

Book Reviews

Richard Barbuto. *New York's War of 1812. Politics, Society and Combat*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, www.uopress.com, 2021. 364 pp., illustrations, maps, table, notes, bibliography, index. US \$39.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-8061-6833-3. (E-book available.)

At different points in time, the War of 1812 theatre spanned the East and Gulf coasts of America, the West Indies, and stretched out into the Atlantic to the British Isles and into the Pacific. The one constant area of contact between the antagonists, from start to finish, was the northern boundary between the United States and the British area of Upper Canada. It was here that the United States hoped to gain a foothold for use as a bargaining chip to leverage their demands at the negotiation table. In that fight along the borderland, the state of New York figured most prominently. Richard Barbuto has written a book which details New York State's contribution to the war. It is a detailed account of the politics, mobilization efforts, and the battles in which the state participated and a welcome addition to the University of Oklahoma Press' "Campaigns and Commanders Series."

The overarching hero of Barbuto's book is New York Governor Daniel D. Tompkins, who leads in all areas (except on the field of battle), from pre-war preparations, to raising additional militia and regular army troops as needed,

to the construction of defences for the preservation of New York City from British attack, and through the celebration of the victorious heroes. Governor Tompkins rallied the war effort in the face of Federalist party resistance and his leadership played a significant part in whatever positive outcome arose from the conflict, at least for New York State.

From the outset of the war in June 1812, things did not go well for the Americans. Poor military leadership in the field, untrained or inexperienced troops (or both, especially among the militia) and little coherent strategy, left the war that was to be won simply by marching, carrying on for another two years. Within this story appear Solomon Van Rensselaer and Henry Dearborn who seem to fail at their tasks right on cue. Winfield Scott and Alexander Macomb make an early career appearance and show their promise. It is Peter Porter and Jacob Brown that are the shining lights in New York State during the war. They proved to be strong leaders, presenting far better trained troops to face the enemy in 1814 than the British confronted earlier in the war.

Barbuto's detailed analysis of the politics and the mobilization of forces stands out in this text. He describes in rich detail the governor's efforts to raise troops, to prepare the state for the war he backed, and his push past early defeats and setbacks. The author uses first-hand accounts of victory celebra-

tions and evacuation in defeat to describe the impact of war on the local inhabitants. Barbuto discusses America's Indigenous allies, discussing their relationship with the local American settlers, the negotiations to have them enter the war, and their eventual partial withdrawal from the fighting.

This book is really a micro-history of one state's response to the national call to arms and the execution of the war against the declared enemy. It focuses almost exclusively on New York State decisions, decision makers, local activity, involvement in battles, and the local actors recording the action. The author delineates the war at the state level for the reader, in compelling detail.

Unfortunately, this singular focus leaves the other important aspects of the war to a single line or two, sometimes a footnote, which tends to reduce significant shifts in the struggle to a marginal position. One example is the 1813 defeat of the British squadron on Lake Erie, which had powerful ramifications for the Niagara Peninsula, but receives five lines in the book, three of which repeat that Oliver Hazard Perry won the battle. Another is the American failure to press home the advantage of their 1813 victory on Lake Erie and the subsequent loss of four vessels on the upper lakes in 1814 (only two of four were mentioned). Indeed, the naval side of the war is reduced in the text. There is a description of Melancthon Woolsey and his early war efforts against the British. American Commodore Isaac Chauncey appears and is involved in the narrative throughout, primarily in his evolving relationship with the army during the war. But the naval aspect is less than might be expected, especially compared to the discussion of the militia and regular troop recruitment, deployment, training, and battle experience. Of course, the Governor of

New York had a hand in these areas and worked with the federal government to advance their development. The navy, on the other hand, was controlled by the federal government's Secretary of the Navy and, therefore, at arm's length from the state government. Thus, in this study of New York's response to war, the navy takes a backseat. Barbuto also briefly mentions privateering, describing the risk of such ventures and the rich rewards. Yet, America's privateers did not destroy, or even really make a dent in British trade, though their attacks did raise insurance costs.

New York's British opponents receive scant attention and the various British responses to American efforts are limited to the basics. This is most clearly apparent in Barbuto's description of the Battle of Plattsburgh and its simultaneous naval engagement (the Battle of Lake Champlain). He details the American army preparations and response but gives the British side no more than a once-over. The overall result is that the other side in this book takes on a ghost-like or shadowy quality.

Peter Rindlisbacher's sterling representation of the opening salvos of the Battle of Lake Champlain graces the book's cover and is one of ten images within. The book depicts only the American participants in events, mainly New Yorkers, while representing none of the British opposition, or even their Indigenous allies. The six maps are clear, instructive, and well-placed. The single table on the comparative losses at the Battle of Lundy's Lane seems somewhat unnecessary, as the information could be easily contained within the text, as it is with similar comparisons elsewhere in the book. The bibliography is extensive and, coupled with the endnotes, would allow any researcher to locate the exact sources that support

this solid work.

Keeping in mind that Barbuto set out to have a razor-sharp focus on New York State's role in the War of 1812, this is a book that readers interested in the War of 1812, the raising of militia, the early development of the American army, and state involvement in the making of war should find well worth reading.

