

included Sir Richard Blackham, the eponymous “chiefe owner” of the ship, were disquieted by its captain’s actions – the ambassador reminding the latter that he had little power to influence Ottoman decision-making in the matter. Meanwhile, the Levant Company feared for the future of their lucrative trade with the empire as regulated by the so-called Capitulations, in which the Porte was the superior partner. The appendix also contains wills drawn up by members of the *Blackham*’s crew who died during the voyage, two at Smyrna, one at Malaga, and a fourth who drowned in the Thames within sight of home. One of the four left a small bequest to Looker, who attended him during his last days.

The historian’s job is never done – as Heywood observes, much valuable material of similar character still awaits discovery. Looker’s journal was thought to be anonymous when it first came to his attention, and its somewhat impenetrable content remained to be revealed to the reader unversed in the arcane language of the time. Heywood’s commentary and notes range widely and greatly enhance the value of the work under review, that would otherwise leave most readers baffled. Colour images of the journal and of contemporary scenes complete this fine volume.

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**Philip MacDougall.** *The Great Anglo-Russian Naval Alliance of the Eighteenth Century and Beyond.* New York, NY: Boydell Press, [www.boydellandbrewer.com](http://www.boydellandbrewer.com), 2022. 234 pp., illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. UK £75.00, US \$99.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-78327-668-4. (E-book available.)

This is the story of Great Britain and Russia’s naval co-operation in the heyday of their shared period of greatest imperial expansion in the eighteenth century. The ebb and flow of the alliance is traced from the reign of Peter the Great through to the Crimean War. The major themes are the interplay of trade and diplomacy and resulting naval warfare in the waters of the Baltic, Black and Mediterranean Seas. The study focuses on the two-way trade: from Russia, of the naval stores required to support mercantilism and the largest merchant marine in the world and the navy needed to protect it, and from Britain, the flow of technical information and trained people needed to build a navy capable of facilitating Russian expansion in European waters and simultaneously, into the Pacific via Siberia.

The preface gives the scale of the trade: “Throughout much of the eighteenth century the quantity of trade transmitted between Britain and Russia

was so immense that it totally eclipsed all trade and commerce conducted with any competitor, with Britain, during the 1730s, gaining from Russia the status of ‘most favoured nation’”. (xiii) The political story focuses on individual Russian tsars, emperors and empresses, and their contacts among the British politicians, aristocrats, merchants, and naval officers who made up the trade. It also includes the working out of the alliance in the form of longstanding co-operation at the strategic and tactical level at sea to keep the trade of naval stores flowing, whatever the state of the formal alliance. Cooperation culminated in joint operations and virtual interoperability of Russian and British fleets during the Napoleonic wars.

Densely-packed information on the economics of the trade and associated tariffs alternates with diplomacy and warfare. The most detailed information is presented in the form of tables showing the yearly totals of commodities flowing into Britain from Russia and other northern nations, especially hemp, flax, pitch, bar iron and lumber. Of special interest were the trees (“sticks”) that become small, medium, and, most especially, the largest masts for naval and mercantile ships. Over the period, the military and resulting political situation in northern Europe was a factor that swung in favour of Russia at the expense of Sweden, especially as it conquered more and more of the east coast of the Baltic Sea, whereby Russia added to the land base with its forests and farms, and developed ports, like St. Petersburg, Reval and Kronstadt to facilitate the naval stores trade and the expeditions needed to expand territory.

The author succeeds in putting the reader into the political dynamics of the period with Europe as a patchwork of contending states relating to the two main actors. Trade is shown as symbiotic in a number of respects. For Britain, the “naval stores” imported were used to enable the huge navy to protect a burgeoning mercantile fleet, which in turn generated the wealth needed to finance the navy. For Russia, the currency brought in by a lopsided balance of trade was instrumental in financing the wars of expansion, specifically importing the technology and people needed to build and fight the ships. The trade ends with Canada supplanting Russia as a source for trees suitable for masts by 1812 and with the two main actors in contact increasingly as adversaries up to the outbreak into open hostility in the Crimean War.

