

descendants are quickly pushed from the stage by the “dollar princess,” her Hungarian lover and some risqué photographs. Any discussion of the Ward legacy moved from the business pages to the gossip columns.

As with most volumes which demand this much original research (the footnotes run 61 pages), the author is occasionally let down by his sources. The source that claimed Ward was born in “New Hamborough” near Toronto (6) probably was unaware that New Hamburg is closer to half way between Toronto and Detroit. The steamboat *London* is noted among the vessels built and operated by Samuel and EB Ward in the mid-1840s (75). It was not. *London* was built in Upper Canada, but seized by US Customs agents in Detroit on grounds subsequently protested by the Canadian government and then quickly sold to Ward. *Canada*, which appears a couple of pages later, was seized on equally specious grounds and as quickly acquired by Ward.

Nagle’s volume depends on a dispersed collection of Ward papers, along with a wide range of primary printed sources to bring this narrative together. If there is more to be said, especially regarding Samuel Ward’s efforts to actually create the fortune to which E. B. contributed and succeeded, this remains a foundational work on one of the key figures in the history of nineteenth-century business in the Great Lakes region. Eber Brock Ward *may* be the Forgotten Iron King, but in the history of Great Lakes shipping his name certainly had not been forgotten, and will be even more prominent in the studies that build on Nagle’s work.

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Chris O’Flaherty. *Torpedoes, Tea, and Medals, The Gallant Life of Commander D. G. H. ‘Jake’ Wright DSC, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.* Oxford, UK: Casemate, www.casematepublishers.com, 2022. xvii+190 pp., illustrations, bibliography, notes. US \$34.95, UK £17.99, cloth; ISBN 978-1-63624-140-1.**

A niche field of study in the Second World War’s broader maritime struggle is that of the coastal forces that contested the narrow waters of the English Channel and the southern half of the North Sea. That there was a struggle is perhaps known, but the details are vague, particularly after the Dunkirk evacuation in May-June 1940, with attention of most tending to the U-boat war in the broad Atlantic, or to more momentous strategic questions dominating the counsels of the Admiralty and its political masters. There is no doubt, however, that denying the free passage of the Channel to enemy coastal convoys, dominating that crucial waterway, and defending similar British convoys was of crucial

importance, notwithstanding the limited profile of this arena of the maritime war. Captain Chris O’Flaherty’s account of the distinguished small boat career of Commander ‘Jake’ Wright, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR), is overdue, given Wright’s outstanding war record—no fewer than three DSCs and a Mentioned in Despatches citation.

This account of Cdr Wright’s naval life was occasioned by the 2019 initiative of the National Museum of the Royal Navy to commemorate the contribution of the coastal forces during the Second World War at a new Coastal Forces Museum at Gosport. During the work involved in creating the Museum, it was noted that the original commanding officer of the restored Motor Torpedo Boat 331 was Commander Wright (a lieutenant at the time), who was one of the most decorated officers in the coastal forces. Hence, O’Flaherty took on the task of writing this engaging biography.

Wright was a typical RNVR officer who was called up on the outbreak of war in 1939. His civilian background was in the tea trade—the family business—involving brokerage work as well as living in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) at a tea plantation. Wright had joined the RNVR in the mid-1930s, acquired the nickname Jake, and been accepted as an officer on the outbreak of war. Given his private, small boat experience and knowledge of the French littoral, “Jake” found himself serving in the coastal forces by the summer of 1940. The interwar years had not left the RN in particularly good shape for conducting a second global maritime war with the coastal forces being no exception. Wright’s early days were, therefore, ones of preparation, re-equipping and more pedestrian operations involving training, convoy protection, mining expeditions and patrols. He did well and was appointed to his first command, MTB 331, in October 1941. Thereafter, the narrative proceeds to detail his ‘Boys Own’ adventures as Wright commanded a series of MTBs against German shipping. It is an account of irregular maritime warfare that is a compelling, and hitherto little told, story and a tribute to a relatively small component of the RN during the Second World War.

O’Flaherty’s narrative covers in appropriate detail the various operations with which Wright was engaged, including his role at more senior ranks towards the end of the war. There are also a pair of chapters on Wright’s post-war life. He, like so many of his contemporaries, was a ‘hostilities only’ officer in the RN and was speedily demobilised at the conclusion of the war, along with most of the MTB force. Throughout the account, the author regularly refers to tea shipments and U-boat successes against those shipments, as well as Wright’s pre-war and post-war career in the business. The one caveat is that these connections are strained in that Wright had little to do, or war experience, with either the shipments themselves or with protecting merchant shipping against the U-boats. The rounding out of Wright’s biography with these details

is useful in terms of the pre- and post-war chapters of his life, but the insertion of these unrelated elements in the main narrative of his naval life is less so. That aside, this is an engaging and most interesting book about an aspect of naval warfare that is not well addressed in standard accounts. It is evident that Wright himself was a prominent figure within the RN's coastal forces, who has been virtually invisible in the years since the war. This omission has been suitably rectified by O'Flaherty, and now his story is available to contemporary audiences. This book will be of value to any who study coastal forces as well as those interested in naval biographies.

While the author does acknowledge the book's lack of academic citation apparatus, there is some limited footnoting and a comprehensive bibliography that will be of value to researchers. Unfortunately, there is no index. The account is peppered with suitable diagrams of the more significant actions with which Wright was involved, as well as family photographs and images from the Coastal Forces archive.

Anyone who may be interested in exploring further the RN Coastal Forces Museum in Gosport is encouraged to check their website. ([The Coastal Forces Heritage Trust \(coastal-forces.org.uk\)](http://TheCoastalForcesHeritageTrust.coastal-forces.org.uk))

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Vincent P. O'Hara and Leonard R. Heinz. *Innovating Victory. Naval Technology in Three Wars*. Annapolis, MD: US Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2022. xiv+301 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. US \$36.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-68247-732-8. (E-book available.)

Technology and its resulting innovations have played an ever-increasingly important role in modern naval warfare but, strangely, we still seem to lack a comprehensive evaluation of the process of innovation itself. While neither of the authors are well-known military scientists, they are accomplished naval historians. Of the two, Vincent O'Hara, author of several historical studies, is perhaps the best known. His co-author,

Leonard Heinz, who has written articles on naval history, is a noted naval war game developer. The publisher, the US Naval Institute Press, is a reputable publisher that has never shied away from printing titles that challenge our understanding of naval and military history.

This limited study attempts to elucidate the process of innovation by examining the evolution of six carefully chosen aspects of naval warfare. To do so, it focusses on selected technological innovations from three major conflicts