

that much can be learned from Jastrzembski's book on Albert Markham, even if the tarnish must remain.

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Angus Konstam. *Tirpitz in Norway. X-craft midget submarines raid the fjords, Operation Source 1943*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.osprey-publishing.com, 2020. 80 pp., illustrations, map, bibliography, index. UK £13.99, US \$22.00, CDN \$29.00, paper; ISBN 987-1-4728-3585-7.

Osprey Publishing is well known for its wide ranging illustrated aviation, naval and military history books that have been produced since the late 1960s. There are now literally thousands of titles covering all manner of subjects. While this could lead to some mediocrity—the X-Craft midget submarine attack on the *Tirpitz* is not one of them.

Angus Konstam, one of Osprey's more prolific writers, has done a good job in detailing the raid from beginning to end. While not perfect, nor as in-depth as some of the many works previously written on the topic, it is not meant to be. Like so many of Osprey's works, this is a primer that allows the reader, especially school children and young adults, to gain a reasonable insight into a topic and thus, let them decide if more in-depth reading is required. Many distinguished military historians have 'cut their teeth' on Osprey books and then moved onto more 'weighty tomes'.

Tirpitz in Norway describes why the ship was there and the risk it posed to the Allied convoys resupplying the Soviet Union via the Arctic Convoys. (The weighty tome for those interested in exploring this further is Richard Woodman's *Arctic Convoys 1941-1945*

reprinted for the seventh time in 2019.) Thus, *Tirpitz* was a classic example of the 'fleet - in -being' doctrine; even anchored in a fjord, she was a risk to Allied shipping and tied down Allied forces fearing what she might or might not do. The risk to Allied merchant shipping was real, as shown by the actions of *Graf Spee* in 1939, the *Admiral Scheer* sortie into the Atlantic and Indian Oceans in 1940-41, and *Scharnhorst's* attacks on Atlantic convoys in 1941.

After attempts to destroy *Tirpitz* by air attack had failed, the British sought a new method to bring about the ship's demise. This was the midget submarine or X-Craft. Midget submarines were not a new concept—they had been employed by the Italians and Japanese with some success in penetrating Allied harbours and ports. Konstam describes the creation of the X-Craft from concept to reality, the training of the crews and their deployment in September 1943 to attack *Tirpitz* in Kaafjord, Norway.

Konstam clearly describes the difficulties encountered by the X-Craft crews, including bad weather, German defences and the poor construction of the midget submarines. The litany of defects that affected the X-Craft during the operation shows both poor workmanship in the British shipyards, but also potentially a paucity of rugged training in the lead-up to the attack that may have better identified the submarine's many mechanical and electrical short-comings. Only three of the six X-Craft deployed actually entered Kaafjord due to engineering failures in the others. Due to ongoing technical failures in their vessels, the three mini-sub that did make it struggled to lay their explosive charges. That two crews successfully laid their charges underneath *Tirpitz* is a testimony to the courage and the resilience of their crews.

The raid was ultimately a success, as *Tirpitz* was badly damaged and out of action for several months (in fact, the damage to some sections of the ship was never repaired) and this allowed her to become an easier target for RAF bombers which sank the battleship in November 1944.

The book is well illustrated and the maps are useful in describing the attack. A cut-away diagram of an X-Craft, showing the layout of the vessel, should have been included to assist the reader identify the X-Craft design and equipment described in the book. Equally, a side and plan view of *Tirpitz* would have been useful as well to complement the written descriptions of the ship.

Additionally, I would have liked to have seen a bit more on the honours and awards bestowed on X-Craft crew-members. The Victoria Crosses awarded to Donald Cameron (X-6) and Godfrey Place (X-7) are well described but the other awards, less so. The author is incorrect in stating that the crew of X-5 (commanded by Australian-born Lieutenant Henty-Creer) received no posthumous awards. X-5 was seen near *Tirpitz* but sunk by German forces, possibly after she had laid her charges, but this has so far been unconfirmed. Henty-Creer and his crew were all awarded a posthumous mention in dispatches (*London Gazette* 1 August 1944) as having lost their lives. The honours and awards rulings of the day could only authorize the award of the Victoria Cross or a mention in dispatches. For those interested in more on X-5 the book *The Mystery of X-5: Lieutenant H. Henty-Creer's attack on the Tirpitz* by Frank Walker (1988) should be consulted.

Overall, Konstam has done a good job in describing the why, when, where, who, what and how of the 1943 X-Craft attack on *Tirpitz* in Norway.

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Buddy Levy. *Labyrinth of Ice: The Triumphant and Tragic Greely Polar Expedition*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, www.macmillan.com. 2019. 376 pp., illustrations, maps. US \$29.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-125018-219-7. (E-book available.)

This is an inspiring and harrowing tale crisply told. In fact, author Levy's spare prose and straight chronological retelling of the Greely Expedition of 1881-1884 amplify the history's emotional punch. There are no dramatic flourishes here; none are needed. *Labyrinth of Ice* recounts the story of a maritime venture carried out by a ground force, the U.S. Army. In the brief Arctic summer of 1881, a multinational company of soldiers commanded by Lieutenant Adolphus Greely steamed northward from St. John's to Lady Franklin Bay, an inlet along the east coast of Ellesmere Island. Ellesmere lies west of northern Greenland across a narrow sea.

There the adventurers constructed Ft. Conger, the northernmost encampment in the world at the time. Their chief goal was scientific research. Commander Greely's ulterior goal, or personal "grail," was to plant the U.S. flag "Farthest North," breaking a centuries-old British record (44). If possible, he wanted to reach the North Pole. The explorers indeed eclipsed the British record by a few miles. They mapped much of the region for the first time and conducted painstaking scientific observations. They also endured sunless winters lasting over 130 days, fraught with almost unimaginable cold and hardship. During November 1881, for example—before the worst of the long night set in—temperatures averaged -24° F.