

formed by the fixed wing E-2 Hawkeye aircraft in the United States. Nor does the book skimp on technical details. While some readers may get lost in the litany of technical details along with the vast list of missions, ship names, aircraft, and weapon systems, the textbook style presentation of information provides a rich resource of information and case examples. Hobbs also covers several novel concepts in naval aviation, including examples where the RN landed jets without landing gear on an aircraft carrier equipped with a rubber deck and the proposal of carrier-borne rocket fighters designed to intercept and shoot down high-altitude Soviet bombers.

After decades of neglect, the Royal Navy's adoption of the F-35 fighter jet and deployment of HMS *Queen Elizabeth II* aircraft carrier indicate that policy makers have finally taken the lessons of sea power, especially through aircraft carriers, to heart and that the aircraft carrier is here to stay. This book is a must-read for those wondering if aircraft carriers are just expensive relics from the past or essential tools for international diplomacy, for now and into the future.

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Nicholas James Kaizer. *Revenge in the Name of Honour: The Royal Navy's Quest for Vengeance in the Single-Ship Actions of the War of 1812*. Warwick, UK: Helion & Company, www.helion.co.uk, 2020. xxi+217 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-912866-72-4.

While the War of 1812 commemorations are now a long six years behind us, the subject matter continues (and

will continue) to produce fertile ground for academic study. In particular, the single-ship actions between British and American frigates and brigs have persisted in fascinating the amateur and professional historian alike ever since the events themselves unfolded. Nicholas Kaizer, a young historian whose Master's thesis for Dalhousie University forms the core of this book, attempts to bring a fresh view to these ship-on-ship actions. The result is a well-researched, thoughtful endeavour.

Single-ship actions at the start of the War of 1812 saw the loss of three British frigates and a brig, a stark contrast to Britain's reputation of dominance over the French and Spanish fleets in European waters. This rough start continued throughout the war, but was somewhat offset by a handful of British victories. Kaizer takes each engagement and works through the action in some detail, comparing ship armament and handling. The aftermath and the letter home to the Admiralty explaining the defeat, plus the ensuing courts martial are all recounted. Kaizer holds that the defeats were a significant blow to the sense of professional and personal honour of the officers of the British navy. Common to all was an expressed eagerness to engage the enemy, the struggle to gain or maintain the weather gauge, the ship-shattering American gunnery supremacy, and fighting to the point where continuance would have spilt British blood with no hope of victory. All defeated officers felt they could have won if luck had favoured them rather than their foe. Though much has been made by other historians over the armament differences between the British and American vessels, the author points out that most ships carried more guns than they were rated for, often leading to a more equal number of guns, though overall superiority in weight of

broadside went to the Americans. Kaizer plays down the weight difference as a reason for the losses in the minds of the defeated officers.

For the British officers, after the first defeats, the drive to beat an American ship-of-war, of similar rate, in single-ship combat became a major motivating force, thus the title of the book "Revenge in the Name of Honour". The three officers held up as models of this line of thinking are Philip Broke, Henry Napier, and Thomas Capel. Using personal letters, and journals, Kaizer paints these men as patriotic British officers in search of honour for themselves, their service and the country. Brooke is the one who realizes his goal by taking HMS *Shannon* against US frigate *Chesapeake* and defeating the American in 11 minutes of carnage. HMS *Pelican* versus the US *Argus* is another successful single-ship action. While the duel between HMS *Endymion* and the US frigate *President* is laid out as a single-ship action, the author reminds us that the presence of three other British vessels closing in on the American ship made this fight really about a squadron chasing down and capturing the heavy frigate.

Kaizer notes that this goal of individual honour through combat interfered at times with the overall goal of blockading the large American frigates in ports, to keep them from commerce raiding. Perceiving the British frigates as not an equal match to the Americans, in July 1813 the Admiralty banned officers from single-ship engagements, ordering ships to travel in pairs and work with large squadrons to capture and destroy elements of the United States Navy.

This book is more than just the recounting of the actions and the relationship with honour. It explores the impact on the public perspective of the navy and the Admiralty as well. Public

papers (especially those critical of the government) tended to see the defeats with panicked shock and defeatist dismay as evidence of the navy's inability to protect the nation. They played up armament differences, disadvantages faced by the British, and the failing heroic effort. The Admiralty's failure to provide the North American Station with proper ships, and its uncertain response with *razées* (cut down from 64- or 75-gun ships), to be able to catch and overpower the American heavy frigates, were taken as signs of a corrupt unpreparedness that caused the defeats. Writers to the *Naval Chronicle* (a source used extensively by the author) were more forgiving, praising the naval officers, and offering excuses for the American victories, though some did clearly lay blame at the Admiralty's door. The difference between British accounts and those in Nova Scotia, where support for the navy was strong, highlight the latter's dependency on a successful naval outcome.

The role of honour is stressed throughout each of the chapters, to explain the motivation of officers to engage the enemy. Kaizer suggests this revealed the central driving force underpinning the professional culture among the British officers of the post-Nelson navy. One British officer declined an engagement when he chose, instead, to honour his duty to protect the half million pounds worth of gold aboard ship.

Overall this argument makes sense, but there are some spots of contention that need further exploration. First is Captain Philip Broke's correspondence with his wife which reveals his strong sense of honour in defending the Royal Navy's reputation and obtaining revenge for the defeats at the hands of the Americans. Broke's letters invoke "honour" many times, but Kaizer fails to note the captain's also frequently ex-

pressed desire for prize money to take him into retirement ashore, along with his wife and his honour. Many of the officers (if not all) were keenly aware that capturing an American frigate, or taking a loaded merchant ship, would provide a rich reward. Honour was not the only motivation.

