

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

with a clear understanding of the battle with far more depth than most would expect. The reader comes away with a good sense of the events and the incredible challenges of operating in this environment. Operating off of Norway at the end of December puts ships and men really at the edge of capability and often beyond it. Even today that kind of climate is a killer of men and ships. Adding a war with U-boats, aerial and surface threats and the result is one of the most hostile situations anyone could face. Discussion of the light conditions and the storms facing both sides leaves the reader with a sense of shock that the operation could even go forward let alone lead to a successful conclusion.

At the same time, the complexity of operations does appear here as well. From the British side, the need to provide escorts for convoys and larger forces in the critical areas to protect a stronger surface force in case of German capital ships presented the admirals with unique challenges. Augmented by ULTRA based on the enigma cypher machine, the British were able to have a more complete intelligence picture of the German threat and were able to plan accordingly. Aware that the Germans wanted to put a major surface unit against the convoys, British planning provided for heavier capital ships in this case HMS *Duke of York* supported by one heavy and three light cruisers and multiple destroyers and smaller vessels. This force was also a multinational force including three Canadian destroyers. In the end the Royal Navy clearly had superior forces at their disposal. In comparison the German navy could field only *Scharnhorst* and five destroyers due to damage to the KM *Tirpitz* which rendered her inoperable. Yet despite the numerical advantages, the ability to read German codes and the expectation of action, the Royal Navy

almost missed the opportunity to sink *Scharnhorst*. Bad weather and equally bad luck can conspire to steal victory from anyone, and it was far closer than most think.

Overall, *North Cape* provides an interesting and fascinating read into the last battle of the *Scharnhorst*. It provides enough information to not only wet the appetite of the reader but a good consensus of the operations without overwhelming the reader. The greatest limitation is that this subject really needs a more in-depth discussion and assessment. This was a dramatic moment that had a huge impact on many things not just the people who fought it. As such it really deserves a larger study. That should not detract anyone interested in this from picking up the book. I think this will be an interesting read for anyone interested in naval history during this period and the little discussed northern convoy operations especially in 1943.

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John G. Langley. *Canadian Confederate Cruiser: The Story of the Steamer Queen Victoria*. Halifax, NS: Nimbus Publishing, www.nimbus.ca, 2018. 192 pp., illustrations, appendices, index. CDN \$17.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-77108-660-8. (E-book available.)

John G. Langley, author of a well-reviewed biography of Samuel Cunard, has written a very readable volume about an important and overlooked vessel in Canadian history. Introduced by the author as a compendium of stories, the book centres on the steamer *Queen Victoria* but he provides extensive details surrounding the ship and the events, making this more of a "life and times" volume.