The book is perhaps weakest on the matter of ships and fleets, where Boyce frequently relies upon a secondary source that is not well regarded by those with that subject expertise. Boyce is also let down by another secondary source. On the question of insurance, Boyce makes the statement in a footnote (217n54) that Lloyd's Insurance customarily had a maximum of three-quarters of a vessel's value. Fortunately, he provided his source, which regrettably is unavailable to me. However, that seems to be nonsense. It is not mentioned in Wright and Fayle's *A History of* Lloyd's. Nor is it mentioned by Lowndes in his 1881 *Practical Treatise on the Law of Marine Insurance*, and it is implicitly contradicted by much of the evidence before the Royal Commission on the Loss of Life at Sea, established by Chamberlain following his personal defeat on the merchant shipping bill. Were this the case, Plimsoll's anti-insurance crusade and Joseph Chamberlain's 1884 shipping legislation would have lacked a rationale. The bill was abandoned because of stiff opposition from insurance and shipping circles. (John Glover had a major part in this.) However, these are little quibbles that do not, I believe, impact in any way on Boyce's exposition of how the tramp shipping business worked.

Notwithstanding what I can only describe as the book's obscene price, I enjoyed it and I look forward to the subsequent volumes.

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Iver P. Cooper, *Poseidon's Progress: The Quest to Improve Life at Sea.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., www.mcfarlandpub.com, 2024. vii+257 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. US 49.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-4766-9446-7 (print); ISBN 978-1-4766-5202-3 (ebook).

For those who went to sea from the seventeenth through the early twentieth centuries, the prospect of a rough life aboard ship was often confirmed by bad air between decks, foul water, poor nutrition (for at least part of the time), illness from contagious disease, injury, collision with ship or shore, and the threats of fire and drowning. Iver Cooper's book addresses the many technical advances that attempted to make a life at sea safer and more comfortable. It is an interesting foray into these many developments and will certainly promote further research.

Cooper divides the problems and their various solutions across nine chapters. The topics covered include air quality aboard ship, drinking water and purification, nutrition, the watch system and bedding, staying dry and afloat, lifesaving gear, safety at night, fires and contagious disease, and heating, cooling, and waste disposal (of all kinds). Brief synopses are given of incidences that led to the innovations being discussed or of ships in which

they were employed. They provide just enough information to indicate the problem or the attempted fix. One example is the deaths of more than seventy passengers among the 200 aboard the *Londonderry.* The space in which they were confined while the ship weathered a storm did not have enough oxygen. Another concerns the use of a flush toilet for the seamen on the USS *Monitor*, which acted like a torpedo tube. Located below the waterline, a sailor who mistakenly turned the valve controlling the outward flow to the inward direction was blown off the seat of ease upon flushing. These vignettes, although sometimes too short, add to the reader's engagement with the more technical elements in the book.

Within each chapter Cooper reviews the issue and then the (often) multitude of attempted solutions. One terrific set of innovations concerns potable water sources and desalination technologies (pp. 30-47). While most of the approaches mentioned are British or American, Cooper discusses other European and Asian techniques for desalination. His discussion of reverse osmosis desalination does take the topic beyond the book's stated time frame. Inboard ship lighting is another example of myriad approaches being taken to solve the issue at hand, including paint colour, skylights, self-wiping portholes, and various forms of artificial lighting (pp. 173-90). Before batteries were improved, the future of acetylene gas lighting looked bright, but the mishandling of the calcium carbide necessary to generate the acetylene led to at least one ship's destruction. Cooper's description of the various efforts to invent machinery to remove water from the hold covers familiar ground (pp. 129-40).

In part, this book resembles an encyclopedia with short simple descriptions or explanations. There are many interesting factoids in the book, such as the use of life preservers made from kapak, which consisted of the fibres from the Kapak tree. Numerous black-and-white illustrations or photographs of the different pieces of technology help the reader visualize the item being described. Most of the technical writing is very clear, making it easy to grasp what is being discussed. There are, however, a couple of sections that some readers might skip through because they are not clear. Transverse (roll) stability is discussed in the chapter on keeping dry and afloat. A vessel's centre of mass (centre of gravity) and centre of buoyancy are important pieces of knowledge needed to keep a ship from rolling so much that it takes on water or capsizes. The two graphs given to assist in explaining the concept are challenging, in part because of the absence of two letters marking the ultimate influences of the ship rolling too far to one side. The same difficulty occurs in the discussion of the lack of oxygen within confined spaces. The percentages and measurements of room volume in his examples are not for the novice. These parts are overly complicated compared with the approach taken in rest

of the book to the various technical elements the author explores.

What the book is missing is the tension between developers of the different approaches within the various areas Cooper examines. The length of time and struggle to get from concept to implemented innovation would be interesting to investigate. Neither are the political debates and forces for change in safety aboard ship explored, a missed opportunity that could be someone's dissertation. He does occasionally mention legislation, ranging from 1852 through to the twentieth century, but any discussion of the struggle to get that legislation passed and to improve it is omitted.

Cooper has assembled a mass of information on the development and improvement of technologies to make sailors more comfortable and safer. The book's encyclopedic nature will make it a good reference for those interested in the evolution of life aboard ship in the modern era.

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Tom Cooper, Sirous Ebrahimi, and E.R. Hooton. *Iran-Iraq Naval War Volume 2: Convoy Battles 1981-1984.* Middle East @ War No. 63. Warwick, UK: Helion, www.helion.co.uk, 2024. 72 pp., illustrations, maps, biography, notes. UK £19.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-915070-80-7.

This work is the second installment of Tom Cooper, Sirous Ebrahimi, and E.R. Hooton's study into the often-overlooked naval side of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980 to 1988. Along with the four-volume study of ground operations previously produced by Cooper, Hooton, and Farzin Nadimi, this text seeks to shed light on the reality of the "Tanker War" and examine the many firsts of modern warfare seen during this dedicated assault on national import/export infrastructure. Divided into four chapters, the work uses unprecedented access to Iranian state archives alongside interviews and period photographs to build its narrative and analysis, with new map renderings and color profile illustrations of both aircraft and surface vessels provided to further understanding. Sources and notes are provided at the end as well for those seeking to carry out their own examinations.

In the pages leading to the Introduction there are a few points of note, mainly a map of the region to give a basic understanding of the discussed area, an explanation for the Romanized naming conventions used throughout the text, and a guide to common abbreviations found in the work. This is followed by a summation of sources and a basic outline of the war's initial moves, which led to the development of Iran's "Caravan" convoy system and the covert purchasing of American aviation materials and foreign oil to keep the nation afloat during wartime. The relatively calm period of early 1981 is