Thomas Malcomson
Toronto, Ontario

Quintin Barry. *Crisis at the Chesapeake: The Royal Navy and the Struggle for America 1775-1783*. Warwick, UK: Helion Books, www.helion.co.uk, 2021. 264 pp., illustrations, maps, ship list, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, US \$45.38, paper; ISBN 978-1-91333-653-0.

“There was in the end no way in which the Americans could have ultimately been denied their independence; but the war that was fought to achieve it was substantially a naval war, and it was at sea that it would be decided.” That statement in the introduction sets the theme for this work. What follows broadens most people's visions of the American Revolution by placing it in the context of a world war. It achieves this by illustrating the role of navies in the war and how combat in other theatres affected the Revolution and was affected by it.

The tale begins with a recognition that Britain's Royal Navy, which had been shaped by two centuries of successful European war – largely against the Spanish, Dutch and French – in home waters, was ill-suited for its role in the American Revolution. Its fleet of mostly ships of the line were ill suited to transporting men and supplies across the Atlantic and intercepting small enemy smugglers, but the Royal Navy's

tasks were broader than that. With the entry of France and Spain into the war, Britain was challenged in four theatres: home waters; North America; the West Indies; and Gibraltar. Competing demands on resources would play roles in the course of battle and its outcome.

This work brings the glorious victories of Minutemen, John Paul Jones (who is not even mentioned in this tome), and George Washington down a notch or two. Speaking of 1778, the author opines, “In many ways the West Indies now ranked as the most important overseas theatre. It was widely believed that they were crucial to the British economy and commerce, while the French islands represented a target of considerable importance. Their loss would be a damaging blow to France, and the King was willing, in order to avenge ‘the faithless and insolent conduct of France’ to come to terms with the colonists if it enabled the conquest of the French islands” (49). Jumping ahead to the end, the terms on which peace was agreed were broad indeed. The United States received independence, true, along with the chance to come crawling back to Mother England, but other territorial interests were also resolved. Spain relinquished its claim to Gibraltar, retained Minorca and West Florida (which it had captured from the British), and gained East Florida, while returning the Bahamas to Britain. The Dutch regained Ceylon and kept the Cape of Good Hope, but lost Negapatam (southern India) to the British and conceded them trading rights with the Spice Islands. France weakened Britain through the loss of her American colonies, as well as recovering St. Lucia, Saint-Pierre and Miquelon (and extended their fishing rights there), and possessions in India, along with retaining Tobago that it had taken during the war.

After an overview of the American

War, the following chapters focus on individuals and battles that played key roles in the war in America and the West Indies. Although the subtitle highlights the Royal Navy, there are also chapters devoted to Comte d'Estaing and Comte de Grasse of the French Navy. Nor did all of the battles occur on American soil or in its waters, as chapters entitled "Martinique" and "St. Eustatius" illustrate. Throughout, Barry skillfully interweaves the stories of the naval forces with those of the land battles. For example, early in the war, Britain punished American blockade breaches by staging a naval raid on the town of Falmouth. He also shows how the arrival of British and French fleets from the West Indies decided the question of whether American offensives should be directed toward New York or the southern colonies and how French superiority in the Chesapeake prevented reinforcement of Cornwallis' army, thereby forcing its surrender.

Although I greatly enjoyed this book, I am always suspicious when I can identify an error. The portrait that is identified as that of John Byron Cooper (53) is repeated as that of Sir Thomas Graves on page 95. Hopefully this is an isolated mistake and not an obvious example of a pattern.

Though a fairly short book, it is one to be read slowly for understanding. This volume greatly enhanced my understanding of the American Revolution. Quintin Barry has placed the movements of armies and roles of navies into a sequence that explains their relationships to each other, rather than as merely disjointed rockets bursting in air that culminate in the surrender at Yorktown and the end of the war. For Americans, it presents an opportunity to see the other side. For Loyalists or British sympathizers, it presents examples of where their champions, both generals

and admirals in the New World and politicians in the Old, made their errors and why. The bibliography is a guide to further reading, both in popular and specialist genres. The index is also helpful.

I recommend *Crisis At The Chesapeake* to anyone interested in the American Revolution, the Royal Navy of the late eighteenth century, or the interplay between the Revolution and other concurrent theatres of combat.

James M. Gallen
St. Louis, Missouri

Andrew Boyd. *British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, www.seaforthpublishing.com, 2020. xxiv+776pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography. UK £35.00, US \$ 52.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-52673-8. (E-book available.)

The adjectives "comprehensive" and "definitive" come to mind after reading *British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century*. After tracing the Victorian origins of modern British naval intelligence, it describes its role in four successive periods of the twentieth century, each of which presented unique challenges: the Great War, the interwar period, the Second World War, and the Cold War up to the end of the Soviet Union. This book is *comprehensive* because it describes a wide range of intelligence gathering and analyses and puts them in context, and *definitive* because it shows where and how naval intelligence was used. The author's narrative style is clear, logical, and authoritative. This study is reminiscent of the abridged 1993 version of F.H. Hinsley's *British Intelligence in the Second World* in that it is not an inclusive history of background events, but does provide a remarkably complete framework for the

role played by naval intelligence.

