

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

artworks, profile illustrations, and one sectional view illustrate both discussed vessels and actions, with a select bibliography and index present to round out the text.-

The brief introduction, consisting of three short paragraphs, offers some basic information on the purpose of armoured cruisers, the classes produced by the United States, and the changing of their names as new warship designs evolved. From here, Herder dives into design and development, briefly covering the impetus for the creation of armoured cruisers, their perceived effectiveness over time, their classification, construction commonalities, and materials used in the designs. The remaining section examines the various classes in three groups, consisting of the early designs constructed between 1893 and 1896, the “Big Ten” of 1905 to 1908, and the semi-armoured St. Louis class of 1905 to 1906. There is good usage of comparative charts and tables in this section, with specification breakdowns for each class, basic construction and service information for each vessel, and a comparison of the USS *Tennessee* to other contemporary warships. The additional inclusion of the Navy’s three semi-armoured cruisers in this section offers interesting comparative data when set against their fully armoured cousins.

The operational history component of the work drops right into the narrative of the Spanish-American War with the deployment of the *New York* and *Brooklyn*. Given that Santiago de Cuba was the primary combat experience of the armoured cruisers, it receives detailed coverage, with period photographs and modern illustrations used to further highlight the narrative. General operations in the Atlantic and Pacific between 1899 and 1917 each receive roughly a page of text, with the peacetime losses of the *Memphis* and *Milwaukee* to a rogue wave and accidental grounding respectively receiving separate in-depth coverage. The armoured cruiser’s role in the birth of naval aviation is also explored, with references to Ely’s 1911 landing on the *Pennsylvania*, early use of balloons, and various catapult experiments. The First World War merits slightly more than a page of text, with a similar amount of analysis specifically on the loss of the *San Diego* to a German mine off the coast of New York in 1918. This is followed by a rather a brief coverage of post-war service before Herder offers his conclusions, largely that American armoured cruisers were key ships during the Spanish American War, vital testbeds for naval aviation, and the progenitors of the idealized “fast battleships” that would be developed and utilized during the Second World War (47).

A few possible improvements come to mind. While the work’s title claims to extend from 1890 to 1933, its primary focus is on events prior to the end of the First World War. As such, an expansion of the post-1918 service lives of the ships beyond the current single image and lone page of text would be appreciated, especially concerning the Asiatic Fleet service of several vessels.

Some of the images such as those showing combat scenes from the Spanish-American War are too small, making it hard to discern details. Increasing their size would increase their effectiveness. Removing the rather noticeable “Getty Images” banners across two images would also improve their usefulness. (4, 35) The profile illustrations, while detailed, lack an indication as to the size of the vessels in comparison to each other. This could be accomplished via the addition of a scale or a side-by-side comparison of line profiles for the different classes. Finally, there is mention early in the design section of armour types accompanied by a table on equivalency without a statement as to what the information is equivalent to. Given the importance of armour to the design of these cruisers, a more in-depth explanation of the different types and the reasons for their varied effectiveness would be appreciated.

*US Navy Armored Cruisers* serves as a decent primer for those interested in American armoured cruisers at the turn of the century and the First World War. Herder offers insight into each of the vessel designs and covers their major actions in terms of combat, accidents, and their role at the dawn of naval aviation. The coverage of cruiser participation in the Battle of Santiago de Cuba is solid for those studying the Spanish-American War, and the inclusion of information on all three cruisers lost in the 1910s offers insight to readers interested in German operations off the Atlantic Coast, salvage operations, and the effects of rough weather on capital ships. While the text could be expanded to add more detail on the nuances of design and the post-war service of surviving vessels, *US Navy Armored Cruisers* offers an introductory exposure to an often overlooked ensemble of warships.

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**James D. Hornfischer. *Who Can Hold the Sea: the US Navy in the Cold War, 1945-1960*. New York, Bantam, 2022. xviii+459 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. US \$36.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-39917-864-1.**

This book is a history of the United States Navy (USN) during the first third of the Cold War, which was that period of intense rivalry, verging on warfare, between countries of the Communist Bloc and the West following the Second World War. The period covered is a turbulent phase of American history with the “Red Scare” playing out in the press and in society after a long period of western co-operation with the Soviet Union and China. The aim of the book is unequivocal: “to develop the story of this global institution as a protector of the national interest” (4). The title is based on a quote from Themistocles, a Greek naval strategist, which appears at the beginning of the