

and mariners, judges, law enforcement specialists, and others tasked with preventing the maritime frontier and its adjacent islands and lands from descending into anarchy.

The author provides a flowing and well-researched account of the challenges and exploits of *Bear* and *Northland* throughout their combined service of 63 years. He documents their many activities, from breaking ice paths to chasing smugglers, escorting ships filled with miners' gold, rescuing explorers and mariners, and transporting reindeer.

Of the many exploits of *Bear* under its longest serving commanding officer, Michael A. Healy, known by many as "Hell Roaring Mike," one of the most important was the transfer of reindeer from Siberia to Alaska to avert disaster among malnourished Inuit in 1890 and 1892. This began what would result in the transfer of thousands of reindeer to Alaska in the 1890s. Due to the depletion of whales, fish, and other resources due to foreign vessels working in the Alaskan waters, Healy's humanitarian actions were instrumental in replenishing the scarce food supplies for the Inuit. However, Healy was also a controversial figure and Sharp gives a good recounting of Healy's widely-reported 1896 court martial and its many dimensions.

Although much of the book focuses on maritime operations in waters of the Pacific Ocean and Arctic Ocean, there were also operations near Greenland. Perhaps the most unusual of these was *Northland's* 12 September 1941 capture of a German-controlled Norwegian sealer, which became the first American capture of a naval vessel in World War II. As a result of the capture of *Buskø* (*Buskoe*), *Northland* also learned of a German radio station on the coast of Greenland and raided it, capturing the station, its codes, and German plans for other stations in the region.

Not only is Sharp's book a good history of the work of *Bear* and *Northland*, it recounts the solid chain of succession and leadership of their commanding officers. He provides organizational insights and shows the importance of individuals as well as institutions in mission success and legacies. The Coast Guard motto *Semper Paratus*, "Always Ready," epitomizes the endeavors of *Bear* and *Northland* and Sharp's book provides a solid history of those efforts.

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**John Darrell Sherwood.** *A Global Force for Good: Sea Services Humanitarian Operations in the Twenty-First Century.* Washington, D.C.: Naval History and Heritage Command, Department of the Navy, [www.history.navy.mil](http://www.history.navy.mil), 2024. 450 pp., illustrations, maps, glossary, endnotes, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-1-943604-87-6 (hardcover); ISBN 978-1-

**943604-86-9 (PDF) (free PDF download available).**

In times of natural catastrophe and emergency navies are often called upon to lend assistance at home and abroad. These various types of operations fall under various monikers according to the context, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) being among the largest and most complex. Even though armed forces are equipped and constantly train for the primary business of war, humanitarian operations require major deployments and specialized capabilities, especially when events happen unexpectedly, and a quick response is desired to prevent further loss of life or to restore some normality in crisis situations. Some critics contend that too much focus on such humanitarian missions detracts or degrades from war preparedness, and that militaries are ill-prepared to take them on or that they represent a very expensive solution for work better performed by civilian agencies and private contractors. John Darrell Sherwood, a historian with the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington, D.C., dispels this notion in a well-documented official history of the US Navy's involvement in some contemporary large-scale HADR operations, and instead he argues that these missions, which exercise command arrangements, test capabilities and responses, demonstrate the value of goodwill, build partnerships and trust, and deliver urgent and necessary aid to the suffering, are worth the effort and deserving of greater attention. The book, which takes its main title from a US Navy publicity campaign that aimed to show a kinder and gentler side of the navy to promote recruitment, basically presents three case studies: the 2004 earthquake and tsunami off the shores of Indonesia (Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE); the 2005 decimation of New Orleans when a Category One hurricane made landfall (Joint Task Force KATRINA); and the 2011 earthquake and tsunami off the Japanese island of Honshu that caused not only widespread deaths and damage but a nuclear accident at Fukushima which released radiation in surrounding areas (Operation TOMODACHI).