Andrew Boyd's *The Royal Navy in Eastern Waters: Linchpin of Victory 1935-1942* (2017), similarly a remarkably full book based on a wide range of sources, established the author's authority in dissecting complex aspects of modern naval history. Boyd was with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for 25 years after serving as an officer in RN submarines. Following his FCO time, he worked with a British multinational defence technology firm before completing his doctorate in history in 2015. It's tempting to conclude that his experience in working in bureaucracies and in the navy is behind his masterful ability to identify important developments in a broad field, to convincingly describe interactions inside government and between allied intelligence organizations, and to single out individuals who played key roles.

The beginnings of a coherent structure to gather and analyse intelligence were part of a push in the Admiralty in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to be better able to plan for possible wars. The dynamic Captain Tyron (later to order the disastrous *Victoria / Camperdown* collision) created the "Foreign Intelligence Committee" in 1882 when Naval Secretary. This temporary body evolved into a Naval Intelligence Department under Captain William Henry Hall (father of "Blinker" Hall of Great War-era fame), the first of three generations of Halls with outsized roles in British naval intelligence.

The key to operational success in war lay in understanding the enemy's intentions, ability, and means of fighting. This required an ability to gather information and to analyse and fuse it in a centre where operations would be planned and directed. Andrew Boyd has a lot to say about the flawed processing of signals intelligence in the early years

of the First World War. Eventually, in October 1917, Captain William James proposed reforms so that intelligence about German forces would be presented in a room where senior planners directed operations. This idea was implemented and constituted a significant step towards the Second World War Operations Intelligence Centre.

During the First World War, British naval intelligence rose to the challenges of exploiting information on a hitherto unprecedented scale. New organizations were created to manage economic warfare against the Central Powers and to exploit information available from intercepting enemy radio traffic. Boyd fully covers the contentious issues surrounding the processing of signals intelligence and its promulgation from the Admiralty during the Battle of Jutland. His deft description of how information was gathered and used to enforce the blockade of the Central Powers is typical of how he dissects a complex story.

In the 1930s, international tensions in the Mediterranean created fresh requirements for a filtered presentation of current operational intelligence in the Admiralty. In 1936, during the Spanish Civil War, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff William James (by now an admiral) pushed for the creation of a centre to compile a composite intelligence picture from multiple sources. This was the genesis of the Operational Intelligence Section (OIC) which Boyd describes "as important an intelligence innovation in Britain's coming naval War as Bletchley Park" (325). The narrative includes balanced discussions of intelligence failures, such as an underestimation of German successes in breaking British naval radio traffic before and during the Second World War, and in 1941, not focusing on photographic evidence that the Germans were constructing bomb-proof shelters for U-boats

and E-boats. Having said this, he does not include faulty intelligence prior to the Dieppe raid in 1942.

Boyd emphasizes the roles of various key individuals and provides engaging character sketches. Ian Fleming emerges as a substantial figure, an important initiator of various developments during the highly effective Admiral Godfrey's tenure as Director of Naval Intelligence. Godfrey had an abrasive side and was "curtly" dismissed after bureaucratic intrigues in late 1942. Boyd provides a balanced account of this episode but writes, "What was not reasonable was the sheer brutality of Pound's (the First Sea Lord) treatment" (517).

Almost a fifth of the book is devoted to the period between 1945 and 1989 where few individuals are singled out. Those in senior intelligence positions tended not to be in office as long as the giants "Blinker" Hall in the Great War and John Godfrey in the Second World War; published sources are also not as specific about key personalities in intelligence as they are for the years before 1945. There is also a shift in perspective as Boyd provides extensive coverage of strategic weapons systems development and the acquisition of Polaris missile technology from the US as context for intelligence issues. The capture of the Falklands in 1982 took the British government and intelligence community by surprise. The successful, long-range projection of naval power to recapture the islands was facilitated by intelligence assistance from France, the US, and Chile. "Looking Back on the Cold War," Boyd writes that good intelligence remained a force multiplier. He cites the importance of special intelligence collection by British submarines off the Soviet Union in gaining benefit for the UK from the US.

The text is supported by well-chosen photographs. Although there is no

bibliography, the endnotes provide full titles of documents and books cited. There is a useful list of acronyms and abbreviations. The narrative is a model of clarity thanks to the author's lucid writing style. With its authoritative tone, wealth of detail, wide scope, and engaging coverage of personalities and bureaucratic interactions, *British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century* is a monumental achievement. This outstanding book will surely become a benchmark study of the role of naval intelligence.

Jan Drent
Victoria, British Columbia

Vladimir Bogdanovich Bronevskiy (Trans. Darrin Boland). *Northern Tars in Southern Waters: The Russian Fleet in the Mediterranean, 1806-1810*. Warwick, UK: Helion & Company, www.helion.co.uk, 2019. xviii+662 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$59.99, paper; ISBN 978-1-912866-71-7.

In the early nineteenth century, the Napoleonic Wars continued seemingly unabated. The battles in Europe resonated throughout the entire continent. Mighty sea clashes had their names written in the ink of eternity – the Battle of the Nile at Aboukir in 1798 and the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Less well known is the role of the Imperial Russian Navy in this time.

