

was of low importance for the British and Americans, who pursued their own distinct strategies and agendas in the Pacific for the rest of the war.

*The Dutch Naval Air Force Against Japan* includes many photographs, maps, and commissioned illustrations to support the text. The colour reproduction of a painting from Joes Wanders graces the front cover. Lots of detailed information resides in the main text and appendices. It strikes a good balance between technical history and rich, engaging narrative. This comprehensive second edition is recommended for general readers interested in maritime air operations, Dutch naval and air force history, and the early operations and actions in the Pacific during the Second World War.

Chris Madsen

South Surrey, British Columbia

## BACKLIST

**Steve Brown. *By Fire and Bayonet: Grey's West Indies Campaign of 1794*. Warwick, UK: Helion & Company, [www.helion.co.uk](http://www.helion.co.uk), 2018. 244 pages, illustrations, maps appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$49.95, hardback; ISBN 978-1-911512-60-8.**

On 4 February 1794, the French garrison on the Caribbean island of Martinique spotted on the horizon the first ships of an approaching fleet. Any hope that this was the vanguard of the anticipated reinforcements from France was soon dispelled by the sight of the Union Jack flying from the masts of the vessels. The next morning the force of nineteen ships divided into three squadrons and began landing soldiers at three separate locations on the island. Over the next five weeks, the force of 6,500 men gradually overwhelmed the island's defenders, placing the island under British control until its return to France eight years later.

The conquest of Martinique represented a successful start to the British campaign to conquer French possessions in the Lesser Antilles. In the months that followed, the British executed similarly successful landings on the islands of Saint Lucia and Guadeloupe, gathering those valuable territories under their control as well, and scoring the greatest British victories up to that point in the War of the First Coalition. Yet this success proved short-lived, as French forces soon recaptured the latter two islands, frustrating British and French Royalist plans for the region. This setback, along with the subsequent and far more momentous campaigns waged against France in the two decades that followed, are undoubtedly factors in why Steve Brown's book is the first history ever

written about the campaign. In it he offers an account that not only provides an operational-level account of the campaign but describes the men involved and situates it within the larger contemporary events of the war.

As the subtitle implies, Brown centres his narrative on Sir Charles Grey, the commander of the British ground forces assigned to the campaign. A career soldier, Grey had earned the nickname “No-Flint Grey” in America during the War of Independence for his preference for stealth and the bayonet over the musket. Grey was in retirement in Northumberland when he was appointed commander of the West Indies expedition by Henry Dundas, Britain’s Secretary of State for War. His naval opposite was John Jervis, a friend from their mutual service on the Board of Land and Sea Officers. Brown holds up their harmonious relationship throughout the campaign as a model of inter-service cooperation that was more often the exception rather than the rule during this period.

The islands themselves were an obvious target, having been invaded by the British several times during their previous wars against France in the eighteenth century. British troops had even landed on Martinique the year before in support of a failed Royalist uprising. Under Grey’s leadership and with the active support of the Royal Navy, the force brought first Martinique under control, then in April, the neighbouring island of Saint Lucia. By the time Grey’s forces began preparations to invade Guadeloupe, however, the ranks of his regiments were increasingly debilitated by yellow fever. Though the French commander on Guadeloupe surrendered on 20 April, capping the incredible success of Grey’s expedition, the vulnerable state of the British forces and the confidence borne of victory left the British dangerously complacent.

Britain paid the price for this in June, when the long-awaited French reinforcements arrived in the region. Under the leadership of Victor Hugues, an “extreme Jacobin” (141) familiar with the region, the French embarked on a campaign to reclaim their captured territories. Nowhere is Brown’s partisanship more apparent than in his coverage of Hugues, whom he denounces as a “hard-nut” with a “private mandate . . . to kill all those of the classes he hated.” (141-2) Yet even Brown concedes Hugues’s gifts in the one area that mattered the most: the raising of local units to overthrow British rule. Aided by the brutish behavior of the restored French Royalist faction, Hugues recruited enough men to defeat the overstretched British forces and reclaimed first Guadeloupe and then Saint Lucia from their control, leaving only Martinique in British hands until they were withdrawn under the terms of the Treaty of Amiens.

Such was the disappointing end of a campaign that had initially enjoyed considerable success. That Brown tries to put a positive face on it by arguing that the expedition was a training ground for the future general officers in Wellington’s Anglo-Portuguese Army is strained, especially as he

demonstrates no direct connection between their service in Grey's campaign and their subsequent success in the Peninsular War. The book is also plagued by poor editing, with errors ranging from minor compositional matters to the unnecessary repetition of both Grey's and Thomas Dundas's biographies in separate chapters. Worst of all from the perspective of the readers of this journal, however, is the under-examination of the Royal Navy's role in the campaign. While Brown gives Jervis's forces due credit for their contribution to the conquest of the three islands, their blockade of the islands prior to the invasions and their failure to intercept French reinforcements do not receive similar attention. It's an omission that is all the more disappointing given that in most other respects Brown provides a satisfactory overview of the 1794 West Indies campaign, one that is likely to serve as the standard account for some time to come.

Mark Klobas  
Phoenix, Arizona

**Dan Buchanan. *The Wreck of HMS Speedy: The Tragedy that Shook Upper Canada*. Milner & Associates, [www.milnerassociates.ca](http://www.milnerassociates.ca), 2020. 259 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, appendices, index. CDN \$23.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-988-34424-9. (E-book available.)**

In an October 1804 gale, His Majesty's Provincial Marine schooner *Speedy* disappeared off Presqu'Île Point in Lake Ontario. Lost with the vessel were some of the élite of the infant Upper Canadian society – among them Justice Thomas Cochran, Court of King's Bench for Upper Canada; Solicitor General Robert Gray, Member of the House of Assembly; Angus Macdonell, lawyer and also a member of the House of Assembly; John Fish, High Constable of the Home District; John Stegmann, Deputy Surveyor General for Upper Canada; and James Ruggles, Justice of the Peace for York County.

Also in the hold of the schooner was a prisoner, the source of all this official interest. Ogetonicut, a member of the Indigenous Mississauga band, stood accused of the murder of a trader at a post on Lake Scugog. The authorities at York, present day Toronto, wished to avoid tension by holding the trial elsewhere, in the capital of the Newcastle District, now Brighton, Ontario. Thus, the judge, prosecutor, defence, jailer, and expert witnesses all travelled together in HMS *Speedy*, an aging 55-foot (17 metres) two-masted schooner gunboat, into the autumn weather of the lake.

*Speedy* never arrived at its destination, but came to grief attempting the difficult entrance into Brighton harbour. Pieces of the presumed wreck were found on the southern shore of Lake Ontario soon after the vessel disappeared.