

Impeccably researched, this book provides a wealth of both primary and secondary references for readers at all levels, especially those who want to conduct further research. Written in a very informal style, it is accessible to both the layman and the serious academic. While light on the technical specifications for the ships discussed, Clarke's work is packed with blue prints and pictures, that describe how the ships were constructed, and the role that appearances play in both the design and perception of warships, both in times of war and peace. He does point out in several places the construction considerations that were taken into account for all of these ships, considerations that allowed them to conduct missions and survive damage that would have sunk lesser ships fulfilling similar roles. Without being overcome by minutia, Clarke explores a group of ships from conception to introduction, through application while offering enough depth to provide something useful to students looking for something new.

As good as it is, the book is not without shortcomings, the most obvious one being what Clarke does not discuss. While determining why these ships were constructed and what they did during the Second World War, there is less attention paid to the post-war period, particularly the Battle and Daring classes, which had long post-war careers, well into the Cold War. They were present in various conflicts, with various navies well into the latter half of the twentieth century. The lack of exploration of this territory, whether limited by considerations of length, or because it would detract from the author's central thesis, leaves plenty of room for further research.

*Tribals, Battles and Darings* opens a window into a period of transition for warships while offering an accessible starting place for looking at the people, events, and ships that influenced this unique period in history. It also provides a clear and straightforward examination of the final stages of the transition of the destroyer, from ships suited to a single mission, to ships that needed to perform a variety of functions in a changing world.

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**David Craddock. *What Ship, Where Bound? A History of Visual Communication at Sea*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, [www.seaforthpublishing.co.uk](http://www.seaforthpublishing.co.uk), 2021. 96 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £12.99, US \$24.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-52678-842-7.**

While at sea, communication between ships and/or shore has been a challenging task. Historically, ships ingeniously utilized semaphore (from the Greek *sema* meaning light and *phero* carrier) to take advantage of the seaman's

visual senses by means of coloured flags, angularly arranged staves and/or balls plus modified lights. David Craddock's brief but informative book on visual communications using multiple historical sources takes the reader on occasional, unexpected detours.

Signaling by flags between ships in the days of sail presented multiple difficulties. Choppy seas, thick fog and residual cannon smoke from battles made viewing at a distance through relatively primitive telescopes problematic. The task was complicated by heaving, slick decks in rain and snow squalls, becalmed skies with no winds to fly a flag, or wild turbulent contrary winds tangling flags together. Communicating at great distances, at or beyond the curvature of the earth, produced a diminishing arc of legibility further limiting the sending of flag messages. Despite of these obstacles, flags were an early form of codification that linked ships during sea battles or fleet maneuvers and distinguished friend from foe.

The book features copious illustrations as well as multiple resources for the inquisitive vexillologist. The design of signal flags could either be rectangular or triangular in shape but their colours and design had to be easily seen and not confused in various lights and wind conditions. Primary colours plus black and white predominated and vertical stripes were generally more easily discerned. Each stood for a letter or number requiring ever-evolving code books. Flag groupings of twos, threes, and fours meant whole phrases or special orders. Adding to the intended meaning of the signals and to their interpretive complexity was the use of the specific masts to display the coded flags (fore, main or mizzen), at times what specific sails were set aloft and occasionally the number of shots fired from guns. Historic sea battles were won or lost by interpretations of these signals. Craddock chronicles their roughly 300-year evolution that became the International Code of Signals. He also includes a small segment showing how the British Union Jack evolved over time. Later, the use of signal flags became an instrument of mercantile marketing, a commerce adjunct to inform ships at sea where to make port and to notify them about which ships were inbound with their cargoes.

In addition to multicoloured patterned and geometric-shaped flags, an elaborate and complex array of semaphore signals could be displayed on a ship's masts at sea, on governmental coastal signal stations or commercially, at Lloyd's stations which were connected to the British Postal Service telegraph. The display of NATO code flags *Bravo Zulu* acclaimed "a task well done." Semaphore pennants used at sea and on land for some undiscussed reason differ in colour but are equal in size. Those used by the navy are red and yellow while those utilized by the army ashore are blue and white.

A communication "sea change" came with the invention of Samuel F. B. Morse's code and the telegraph, the basis of code for information transmission,

sometimes in detail via blinking lights and later by radio transmission. As an interesting, not well-known fact, a resourceful nineteenth century lady, Martha Coston, perfected coloured telegraphic night flares fired from pistols or grenade launchers. First employed during the Civil War, they are still used as distress and pilot signals today.

*A History of Visual Communication at Sea* is a concise book that is illustration rich with sometimes surprising anecdotes that make for enjoyable reading. As an example, one segment is titled “Semaphore in Popular Culture: Protests and public spaces.” The circular line drawing, known as the peace symbol, was originally emblematic for nuclear disarmament. It is in reality the superimposed semaphore for the two letters, ND (see below). The international campaign for nuclear disarmament adopted this protest symbol in 1958 and it has become an icon meaning peace.

Signaling at sea is not a common topic in the maritime history literature; yet it is a figurative footnote found on many pages and, therefore, of great significance. The most memorable example is Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson’s “England expects that everyman will do his duty.” With that in mind, although this short book may be critiqued as somewhat superficial, I would order a semaphore display aloft of *Bravo Zulu* for David Craddock’s *What Ship, Where Bound?*

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**Sarah Craze. *Atlantic Piracy in the Early Nineteenth Century. The Shocking Story of the Pirates and the Survivors of the Morning Star.* New York, NY: Boydell Press, [www.boydellandbrewer.com](http://www.boydellandbrewer.com), 2022. 222 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £65.00, US \$99.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-78327-670-7. (E-book available.)**

When media reports of a pirate attack on the MV *Maersk Alabama* circulated in April 2009, much of the Western world was shocked to learn that piracy was not a scourge of the past, rather it was, and had remained, a menace to regions of the maritime community since the so-called “Golden Age” of the early eighteenth century. This was not the first time that public consciousness had suddenly awakened to this plague of the seas long thought defeated. Within a couple of months of a series of pirate attacks on trading vessels, including the British brig *Morning Star* off Ascension Island in February 1828, the press brought alarming news of high seas robbery to the front pages, spurring widespread public fascination, and forcing both the British and Spanish governments to take action. Though contemporary justice was served