

two paintings of convoys to North Russia (83, 90) and the battleship *Howe* (138). There are several striking works by William Wyllie (1851-1931) who gained a tremendous reputation during his lifetime. These include arresting images of survivors and dead bodies floating in the flotsam left by the *Lusitania*, and lovely studies of the Grand Fleet at sea and the Battle of Jutland. A terrific painting by Stephen Bone offers a three-dimensional perspective looking up the conning tower of a submarine (103). While most of the paintings depict well-known events, Fairley included two evocative water colours by G.L. Parnell, of a British fleet created in the Caspian Sea in 1919 (62). Most of the pictures are of ships, but Anthony Gross' view of a board game in progress in the claustrophobic mess deck of a troop ship during the artist's long voyage around Africa gives a vivid sense of cramped living conditions (94).

The narrative does not describe every incident depicted; nor does it talk about every war artist. Two fine paintings of First World War convoys by Herbert John Everett (23, 30) convey a palpable sense of how ships out on the ocean move and look. The images are unexplained but, according to Wikipedia, the artist did spend time at sea as a merchant ship officer; perhaps this helps explain his extraordinary ability to put the viewer out on the water. Another unexplained artist is Yuunosuke Kojima, whose dramatic view of *Prince of Wales* under attack in 1941 appears on page 115. The text includes a discussion of the role of the Western Approaches Tactical Unit in Liverpool during the Second World War, and unexpectedly for a book about war art, an appendix reproduces a document about the Western Approaches Tactical Policy in April 1943. As for Canadian content, there is a painting by Simon Fisher of Lieutenant R.H. Gray's attack on a Japanese escort in 1945 (119), and one by Arthur Lismer showing the liner *Olympic* as a transport bringing troops home to Halifax after the Great War (27).

*The Royal Navy in Action* presents a compelling collection of marine art spanning the years 1914-2021. Some paintings by well-known British artists like Eurich, Wilkinson, and Wyllie have appeared in other books, but most are less well known and fresh. These dramatic and evocative depictions have been superbly chosen and attractively reproduced. They are supported by a running text describing actions by the Royal Navy over the last century.

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**James Goulty. *Naval Eyewitnesses: The Experiences of War 1939-45*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk), 2022. xxii+208 pp., illustrations, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, US \$49.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39900-071-0. (E-book available.)**

Having already published books on the experiences of airmen and soldiers in the Second World War and Korean War, James Goultly continues to have a special interest in the training and combat experience of ordinary airmen, soldiers, and sailors. In his first chapter, sailors describe how life differed in battleships, cruisers, destroyers, minesweepers, coastal forces, all the way down to motor torpedo boats and even to landing craft. It really shows that sailors could find a style of life that fitted their personalities – from rigid top-down authority to being part of a team.

Next, the author chronicles the history of British naval aviation and aircraft carriers and the sailors' impressions of their aircraft. He explains why British aircraft were not as good as American planes. Training of pilots involved not only learning to fly, but also practicing take-offs from and landing onto a moving ship. Some operational experiences (e.g., torpedoing *Bismarck*, attacking the Italian navy at Taranto, and surviving Kamikaze attacks) are told by those involved. Life on board submarines, whether large or small, including the even smaller four-crew X-craft and chariots, and their exploits are described in chapter 3 along with anti-submarine warfare. The latter subject area continues into the next chapter which describes convoy experiences whether they were in North Atlantic, to Malta, or to Murmansk/Archangel. Particular mention is made of PQ-17.

All of chapter 5 is devoted to amphibious landings, from the learning experiences in 1940 at Dakar, to the small-scale raids by Combined Operations (including HMS *Campbelton*'s intentional destruction at St. Nazaire (March 1942), landings in North Africa (November 1942), Sicily (July 1943), Italy (September 1943), Normandy (June 1944) and even the raids along the coast of Burma (1945). How landing craft landed at beaches and then extracted themselves after unloading is well described.

To answer the question why choose the navy, a veteran of the First World War trenches advised his son about the various branches of the armed forces: "Air Force: what goes up must come down; Army: you're cannon fodder; Navy: three-square meals and a dry bed until the ship goes down" (163). In chapter 6, the author relates sailors' lives at sea, as well as the experiences of sailors and Wrens at shore establishments in terms of welfare, entertainment, rations, food, drink, love, romance, and sex. The author ends the chapter with a short section on the experiences of survivors of sinkings and of prisoners of war. The German name for prisoner of war camps for naval sailors was "Marlags" and for merchant mariner sailors was "Milags". Chapter 7 concludes the book with demobilisation and sailors' personal reflections on their wartime service.

What I liked about the book was the author's comprehensive appreciation of what it was to be a sailor in wartime. Lots of books describe naval actions, usually in terms of ships doing this or that, possibly featuring the captain or,

remotely, a heroic act. Goulty tells the story from the perspective of the ordinary sailor or officer who was there. Despite growing up with small boats and spending about a year's worth of sea-time on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic Oceans, I still learned a lot about wartime life at sea. There is a comprehensive, six-page Timeline covering events from the 1921 Washington Naval Treaty to VJ Day which serves as a useful reference source for future reading.

The book is full of direct quotations from written material, but also from transcripts of oral recordings. The latter can be somewhat disjointed and could have been lightly edited. Thoughtfully, Goulty makes good use of explanations inside square brackets to define what is meant by words or phrases.

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**John D Grainger. *The British Navy in Eastern Waters. The Indian and Pacific Oceans*. Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, [www.boydellandbrewer.com](http://www.boydellandbrewer.com), 2022. vii+319 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. UK £85.00, US \$99.00, hardback; ISBN 978-1-78327-677-6. (E-book available).**

*The British Navy in Eastern Waters* summarizes the role that the Royal Navy played in both bodies of water from the age of sail through the end of the Second World War. Grainger opens his work with the birth of the East India Company and follows its evolution and influence in the Indian and Pacific Ocean region. In the process, he outlines the various conflicts that the Company and, later, the Royal Navy had with the various kingdoms that formed India, as well as foreign competitors, such as the Dutch and the French. Perhaps most enlightening is his exploration of the activities going on in these regions in the midst of larger conflicts. For example, the American Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars both had an effect on these far-flung regions, as well as affecting the conflicts on the European continent. Although Grainger touches on the American Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, he does not dwell on them. Rather, he focuses on the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the surrounding environments. He follows the emergence and rise of the East India Company, with an examination of its gradual evolution into the modern British Empire, away from a mercantile organization to one charged with maintaining and defending a global empire. Finally, he concludes with a brief examination of the role the Royal Navy played in this part of the world during the twentieth century.

The greatest strength of this particular work is the broad overview of the role the East India Company and Royal Navy played in shaping the region, and the impact those events had on the British Empire as a whole. In almost