

can damage or destroy ship models over time, though the adverse effect on human health with prolonged proximity has been equally demonstrated. Lui is very much old school in a craft that struggles to attract new followers who might prefer just to buy finished models or incline instead toward newer forms without the downside. Computer modelled ships can be made to move, without a push by the hand, and may even be projected in three dimensions.

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**R. Bruce Macdonald.** *Never Say P\*g. The Book of Sailors' Superstitions.* Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, [www.harbourpublishing.com](http://www.harbourpublishing.com), 2022. vi+163 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography. CDN \$22.95, hardback; ISBN 978-1-55017-979-8. (E-book available.)

At its core, *Never Say P\*g* is a collection of maritime superstitions, beliefs, and values of sailors from around the world and through the ages. Macdonald relies on his personal experience, notes, and interactions to build up an alphabetized list of sailors' superstitions. While the concept is simple and straightforward, the final result covers international boundaries, long-held beliefs, and modern creations. It touches on cultural norms, industry standards, and the methods through which identity is formed by sailors.

The book is highly personal in its writing style and authorship. Macdonald claims his initial interest in maritime superstitions came after being told not to stir his tea with a knife, as “stir with a knife and stir up strife” (136). He continues to draw on his own experience to show how it allowed him to collect anecdotes and listen to other maritime folk tell their stories or warn others away from bringing on bad luck. Relying on private experience, especially in a work of maritime history, can seem counterintuitive in a field where personal recollections rarely carry the same weight as historical documents, reports, or diaries. On the other hand, one might be hard pressed to find academically accurate recollections of folk beliefs and superstitions. When this knowledge is handed-down from individual memory, however, it can be a reliable historical and anthropological approach for creating a database of people's beliefs – or at least a good place to start. It should be noted that, where possible, Macdonald also provides more academic sources for his findings.

A list does not necessarily lend itself to grand historical, or cultural, conclusions. Nevertheless, certain themes do come forward as the reader proceeds down the alphabet of sailor's truths. Superstitions help a community form an identity and create a specific way of doing things. Traditions exist for a reason. While seemingly based in occupational mythology, they can carry a

grain of truth or be used to reinforce a certain group culture. For example, the beliefs surrounding respect of the dead dictate a rapid burial at sea to avoid upsetting the sailor's spirit or ghost (45). This serves a practical purpose as well: rapid burial means less risk of disease spreading from the deceased body. As an historical note, it is strange that this custom was ignored for Horatio Nelson, one of the most beloved sailors of his age, when his remains were stored in a cask of brandy following the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

Traditions also create a visual language within a community. The most obvious of these is the practice of tattooing among seamen. Some symbols stood for good luck, like the pig and rooster, and helped a sailor keep good fortune on his side. The origins of the tattooed words HOLD and FAST, shed a particular light on sailing culture. It is thought to have a biblical origin in Deuteronomy 10:20: "Fear the Lord your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name" (141). While sailors considered it bad luck to run into a preacher, or have one on board, it is interesting that religion was still an inspiration for such a permanent reminder of a sailor's profession. Tattoos separated sailors from the general population: a sailor could literally carry his resumé with him with symbols like a dragon, turtle, and anchors all indicating service at a specific destination, or with a particular service—yet another method of maintaining a maritime identity.

Overall, this book is a comprehensive collection of sailors' beliefs and superstitions. Unfortunately, it does not go much beyond that. While it is informative, it lacks analysis or description about the origins or potential impact of such beliefs. A fuller study would lend the book an extra layer of credibility when explaining the origins of such strange facts of maritime life. *Never Say P\*g* is a good introduction to sailors' mental attitudes but does not delve much beyond the initial offering of information.

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**Alastair Mars. *Unbroken. The Story of a Submarine*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword Maritime, [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk), 2021. (Originally published 1953.) 224 pp., illustrations, map. UK £12.99, paper; ISBN 978-1-84415-793-8.**

Books on the U-Boat war in both World Wars are many; so, too, are books on the American submarine war in the Pacific during the Second World War. Less well-known are the efforts by the British submarine fleet in that second conflict. In *Unbroken. The Story of a Submarine*, this reprint of a 1953 memoir of Royal Navy (RN) operations details the first months of its career by its first