation that included: government incentives, access to relatively easy financing, and a view of future prospects based on past outcomes.

OPEC price hikes helped usher in a period of global stagnation that put an end to the post-war economic boom. World shipping markets fared poorly with Norwegian tanker owners having a particularly difficult time trying to come to terms with the new reality. In Chapter Eight, Tenhold traces the fates of four different tanker owners, only two of which will be considered here, Sig. Bergesen d.y., and Hilmar Rekstens Rederi. These mini-histories demonstrate that Norwegian corporate reaction to the shipping crisis was far from monolithic. An individual firm's behaviour depended upon such variables as fleet size and structure, tonnage on order, percentage of tonnage tied to long term charters, and the firm's risk profile.

The most spectacular fall from grace came with the collapse of Rekstens. Hilmar Reksten was known as a buccaneer for his seemingly unending series of winning bets on the future of the tanker sector throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. As the author admits, analysing Rekstens shipping business is complicated by the fact that he allegedly held substantial maritime assets outside of

Norway. His management strategy, however, was to bank on continued expansion of global demand for crude oil. Arranging charter contracts in advance of new buildings was treated as an old-fashioned risk-averse strategy that would only reduce profits. Before 1973, Reksten's aggressiveness appeared to pay off. He kept building the largest and most efficient tankers which he used in the spot market. When the demand for large fast vessels came crashing down in the fall of 1973, Rekstens was stuck, not only with unemployed ships but also with a host of ULCCs on order. With the virtual disappearance of the spot market, the tonnage on order became less employable than the company's existing vessels. By 1975, Rekstens was bankrupt with the Norwegian government and the company's bankers left to restructure the old firm.

If Hilmar Reksten represented the wild west of Norwegian ship ownership, then Bergesen was the solid, stuffy, conservative alternative. In 1970, Bergesen was Norway's largest shipowner with 2.2 million dwt which had expanded to 2.8 million by 1973, with an additional eleven tankers and one 223,000 dwt combination oil/ore carrier on order. Looking solely at order books, the firm appeared to be vulnerable to any downturn in the market. But Bergesen's strategy of having negotiated charters before ordering new vessels protected it from the worst of the collapse. By foregoing the spot market prior to 1973, the firm had passed on potential profits, but in the long run this risk-adverse behaviour paid off.

*Tankers in Trouble* is a valuable addition to our understanding of shipping

markets in the last third of the twentieth century. The author has shown that he has a command of both economic theory and the specifics of the Norwegian shipping sector. *Tankers in Trouble* deserves to be read by everyone interested in the political economy of post-war shipping.

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Geoffrey Till (ed.). *The Development of British Naval Thinking. Essays in Memory of Bryan Ranft*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, www.routledge.com, Cass Series, Naval Policy and History, 2006. xvi + 214 pp., notes, bibliography, index. US \$ 49.95, paper; ISBN 978-0-7146-8276-4.

It has often been remarked that while the Royal Navy made the British Empire possible, especially during the long, golden years of *Pax Britannica*, it is a frustrating thing to seek the principles of strategic thought underpinning the process. Of course, we know how many ships of each type were built, which provides a clue to the types of service expected, whether battle or cruising; we know where the ships were stationed; we understand their weaponry. What we seek in vain is a coherent statement of naval strategy from the brains of the Royal Navy itself. In what is, perhaps, an apocryphal story, Admiral Jackie Fisher was asked in pre-1914 days, "What were the RN's plans against Germany in the event of war?" He is said to have responded by tapping his forehead and saying, "They're up here." This implied,

of course, that there was no accepted strategic doctrine for the RN as we understand the term, but that experienced officers were expected to just do the right thing as they had always done. Like the “English Constitution,” the RN’s strategic doctrine was unwritten. This collection of nine essays attempts to illuminate strategic thinking by examining select events and personalities from the eighteenth century to the present.

Geoffrey Till’s masterful introduction places the whole issue in historical context, or rather “contexts,” as the nature of Britain’s naval power altered from one generation to the next. There does seem to have been a stable belief of the need for strong naval forces on the part of a succession of senior politicians: Britain was an island dependent on sea lanes for food and survival, let alone prosperity, so financial support was denied rarely. Yet, where was the doctrine? Towards the end of the nineteenth century, concerned observers came to fear that the gentlemen officers of the RN were brave and excellent sailors, but quite lacking in any knowledge of military or naval history and the strategic insights such studies might provide.