Besides its struggles on the European mainland, the Russian Empire was in competition with the Ottoman Empire for control over the shores of the Caspian Sea. After the first Russo-Turkish War (1768-1774), the Russians gained power in Ukraine and reached well into the Ottoman Balkans. Their goal was control of the Dardanelles, the entry to the Mediterranean. Prior to the

French Wars, the Venetian Republic owned seven islands on the west coast of Greece. After the Treaty of Campo in 1797, the islands became French. A few years later the French forces made way for the Russian and Ottoman armies. The victors founded the Septinsular – the Ionian – Republic, under Russian control and suzerain to the Ottoman empire until 1807.

In 1805, Tsar Alexander I sent out a naval squadron of six ships to bolster the Russian forces that had previously defended the Ionian Republic. The fleet set sail from Kronstadt, near St. Petersburg in Russia, across the Baltic Sea to Copenhagen in Denmark, and then on to Portsmouth in the south of England. At Gibraltar on the southern tip of Spain, the squadron headed further east; to Cagliari on the island of Sardinia, and Messina on the eastern tip of Sicily. From there, it was a short voyage to Corfu in the Ionian archipelago.

France still remained somewhat of a challenge. It was the time of the War of the Third Coalition (1803-1806); the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Holy Roman Empire, Naples, and Sicily were up against France and its allies. Russia entered the fight against France in April 1805. The war ended in a French victory and the end of the Holy Roman Empire. Peace was not to last, however, as the Fourth Coalition War broke out (1806-1807). This time Prussia joined Great Britain, Sweden, Saxony, and Russia against France. This war also ended in a victory for Napoleon. In July 1807, France, Prussia, and Russia signed the Tilsit Peace Treaty, which would last until 1810. The agreement led to the return of the Ionian Islands to French hands.

In 1806 another war erupted between Russia and the Ottoman empire. In 1807, the squadron of the Imperial Russian Navy moved to blockade the

Dardanelles Strait at the Aegean Sea, cutting off Ottoman trade between the Mediterranean Sea and its capital Constantinople. In their failed attempt to break the Russian blockade, the Ottoman navy lost three battleships and suffered about 2,000 casualties. Russian losses amounted to less than 100 casualties. It was against this background of war-torn Europe that Vladimir Bronevskiy wrote his memoirs while serving on the Russian navy frigate *Venus*. He describes the actions of Russian Admiral Dmitriy Senyavin's squadron and the infantry at his disposal in the Adriatic and Aegean Seas between the years of 1805 and 1810.

This translation could have done with better proof-reading and editing. Another improvement would have been a map with the voyages, along with indicating the various countries and ports, etc. This work has 112 chapters, describing voyages, ports, islands, naval actions, the flow of winds, the different cultures, political and social ideas, and the customs Bronevskiy encountered, the day-to-day life at sea; in all, a sometimes mindboggling array of subjects. Nevertheless, *Northern Tars in Southern Waters* is a fascinating read.

Jacob Bart Hak
Leiden, Netherlands

Paul Brown. *Abandon Ship. The Real Story of the Sinkings in the Falklands War*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Books, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2021. 320 pp., illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. UK £20.00, US \$25.00, CDN \$34.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-4728-4643-3.

The Falklands War of 1982 was the first post-Second World War conflict fought between near peer defence forces in the missile age. Casualties on both sides

were high and the British task force commander Rear Admiral John ‘Sandy’ Woodward later stated it was “a lot closer run than many would care to believe.” Dr. Paul Brown has done an excellent job in describing just how close the British forces came to potential defeat in this war.

Abandon Ship does not cover the full details of the conflict but instead looks at the naval losses on both sides and particularly analyses the causes for the loss of several Royal Navy ships. Much of this analysis hinges on the release, under the British *Freedom of Information Act 2000*, of the transcripts of the Royal Navy post war Boards of Inquiry. These were held in late 1982 to ascertain what had gone wrong and why so many ships had been damaged or sunk. As these were conducted shortly after the conflict and the findings were not meant to ever become public, the details are at times raw and confronting. Poor command and leadership, flawed decision making, sub-standard training and poor equipment are often spelt out as major contributing factors to ships being sunk. Equally bravery, in dire circumstances, and outstanding leadership and skill at all rank levels were also singled out.

The sinking of the Argentine cruiser *General Belgrano* opens the narrative with poor tactics displayed by the cruisers commanding officer (failing to zig-zag in a war zone, poor use of her escorts and the cruisers sonar) which made the ship an easy target for the submarine HMS *Conqueror*. The fighting at sea, however, soon highlighted that the Argentine forces could fight well. While the Argentine surface fleet played a very minor part in the ensuing campaign the Argentine fleet air arm and air force soon proved they were well-trained and brave; consistently pressing home their attacks on British ships with skill

and determination. British losses would have been catastrophic if the Argentines had access to more Exocet missiles and if many of the bombs dropped had actually detonated.

Britain lost six ships in the battle for the Falklands (HM Ships *Sheffield*, *Ardent*, *Antelope*, and *Coventry*, the civilian transport *Atlantic Conveyor* and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary *Sir Galahad*). Several other ships were damaged, but, in the end, it was the British ability to get enough troops and logistical support ashore and prevent Argentine forces being resupplied that tipped the scales in their favour – but it was a close run thing.

