

rivalries, war scares with Russia, and occasional armed demonstrations in local affairs gave the aging ironclads continuing relevance. By 1900, the now 35-year-old armoured iron ships and their guns were clearly obsolete, even for limited coastal defence roles, and they were struck from strength.

Besides the basic story of initial intrigue and later normal routine of the Laird ironclads, the book also provides considerable technical explanation in the context of changes to naval warfare and ship design, and rich descriptions of primary and secondary weapons carried on board the ships. The two ironclads, as originally conceived, were intended to operate near coastal waters and break, once and for all, the strangling Union blockade, which gave the ram a certain prominence, and reflected contemporary opinion about the importance of that weapon. The main guns housed in manually rotating turrets midships represented another notable innovation. The piercing effects of shell against armour attracted considerable attention, in which the Laird ironclads were at the start of a seesaw contest between guns versus armour based upon key industrial and ordnance improvements. Additional rapid firing guns and machine guns, such as the Nordenfelt, furnished increased firepower in close-quarter combat and an ability to ward off attacking torpedo boats. The armour-clads possessed the ability to fire their own Whitehead torpedoes, and as reconfigured, could carry their own torpedo boats for independent action. English points out, however, that any firing of the main guns was likely to damage or smash the torpedo boats kept on deck, and hoisting them out would have been very difficult in anything less than ideal sea conditions. Numerous illustrations picked by English from his own collections and the National Maritime Museum accompany the text, and are an important feature of the book and its account.

The Laird Rams is a serious book with academic and popular appeal. It can be read in conjunction with Howard Fuller's *Clad in Iron* (2008), from which it references. The book is recommended for readers interested in the American Civil War, the Confederate Navy, afloat coastal defences, and the technical and armament aspects of naval warfare in the second half of the nineteenth century.

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Eugenio Luis Facchin. *The Untold Story of a Fighting Ship: One Ship, Two Flags, A Thousand Battles*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Springer Nature, www.link.springer.com, 2023. xiii+193 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography. US \$37.99, paper ; ISBN 978-3-030-92624-3. (E-book available.)

Eugenio Luis Facchin's *The Untold Story of a Fighting Ship* tells the story of the Argentine naval vessel ARA Bouchard, formerly the USS Borie (DD-704) of the United States Navy from its commissioning until its final disposal. He covers the ship's entire service history, emphasizing the role the ship played during the Falklands War while in the service of the Argentine Navy. He reveals the changes that warships undergo during long service lives, and in the service of multiple nations, illustrating how ships are adapted to suit changes in environment and role depending on the state of technology and the needs of the navy in question.

The author begins with a brief but comprehensive description of the technical details of the ship. He thoroughly documents the major systems and equipment aboard the ARA Bouchard, using tables to lay out the technical specifications of each of the ship's major systems. While useful for readers who may not have access to primary sources from the builder or comprehensive reference sources, the degree of detail may be too much for the casual reader. Nevertheless, those who are looking for baseline knowledge concerning the initial construction and alteration of a warship across time and nations will find it fascinating. After his technical breakdown of the ship, he explores the ship's service while it was the USS Borie, briefly discussing its role in the Second World War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Following this the author provides background on the ship's namesake, Hippolyte Bouchard (1780-1837), and his role as a sailor and corsair in Argentine history.

The last two-thirds of the book recounts the history of the Bouchard in the Argentine Navy, including the Falklands War. He opens with a summary of the diplomatic, political, and social factors that led to the conflict with Britain, predominantly from the Argentine perspective, although he includes British sources and viewpoints. On the Argentine side, Facchin depicts a country that was militarily unprepared for conflict. For example, ARA Bouchard was beset by technical problems, along with both strengths and weaknesses in the Argentine Navy that emerged during the war. Finally, he discusses the post-war role of the Bouchard and its subsequent decommissioning and disposal.

Facchin's work provides something for all students of maritime and naval history. While perhaps too technical for the casual reader at times, there is something for the readers interested in the construction and outfitting of late Second World War warships, and the changes they underwent as technology evolved after the war. On the other hand, the book will offer valuable insight to readers unfamiliar with the 10-week undeclared war between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands in 1982, but with more emphasis on the Argentinian background and battles than the British. The Argentine perspective is valuable, however, as are the Spanish language sources that might not be easily accessible in a translated format. While not footnoted, the author

documents his sources by chapter and his bibliography provides references and resources for exploring the narrative further.

As with all accounts written by participants in a conflict, the work should be viewed in a larger context. The author uses war diaries and ship histories rather than individual memoirs and recollections, which helps with a balanced narrative. Even though Facchin does not delve into his own role in the conflict, the story occasionally becomes personal and less objective. On the other hand, it offers English-language speakers an introduction to the Falklands War through one of its ships, and provides a useful contribution to current and future historical study of a conflict that remains unresolved.

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Stan Fisher. *Sustaining the Carrier War: The Deployment of US Naval Air Power to the Pacific*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2023. xv+288 pp., illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. US \$32.95, hardback; ISBN 9781682478479. (E-book available)

Anyone visiting an academic library can find plenty of shelves bowing under the weight of books about the naval air battles in the Pacific during the Second World War. In the decades since that war, a veritable mountain of memoirs, popular histories, and scholarly monographs have been published recounting the campaigns waged in the Pacific theatre, most of which feature the role played by naval air power within it. Given the sheer weight of these accumulated works, it is difficult to imagine that there is anything new to add about the subject. Yet in writing a book about how the United States Navy addressed the challenges of aircraft maintenance in the Pacific during the war, not only has Stan Fisher identified an important aspect of it that has long gone unaddressed, he has written a book that goes a long way towards filling this regrettable gap in our knowledge of the conflict.

The core problem, of course, is a longstanding one when it comes to military history, namely the traditional focus on the “teeth” at the expense of any proportionate coverage of the “tail.” Yet numbers alone demonstrate the folly of such neglect. To support the eighty-two planes which comprised the original aircraft complement on the Essex-class aircraft carriers, for example, it was estimated that a crew of over 200 officers and 2,171 enlisted personnel would be needed, with approximately half of them assigned to air group operations. Such numbers reflected the effort required to equip and maintain the planes, an effort that as Fisher explains only grew with the increasing complexity of the aircraft. How the Navy addressed the challenge of training these men for their