

great naval leaders. His analysis will engage the reader and lead to further work, whether to argue a point or to dive deeper into one aspect or another of Anson's life, Admiralty functioning in the mid-eighteenth century, or the Byng affair. This book will appeal to the academic, and the independent maritime scholar.

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James H. Bruns. *Black Sailors in the Civil War. A History of Fugitives, Freeman, and Freedmen Aboard Union Vessels.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishing, www.mcfarlandbooks.com, 2023. 246 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$39.65, cloth: ISBN 978-1-4766-90544-4. (E-book available.)

James Brun's scholarly and moving work explores a topic that has rarely been written about, the crucial role of fugitive, free and freed Black men who served in the Union Navy during the American Civil War. Bruns presents documented accounts of former slaves (whom he refers to as contrabands) and free men, some of whom volunteered to join the union army. These men were not really integrated into combat units until late in the war. Others became Union Navy sailors on board naval vessels and fared much better as largely accepted, essential members of the crew. They saw a great deal of combat, serving in many capacities from coal stokers to gun crews, some achieving enlisted leadership positions. Many were decorated and several received the Congressional Medal of Honor for their extraordinary valour while in the naval service.

As slaves, death could come through accident, disease, suicide, or brutality, but working as a member of a military unit brought an opportunity for social dignity that was previously unattainable. The navy was by far the safest service to be in during that brutal war. "During the entire war, the United States Navy reportedly lost only 4,523 sailors killed in action, from accidents or disease. More seamen died of disease than combat (2,411 verses 2,112). The casualty rate within the Navy was roughly 2.7 percent. Comparatively, Union Army losses during the war due to combat, accident or disease have been estimated at 325,000 or roughly 27 percent, although this number is now thought to be underestimated" (176). The author states that sailors were far more likely to survive the war than the typical soldier. Also, some slaves living in the swampy south had natural or developed immunity to some insect-transmitted diseases that were debilitating to their white shipmates.

Bruns describes the brutality of life under slavery, and that escape,

although very difficult, was preferable. If a slave worked by a seaport or major river, or even swamp land, it was easier to escape. Often these slaves had developed rudimentary and occasionally, sophisticated skills, that could be used on vessels. The author goes on to describe the abject cruelty, and how some slaves overcame the hardships.

Once integrated into the Union Navy, they were either assigned to the blue water units, ocean-going vessels that operated as part of the Anaconda Blockade of southern ports, or the brown water riverine navy that largely worked in conjunction with army units supporting capture of inland ports or coastal harbour cities to cut off commerce, particularly the export of cotton, and the importation of salt for food preservation and metals for armament and munitions.

The author does deviate from the title's theme but provides graphic and moving descriptions of important naval battles such as the capturing of the ports on the upper Mississippi, the siege of Vicksburg, the subjugation of the Red River, and the famous battle of Mobile Bay. In doing so, he describes the character, heroism and weaknesses of Admirals David Farragut, David Dixon Porter, Andrew Hull Foote, John Adolphus Dahlgren, Samuel Francis Du Pont, and Theodorus Bailey. Bruns also discusses how President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward and Secretary of War Edwin McMasters Stanton influenced the conduct of the naval war through the intrepid and sometimes beleaguered Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. The latter emerges as sympathetic, decisive and to some degree, heroic. Bruns also describes the evolution of naval ships during the war from wooden to iron-clad to the various types of monitors, (river, coastal and ocean categories), their uses advantages and vulnerabilities. He concludes his book with anecdotes about manumission; how former slaves, now naval veteran sailors, fared in emancipation within a post-war society. Stories about run aways, northern Black mariners, heroes like the legendary boat stealing pirate Robert Smalls, as well as Navy Medal of Honor awardees John H. Lawson, John Davis, Wilson Brown, William H. Brown, James Mifflin, Joachim Pease, Thomas English, and Aaron Anderson. Also, the creation of the Grand National Sailor's Fair to help care for disabled and infirm veterans, a precursor of the 1865 Veteran's Administration.

This is a totally enjoyable and instructive book, even if the author did stray from his title's theme now and then. One very minor point: Bruns refers to all Civil War major Union Naval Vessels with the prefix USS, surprising with his Department of the Navy's Museum System and Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) background, he referred to Confederate Navy vessels as CSS rather than the customary CSN. From the beginnings of the US Navy there had been no standard method of referring to US Navy ships. According to the

NHHC, on 8 January 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt issued Executive Order 549 stating that all US Navy ships were to be referred to as “The name of such vessel, preceded by the words, United States Ship, or the letters USS, and by no other words or letters.”

In summary, *Black Sailors in the Civil War* is a well written history of a topic which is rarely discussed and one which is important in today’s American political climate. The author has put forth many thought-provoking images and historical accounts. The book, although relatively brief, is full of worthwhile information. I recommend this to all maritime historians, especially those whose interest is the American Civil War and those who fought in its opposing navies.

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Alex Buchner (Janice W. Ancker, trans.). *Narvik: The Struggle of Battle Group Dietl in the Spring of 1940*. Oxford, UK: Casemate Publishers, www.casematepublishers.com, 2020. xxi+218 pp., maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. UK £35.00, US \$45.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-61200-917-9. (Casemate - Die Wehrmacht im Kampf series.)

Buchner’s book was originally written in 1958 and has now been translated into English by Janice W. Ancker. Buchner joined the German Army in 1939 (aged 19) and served throughout the war in various mountain troop formations, rising to the rank of lieutenant, and serving as a company commander by 1945. This was one of many similar volumes written by various authors at the time that focused exclusively on operational and tactical matters. As such, it reflects its origins and certainly does not delve into the political or ethical questions that rightly predominate today. German veterans, their families, and survivors of the Nazi regime in general largely failed to confront their history and their responsibilities in the decade and a half after the war. Although perceptions certainly changed over time, this volume serves as both a signpost for attitudes in the immediate post-war period, as well as some specifics of this fascinating campaign.

Readers familiar with the Allied perspective on the defeat suffered in Norway, will be interested in examining the views of those on the other side of the hill. There existed at the time, and continues to this day, an abiding respect for the operational and tactical capacity of the Wehrmacht that did not desert the German forces until the final months of the war. At the time of the Norwegian Campaign (April to May 1940), however, this superiority was in the early stages, overshadowed by the German conquest of France in May and