The following are the salient points.

The Royal Navy was being reduced in size and capability due to 1981 British Government budget cuts and struggled to put its South Atlantic task force together; that they did speaks volumes of the skill and determination at all rank levels.

The ships in many cases were not ready to deploy due to a distinct lack of training and their materiel state was, in several cases, quite poor. British radar and weapons systems were plagued with various problems and, in some cases, were useless, especially the Sea-cat missile system and 4.5-inch guns in the anti-air role. Much of this was due to poor design rather than poor maintenance; although there were failures in keeping equipment well maintained in the South Atlantic.

Ship design was also a problem particularly with aluminum super-structures which burned more readily and with many ships built for “habitability and not survivability.” Some of the older ships that were deployed were of an all-steel construction, or well-designed, and survived serious damage.

Failures of command and leadership, at all rank levels, led to the loss of

some ships – especially *Sheffield* whose command team were lucky to escape a court martial due to their poor decisions prior to being attacked. Additionally, once other ships were damaged, degraded communications led to poor decision making – particularly in the case of *Ardent*, which might have been saved if the commanding officer had received sound advice (or sought out advice) regarding the ship's actual damage.

The fog of war and confusing higher-level orders placed other ships in difficult positions. Equally some ships were damaged but were still in an area where enemy attack was expected so were still trying to fight the ship while dealing with unexploded bombs on-board and many casualties. The Boards of Inquiry were conducted in quiet office spaces and well after the events. Many of the recommendations made regarding equipment and training were sound but they often failed to comprehend the time pressure that many command teams were under – where split second decisions made the difference between life and death or staying afloat or sinking. In other cases, such as the loss of *Atlantic Conveyor*, being in the wrong place at the wrong time and following orders played a major part in her loss.

Command and control at the staff level showed serious limitations due to the skill and stamina, or lack of it, amongst the various embarked headquarters staff. Poor decision making and lack of communication at the operational level had, in some cases, a disastrous flow on effect at the tactical level particularly at the landing of troops at Fitzroy from RFA *Sir Galahad*.

My only suggestion to improve this analysis would have been a little more on what kept other damaged ships afloat – what were the ship design and decision-making aspects that enabled their

survival vice that of their peers. It is easy to be critical, from our safe arm-chairs, of the failures of those in combat – but equally analysis of what went wrong, and why, should be investigated in order to try and prevent its repetition. Overall, an excellent book and one that should be read by all naval personnel, regardless of nationality or rank, as it provides well-described cases studies on modern war at sea.

Greg Swinden
Canberra, Australia

Barry Cahill. *Rebuilding Halifax. A History of the Halifax Relief Commission*. Halifax, NS: Formac Publishing, www.formac.ca, 2020. 224 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. CDN \$27.95, paper; ISBN: 978-1-45950-637-4. (E-book available.)

This study of disaster relief adds another book to the growing corpus of 1917 Halifax Explosion literature. Barry Cahill concentrates on the Halifax Relief Commission (HRC), a bureaucracy adopted to disburse the funds – some \$18 million from the federal government which amounted to two-thirds of the total donations available for the relief of the injured and dispossessed in Halifax-Dartmouth and the redevelopment of the “Devastated Area.” For the initial context, Cahill chooses the field of disaster studies. Then he moves on to envisage the long-lived HRC as both a forerunner and later an example of Canada's regulatory state.

The reader is left in no doubt about the objective of the analysis. It is not meant to explore the cause of the collision between the *Imo* and *Mont-Blanc*. That was beyond the purview of the HRC. It largely bypasses the initial rescue, relief, and restitution efforts of the volunteer-based Halifax Relief Com-

mittee. Although there is a chapter on Thomas Adams and city planning, the study does not aim to lionize Adams, the arrogant city planner in the employ of the federal government who designed a redevelopment scheme for Richmond, the pre-explosion name for Halifax's working-class north end above the Narrows. Instead, the focus is on the leadership of the Halifax Relief Commission, which was established under the War Measures Act of 1914. While preserving federal authority, that statutory underpinning was replaced near the end of the war by a Nova Scotian statute, the Halifax Relief Commission Incorporation Act (April 1918) which lasted until 1976 when the last survivor pensions, by then the one remaining responsibility of the HRC, were transferred for administration first to the Canadian Pension Commission and then, on its demise, to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Besides funding the pensions, the other issues which focused the HRC's attention throughout its long history were the rental and maintenance of the housing for homeless survivors that it built in Richmond Heights, soon known as the Hydrostone, and the fraught relationship the commissioners maintained with Halifax City Council, especially with respect to the exemption of the HRC from taxes, a bone of contention beginning in 1926. After the Second World War, the HRC decided to sell its properties, a move that was completed in 1954 and gave the city some of the tax base it had lost. Dissatisfied, the city of Halifax tried to go after the HRC's assets, and a running battle ensued for the rest of the HRC's existence.

Cahill aims to rescue the HRC from obscurity, but he is interested only in the executive staff (for most of the time, three commissioners and the comptroller), not the employees. How much the

bosses were paid we are not told, but they certainly held down other jobs at the same time. Maybe the autocratic, paternalistic, secretive bureaucracy was what was needed in unique circumstances which the municipal government was deemed incapable of handling.

