

that date that challenged and engaged the British, particularly as a colonial (and earlier defeated) power trying to reassert its authority and sovereignty.

Whether the British Pacific Fleet is deserving of its own title so early in Osprey's Fleet series might be debatable, but the book furnishes a good summary of the Royal Navy's work with the Americans and its participation in the last naval operations against Japan, limited as it was. As is standard in the series, no references are given and further research can be done in the books and articles listed at the end, which includes two of Herder's other Osprey titles. The graphics and artwork stand out as the most original contributions to the topic. *British Pacific Fleet 1944-45* is recommended for readers interested in naval history, the war in the Pacific against Japan, naval carrier aviation, and the Royal Navy in the Second World War.

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**Dwight Sturtevant Hughes and Chris Mackowski (eds.). *The Civil War on the Water: Favorite Stories and Fresh Perspectives from the Historians at Emerging Civil War*. El Dorado hills, CA: Savas Beattie, [www.savasbeattie.com](http://www.savasbeattie.com), 2023. xxx+305 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, index. US \$32.95, hardback; ISBN 978-1-61121-629-5. (E-book available.)**

Although the Civil War was principally fought on land, naval and mercantile maritime operations were a crucial component of the conflict. In a letter to James C. Conkling, President Abraham Lincoln wrote that "Uncle Sam's web-feet should not be forgotten. [The enemy appears] on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow, muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp."<sup>1</sup> In spite of this, comparatively little has been written about the Civil War's maritime events in comparison to its many land battles. *The Civil War on the Water* is an attempt to correct this gap. This new work is a compendium. It contains 44 essays, assembled in historical order, written mostly over the last decade by an eclectic group of maritime historians. The primary editor, Dwight Hughes, is the author or co-author of 19 of these snippets of Civil War maritime history, a celebration of Emerging Civil War's 10th anniversary. The narrations are quite eclectic in their focus, but they do offer fresh accounts on both familiar and less-familiar topics. They reassess

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1 Abraham Lincoln to James C. Conkling, 26 Aug. 1863, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, (1953–1955), vol. 6: 409–410.

several well-known marine battles, Confederate and Union ships, as well as disparate leaders and events. The work also adds additional information concerning Lincoln's Anaconda Strategy – the blockading of the Atlantic and Gulf coastline to cripple the Confederacy's economy, and in turn hindering its ability to wage war. This initiative required a large navy and, according to most of the writers, it may have been one of Lincoln's wisest wartime decisions. The largely seagoing Union Navy did much more than maintain a vast blockade; it became an effective arm in an integrated and combined military.

There are many graphic vignettes or cameos that give credence to Lincoln's point. Some are unusual, such as the coverup of privateering, which was frowned upon during this era. Also covered are the role of destroying lighthouses along the Confederate shores to make blockade-running difficult, a not well-known defeat of the Union's Marines in an early *mêlée*, and a look at the early years of the United States Naval Academy before some of its graduates became foes. There is also an unusual tale of the famous USS *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia* (ex-*Merrimac*) battle and the unheralded Confederate chocolate-brown ironclad CSS *Arkansas*, particularly at Vicksburg.

Several unsung heroes of the era and their feats are profiled, including the almost invisible mariner Captain Sidney Smith Lee (known as Smith), the older brother of General Robert E. Lee who had served as the second Commandant of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, MD. Smith Lee oversaw the batteries at Drewry's Bluff on the James River that protected Richmond, the capital city of the Confederacy. This fort later became the site of the short-lived Confederate Naval Academy. His son, Lieutenant Smith Lee Jr., served on the ill-fated ironclad *Louisiana* and later the commerce raiders CSS *Georgia* and CSS *Rappahannock*. Another under-recognized mariner was Sailing Master John Crosby, who was onboard the USS *Housatonic* when it was sunk by the first successful submarine, CSS *Hunley*. Later he suffered a similar sinking while serving on the USS *Harvest Moon*. Another was Commander Hunter Davidson, the controversial inventor of the electric torpedo (mine).

Additional topics include the story of how both brown-water navies added a new dimension to riverine warfare and how the dichotomy of two different command organizations at New Orleans led to the Union's conquest of this vital riverport. There is also geographic spread from a look at how Maine became the site for the Battle of Portland Harbor, which was partly fought in the cold waters of Casco Bay, to the pitched battle of Plymouth, NC, and the last decisive land and sea battle at Wilmington, NC. Finally, there is a discussion of the role of European-built vessels in the Confederate Naval Squadron, and the political kerfuffle around the loss of CSS *Stonewall*, the south's only seagoing ironclad.

In the book's final essay, Hughes places these wide-ranging events in perspective: "There are no monuments on the ocean, no crossroads in the great waters, no places echoing in the heart and mind like Gettysburg, Shiloh, or Chickamauga. . . . Names that resonate are long-gone ships such as *Alabama*, *Kearsarge*, *Florida*, *Shenandoah*. The mostly unknown men who sailed them carried the conflict to the ends of the earth through every extreme of sea and storm with no less conviction than land-bound compatriots. They struggled and fought and suffered even when the enemy was more often Neptune's wrath and Aeolus's breath. There were very few of them, comparatively speaking, but they had impact well beyond their numbers." (p. 281).

The collected essays that comprise the book are four-to-six-page vignettes that ramble like a literary slide show. Editors of a collection of essays usually attempt to make the writing appear uniform, but this compendium is at times a little uneven. Still, this ambitious work appends little-known obscure heroes, background events, and battle stories to the better-known elements of the Civil War's maritime history by craftily coloring both sides of conflict. This reviewer therefore recommends *The Civil War on the Water: Favorite Stories and Fresh Perspectives from the Historians at Emerging Civil War* to any "Civil War buff" without reservation.

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**David E. Johnson and Gary Guinn. *Midwatch in Verse: New Year's Deck Log Poetry of the United States Navy, 1941-1946*. Jefferson North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2023, 241pp., illustrations, bibliography, glossary, appendices, index. US \$24.99, paper, ISBN 978-1-4766-8926-5**

During the age of sail and the early years of steam, a good-natured New Year's custom occurred beginning at midwatch, the duty watch that occurs from midnight to 4 a.m. As eight bells chimed midnight on the special watch, the oldest man on board was assigned to ring those bells, followed by eight more by the youngest crewman. This was the only time when the midnight hour was marked by sixteen bells, symbolizing the passage of the old year to the new.

That ritual largely disappeared, but in the twentieth century a different New Year's tradition has emerged. Typically, a naval ship's official deck log is meticulously recorded, devoid of any creative flair. However, an exception developed on certain vessels during the initial four hours of the New Year's mid-watch. During this specific day and time, a relaxed adherence to the revered log regulations is permitted and, on many ships, it is encouraged