Sherwood draws upon unclassified official documents, after-action reports, oral history interviews conducted by himself and others, war college and research tank analyses, as well as available public affairs and media sources. In each case, the context and background behind the specific disaster and the response are explained from the US Navy's perspective in order to find consistent themes, lessons learned, and commonalities. All three locations were accessible by sea or within reach of sea-based platforms employing aerial means. The US Navy, as befits a superpower, has one of the most forward deployed and capable navies in the world, and had warships and resources in situ or within sailing distance when the calls for assistance were made. Given the diplomatic, political, and legal circumstances, the US Navy consciously

assumed a supporting role to the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), to civil authorities at the federal and state levels domestically in the United States, and to the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF). Initial efforts focused on search and rescue, preliminary recovery, and provision of basic needs such as fresh drinking water, food, and shelter. Useful assistance was provided by a variety of types of ships. The availability of rotary wing aircraft to fly in supplies and perform a multitude of tasks with minimal presence on land remained very important. There are also complications. In New Orleans, the much smaller US Coast Guard held the advantage of having dedicated equipment and a law enforcement mandate unimpeded by legal restrictions governing the employment of the military on US soil under the likes of the *Posse Comitatus Act*. Although symbolic, the US Navy's reserve hospital ships, manned by regular navy and civilian medical professionals, lacked readiness, speed, and enough landing platforms to be truly effective in the intended role of providing advanced medical assistance and comfort.

Often underrated capabilities such as naval construction, airfield rehabilitation, clearance diving, and salvage became hugely important in successful completion of the HADR missions. In Japan, the need for radioactive detection and contamination added another dimension that the US Navy was prepared for through its own nuclear power community, enabling them to offer advice to civilian authorities and the American ambassador, and making sure its own operations proceeded unhindered. Simultaneously the US Navy undertook a major evacuation of dependents of service personnel and American civilians wanting to return to the United States and other safer areas.

The diplomatic benefits can be significant. Through the HADR, the US Navy reestablished working relations with the military in Indonesia, which had been isolated by sanctions. Forming part of a pan-government response in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the US Navy helped reassure the American populace, and their response reinvigorated a rocky relationship with the Japanese about the continued US presence in Japan. US naval leaders knew when to leave and handover to civilian authorities, which allowed them to bask in the good press from the efforts made.

Instead of a dry official history replete with statistics about sailing days and supplies delivered, Sherwood has also personalized the narrative by drawing upon the individual recollections of participants about their experiences, from admirals and generals right down to the enlisted ranks. Extracts from the oral history interviews are used extensively throughout the text. The US Navy had dedicated teams and sections devoted to capturing the reminiscences of those involved, and these add immense depth to the analysis and explain some of the decision-making and approaches at the time. The captioned colour photographs are also frequently connected to the personalities discussed and

were selected from the navy's immense holdings. Four professionally drawn maps are also included. Official histories, even on a narrowly focused topic such as HADR, benefit from access to government resources, documentation, and staff. An academically-trained professional historian like Sherwood brings all the strands together in a very readable form. His coverage of the Canadian contribution to the Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts is balanced and insightful, although the inference that it went some way in making up for Canada's decision to sit out the 2003 invasion of Iraq is peculiarly American.

*A Global Force for Good* is recommended for readers interested in the US Navy, modern humanitarian operations with a maritime dimension, sea-basing, and capabilities such as rotary wing, amphibious, diving, medical, and salvage, as well as the implications of operating (and fighting) in radioactive environments. A PDF version of the book is available for free download from the Naval History and Heritage Command website if a trip to the Washington Navy Yard is not in the cards to pick up a hardcopy.

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**Brendan Simms and Steven McGregor, *The Silver Waterfall: How America Won the War in the Pacific at Midway* (New York: Public Affairs, 2022). 290pp, index, tables of losses, notes. ISBN: 9781541701373.**

I was told once, back in my early graduate days, that if you wanted to make money writing military history, especially American military history, write about either the Civil War or Patton. As crazy as that sounds those subjects seem to be incredibly popular. However, I think that is incomplete. It would be more accurate to say, write about the Civil War, Patton, or the Battle of Midway. The drama and pivotal impact of Midway captures the imagination of readers and almost guarantees sales. Some incredible heroes come out of the battle and, of course, it is the end of Japanese expansionism in World War Two and starts the road to Japan's defeat. Sadly, it also runs the risk of beating a dead horse dropping anything new into the historical dialogue. The subject of many books, articles, documentaries and two Hollywood blockbusters, Midway is a tale repeated often in many ways. Needless to say, it has also been a favorite in classrooms. It is with this in mind that Brendan Simms and Steven McGregor's book *The Silver Waterfall: How America Won the War in the Pacific at Midway* enters the historical discussion.

Simms and McGregor bring quite a bit of experience to the work. Simms has written on the Battle of Waterloo, on Hitler's gamble of declaring war on the US, and a biography of Adolph Hitler. This is the first book for McGregor,