

prints, portraits and paintings, draughts, diagrams, and numerous well-chosen colour photographs of model products by John McKay, all contribute to this beautifully illustrated publication.

It is in the above-described sections on model products and appearance where one really begins to appreciate the craft of ship modelmaking, from laying the keel to the framing, fitting and rigging. There is enormous value in these models in helping maritime historians understand how sailing ships were actually built and outfitted. It is hoped that this series will build on the success of the Jang guides by introducing further such works on period sailing ships.

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**Philip Kaplan. *Naval Air: Celebrating a Century of Naval Flying*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen and Sword Maritime, [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk), 2022. 208 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. UK £11.99, US \$29.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-39907-505-5.**

Soon after the Wright Brothers' first airplane flight on 17 December 1903, military men began to consider the airplane as a potential weapon of war, particularly for navies. In *Naval Air: Celebrating a Century of Naval Flying*, Philip Kaplan has written an overview of the applications and many of the personalities that mark naval aviation over time.

By the First World War, most of the combatants had a naval air arm in addition to their air force; Great Britain, the United States, France, Imperial Russia, Greece, Imperial Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire had naval aircraft. They were, however, either land-based or amphibious, such as floatplanes or flying boats. While Great Britain experimented with aircraft carriers as early as 1912, it was not until late in the First World War that the first practicable aircraft carrier, HMS *Furious*, was developed. Trial and error, and the death of at least one naval pilot, led to the basic operating procedure—takeoffs from the forward end of the carrier and landings at the aft end.

In the 1920s, the US Navy (USN) and the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) developed aircraft carriers in addition to the British Royal Navy. Shortly thereafter, the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 limited the development of aircraft carriers to the same three nations and imposed tonnage limits for aircraft carriers. Further restrictions on naval air development came during the Depression of the 1930s, but technology still advanced, albeit at a reduced level.

The onset of war and consequent rearmament meant that the three carrier-possessing nations accelerated naval air and aircraft carrier development. The

Second World War was naval aviation's "big war" – with the British Fleet Air Arm (FAA), the USN's Naval Aviation, and the IJN's air arm playing major roles in that conflict. Since 1945, naval aviation has been involved in many conflicts—the Korean War, the Indochina and Vietnam Wars, the Falkland Islands War, and the more recent conflicts in the Mideast.

Kaplan's book is a brief history of this most important military service. His book has seventeen sections: an introduction; The First Carriers; Washington (describing the 1922 Washington Naval Conference and Treaty); the FAA's raid on the Italian Navy base at Taranto in 1940; the IJN aerial attack on Pearl Harbor; the famous Doolittle Raid on Imperial Japan in 1942; a review of movies on aircraft carriers and naval aviation; the carrier-fought battles of the Coral Sea and Midway; a brief review of naval aces, beginning with First World War naval aces and continuing into aces from the Second World War; sections on naval aviation in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Falklands; a review of carrier aircraft beginning in 1935 up to the present; a description of what goes on in an aircraft carrier strike group; the advent of women pilots on board carriers; helicopter operations; and a final section on flight training and operations. The bibliography has a short list of very basic and traditional sources on naval aviation. A good selection of relevant photographs is included in the centre of the book.

One of the review comments on the back cover of the book states that it is a "comprehensive and detailed account" of naval aircraft operations. Kaplan's accounts of the Washington Naval Conference and Treaty are accurate and provide sufficient detail to satisfy most readers. Likewise, his account of the FAA's attack on Taranto, the IJN's attack on Pearl Harbor, and the Doolittle Raid (all of which had to be included, despite the many works available on those attacks) are also satisfactorily detailed. His narrations of naval air in Korea, Vietnam, and the Falklands are detailed enough to spark a reader's curiosity for further investigation.

It must be noted that Kaplan's sections on aces and carrier planes are necessarily selective. For example, the aces section starts with a review of the career of Raymond Collishaw of Nanaimo, British Columbia, the leading First World War naval ace, and ending with Joseph Foss of the US Marine Corps, all of whose aerial victories came in USMC service in the Second World War. Similarly, Kaplan starts the section on carrier planes with the Second World War Fairey Swordfish, a description of the principal naval fighters and bombers of that great conflict, and more brief descriptions of the many jet aircraft and early warning aircraft so necessary to carrier protection in any day and age. These segments may cause the novice to the topic to do more research into naval aces and carrier aircraft.

Kaplan's section on women carrier pilots is informative and helpful. He

does go into detail on the death of USN Lieutenant Kara Hultgreen, one of the first women combat pilots in the USN. She was piloting an F-14 fighter in October 1994, when one engine on the aircraft malfunctioned during landing approach. The result was an investigation into the cause of the accident and a renewed controversy as to whether women should be allowed in combat roles.

In short, this is a useful book; not always one for an expert demanding in-depth narrative of some topics therein, but helpful to a novice in the field and a good read.

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**Angus Konstam. *Barents Sea 1942: The Battle for Russia's Arctic Lifeline*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, [www.ospreypublishing.com](http://www.ospreypublishing.com), 2022. 96 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. UK £15.99, US \$24.00, CDN\$32.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4728-4845-1.**

The Allied Arctic convoys supplying the Soviet Union via its northern ports with all kinds of military equipment were not only critical for the defeat of Nazi Germany during the Second World War, but they operated in a gruesome theatre of war, in one of the most challenging parts of the world's oceans, especially during winter. It is no wonder, therefore, that there is a rich historiography on the subject, addressed from a wide variety of historical perspectives including naval, maritime and many other historical (sub-)disciplines.

*Barents Sea 1942: The Battle for Russia's Arctic Lifelines* focuses on Allied Convoy JW51B, and the so-called Battle of the Barents Sea, fought in the darkness of the Arctic night. As part of Osprey's Campaign Series, Konstam's goal was not a new historical or analytical take on the subject, but rather, a purely descriptive approach, designed for readers who are interested in (or even fascinated by) the details of this battle.

This approach works well, thanks to the easy-to-read text that explains the full details of a complex campaign, establishes the historical facts of operations on both sides of the conflict, discusses the motives behind individual actions, and is supported by a good number of historical photographs, charts and diagrams, that help the reader understand ship movements throughout the battle. There is also some powerful modern artwork that illustrates the historic event. A key aspect of the book's success is its organization by topics and its evenhanded presentation of the battles from both sides of the conflict.

A professional historian, however, might find confining the book to just ninety-six pages of 'facts' a somewhat dangerous approach? After all, how can a complex, catastrophic conflict like the Second World War be understood