

Osprey's various titles. Yet most scholars already familiar with the battle will find nothing that is new within its pages, as the author's bibliography consists entirely of a collection of the "greatest hits" published about it over the past 75 years. While he uses these to write a work that is a good introduction for someone new to the subject, anyone who has already read the fine books published about the battle by Samuel Eliot Morison, C. Vann Woodward, or H. P. Willmott can afford to pass on this one.

Mark Klobas
Phoenix, Arizona

Keith Thomson. *Born to be Hanged: The Epic Story of the Gentlemen Pirates, Who Raided the South Seas, Rescued a Princess, and Stole a Fortune.* New York, Boston and London: Little, Brown & Company, www.littlebrown.com, 2022. 371pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$32.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-3167-0-3611.

Although there have been many nonfiction books about the pirate era, occasionally one work sets a new standard for this genre. *Born to be Hanged* achieves this benchmark. It is maritime history, almost written in the style of an adventure novel. The vivid narration features graphic accounts of sea and land battles, treasure seeking, fierce storms, perilous jungle treks and river rides, mutinies, and improbable plot twists.

The book is divided into three sections: "The Sacred Hunger for Gold, The South Seas, and Straits." The main protagonist is Basil Ringrose, supported by many colourful characters such as Bartholomew Sharp, Lionel Wafer, William Dampier, Edward Cook, John Cox, William Dick, and "a cameo" featuring Henry Morgan. Ringrose was a surgeon who joined a buccaneer band led by Sharp in 1679. They crossed the Isthmus of Darien to attack Panama, and later, seized a ship to cruise the eastern Pacific. Leadership disputes erupted and the pirate alliance broke up. Ringrose and Sharp continued on sailing around Cape Horn for the first time from west to east. They journeyed to the Caribbean, and later arrived at Dartmouth, England, in 1681. As the tale unfolds, Thomson ponders the character traits of these unusual and complex characters. This account was largely based upon Ringrose's supplement to John Esquemeling's 1685 book *The Buccaneers of America* and influence by Dampier's *The Campeachy Voyages* and *A New Voyage Round the World*.

The first part introduces the maritime adventurers in the quest for riches, largely gold and silver, valuable commodities believed to be found on the isthmus of Panama in the Darien jungle. Much of this section involves the search for a kidnapped indigenous Kuna princess, and a wild trek across the jungle and tempestuous rivers from the East Coast to the west ending in the

Pacific. This is followed by a peripatetic, wide-ranging south sea adventure more focused upon the search for treasure on remote Pacific islands and settlements, but certainly piratical in nature. The pirate code “politics” allowed for the election of their captains and the distribution of wealth or bounty, which often led to untimely and unexpected leadership shifts. The buccaneer band covered a vast amount of uncharted ocean and encountered many clashes with the Spanish and some native people. The last section is a homeward bound tale where the motley band became the first documented mariners to successfully sail from the Pacific to the Atlantic around “The Horn” and ultimately to England. Their next problem was that as survivors, now criminals, they had to face Admiralty law justice. The result was an unexpected conclusion under the Admiralty Court’s iconic “Silver Oar.”

Thomson’s book contains instances of exceptionally graphic and moving prose. Although it is unusual to include long quotes in a review, the following samples will hopefully capture the tone:

The Darien jungle ... instantly cut off from the rest of the world by throbbing, fecund darkness. Sixty feet overhead, branches, leaves, and vines grappled with one another, in a competition for sunlight, forming a veritable ceiling. Every so often a speck of blue sky appeared through this canopy, illuminating a galaxy of flowers on his underside.... The men were concerned with bongos, squat trees, whose roots spread across the forest floor, like tentacles, and pochotes whose trunks were coated with thorns, bigger, and sharper than goat’s horns.... Worse were the Chunga palms, whose long spines appeared designed to pierce human flesh, and deliver a dose of infectious bacteria when they did.... [Also] manchineel trees, known for the dangerous fruit [that] ‘smell and look like a pleasant apple, small and fragrant, but of a poisonous nature’.... Its bark was also to be avoided on account of its milky white toxic sap (22).

As the whiskey took hold, the surgeon opened his instrument case, which was, pragmatically died red. Beside the sailcloth-draped platform that would serve as the operating table, he laid out his instruments, including an ‘amputation knife’ that resembled a curved dagger, along with a scissors-handled ‘crow’s beak’ clamp used to constrict blood flow, and, for the same purpose, several metal cauteries that he would heat in his fire pot.... [A] wooden rod or stick [was] given to the patient to bite down on during the operation so that it ... could curtail screams that might interfere with the surgeon’s focus. And if ever a surgeon needed focus, it was during a shift forward above-the-knee amputation, which was analogous to carving a large rib roast while it was still attached to a living cow” (105-106).

The medical profession has been aware of scurvy—the name is derived from the word *scurf*, meaning scaly, skin, or lesions.... [In the advanced]

second stage of the disease, the gums turn purple and soften to the consistency of a sponge, causing teeth to loosen, if the disease persisted for two more weeks, the symptoms would also include ecchymoses, enormous purple-blue bruises on the skin that develop into open sores and ulcer. . . . [The body] begins to deteriorate, leaving the body like a brick building suddenly without mortar. Blood vessels tear, bones easily break, and the wounds cannot heal” (186 -188).

In summary, Keith Thomson’s *Born to be Hanged* is an extraordinary book. It is very well written and among the most readable maritime histories focused upon the late-seventeenth-century pirate era. I unreservedly recommend the work to maritime scholars as well as lay readers interested in the life and times of this period and the many colourful characters that populate this complex, exciting tale.

Louis Arthur Norton
West Simsbury, Connecticut

Guy Warner. *Atlantic Linchpin: The Azores in Two World Wars*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, www.seaforthpublishing.com, 2021. 160 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £24.97, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39901-090-0. (E-book available.)

In *Atlantic Linchpin: The Azores in Two World Wars*, Guy Warner explores the role that the islands in the Portuguese archipelago of the Azores played in the First and Second World Wars. He also briefly discusses relevant events before, between, and after both conflicts.

Wasting little time, the author examines the importance of aviation in the First World War, focusing on how both the United States and the United Kingdom developed air bases on the islands. He also explores the activities of the various units stationed on the islands, including anti-submarine warfare and search and rescue. Of note is the role of United States Marine Corps in the Azores, a seldom-discussed aspect of aviation history. Following a brief discussion of expansion and development on the islands between the conflicts, the author moves on to the Second World War, with the United States Navy and the Royal Airforce Coastal Command providing search and rescue support, anti-submarine warfare, convoy escort, and ship replenishment and maintenance. Warner then discusses the fate of various airfield once the islands transitioned back to civilian life after the war.

Accessible to both students of naval aviation and first-time readers, the book reads like a unit or instillation history, focusing on the activities of units and missions conducted from the various airfields, rather than a single unit or individual – a book about places rather than people. Readers unfamiliar with the role of the Azores, or even Portugal, during both world wars will find