Court martial testimony as to the honourable intentions and behaviour of the officers and men of His Majesty's ships, as Kaizer draws out for each loss, was the standard line of defence. Without significant objection from junior officers, captains and commanders were acquitted of responsibility for the defeat. The officers were found to have done all they could, that they did not shirk their duty in any manner, and that early battle damage and superior armament favoured the Americans. These 'legal' results were published, defending the honour of the service, and the government. Privately, however, the Admiralty tended to not re-employ those who were defeated. Such losses even tainted the careers of their junior officers, as Kaizer so ably demonstrates. Thus, honour and outcome collide in deciding the continued careers of the officers involved, an incongruity that is not dealt with sufficiently by the author. For the navy, doing everything to protect your honour was not enough; you had to win.

Not all commanding officers were that honourable. Captain John Carden, of HMS *Macedonian*, was acquitted by the court, despite being challenged for keeping his distance at the start of the fight. Criticized in the press, he wrote a book defending his actions, blaming a large portion of the loss on his wretched seamen. Captain Thomas Laugharne, HMS *Alert*, threw his lieutenant, Andrew Duncan, under the "boat" (per se) as the court asked questions about gunnery practice. Duncan had a severe

hearing loss and was sacrificed by the captain to redirect the court's attention. No further questions were asked about gunnery as all attention focused on Duncan's failure to adequately rouse the crew to fight on. Less than an honourable deed on Laugharne's part, since he had not brought the point up in previous correspondence on the loss. Captain Wales, HMS *Epervier*, and his officers complained to the court of the inferior nature of the crew, overlooking their own failure to check the repairs to their ship's guns after it had been driven under water during the hurricane at Halifax, in November 1813.

Kaizer has purposefully concentrated on the single-ship actions of the war to determine the place of the sense of honour in motivating Royal Navy officers, attributing it to underpinning the professional culture of the British navy's officer corp. Missing in the discussion of honour is its relationship to coastal raiding, attacks on specific communities (not just Washington) around Chesapeake Bay, the interdiction of coastal trade and the capture of merchant ships. The other element that certainly influenced the officers on the ocean were the defeats, or indecision, of British naval forces on the Great Lakes. This wider view might yield a more nuanced view of the issue, but that is for future work.

There are six illustrations, mainly of the officers mentioned, spread across the text, and 16 coloured ship profile drawings in the centre of the book, the work of Florian Richter. The four large maps are clear and helpful in situating the various actions under discussion. The first of two appendices contains information pertaining to the careers of the commanding officers and lieutenants on the British ships that were defeated, or victorious, which are discussed in the book. The second shows the disposition of frigates, by rated ar-

mament, for 1813. The second appendix seems less useful than the first. The book, sadly, lacks an index.

Even with my minor reservations, I recommend this book to those interested in the naval side of the War of 1812, those studying command and naval culture, and people examining the influence of war on local press and the role of the press in shaping the understanding of future historians of the events of the war. Nicholas Kaizer has written a volume that is enjoyable to read and will give one much on which to think. I look forward to his next publication.

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Angus Konstam. *North Cape 1943. The Sinking of the Scharnhorst*. Oxford, UK; Osprey Publishing, 2020. 96 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. US \$24.00, CDN \$32.50, paper; ISBN 978-1-4728-4211-4.

Every book, no matter the subject, presents a unique glimpse into an area of history. It may reveal totally new sources or research, different approaches, or methodologies, or even philosophies of history. Often, it reveals the subject in unique and exciting ways. Whatever the length, readers can appreciate it for what it is, a unique and valuable window into history. The Osprey books offer very simple and straightforward accounts that offer a clear narrative and accuracy.

Angus Konstam's *North Cape 1943: The Sinking of the Scharnhorst* (2020) certainly provides the latter. A relatively small book at only 96 pages, *North Cape* examines the final sortie of the KM *Scharnhorst* at the end of December 1943 in Operation *Ostfront* (Eastern Front) and its vain attempt to interfere with Allied convoys on the way to the

Soviet Union. The resulting one-sided battle that ensued ended with the destruction of the *Scharnhorst* off the North Cape of Norway. Over eight chapters, Konstam breaks down the operation from the perspective of both the British and German sides. Starting with a strategic assessment of the conditions that set up the campaign, Konstam provides a clear and concise chronology of the operation. What follows is a succinct discussion of the key elements of the battle. Chapter three focuses on the opposing commanders and their experience and training. Chapters four and five examine the order of battle for both sides and their plans, respectively. What follows is, despite its brevity, a crisp and clear-cut discussion of the campaign. Lavishly illustrated with maps providing an effective reference for ship movements, this chapter is really the heart of the text. Like most naval engagements, the battle developed over time in stages. In this case the author breaks it up into eight sections based on ship movements and actions. The final two chapters deal specifically with the aftermath of the battle and the discovery of the wreck of the *Scharnhorst* in September 2000. Resting in 290 meters of water, the wreck is the final resting place for some 1,932 men. The author also provides a section for further reading on the subject and index.

The biggest limitation for the text is its brevity. While most texts have the space to provide the reader with a great more context and understanding, a brief text like this one tends to produce a very bare-bones assessment of the events. Do not be confused by this. Konstam packs a lot of information into this small text, and I salute him for the work. To do that is never easy by any stretch of the imagination. When augmented by detailed charts and photos, *North Cape* provides its reader