

Spanish out of the war), and those who seek a deeper understanding of prize law in general.

Thomas Malcomson
Toronto, Ontario

Desiderato, Augustin Daniel. *The Argentine Navy and the First World War, 1914–1928*

Springer Nature, 2024

246 pp., notes, appendix, bibliography, index

ISBN 9783031676512 (hardcover) US\$159.99, 9783031676529 (e-book)

US\$129.99

In his new book, Augustin Daniel Desiderato provides a comprehensive analytical history of the Argentine Navy for the period from 1914 to 1928. As such, it closes a desideratum in naval and maritime history available in English language and contributes substantially to the understanding of global naval history during a period of utmost historical relevance. The original Spanish language version was published in 2023 by the Argentine publisher Teseo Press.

Divided into eight chapters, the book begins with an overview of the Argentine Navy at the start of the war, followed by a discussion on Argentine neutrality, the effects of World War I on the Argentinian navy, and a second group of chapters focusing on the lessons learned from the war and the interwar modernization project of the Argentine Navy.

Most of the existing literature on naval history of the World War I period covers only the war itself or the naval developments of the belligerent nations. As Argentina stayed neutral during World War I, the book provides a rare and interesting take on options available for a neutral nation that had no own shipbuilding industry capable of building war ships and procured its naval vessels from nations involved in World War I on both sides of the conflict. Equally interesting is the discussion of how Argentine naval officers embedded into the Argentine diplomatic missions to the main belligerent nations, observed the war, and used it as a chance to develop post-war plans for the Argentine navy, showcasing the challenges of a small nation without relevant resources like coal.

Although the chapters on World War I are interesting and important, the chapters on post-war developments (chapters 6 and 7) are probably the most relevant part of the book. Desiderato clearly shows by analyzing reports by individual officers of various ranks that the Argentinian naval officer corps

had understood the need for a substantial or even radical change not only to the ships and equipment of the Argentinian navy. This change needed to include doctrine and training schemes for young officers, as well as to build up a submarine fleet and a naval-air component. Despite a series of setbacks and political opposition, Argentina ultimately decided to begin the modernization of its fleet in 1923. Desiderato clearly shows that the new fleet was no longer an attempt to mimic the fleet of a major naval power, just in a smaller version, but was designed on the lessons learned during the war and to fit Argentina's needs. This approach resulted in a fleet no longer dependent on coal but on oil-burning vessels with a huge operational range, and most importantly, a mainly defensive force using smaller units and submarines instead of capital warships. In other words, Desiderato argues convincingly that World War I was, in the end, the reason for Argentina to understand its own unique needs for a navy.

Besides its value as a research study, the book is also a relevant reference tool for any historian interested in Argentine naval history. For example, the appendix includes short biographies of many of the most important Argentine navy officers and English translations of several primary source documents like laws, agreements, and reports cited in the book.

When it comes to some weak points of the book, the most important seems to be the omission of any illustrations. Especially for a book at this price point, it would have been expected to include at least some illustrations providing an idea about the locations of naval installations, the main types of ships used by the Argentine Navy mainly showcasing the differences between the fleet during WW I and the modernization project since 1923. Of course, the reviewer is aware that this criticism mainly goes to the publisher.

Another omission worth mentioning is the near complete lack of mention of the activities of the Argentinian navy in support of Argentina's Antarctic ambitions, which seems to be particularly problematic as Argentina's naval activities in Antarctica up to the mid-1920s were very different to the better known activities in the post-World War II period and thus even a brief section on Antarctic activities would have helped to understand the cooperative approach Argentina was using throughout its early Antarctic activities.

Both omissions are unfortunate but do not limit the overall quality of Desiderato's book. The quality of the translation from the original Spanish version is high, but as an interesting observation consequently uses the name Malvinas despite the internationally accepted standard to use Falkland Islands (Malvinas) in English publications and Malvinas (Falkland Islands) in Spanish publications.

Without any doubt, the book is a relevant addition to the existing research on naval history during World War I and the post-war period and can easily be

recommended to any naval historian. Furthermore, with the book shedding light on the challenges of a neutral nation during a major international conflict, the book can also be recommended to scholars working in the field of international relations and conflicts, and of course, any scholar studying Argentine history in an international setting. Especially interesting in this context is the discussion on how individual Argentine merchant vessels affected by the war despite of their neutrality became the reason for discussions on giving up Argentina's strict neutrality.

With this review being based on the PDF version of the book, the reviewer can neither comment on the technicalities of the printed hardcover version nor the functionalities of the EPUB version. While the book definitely has the quality to be used as a textbook in a wide variety of classes reaching from naval history to Latin American history or international studies, the reviewer hesitates to recommend the book for this purpose due to the price unless it is available via institutional access for students at the respective university. The suggested retail price for both versions put the book in a price range mainly suitable for institutional purchases only.

Ingo Heidbrink
Norfolk, Virginia

**Hancock, James F. *From John Cabot to Henry Hudson, Early European Arrivals in Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic North America*
McFarland, 2025**

215 pp., illustrations, glossary, notes, bibliography, index
ISBN: 9781476695778 (softcover) US\$39.95

In his publication James Hancock offers a short overview aimed at a broad audience. Accordingly, he focuses on a retelling of well-established facts, drawing partly on recent scholarship and partly on research over a century old, combining both with a fresh look at the primary sources.

The book adopts a geographical and chronological approach in chapters dedicated to certain regions. These chapters focus whenever possible on famous explorers, their voyages, and encounters with Native American populations. In doing so, Hancock sheds light on six different geographical regions: Newfoundland, Baffin Island and Labrador, the Gulf of Maine, Cape Cod Bay, the St. Lawrence Valley and Chesapeake Bay.

For the most part, Hancock uses the well-known writings of famous explorers like Samuel de Champlain, John Smith, Jacques Cartier and others. If no such prominent discoverer visited a particular region, he describes other,