Nicholas Rodger explains that the notion of strategy as we understand it was foreign to the eighteenth century RN. There were few books touching on the subject, and no formal officer training schools, so aspiring officers read what they could, but mostly kept their eyes and ears open to pick up practical knowledge. Masterstrokes such as the establishment of the Western Squadron might occur, but they were never explained in writing. The extensive expansion of Plymouth Dockyard might be the best concrete

manifestation of the policy. In effect, eighteenth century officers were supposed to “just know” what to do.

Andrew Lambert contributes an article on how some strategic thinking did develop up to 1914. At first, the practices of the eighteenth century continued, whereby aspiring officers observed their superiors and learned the practicalities of seamanship. Further examples were to hand in the recent glorious war, so that “officer training,” or “staff work,” as we understand it, was unknown. Moreover, after the brief Crimean War there was no realistic expectation of a major naval war to require much deep thought or study of past lessons. Further, it was widely accepted that the adoption of steam power made the experiences of the sailing navy obsolete. John Knox Laughton began the move towards educating officers in naval history in the 1870s at Greenwich, and was a founder of the Navy Records Society designed to increase general awareness of naval history. Yet he met with spotty success, and the disappointments of the First World War were illustrative of the problem: technical competence alone was no substitute for a balanced historical/strategic overview, and few RN officers had the whole package.

Geoffrey Till examines a raft of individuals who published widely on naval issues before the First World War such as Colomb, Corbett, Callwell, Clowes and Custance. Corbett’s pre-eminent role in promoting historical education for officers is emphasized, whereby officers were encouraged to think of the implications of offence and defence, protection of routes or ships, and command of the sea or decisive battle. It

seems the latter two were usually confused by most officers. Andrew Gordon examines the breathtakingly radical views of Jackie Fisher and illustrates how they are even more breathtaking when juxtaposed to the uninspired values of his traditional colleagues.

Geoffrey Till again points out more intellectual activity in the interwar years, after the disappointments of 1914-18. Admiral Richmond led the debate on the future of the battleship, and finished as holder of the Chair of Naval History at Cambridge, in itself a timely recognition of the need for serious academic study of the subject. The experiences of the Second World War are touched on by Jack Gardner with a view to the balanced theories of Roskill and Gretton who continued to play down the significance of traditional big battles which still seemed to mesmerize the officer corps. The uncertain situation in the nuclear age is handled by Richard Hill, while Eric Grove wraps up the collection with a treatment of British thinking at the end of the twentieth; as Britain moves closer to Europe, there is ongoing debate on the role of the RN. The mere fact of such a debate occurring is a strong indication that future historians will not lack for concrete statements of doctrine as do those of the eighteenth century.

This is a very solid collection of essays by established scholars on an important topic. The research is extensive and the topic is one that serious students of the Royal Navy cannot ignore.

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Nicholas Tracy. *Who's Who in Nelson's Navy. 200 Naval Heroes*. London: Chatham Publishing, www.chathampublishing.com, 2006. 384 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. CDN \$56.95, cloth; ISBN 1-86176-244-5. (Distributed in Canada by Vanwell Publishing Ltd.)

The blurb on the back cover touted it as "The only modern bibliographical dictionary of the Royal Navy in the Nelson Era" and "... much more than a reference book." *Who's Who in Nelson's Navy* includes bibliographical entries for 200 naval personnel, focusing on the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, the era of Admiral Viscount Horatio Nelson, 1765-1805.

This book is one of dozens of publications commemorating the two hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson on 21 October 1805. British naval and maritime organizations and others sponsored hundreds of events, activities, re-enactments and publications spread over the "Nelson Decade," 1995-2005, corresponding to the period of Nelson's great victories, notably Cape St. Vincent (1797), the Nile (1798), Copenhagen (1801), and Trafalgar (1805). One indication of the success of these endeavours was confirmed by a fully-booked day-long conference, "The Nelson Legacy," 29 September 2007, at the Royal Naval Museum, and plans for another one in 2009.

Biographical dictionaries are enjoying a revival, although *Who's Who* has published annually since 1848. John Knox Laughton, 1830-1915, personally wrote 926 entries on "naval worthies" for

the *Dictionary of National Biography* (1885-1900). Most important, recently, has been the sixty-volume Oxford *Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), available in published form and online, containing 55,000 entries. Of course, one must be dead to be eligible for an entry in these dictionaries of national biography. The work under review is not, as claimed, "the only modern" such dictionary. See Colin White, ed., *The Trafalgar Captains: Their Lives and Memorials* (2005), sponsored by the 1805 Club, and containing thirty-eight entries.

