

complex topic in a manner that is generally guaranteed not to overwhelm readers of any level of prior knowledge while also not being overly simplistic. It admirably achieves its stated goal of showing how the Mid-Atlantic region was profoundly shaped by the influence of both pirates and privateers, while also pointing to future paths of scholarly inquiry which appear to have been previously overlooked or under-emphasized. Sure to be a well-thumbed tome for those interested in the history of piracy on the American continent, this book will neatly fit into almost any maritime book collection.

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Max Hastings. *Operation Pedestal. The Fleet that Battled to Malta, 1942.* Toronto, ON: HarperCollins Publishing, www.harpercollins.com, 2021. 464 pp., illustrations, glossary, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. CDN \$36.99, cloth; ISBN 978-0-0083-6494-6.

Operation Pedestal: The Fleet that Battled to Malta, 1942 explores the enormous effort to keep Malta supplied during the Second World War. Hastings' account provides a comprehensive examination of the people, equipment, and events that occurred in the course of accomplishing this goal, and Germany's opposing efforts to prevent the island from being resupplied. He also explains the role that Malta played in the Mediterranean campaign and why it was so important that Malta remain within Allied control.

The book opens with how and why the island of Malta was so vital to the Commonwealth war effort, briefly exploring Winston Churchill's personal commitment to the operation and his insistence that something be done. Hastings breaks down the composition of the supply convoys, examining the various merchant ships, what they carried, and why they were loaded the way they were. These details were governed by a series of strategic decisions driven by wartime necessity, and the critical need for ships to get through. Focusing on the convoy's escorts, Hastings addresses their role and that of the crews who manned them, placing the human component at the heart of the operation. Putting people front and centre makes the story more appealing to readers interested in people and events, as opposed to the technical aspects of convoy logistics, or how convoys were assembled and used. Nevertheless, the author explains how convoys and their escorts worked together to provide comprehensive protection against the many threats they faced creeping from England to Malta across the Mediterranean. Using a chronological format, Hastings closely follows the convoys, highlighting the almost incessant attacks they endured as they approached the Italian-controlled area of the

Mediterranean. The omnipresent threat of danger drives most of the narrative and the main body of the text.

This is an easily accessible volume for someone unfamiliar with Operation Pedestal, or the larger war in the Mediterranean, who is interested in an historical account without being overburdened by technical details. While discussing the tactics used to attack and defend the convoys, Hastings keeps things general enough that casual readers will not get bogged down in strategic issues, while providing enough detail to keep students interested in such things involved in the narrative. The text allows readers to follow the flow of the events without explaining how submarines, aircraft, and torpedoes actually work. While those familiar with the action surrounding Operation Pedestal might not find anything revolutionary here, Hastings' research will still enhance their understanding of the events and challenges faced by the Malta convoys.

For casual readers wanting an entry into the subject, the book has a lot to offer. Students looking for a more in-depth academic discussion, however, may find the work somewhat lacking. Fortunately, Hastings provides an extensive bibliography for further exploration – unfortunately, none of the endnotes are referenced within the main body of the text. This makes correlating a specific endnote to a reference in the book extremely difficult. If by design, it takes away from the usefulness of this work for academics; if in error, it should be corrected through careful editing of future editions.

While not shedding new light on Operation Pedestal itself, this book opens an accessible, well-researched porthole onto a dramatic and important series of events that students of naval and military history might not have previously considered exploring.

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David Hepper. *British Warship Losses in the Modern Era 1920–1982*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, www.pen-and-sword.uk.com, 2022. 424 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £30.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39909-766-6. (E-book available.)

A very interesting and extremely well researched reference book concerning the loss of Royal Navy and other Commonwealth naval ships, from 1920 through to the Falklands War. Each entry provides the ship's details, date of loss, commanding officer, and a narrative detailing how the vessel was lost.

Second World War losses make up the bulk of the book and describe the campaigns fought such as Norway, Dunkirk, and the Atlantic through to the final fighting in the Pacific in 1945. Some entries are quite lengthy, others less