

was extreme and *Berkeley Castle* was “written off.” Training incidents saw several losses with the Motor Launch ML 2582 sunk, with only one survivor, when a Dutch F-84 aircraft failed to pull up during a mock attack and crashed into the vessel. The Australian destroyer HMAS *Voyager* was sunk during a collision with the aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* during nighttime flying exercises in February 1964 with the loss of 82 of the ship’s company.

The book ends with the analysis of the Royal Navy losses in the 1982 Falklands War. The RN lost two destroyers, two frigates, a landing ship-logistics, and a landing craft medium in this short but sharp conflict. Several other RN ships were damaged in this “close run” short war. For those seeking more information on British ship losses in the Falklands, the recently published *Abandon Ship: The real story of the sinking’s in the Falklands War* by Paul Brown is an interesting and sobering read.

I noticed a few minor glitches in the book such as the omission of the RAN minesweeper HMAS *Warrnambool*, sunk in September 1947 while conducting post-war mine clearance. Additionally, for completeness, in the Falklands War section, inclusion of the loss of *Atlantic Conveyor* (taken up from trade and with a mixed RN/merchant navy crew) could have been considered.

That said, this is an excellent reference book for the naval historian and those with an interest in the war at sea during the Second World War. Highly Recommended.

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**Kenneth V. Jack. *Eyes of the Fleet Over Vietnam. RF-8 Crusader Combat Photo-Reconnaissance Missions.* Havertown, PA: Casemate Publishers, [www.casematepublishers.com](http://www.casematepublishers.com), 2021. 230 pp., illustrations, appendices, terms and acronyms. US \$39.99, UK £35.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-63624-074-9.**

Since the days of hot-air balloons, aerial reconnaissance has been a critical part of warfare. With the development of the airplane, camera-carrying observers spotted enemy formations. As aircraft changed from fragile biplanes to metal monoplanes, it was natural that cameras would be installed in them.

The Second World War saw the development of dedicated, or even specialized, photoreconnaissance aircraft—the most famous being the photo-reconnaissance versions of the famed Supermarine Spitfire. Unarmed, without cannons or machine guns for defence, the photo-reconnaissance aircraft depended upon speed and manoeuvrability to avoid enemy aircraft.

This format of unarmed photo-reconnaissance versions of fast fighter airplanes was repeated when jet fighters became available in the late 1940s and

1950s. The US Air Force replaced the guns in its F-80 and F-84 Fighters with cameras to make the RF-80 and RF-84 (the R prefix denoted reconnaissance.) US Naval Aviation and US Marine Corps Aviation did the same thing to its F9F Panther and F2H Banshee fighters—the guns were removed and cameras installed.

In the late 1950s, the Vought F-8 Crusader was the newest USN and Marine Corps fighter aircraft—one of the best performing aircraft of its day. It was inevitable that the Crusader would be modified into a photo-reconnaissance aircraft. In *Eyes of the Fleet Over Vietnam*, Kenneth Jack, a US Navy veteran who had been a photographic technician in RF-8 squadrons, tells the story of the RF-8 missions from 1964 to 1972 in the tragic Vietnam conflict.

The RF-8 Crusader made its public debut in 1957, when one set a North American transcontinental speed record from California to New York in 3 hours, 23 minutes. The pilot was US Marine Corps Major John Glenn – later an astronaut and US Senator. (The aircraft that set the speed record saw reconnaissance in Cuba in 1962 and in the Vietnam War. Unfortunately for aircraft historians, the record-setting RF-8 was lost in a crash on 17 December 1972, and now sits at the bottom of the South China Sea.) RF-8s proved their worth with valuable photo-reconnaissance during the autumn of 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis. (The author of this book chronicled RF-8 missions in an earlier book, *Blue Moon Over Cuba*.)

The combat career of this remarkable aircraft and its crews, both aircrew and ground crew, can be stated briefly. For eight years, two US Navy squadrons and one US Marine Corps squadron flew reconnaissance missions over North Vietnam, locating future bomb targets and then photographing areas that had been bombed to assess battle damage. The crews generally had to fly at low altitudes at top speed, but when the aircraft approached the area to be photographed, the flight path was a straight-on approach which gave the enemy ample chances to damage or shoot down an RF-8. The Crusader, in both its fighter and photo-reconnaissance versions, was rugged, fast, maneuverable, and possessed a good range. Its vices were that it was difficult to land on an aircraft carrier deck and was not capable of night reconnaissance.

Jack begins the narrative with an introduction to the Crusader, its development, and early service history. From there, the chapters are organized chronologically: 1964-66 on photo-reconnaissance and countermeasures; 1964: Over Laos & Prisoners of War; 1965: Support of *Operation Rolling Thunder* (bombing of North Vietnam); 1966: *Operation Rolling Thunder* intensifies; 1966-67: VFP-62 (a USN squadron) enters the Vietnam War; 1967-68: dangerous skies over Hanoi and Haiphong; 1969-72: the final years; a chapter on other Navy/Marine Corps photo-reconnaissance aircraft; and summary and conclusions. Two appendices follow, analyzing the effectiveness

of the bombing of North Vietnam (the appendices state that the bombing was not effective, either as a military or policy tool.

The narrative has many “I was there” anecdotes and is heavily illustrated. Those first-hand recollections keep the narrative flowing and prevent the book from being a monotone recitation of what were very dangerous missions. A few pilots were shot down and taken prisoner; their experiences as POWs are included and add to the disaster that was the Vietnam War. At the end of each chronological chapter is a stark reminder of the tragedy of war—a picture of each pilot killed during that period, together with a brief biography, remembrances of the deceased from family, friends, and crew, a listing of the deceased’s medals, and also the location of the deceased’s name on the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C.

Jack’s personal experience as a RF-8 Crusader photographer’s mate is a valuable asset to the book; he served with an RF-8 squadron in the Cuban Missile Crisis and again with an RF-8 squadron during Vietnam. He, therefore, knows the aircraft he writes about. He writes well and keeps the reader’s attention.

After Vietnam, the RF-8’s service days were numbered. It was gradually replaced in first-line USN service by the RF-4B Phantom. The last RF-8 in first-line service left for storage on 28 May 1982, though some RF-8s remained in reserve units until 1987. Many Crusader pilots, whether of the fighter or reconnaissance versions, remember the Crusader as their favourite airplane. *Eyes of the Fleet Over Vietnam. RF-8 Crusader Combat Photo-Reconnaissance Missions*, is a fitting tribute to an aircraft that served the USN and USMC well in dangerous airspace. It is recommended.

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**Gareth Michael Jones. *The Development of Nuclear Propulsion in the Royal Navy, 1946-1975*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan (an imprint of Springer Nature), [www.link.springer.com](http://www.link.springer.com), 2022. xxv+287 pp., illustrations, dramatis personae, chronology, technical definitions, notes, appendices, glossary, bibliography, index. US \$109.00, e-book; ISBN 978-3-031-05129-6. (Hardcover book available.)**

Gareth Jones has done what (probably) very few former Royal Navy Chief Petty Officers have felt any desire to do, that is, to spend six years of their post-service life working towards a PhD – in his case, in History at the University of Plymouth. That time was no doubt spent well, for his 2019 thesis was published, with remarkably few changes, in Palgrave Macmillan’s