

increased specialization and the commissioning of dedicated assembly and repair vessels. Yet Fisher notes that, over time, the heavy tempo of air group operations fueled the emergence of a “throwaway culture” in maintenance, as the enormous output of American factories made it simpler to replace damaged planes rather than to undertake major repairs. Formalized by the 1944 Radford Board, their conclusion had the added benefit of reducing the need to have large amounts of spare parts at hand, which freed up space in hangars for more airplanes and, in turn, increased the combat capability of the carriers.

While such a label may seem pejorative, Fisher argues that this throwaway culture made sense within the context of the war in which the United States Navy was engaged. It also underscores his larger argument about the role played by naval aircraft technicians in defining the scale and the pace of the carrier war. In giving these men the recognition that they have long been denied, he provides a valuable study of how the USN met the need for skilled labour and adds significantly to our understanding of the broader subject of naval logistics in the Pacific theatre during the conflict. His book should become necessary reading for anyone interested in naval logistics or the larger challenges of developing a technical workforce in an industrial war.

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**Ian Friel. *Breaking Seas, Broken Ships. People, Shipwrecks and Britain, 1854–2007*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword History, [www-pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www-pen-and-sword.co.uk), 2021. 176 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, US \$49.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-52677-150-6.**

Ian Friel’s latest book tells seven stories of sunken vessels, hardship, death, and destruction covering 153 years of British seafaring. In this era, Britain moved from ruling the waves in the centre of an empire to an island nation with a large network of trading partners. Although the stories themselves do not connect, the theme of their swansong is the same. The author shows that it sometimes takes more than bad luck or foul weather to create a catastrophe at sea. Sheer incompetence, criminal negligence, greed or mistakes in a ship’s design, or slow development in laws and regulation are, by themselves, or in combination, often the cause of disaster. And yet, as we stand on the shoulders of giants, we learn from mistakes, don’t we? As vessels become larger, the cargo per ship has a higher value than a decade ago. Once the exclusive riches of the East, the ‘high end’ products were the aim of western trade. Nowadays, the factories in the East produce western-designed products in high volumes. Asia has become the factory of the world. The volume of goods transported

around the world is at its zenith. If something goes wrong, it goes seriously wrong. Remember the container ship that became lodged in the middle of the Suez Canal in March 2021, its bow stuck in the banks of the world's transport artery? Although the ship was not substantially damaged, the interruption of delivery schedules exposed the vulnerability of world trade. When container vessels get stranded, grounded or lose a large part of their cargo at sea, the result is always messy. The response of governments to these incidents is not always remembered in the halls of fame and ingenuity.

After the tanker, *Torrey Canyon*, struck on Cornish rocks in 1967, the Royal Air Force targeted it with bombs, rockets, and napalm, to try to get rid of the oil. The operation failed dismally, the shores of Cornwall, the island Guernsey, and Brittany in France, endured a black tide of thick oil. It was an unprecedented environmental disaster. Sometimes the public volunteers to help with the clean-up such as the case of the MSC *Napoli* damaged off the southern coast of England in 2007. From the containers that the ship had lost, the cargo—like food, engine parts, needles, and airbags—was 'saved' by local people, in the tradition of their ancestors, true "wreckers", who had done this for generations. I remember the image of someone pushing a BMW motorcycle up a cliff path. I envied that man. *Breaking Seas, Broken Ships* is not just about severe weather and lost ships, it is also about personal tragedy and courage, on occasion sprinkled with downright hilarious detail. A joy to read.

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**Brian Lane Herder. *US Navy Armored Cruisers 1890-1933*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, [www.ospreypublishing.com](http://www.ospreypublishing.com), 2022. 48 pp., illustrations, tables, bibliography, index. UK £11.99, US \$19.00, CDN \$25.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4728-5100-0.**

This work is the 311<sup>th</sup> title released as part of Osprey Publishing's New Vanguard Series and Brian Herder's tenth. Building on his previous entries, Herder examines yet another turn-of-the-century collection of American warships, this time the US Navy's (USN) twelve armoured cruisers. Controversial for their comparatively limited armour and expensive cost, Herder argues that these ships were "among the finest of their type in the world" (47). This he illustrates through two analyses; the first detailing the cruisers' design and development, and the second covering the vessels' operational histories. The latter portion is naturally focused on the Spanish-American War (1898) and the First World War (1914-1918), given that these were the primary combat experiences for American armoured cruisers. Period photographs, period and contemporary