

book Snyder emphasizes that the physicians were also commissioned naval officers and had to carefully walk the fine line that sometimes divided the two professions.

After World War I, the hospital had to survive the fiscal restraints of the Great Depression, but then ramped up as a major medical facility during World War II. There were fears that the hospital, which treated about 2,300 patients, might be bombed, but the 23 structures survived the war unharmed. It became a major mainland or continental infirmary after wounded personnel were evacuated from Hawaii's Tripler Army Hospital, enabling family and friends easier access to loved ones who had served and been wounded in the Pacific Theater. A broader number of services were available, including general family care as well as for obstetrical cases. Later the Korean War brought more armed services personnel to the Mare Island shipyard, but general clinical and hospitalization services started to limit the number of beds available for admission and foretold the 1957 closure of the hospital. The nearby supporting town of Vallejo evolved, as did the use of Mare Island. The Navy Yard became a light industrial facility and the remnants of the hospital went to the Department of Veterans affairs. Its buildings and campus were repurposed by the United States Navy Schools Command. Ultimately, what was left of the facilities became the Touro University California, an institution that in a way carries on the navy's Mare Island tradition by granting several professional degrees in healthcare.

*Mare Island Naval Hospital: 1864–1957* is a good resource book for those who wish to study the creation and evolution of a naval post in and between times of war. The book contains a great amount of primary source material, but the narration is bureaucratic in style and can be tedious. Despite this minor flaw, Thomas Snyder's work is a worthwhile contribution to an understudied aspect of American naval history.

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**Solly, Ray. *BP Shipping Pictorial: The Golden Years 1945–1975*  
Whittles Publishing, 2023**

viii + 148 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index  
ISBN 9781849954747 (softcover) £18.99

The first three decades after the end of World War II saw the development of tankers from ships not much larger than any other cargo-carrying vessel

to the leviathans of the oceans that are at the same time the backbone of the international oil trade and one of the largest risks for environmental catastrophes. One of the key players in this development was the shipping branch of British Petroleum. With *BP Shipping Pictorial*, author Ray Solly provides another book taking a look at this period after having written several books on the history of tanker shipping, this time focusing on the development of a single company.

Being a pictorial work, the emphasis of this small book is on the illustrations, which range from traditional ships' photographs to pictures of the everyday life and work of their crews. Many of the photos originate from the BP archives and private collections (including the author's), and have never been published before. Despite the emphasis on the illustrations, the book includes a well-written text, which, despite being largely descriptive, is definitely based on solid knowledge and research.

Serving as a crew member on a tanker was, to a certain degree, different to serving on other ships given the enormous size of the vessels and their routes, which connect crude oil terminals in the Middle East with oil-import ports in the western industrialized nations. The photographs provide the reader a unique opportunity to understand how and why sailing on a large tanker was different. The publisher needs to be lauded for the reproduction quality of the numerous illustrations, although the various technical drawings are somewhat challenging to read given the small format of the book.

Organized in eight chapters following a chronology from the beginnings of BP's tanker operations to the era of VLCCs (Very Large Crude Carriers), the first seven chapters provide the reader not much beyond what has already been published. Nevertheless, it is nice to have the development of the BP tanker fleet available in one book. Chapter Eight, titled "BP Shipping Company's 1970s VLCC Revolution," occupies not only a third of the pages of the whole book, but is the main reason why it can be recommended to historians with an interest in the history of post-World War II commercial navigation. Besides discussing the ups and downs of the international oil trade throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Solly provides a brief but comprehensive overview on the challenges of building vessels the size of a typical VLCC, discusses how the construction of these vessels was paralleled by developing international safety and environmental standards, and provides useful insights into the crewing of these ships, including the related training programs for future officers. The illustrations easily help to understand why VLCCs were among the ships setting new standards for crew quarters aboard merchant vessels, with the dayrooms of officer quarters larger than many living rooms

ashore and amenities like table tennis aboard no longer a rare exception but a standard.

While the book might not provide much new analytical insight into the history of tanker shipping, it provides the maritime historian an insight into how these ships changed the everyday life at sea for their crews, especially as the author had served as a professional mariner on tankers. Consequently, the book can be easily recommended to any maritime historian interested in the post-World War II social history of seafaring, especially given its low price. It can also be recommended to newcomers to the field of maritime history as it provides a brief but solid overview of the history of tanker shipping throughout the twentieth century. Altogether, it might not be the most relevant new publication in the field of maritime history research, but it is a welcome addition to the existing literature.

Finally, it should be mentioned that scholarly readers are only one part of the target audience for maritime history publications and that there is also another potential target audience for this book – the large group of people somehow directly or indirectly connected to the ships of the post-World War II BP tanker fleet as crew members, shipyard workers, office personnel in the company headquarters, or family members of one of these groups. While Solly's new book may be of interest for scholarly readers, it is most likely that it is this second target audience that the author and the publisher had in mind when working on the book. While the book can be recommended for scholarly readers, for this diverse group it can be recommended even more, being a short but comprehensive overview of the development of the BP tanker fleet after World War II. It provides enough historical information but also enough illustrations to bring back memories of a time when these ships were part of someone's life.

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**Weir, Robert F, edited by Andrew W. German. *The Watch's Wild Cry: A Voyage Aboard the Whaling Vessel Clara Bell*  
Lyons Press; Mystic Seaport Museum, 2024**  
xxvi + 228 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, glossary  
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Whaling journals are some of the most important primary sources for the history of the US maritime industries of the nineteenth century and were