The HRC officials – the key bureaucrats – were naturally men and, with one initial exception, local men. Cahill has little to say about the committees or departments that reported to the commissioners, which must have included a sprinkling of women because of their prominence among social workers, as well as the volunteers the HRC replaced with paid staff. The former included Jane Wisdom, a highly effective administrator, the latter the indomitable Agnes Dennis who headed a pre-commission clothing committee. International interest among women is illustrated by the concern shown by Dame Nellie Melba who not only toured the “Devastated Area,” but went on to sing in a fund-raising concert for the cause in Boston in 1919. Despite the impressive newspaper research by the author's research assistant, Cahill misidentifies the female journalist writing for the *Daily Echo* (90-91). She was Ella Maud Murray, an activist who had an intimate knowledge of the north end.

The unique nature of the HRC in Canadian bureaucratic history has Cahill looking for the motives that produced it. He identifies the principal consideration to be the need for “high public policy,” not much comfort to survivors who would have preferred “to work out their own salvation” (59) or a city government undermined for generations by a commission over which it had no control. The public policy was so “high” that the Parliament of Canada ensured that the HRC's accounts were audited only by Auditor General of Canada. Another more unsavoury motive was pa-

trouge opportunity for Halifax's Members of Parliament.

Not surprisingly, then, Cahill gives top research priority to the high-level documentation pertaining to the policies adopted to pull Halifax back from the dangerous brink of disaster. As a result, his exploration of the long-term recovery overseen by the HRC is an interesting companion piece to David Sutherland's *"We Harbor No Evil Design": Rehabilitation Efforts after the Halifax Explosion of 1917* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 2017), a lower-level examination of the interaction between HRC staff and a sampling of representative categories of rehabilitated and pensioned survivors.

Judith Fingard
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Richard Camp. *Three War Marine Hero: General Raymond G. Davis*. Oxford, UK: Casemate Publishers, www.casematepublishers.com, 2020. viii+231 pp., illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. UK £27.50, US \$34.95, cloth; ISBN-978-1-61200-939-1.

In *Three War Marine Hero*, Richard Camp examines the life and career of General Raymond G. Davis, with particular emphasis on the general's role in the Second World War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Briefly mentioned are the family-related events that occurred between the wars.

Beginning with the Davis' enlistment in the United States Marine Corps, the author follows his career from Guadalcanal and the Pacific campaign, through Korea and Vietnam. While the broad nature of the work does not allow for a detailed exploration of every battle and fire-fight, by choosing specific events from all three wars, Camp gives the reader a glimpse into the unique chal-

lenges of each conflict and the changing roles of an officer as Davis advances in rank. Though useful, a knowledge of the conflicts and battles discussed is not essential to understanding or enjoying this particular book. Students of military history will find this book interesting because of the different perspective that it provides. Unlike personal memoirs by a soldier who is on the ground doing the shooting, but with little idea of the bigger picture, this book approaches the situations discussed from a different perspective. Being an officer, Davis is required to both execute the orders given to him, and make sure that those under him follow his orders. As a result, he has a better grasp of what is going on around him. Nevertheless, like the soldier on the line, he still has to deal with the fact that he does not know everything. Camp's examination of this issue allows the reader to reflect on how the lack of information affects those soldiers giving the orders, as well as those following them.

A recurring theme throughout the book is the fact that military commanders have little control over what's going on around them. Whether it involves mobilizing to go to war, or the fact that rations and bullets are in short supply, soldiers on the ground often have to approach the situation with what they have, rather than what they wish they had. This is particularly evident when discussing the chaos of mobilization. Military commanders can seldom pick when, or where they will go to war or into battle. By selecting specific battles from each war, Camp allows the reader to see the unique challenges of each conflict. His choice of specific engagements also allows the reader to experience events in greater detail than might otherwise be possible in a book covering three wars.

Well sourced, Camp's use of in-

interviews, published documents, and Davis' own recollections provides for both a general and personal discussion of events. This book is a good starting point for a reader who wants to explore these conflicts without becoming overly bogged down in the politics surrounding events. The author's use of published accounts of the wars and individual battles discussed, enables the casual reader to explore various subjects in greater depth at leisure. Furthermore, Camp's extensive use of personal papers, interviews, and oral histories provides those who want it with a way to locate original documents and recollections of the people who were actually involved in the events, allowing them to do their own research and draw independent conclusions.

If this book has a shortcoming, it may be in the discussion of Davis' life and career outside of the warzone. Of the 36 chapters and epilogue, only six discuss in any depth his family and time outside the Marine Corps and away from the battlefield. Students of military history might not mind this, but readers wishing to examine the impact of a military career spent at war, on family life, may find this less satisfactory. Davis' wife and children are just mentioned in passing, or in the context of moving to a new assignment or heading off to another war.

Richard Camp provides us with a well-researched account of the career of General Raymond Davis, from beginning to end, across three wars. His book is well researched, and accessible to both serious students of military history, as well as those exploring these events for the first time. He also provides readers with the tools to explore the people, places, and events discussed in greater depth. While somewhat lacking in the personal exploration of the effects of a career in military service on

the family, *Three War Marine Hero* superbly illustrates the changing roles and responsibilities of a Marine Corps officer over the course of his career.