The format of *Who's Who in Nelson's Navy* features an introduction and explanation of naval ranks, 23 chapters, each an alphabetical letter with none for Q, X, and Z, one page (p.375) listing sources and bibliographical references, and an Index of Persons. (pp. 376-384) Unfortunately, it lacks a subject index.

Each of the 200 entries is identical in format: the last name in capital letters, the full name with final rank, followed in most entries by aristocratic status, e.g., Baronet, Baron, Viscount, Earl, and various initials, e.g., KB, GCB, KCB, describing special honours.

There then follow several paragraphs: a brief description of why each man is prominent and what he is known for; date and place of birth, family, early career, e.g., assignment to first ship; much detail on each ship in turn, with the number of guns in parenthesis, and frequently, the ship's captain; more details on the immediate family, marriage, wife, children, and various naval relationships, and every entry concluded with a table, containing exact dates of attaining rank:

"Lt., M-C (Master and Commander), Capt., R-Adm., V-Adm., Adm."

Nicholas Tracy, a professor in the Department of History, University of New Brunswick, is a prolific writer and editor on British and Canadian naval history. Beginning in the late 1960s, his articles have appeared in the most prominent periodicals. He edited the five-volume abridgement of that fabulous, unique source, *The Naval Chronicle* (1998-1999). The original was forty volumes, two per year, covering items of interest to all officers of the Royal Navy, 1799-1818, a total of about 20,000 pages. Other works by Tracy include *Age of Sail*, 2 vols. (2002-2004), *Nelson's Battles* (1996), *Canadian Naval Strategy* (1995), and two volumes for the Navy Records Society (1997 and 2005).

No doubt, the 200 entries cover the most important naval operational personnel of the period. Five pages are devoted to Nelson, four to Cuthbert Collingwood, etc. Both of Jane Austen's brothers appear, one an Admiral of the Fleet, and the other a rear admiral. Nelson's Band of Brothers is there, e.g. Edward Berry, Thomas Hardy, Thomas Troubridge, and even William Bligh, who was praised as a navigator but condemned for continuous abusive language. There are two Brentons, including Edward, the naval historian. Inevitably, Thomas Cochrane, Edward Pellew, Sidney Smith, Richard Howe, Robert Calder, Lords Bridport and Keith, and Earl St. Vincent are included. Then there is Lieutenant (later Captain) John Lapenotierre of HMS *Pickle*, who delivered the Trafalgar dispatch to the Admiralty; Captain Peter Haywood, a mutineer aboard HMS *Bounty* (subsequently court-martialled,

retrieved, restored); Alexander Dalrymple, hydrographer and without naval rank; and four Parkers: Hyde (of Copenhagen infamy), Peter (but oddly, Captain, not the more famous admiral, chief mourner at Nelson's funeral), William and Richard. This latter choice is even more surprising than the omission of Admiral Peter Parker; Richard Parker, never an officer, was the leader of the mutiny at the Nore in 1797, subsequently executed. If Seaman Richard Parker, why not Lieutenant Fletcher Christian, actually, illegally acting captain of HMS *Bounty*, who was twice mentioned but had no entry?

Nicholas Tracy has produced a good, error-free, biographical dictionary. It is especially timely. It clearly demonstrated what others have observed about the Royal Navy, the early American Navy, and, no doubt, others of the period. There was a complex web of personal and service relationships, including naval families and naval dynasties. Connections, patronage, influence, "interests," and relations prevailed.

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George Victor. *The Pearl Harbor Myth - Rethinking the Unthinkable*. Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, www.potomacbooksinc.com, 2007. Ix + 355 pp., illustrations, map, notes, references, index. US \$ 22.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-5979-042-6.

"Surely not another book about Pearl Harbor?" was the phrase that immediately sprang to mind on seeing this book. The attack, President

Roosevelt's "day that will live in infamy," when the Imperial Japanese Navy launched a surprise attack on the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, is well known to many people. Few events in the history of the USA have generated as much controversy. That people still argue about this attack shows the depth of feeling that has grown up about it. But why do we need another book?

