

as hospital ships, that were anchored off the American coast. A few of these vessels were famous in their day before being converted, such HMS *Bellerophon*, the ship upon which Napoleon surrendered, and the USS *Essex*, a famous veteran of the Barbary Pirates War.

The English Convict Hulks is not “a page turner,” but a scholarly work focused on a rarely discussed and unpleasant period of British maritime history, an awkward time when British citizens displayed cold-heartedness to their fellow humans and disposed of them in disparate places.

Louis Arthur Norton
West Simsbury, CT

Gerard de Lisle. *The Nile Campaign 1884-1885: The Letters and Sketches of Rudolph de Lisle RN*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen and Sword Books Limited, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2024. 166 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £35.00 US \$70.00, hardback; ISBN 978-1-39905-836-0.

Following an earlier volume focused on the Peruvian-Chilean War, this work is a compilation of research, transcriptions, and reproductions of original artworks that document the service of Royal Navy Lieutenant Rudolph de Lisle throughout the Nile Campaign’s effort to rescue General Charles Gordon in Khartoum.

Offering a first-person insight into the riverine expedition of Sir Garnet Wolseley prior to the Battle of Abu Klea in January 1885, *The Nile Campaign* additionally provides the context of de Lisle’s life and of contemporary remembrances held after his death in combat, offering an additional perspective on the effect of the war against the Mahdi from the perspective of one family. An initial section of more modern scholarship on de Lisle is followed by his eighteen Nile Campaign letters, with his sketches and some of the resulting *Illustrated London News* renderings interspersed. Additional letters and funerary materials are then covered, along with five appendices of sources from the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries related to de Lisle’s life and service, followed by a brief biography and index.

As noted, the first half of the text compiles secondary source research on de Lisle’s life and experiences, leading in with a 2016 biographical examination by retired police officer David Howell and followed by brief biographical entries on de Lisle’s relatives and maps of both Egypt and Sudan. Howell’s section is essentially self-contained, featuring its own independent footnotes, source list, and author biography, whereas the “Who’s Who” and map sections are more linked to the provided sketch list and explanation of Gerard de Lisle’s Principles of Inclusion. De Lisle’s service history is rendered in this section as

well, with a list of his education, duty stations, awards, commemorations, and the editions of his posthumous memoirs.

The letters themselves include the core eighteen initially published by Reverend Henry Nutcombe Oxenham as part of his posthumous memoir of de Lisle, as well as a further five letters written by de Lisle in his younger years, two campaign-era letters written to de Lisle, and one written to his family after his loss. The eighteen “Nile Letters” naturally receive the bulk of the work’s focus, with the Principles of Inclusion noting the preservation of de Lisle’s grammatical and spelling errors, the occasional presence of language often offensive to modern audiences, and notations for illegible words. Interestingly, Gerard de Lisle has opted for a hybrid approach to note inclusion, with contemporary references from Reverend Oxenham’s publication rendered as footnotes and modern citations from de Lisle rendered as endnotes. Sketches, watercolors, and completed newspaper illustrations naturally form another backbone to this section of the work, allowing readers a glimpse through de Lisle’s eyes and sketchpad as he wrote home to his family. This is followed by a series of shorter supporting matter, most notably a contemporary newspaper account of the Naval Brigade, the funeral sermon for de Lisle, and his 1884 will, which was written in Abka and mentioned in the transcribed letters. Additional appendices offer one contemporary and several additional modern sources related to de Lisle’s death and commemoration, with an image of the Abu Klea cairn rounding out the appendices and leading into the work’s bibliography and index.

In terms of possible improvements, a few come to mind. There are some places where seemingly unrelated information is presented, such as a footnote on page 13 stating how much a Nile Campaign soldier’s medal sold for at auction, images of swords belonging to De Lisle’s later namesake, and information on the acquisition of de Lisle memorabilia. The inclusion of the two letters from de Lisle when he was seven and eleven years old do not seem to add much to the work either, and their placement immediately after de Lisle’s Nile Campaign letters does not aid the work’s chronology. Removing this information or placing it in appendices might aid the flow of future editions. Similarly, some of the post-Nile Letters material would likely serve better as appendices or sources, notably the two separate source lists regarding accounts of de Lisle’s death, which at the very least could be combined into a single entry.

All in all, *The Nile Campaign 1884-1885* is a solid combination of primary and secondary sources offering insight into the expedition to save General Gordon through the eyes of one of its junior officers. The unique nature of de Lisle’s artistic works synchronizing with the content of his letters home allow for the creation of an illustrated journey down the Nile with the Naval Brigade, offering researchers and historians a unique and multifaceted view into the

conflict. Combined with the more modern scholarship, funerary orations, and period reports, this work allows one man's life and experiences to further modern understanding and perceptions of the Nile Campaign.

Charles Ross Patterson II
Metairie, Louisiana

Stefan Dрамиński. *The Destroyer USS Kidd*. Series: *Anatomy of The Ship*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2024. 336 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. UK £45.00, US \$60.00, CDN \$80.00; hardback; ISBN 978-1-47282-741-8. (E-book available.)

This work, the eighth entry in Osprey Publishing's *Anatomy of the Ship* book series and the sixth by author and artist Stefan Dрамиński, examines the United States Navy Fletcher-class destroyer DD-661 *USS Kidd*. This is the first examination of an escort-type vessel in the series, as the previous seven books have all covered capital ships. One of only four surviving examples left out of a class of 175 vessels, Dрамиński has recreated the *Kidd* through both line drawings and three-dimensional renderings, allowing readers to examine the vessel in various configurations throughout her service life and in ways not possible even on a visit to the ship itself. A textual service history and component information section is followed by full-colour primary renderings from key points in the *Kidd*'s service, general arrangements, sectionalized structure views, armament and mechanical component detail renderings, and examinations of common fittings and standard boats carried aboard. The work additionally contains a brief bibliography of books and websites at the end for further reference.

As with previous entries in the series, this work is largely divided into text and rendered images. The forty pages of the initial text can be further divided into twenty-four pages of discussion and analysis and a sixteen-page timeline of the *Kidd*'s service history focused on her wartime service. Both components are accompanied by period and contemporary images of the *Kidd* to aid in visualization and understanding of past and present configurations. Coverage is given to the evolution of the Fletcher-class design as a whole, followed by discussions of the general arrangements, machinery, armaments, fire control, specialized equipment, and camouflage patterns employed on the *Kidd*. Data tables on the ship's principal characteristics, weapons systems, and radar arrays are all provided with many tables offering comparative data between key points in the ship's service life when applicable. As mentioned above, the service timeline largely focuses on the *Kidd*'s active role in World War II, with the key date of 11 April 1945 highlighted minute-by-minute to