

ground level view of how men became involved in the Navy's medical service, their personal experiences overseas, and how it affected their lives after the war. The inclusion of a fallen corpsman's story and a listing of all those corpsmen lost in the conflict reminds us that not everyone made it back, and many were willing to sacrifice themselves while saving others. For individuals interested in the Navy and Marines during the Vietnam War, researchers seeking primary source accounts, or those studying military medical personnel, this work is a solid resource.

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Mark Stille. *Super-Battleships of World War II: Montana-class, Lion-class, H-class, A-150 and Sovetsky Soyuz-class*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2022. 48 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. UK £11.99, US \$19.00, CDN \$25.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47284-672-3.

This work is number 314 in Osprey Publishing's New Vanguard Series and author Mark Stille's fifty-fifth contribution to the Osprey catalogue. Shifting slightly away from his usual analyses, Stille uses this text to examine the largely theoretical "super-battleship" designs of the major powers involved in the Second World War, covering the partially built Sovetsky Soyuz class of the Soviet Union, the schematics produced by the Americans, British, and Germans for their proposed ships, and the largely undocumented theoretical work of the Japanese. Period photographs are provided, often of models, blueprints, or of the active warships these designs were meant to replace. New contemporary illustrations are also present to show the theoretical configurations of completed vessels. When information is unavailable due to loss of records or the abandonment of a design at an early stage, Stille offers his best estimates of technical information using the production histories and materials available to the country of origin. A "what-if" combat scenario of super-battleships in the Pacific is part of the conclusion, followed by a short Further Reading list and index.

The first five pages introduce both the subject and the basics of early-to mid-twentieth century battleship design. The former consists of a short summation of each nation's proposed designs, while the latter addresses the three key elements of protection, firepower, and speed. The armor employed on vessels receives the most attention, due to the varied application styles and types used by the different countries. Armament receives a similar level of coverage, including a comparative table and some information on fire control

systems. Propulsion is by far the briefest section, mainly touching on the fact that America led the way with high efficiency systems, while Germany was at the forefront of large diesel-driven machinery (7).

The core of the work naturally consists of the five battleship designs, which are alphabetically arranged by their country of origin, assuming that “America” and “Britain” were used for the United States and United Kingdom, respectively. Each warship’s section examines the origins of their design, construction, propulsion, protection, and eventual fate. The depth and detail of coverage varies, with roughly eight pages devoted to the *Montana* class, six for the *Lion*, nine for the H class variants, six-and-a-half for the A-150 project, and seven for the *Sovetsky Soyuz*. Each section contains three data tables of proposed armor, planned production, and basic design specifications. These tables are more straightforward for the Allied nations, while the German information presented is specifically for the *H-39*, with an additional section offering select data for the *H-42*, *H-43*, and *H-44* variants. The Japanese charts have several unknowns and conjectures based on the *Yamato* design, which is understandable due to the destruction of records in the last days of the war. Period photographs, usually of builder’s models, blueprints, or the preceding designs these warships were meant to replace are present for visualization of the various countries’ design aesthetics and start points for their super battleships, with some images also available showing the partially constructed hulls of the Soviet vessels. Stille offers a larger concluding analysis than is common in most Osprey works, spending almost two pages breaking down each of the designs and gauging their possible effectiveness, asserting that the *Montana* was the best overall potential warship. Amid this section is an insert where the author created a ‘what-if’ scenario of an engagement between a *Montana* and an *A-150* in 1946 to showcase a possible duel between two of the five proposed designs.

There are a few possible improvements that come to mind. All the various ship designs save for USS *Montana*, have speculative profile and top-down drawings. It would be helpful for consistency for the *Montana* to have the same depictions available, and a page featuring all the scale profiles side by side would greatly aid in direct visual comparisons. The section discussing the *Lion* class does include two images of HMS *Vanguard*, but the vessel is not directly addressed in the text beyond photo captions. A more in-depth statement on why the British chose to complete this design and not the *Lion* would be appreciated, given that she was the last battleship ever built. Finally, the 1946 “what-if” scenario on a grey, page-length insert in the conclusion seems a bit out of place and somewhat unnecessary. Rearranging the layout to have the American and Japanese designs discussed sequentially with the scenario following might be a better fit, possibly aided by the drawings of

both ships as they would look at sea (11, 37). Furthermore, the concept of including such a scenario would work better if ones were provided for the other addressed classes in a separate section. The addition of a British versus German and Soviet versus German would further highlight the differences in designs and bolster the effectiveness of the existing scenario in addressing strengths and deficiencies between the creations of the various adversaries.

All in all, *Super-Battleships of World War II* is a useful introduction into the abandoned, heavy capital ship designs of the Second World War's main combatant nations. Stille is able to provide comparable data or reasonable projections for the key aspects of each proposed vessel along with the reasoning behind their abandonment. The combination of period images and profile drawings allows one to visualize the changes meant to occur with each design in comparison to their predecessors, while information tables allow for a similar comparison between each type. Although there is room for improvement, or expansion, *Super-Battleships* does a good job of exposing those unfamiliar with the designs to their concept and offers useful depictions for those interested in modeling warships that never made it far beyond the drawing board.-

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Angela C. Sutton. *Pirates of the Slave Trade: The Battle of Cape Lopez and the Birth of an American Institution*. Essex, CT: Prometheus Books, www.prometheusbooks.com, 2023. xxiv+274 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, index. US \$29.95, cloth. ISBN 978-1-63388-844-9.

In the annals of decisive sea fights, the Battle of Cape Lopez off what is now the country of Gabon in West Africa must certainly rank high. For it was there, on 10 February 1722, that Captain Chaloner Ogle of the British Royal Navy defeated Captain Bartholomew "Black Bart" Roberts, ending the golden age of piracy and ensuring the stabilization and British dominance of the slave trade.

Angela C. Sutton, an assistant research professor at Vanderbilt University, examines this battle, its complicated context, and how she believes it fundamentally transformed slavery, most specifically how, though it took place 54 years before the United States even existed, "it shaped the type of nation we would become." (xxiii) That is a lot of interpretive baggage to pack into a short book about one battle. Doubtless other scholars will debate Sutton's claims, but in this reviewer's opinion they are too sweeping.

Sutton focuses on three principal characters, and she could not have asked