Michael Razer
Ward, Arkansas

Hugues Canuel. *The Fall and Rise of French Sea Power: France's Quest for an Independent Naval Policy, 1940–1963*. Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2021. xiv+344 pp., illustrations, map, tables. US \$54.95, UK £49.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-6824-7616-1.

This rather unique volume is another welcome contribution to the already-published books in the excellent series from the United States Naval Institute Press entitled Studies in Naval History and Sea Power. Historian Hugues Canuel has not written a traditional naval history of the years from 1940–1963; instead, he examines French naval thinking and strategy – and its leading personalities – against the backdrop of the enormous historic challenges to French naval power in the mid-twentieth century. The book opens with the crushing defeat of France in the Second World War and the collapse of its naval power worldwide. The book concludes with the remarkable build-back of the French navy and the nation's return to the ranks of the world's naval powers.

With the German military victory in France in 1940, the French navy (*Marine nationale*) was divided between the officially neutral Vichy regime and Charles de Gaulle's Free French forces exiled in London. The author examines in great detail the conflicts and events of this French naval civil war, as well as the challenges France faced in its relationships with the United States

and Great Britain. The Allies, especially the United States, were forced to walk a difficult line between the rival French loyalties before the D-Day invasion in June 1944 and the subsequent collapse of the Vichy government just two months later. The author contends that the Free French forces under de Gaulle spent more time and energy on politics than it did on military matters, frustrating the Allies, who wished de Gaulle would focus more on a military win against the Germans. Canuel notes that De Gaulle's haughty manners and self-aggrandizement did little to build relationships, while trust was further eroded by Allied concerns about security links among the Free French forces.

The Fall and Rise of French Sea Power gives extensive coverage to the conflicts in the French colonial empire between the Vichy forces and the Free French supporters. With the Allies landing troops in French North Africa in November 1942 as part of Operation Torch, North Africa became the locus of the conflict – and the site of the last armed naval clashes between the US and Vichy forces. Marshal Henri-Philippe Pétain and the Vichy regime he headed were rapidly moving toward a pro-German position, but Vichy France did not survive the war.

Though France was on the victorious side with the German surrender in 1945, its naval power lay in ruins, and its hold on its colonies severely diminished. French military strategists warily eyed a powerful, Cold War Soviet Union, which had defeated the Germans and occupied Eastern Europe. In order to restore its naval power, France had to rely on extensive aid from the United States (via the Marshall Plan) and a weakened Great Britain. In addition, French politics were in continual turmoil, demonstrated by its frequent change of governments – 21 adminis-

trations over the 12 years of the French Fourth Republic (1946–1958). Despite the political instability and disputes about its claim to be a world power, the Republic of France became a founding member of the NATO alliance in 1949.

France's naval prowess was still struggling in 1956 during the Suez Crisis, which Canuel views as a milestone for French admirals and politicians. For all the world to see, French naval forces lacked the ability to conduct a large-scale operation. In the face of strong US opposition to fighting in Egypt and British withdrawal of its troops and ships, France had no choice but to step down from its engagement in Egypt. The ignominy was not lost on Charles de Gaulle. A major turning point for France and its navy came in 1958 when de Gaulle returned to political leadership, serving for seven months as prime minister followed by a decade as France's president (1959–1969). His strong ideas for a path forward for post-war France included plans to rebuild the country's naval power independent of its "Anglo-Saxon" wartime allies, even though France would continue to depend on their material and political support.

De Gaulle accelerated France's relief from its most pressing colonial issue, Algeria, with a French withdrawal of its forces in 1962. With de Gaulle's determination to restore French naval power, Canuel credits him and other senior commanders with modifying the traditional geopolitical French desire to be a great land power *and* naval power concurrently. The change was significant, and brought France more in line with the long-held strategy of Great Britain, which, as an island nation, aspired to be a strong naval and maritime power.

One reason for De Gaulle's success was his decision to take France nucle-

ar as the post-war economy slowly recovered. This decision, in the author's opinion, made the navy France's most potent military service, in part by taking her nuclear weapons to sea. Developing an independent nuclear deterrent made France a nuclear power, putting the country in the same company with the United States and Great Britain, as well as the Soviet Union. The rebirth of French naval power coincided with its evolution into a blue-water navy, equipped with nuclear weapons. As a result of this evolution, De Gaulle emerges as a key figure in the book and receives the major recognition for restoring the navy – and the public's pride in France.

While not for the general reader, the book provides a compelling and detailed account of the changing fortunes of French naval power over the years 1940-1963 – a very troubled period in France's history – from a political, diplomatic, and strategic vantage. The story is complex and its detail is well-supported with thorough research.

Hugues Canuel holds a doctorate in war studies from the Royal Military College of Canada and has served as a Canadian defence attaché. The book's bibliography is current, with a section of extensive notes for each chapter. *The Fall and Rise of French Sea Power* provides a much-needed contribution to the non-French reading historical community and a welcome addition to twentieth-century naval and maritime historiography.