In examining where this book stands in relation to existing literature, it is important to be aware of revisionist history since the verdict of the Roberts Commission in 1941. Both Admiral Kimmel (the commander-in-chief Pacific Fleet) and Lieutenant General Short (the Army and Army Air Corps commander) fought long campaigns to clear their names after being forced into retirement by its verdict. The initial war-time view was that this was a cowardly sneak attack on a nation at peace and in the middle of negotiations. In many respects, the commission had been a hasty affair, but America found itself at war and needed a clear-cut decision on who was responsible. While it was possible to replace the immediate commanders in wartime (and the replacement of Kimmel with Chester Nimitz proved to be a masterstroke), the replacement of the president, his ministers and the Chiefs of Staff was less likely, especially in the dark days of early 1942, when the allies faced one problem after another and not just in the Far East. Clearly, the commission did what it set out to do, which was to find someone to blame. Attempts by Kimmel and Short to clear their names started soon after they were coerced into retirement and grew with the report of the Joint Congressional

Committee in 1945-46. Short died in 1949 and Kimmel in 1968, but the campaign was kept alive by their relatives and friends. Revisionism culminated in the Dorn Report in 1995, which led to a vote 52:47 in the US Senate on 25 May 1999 clearing them of leaving Pearl Harbor vulnerable to attack. The Senate declared that they performed their duties “competently and professionally” and that American losses at Pearl Harbor were “not the result of dereliction of duty.”

Finally, the two originally guilty parties became innocent scapegoats. But if they were innocent, guilt had to rest elsewhere. Since 1999, there have been a number of volumes which lay the blame firmly in Washington and in particular, on President Roosevelt. They include Robert Stinnett’s *Day of Deceit* (2000) and Michael Gannon’s *Pearl Harbor Betrayed* (2002). These writers (among several others) contend that there was ample evidence of a plan to attack Pearl Harbor (e.g. the “Magic Decrypts” of diplomatic codes and the “bomb plot message”) and that local commanders should have been given this tactical information and not just vague strategic “war warnings.” But then, some writers called “foul,” and pointed out that Kimmel and Short also bore a measure of responsibility for the lack of reconnaissance and preparedness, and for failing to change the culture of Pearl Harbor as a relaxed and comfortable posting. From this the post-revisionist view has grown.

It is at this point in the controversy that George Victor’s book is pitched. Victor, a retired psychologist and author of psychological histories (e.g. of Hitler), has, therefore, approached the

topic from a different perspective from that of other authors. Unlike some, in questioning the evidence he avoids extremes of speculation. He is particularly concerned to expose what he sees as the myth that has grown up about Pearl Harbor and FDR’s involvement, to trace how this was established and developed, and also to examine the secrecy and cover up which are evident in the various hearings. But Victor also puts the escalating problem of what to do about Japan during the period 1937-41 in a context that has not been well researched before. This is FDR’s developing “Germany First” view, as well as the perceived need to tempt Japan away from attacking Soviet Russia as a means to keep the Russians in the war against Germany.

Victor also draws some unusual parallels between FDR’s actions and those of previous presidents, such as Polk (over Mexico), Lincoln (over Fort Sumter and the Civil War), McKinley (over the USS *Maine* incident at the start of the Spanish-American war), and Wilson (over the SS *Sussex* and US entry into the First World War). In all of these, he concludes that the presidents manipulated the situation. He might also have mentioned Johnson in Vietnam and Bush over Iraq in 2003. Perhaps we are becoming more critical of what we will allow the president to do, but Victor points out that FDR was not the first to manoeuvre in this way, or to cover up what Washington knew in order to achieve a vital war aim.

The book also contains some excellent appendices with very detailed notes, references and an index, together with maps and photographs.

The importance of this study lies not only in the new perspective Victor mentions concerning the need to keep Soviet Russia engaged in the war against Germany by policies that forced Japan to attack in SE Asia rather than Siberia, but also in suggesting a re-think on FDR's actions. Other writers, notably Stinnett, who used the very emotive "deceit" in his title, criticise the concealment but Victor's view is that this is sometimes necessary. For readers who came to the topic belonging to the sceptical school of thought regarding Washington's prior knowledge, it will provide an opportunity to reconsider their view. For the non-sceptics, it will provide an opportunity to see the events in a different context, though they may not sanction the "deceit."

It is a measure of this study that it has taken a non-naval historian to see the events in a different light.

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