The Northern Mariner / Le marin du nord
Volume 33, Number 2
(Summer/Été 2023)
CONTENTS

Articles
David Kohnen and Roy Cash, Jr., Blue Jacket Blues: Lost Recordings of Johnny Cash at the Naval War College – Live in '75 /167
James Alvey, Fleet Carrier in Name or Fact?: The Post-War Misinterpretation of USS Ranger as Unsuitable for Combat in the Pacific /207

Commentary
Chris Madsen, A Sailor’s View of Early Service in the Marine nationale on the Eve of the First World War /245

Review Essay
Fraser McKee, Reassessing U-Boats and Convoys /273

Book Reviews
Robert W. Cherny, Harry Bridges: Labor Radical, Labor Legend by Chris Madsen /277
Jeffrey R. Cox, Dark Waters, Starry Skies: The Guadalcanal-Solomons Campaign, March-October 1943 by Kater Yip /281
Andrew Cunningham, A Sailor’s Odyssey: The Autobiography of Admiral Andrew Cunningham by Michael Razer /282
Jingle Davis, Island Passages: An Illustrated History of Jekyll Island by Jim Gallen /284
Alfred de Quervain, Across Greenland’s Ice Cap: The Remarkable Swiss Scientific Expedition of 1912 by Ingo Heidbrink /286
James Delgado, The Curse of the Somers. The Secret History behind the U.S.
Navy’s Most Infamous Mutiny by John E. Grady /288
John J. Domagalski, Escape from Java: The Extraordinary World War II Story of the USS Marblehead by Robert L. Shoop /290
Donald J. Feltmate, Building a Better Boat: How the Cape Island Longliner Saved Nova Scotia’s Inshore Fishery by Harry T. Holman /292
John Grehan, Great Naval Battles of the Pacific War: The Official Admiralty Accounts: Midway, Coral Sea, Java Sea, Guadalcanal and Leyte Gulf by Michael Razer /294
John Knight, The Magnetism of Antarctica—The Ross Expedition 1839-1843 by Ingo Heidbrink /299
Angus Konstam, Warships in the Baltic Campaign 1918-20: The Royal Navy takes on the Bolsheviks by Charles Ross Patterson II /301
Angus Konstam, Naval Battle of Crete: The Royal Navy at Breaking Point by Ian Dew /303
Mark Lardas, South China Sea 1945: Task Force 38’s bold carrier rampage in Formosa, Luzon, and Indochina by Emily Golden /307
Jean Leclerc, Le Saint-Laurent et ses pilotes 1805-1860 by Harry T. Holman /309
John Quirk, Quirky History: Maritime Moments Most History Books Don’t Mention by Eric Wiberg /314
J. W. Richardson, In The Treacle Mine, the Life of a Marine Engineer by Ingo Heidbrink /316
Ray Solly, The Development of Crude Oil Tankers. A Historical Miscellany by Eric T. Wiberg /318
Mark Stille, Leyte Gulf 1944 (2): Surigao Strait and Cape Engaño by Mark Klobas /321
Mark Stille, USN Submarine vis IJN Antisubmarine Escort by Ian Yeates /322
Keith Thomson, Born to be Hanged: The Epic Story of the Gentlemen Pirates Who Raided the South Seas, Rescued a Princess, and Stole a Fortune by Louis Arthur Norton /324
Gordon Williamson, Hitler’s Navy. The Kriegsmarine in World War II by
I am very happy to introduce the second issue of 2023, which contains two fascinating research articles, a lively and insightful commentary, a thoughtful review essay, and a selection of high-quality book reviews. I want to thank all the authors for their incredible patience as they waited for the publication of this issue.

As a long-time fan of Johnny Cash, I am delighted to present the first article, “Blue Jacket Blues: Lost Recordings of Johnny Cash at the Naval War College – Live in ’75,” by David Kohnen and Roy Cash, Jr. At the heart of this article is a previously undocumented performance by the “Man in Black” on St. Patrick’s Day in 1975 at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. The authors provide an in-depth examination of the concert, using recently rediscovered audio from the event that showcases how much Cash had to “say about civil-military relationships and the future of America on the global stage in 1975.” At the same time, the authors explore Cash’s long involvement with military affairs, the impact that his military service had on his work, his close connection with the Naval War College, and his broader thoughts on American policy, strategy, and sea power. As much as has been written about Cash’s life and his impact on popular culture, the authors highlight that much more remains to be uncovered.

In the second article, “Fleet Carrier in Name or Fact?: The Post-War Misinterpretation of USS Ranger as Unsuitable for Combat in the Pacific,” James Alvey strives to correct the faulty perceptions that many still have about the aircraft carrier, USS Ranger. Naval historians long ago concluded that the Navy Department regarded Ranger as a carrier unsuited for combat in the Pacific. Alvey convincingly establishes that this common view is incorrect. Indeed, the US Navy considered Ranger fit for combat during the Second
World War, but a range of issues, including diplomatic necessity and the need to fill essential non-combat roles, kept the vessel from battle. Alvey takes the reader through Ranger’s rich history, from the Mediterranean, to the Atlantic, to the Pacific, and crafts a strong argument. But, as he points out, Alvey is not simply trying to salvage Ranger’s image. The carrier “is still cited in debates on the size and types of carriers the United States builds. For Ranger to be used as an example, a complete understanding of the ship and its context is necessary. Otherwise, these arguments may be built on shifting sand.”

In the commentary, “A Sailor’s View of Early Service in the Marine nationale on the Eve of the First World War,” Chris Madsen offers an up close and personal look at the individual experience of a sailor in the French Navy between 1913 and 1915. Madsen uses thirty-eight original handwritten letters sent by George Brucelle to his mother and sister to recount the working and social life of this sailor, including training, off-duty extracurriculars, and health issues. Brucelle specialized in torpedoes and his letters offer a rare window into the intense training and experiential learning provided to common sailors. The author grounds his analysis in an extensive amount of contextual and historiographical content that captures the shifting currents of the era. “Sadly, Brucelle died when the Casabianca sank on the night of 3 June 1915 in the Aegean Sea due to a mine explosion. The letters are what remain of a young life cut-short during the war, and an otherwise forgotten sailor only remembered and cherished by his immediate family. Sharing Brucelle’s writing and reflections brings a unique lower deck perspective to the working and social lives of a sailor indoctrinated into the pre-war French Navy.”

Finally, in his review essay, “Reassessing U-Boats and Convoys,” Second World War veteran and long-time Northern Mariner contributor, Fraser McKee, shares his thoughts on Lawrence Paterson’s, The U-boat War: A Global History, and Convoy Will Scatter: The Full Story of Jervis Bay and Convoy HX84 by Bernard Edwards. We have some great content lined up for the next few issues. If you have an article, research note, commentary, or review essay that you are interested in publishing, I urge you to submit as soon as possible.

I hope you find this issue informative, insightful, and engaging. I want to thank the authors for their contributions. As usual, I would also like to thank editorial board members Roger Sarty and Rich Gimblett, book review editor Faye Kert, and production editor Walter Lewis for their assistance and guidance.

All the best,
Peter Kikkert
Editor, The Northern Mariner