Because most statistics and the bulk of information available to the author are British, the trade of naval stores into Britain is much more complete than information on the returning trade in information and expertise in naval technology from Britain to Russia. That return trade is much less well-defined because it was often clandestine, being at times, either not sanctioned or in opposition to official foreign policy. This makes for an incomplete documentary record based on correspondence and second-hand reports. The author traces the special place of Jacobites in Russian history and of Scottish officers in

the Russian navy, like John Paul Jones, who was contemporary with Samuel Bentham, fighting in the same naval campaign and in particular, the friction involved between them created by having them in the same command. Use of existing Bentham family papers could have expanded the author's discussions of naval science being used to develop ordnance and explosives. More could have been made of other Bentham family members such as brother Jeremy's larger role as inventor and contractor. Trained as an officer and shipwright, he was a conduit for new technology with the know-how and muscle to execute.

Some of the best features of the book are detailed descriptions of the systems for purchasing, importing, and manufacturing the raw material of naval stores into finished products. The processes of turning logs into masts; hemp into cables, hawsers, warps, and cordage; flax into sails; pitch and tar into preservatives; and iron into anchors, structural members and fittings, are described down to the level of the individual vessel. The constant need to regularly replace rigging and all the other parts due to deterioration is described, as well as the requirements for fitting out newly-constructed ships.

This book succeeds in throwing light onto a little-known chapter in the history of both countries and provides insights into the functioning of a pre-industrial arboreal economy of resource-extraction in contact with an advanced industrial and mercantile nation and its empire founded upon use of the sea. It provides an important illustration of how naval power can project military power on land in littoral warfare.

Although recommended, the book has a few shortcomings. It is produced on acid-free paper but in a small typeface. Notes are even smaller. Black and white, low resolution photographs are dark, and some are only marginally connected to the story. Photo credits are fragmentary or missing. The bibliography contains minimal information, which will make checking sources more difficult than a fuller, more conventional format. "Newspapers and periodicals" consist of the title alone. "Printed Sources" are contemporary books, journals, and pamphlets and "Secondary Works", modern works. Also "electronic sources" are a separate minor subdivision, when, in fact, virtually all recent titles would have an electronic version. Particularly curious among these "electronic works" is the presence of Jeremy Bentham's *Works*, published in 1838-43 and edited by John Bowring. These have been re-edited, augmented and republished in all forms (including electronic) by University College of London Press up to 2019. Despite a sense that the book is expanded from a thesis on eighteenth-century maritime economics, it might have benefited from a few more modern references to the trade in technology; for example, in 1947, when copies of Roll-Royce jet engines exported to the Soviet Union showed up in the MiG15 in Korea.

Nevertheless, this book should be in any academic collection of naval and Russian history and read by anyone studying European history, politics, and diplomacy.

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**Edward J. Marolda. *Admirals Under Fire. The US Navy and the Vietnam War.* Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, [www.ttupress.org](http://www.ttupress.org), 2021. xxiii+496 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$49.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-68283-089-5.**

A Vietnam War veteran himself, Edward Marolda has produced an excellent analysis of the US Navy during that war, as seen through the lens of the five Chiefs of Naval Operations (CNO) who led the navy from 1958 to 1978, and thus, encompassing the entire period of the conflict from its most early days to the very bitter end.

Admiral's Harry Felt, Ulysses Sharp, Thomas Moorer, Elmo Zumwalt and James Holloway each undertook four year terms as the CNO. Their service also corresponded closely with the terms of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter. The naval-political relationship was often very difficult – hence the title of the book.

Marolda's in-depth analysis of the US Navy's roles and tasks during the war stretches chronologically from the grand strategic to the tactical and provides a candid view of each admiral's strengths and weaknesses. Felt and Sharp appear too stuck in a Second World War/Korean War view of the world and the way the war should be fought. Moorer was more realistic, seeing Vietnam as a side show, with the real threat being the rise of Soviet naval power, but he was also focused on becoming the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Zumwalt also saw the growth of the Russian Navy as more important than Vietnam and sought to improve ship numbers and capability. This was a difficult task with funding shortages meaning many elderly vessels were retained and shipbuilding reduced.

Zumwalt also undertook several reforms to improve discipline, in the face of increased drug usage in the US Navy, as well improving morale and retention of junior personnel – particularly among minority personnel, such as African-Americans, Hispanics and women. His Z-Grams to the fleet became famous (and in some cases, infamous) and alienated him from many within the Navy's leadership. In 1974 Holloway inherited a navy struggling for numbers of effective ships and personnel; but he saw the method in some of Zumwalt's perceived madness and modified the reforms, which later saw increased