W. Mark Hamilton
Alexandria, Virginia

Lars Cleander. *How Carriers Fought: Carrier Operations in World War II*. Oxford, UK: Casemate Publishers, www.casematepublishers.com, 2020. 296 pp., illustrations, tables, appendix,

notes, bibliography, index. US \$22.95, UK £14.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-61200-853-0.

This work is a 2020 paperback reprinting of author Lars Cleander's 2018 examination into the mechanics of aircraft carrier engagements during the Second World War. Cleander, a former Navy systems engineer, analyzes the design and implementation of all aspects of carriers used during the war, covering available "tools" and tactics, their effectiveness and use in battles, as well as a breakdown of the Pacific Theater carrier battles of the war. While offering information on American, Japanese, British, and even German Luftwaffe forces, this work naturally focuses on the first two as the primary adversaries of the Pacific carrier war. Cleander approaches the subject from the viewpoint of a technician or logistician, rather than a historian, offering an interesting take on one of the defining naval aspects of the Second World War.

The book is divided into three parts: an examination of the technical and logistical components of carrier operations; an examination of the major wartime engagements; and a comparative analysis that includes coverage of what if scenarios regarding changes in various aspects of carrier design and deployment through the benefits of modern hindsight. Cleander describes this overall flow as covering a carrier's "tools," their combat usage, and how well they were employed (xiii). Part I is subdivided into nine sections which address the types of equipment, training, and tactics employed by the various navies from navigation and aircraft models through the attack patterns and defensive responses. The technological limits of the time are addressed throughout, such as the early American use of signal frequency radios resulting

in channel saturation during combat situations or radar initially serving as a ranged warning system until combinations of types and design changes could interpret target altitude and speed more clearly (103). Interestingly, no dedicated section is given for overall carrier design and classes, focusing instead on the components of the vessels rather than addressing their overall general characteristics in a comparative section.

The second part of the work covers the wartime carrier engagements themselves. It commences with a brief chapter on “carrier raids,” focusing largely on early war British operations off Norway and in the Mediterranean, air attacks on battleships, and the attack on Pearl Harbor. The bulk of this section covers the seven carrier battles of the Pacific Theatre, with each engagement laid out with an introduction, description of forces, logistics, command and control systems, weather conditions, air operations undertaken, overall analysis, and aftermath. While the summaries of the battles may come across as short, this is an area where the work shines. Cleander offers a solid minute-by-minute accounting of key engagements, interspersed with analytical statements of new tactical decisions based on previous experience, mistakes made, and implications of not only the actions themselves, but the respective navies’ reactions to learned data, such as the correlation of USN decisions and statements in 1943 implying that the organization held “serious doubts about the correctness of the *Essex* design” through the borrowing of HMS *Victorious* with her armored flight deck instead of simply using the available USS *Ranger* following the Battle of Santa Cruz Islands (172). A brief section on the larger wartime context of carrier operations rounds out the section, with Cleander summarizing the Royal Navy

as having an eccentric carrier fleet, the Japanese as gambling on pure offense and knockout blows, and America as being a giant powerhouse of industry able to out-produce its foes at a staggering rate and upgrade its vessels faster than others thought possible.

The final portion of the work is essentially a theoretical comparison, utilizing combat models, statistical data, and modern knowledge to address the questions of what was and could have been the most effective combination of design elements, tactics, and carrier deployment during the Second World War. Most interesting is his conclusion that after analysis, the Royal Navy’s new carrier, HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, has a layout that “would have been the ideal World War II carrier” (247). An appendix immediately follows which can be seen as a continuation of the section, covering actual post-war developments in carrier design and comparing the realities and costs of carriers from the Second World War versus the modern day.

In terms of possible improvements, several come to mind. There are no footnotes or endnotes anywhere within the work, and some quotes are not cited even within the text. Cleander sometimes uses jokes or hyperbole, possibly holdovers from the book’s genesis as an essay on his website, that do not always sound professional. For example, his crack about radios being improperly grounded by their Japanese crews: “The Bushido spirit is all well and good, but being able to distinguish a grounding strip from a bowl of rice is also helpful” (19). Removing comments like these would help shore up credibility and lend more weight to the rest of the work. There are several grey background insertions in the work that could also be integrated into the main text to improve flow, such as the listing

of Midway commanders after the discussion of Midway or the radar section four pages after the main text's reference to the same subject (59, 142). The earlier sections of the work could also use a clearer differentiation between the United States, Japanese, and British navies, as the three are described with various levels of depth and detail. The American and Japanese navies obviously receive the bulk of the analysis, making the less frequent mentions of Royal Navy and, on some occasions, German Luftwaffe, technology or tactics somewhat jarring. Perhaps a more defined comparative layout in the early sections could help address this shortcoming.

How Carriers Fought is an interesting addition to the historiography of Second World War carrier operations, offering a non-historian's perspective on an important evolutionary point in modern naval warfare. Cleander does a good job of examining the various aspects, technology, and training that went into the carrier forces of the major powers during the war, and while the lack of direct citation may reduce its effectiveness for correlating research, it offers a wide range of information and comparisons that can be useful for those interested in the actual mechanics of carrier operations and actions in the heyday of their use.-

Charles Ross Patterson II
Yorktown, Virginia