

ship grappled with five English 74's. Though dismayed, *Revolutionaire* succeeded in slipping away under cover of darkness.

On the following day, the two fleets sparred and jockeyed for position. Still struggling against the wind, Howe finally ordered a general engagement. But due to confused signals and the inevitable fog of war, only a handful of ships engaged. Howe personally led the attack, which degenerated into a disorganized melee. The fight largely resulted in a tactical draw, although Howe succeeded in securing the weather gauge for the next day's fighting.

By 1 June, Howe finally succeeded in bringing his fleet to bear in a classic line-of-battle naval action. After intense fighting, Howe, commanding from the quarterdeck of the *Queen Charlotte*, succeeded in crossing the French line. By end of day, Villaret-Joyeuse's fleet had been badly battered, forcing him to disengage.

Ultimately, both sides would claim victory: the French for having ensured the safe passage of the grain convoy, the British for having badly mauled the enemy fleet. But Britain was clearly in a superior position for the continuing war at sea. The Revolution's frenzied political assault on the French navy, which included the purges of both experienced officers and trained gunners, had badly crippled her maritime capabilities. As the Napoleonic Wars unfolded over the succeeding decade, France was left at a decided disadvantage.

In addition to an engaging account of the fleet actions that took place between 28 May and 1 June 1794, Lardas' *Glorious First of June* constitutes a worthy reference volume on the battle. The book includes an exhaustive order of battle for both fleets, as well as excellent two- and three-dimensional maps that help clarify the chaos that erupted

when the two sides clashed.

This book follows the traditional Osprey template, and includes chapters on opposing commanders, opposing navies, opposing plans, the campaign, and its aftermath. Although Osprey books can't be strictly classified as academic volumes, that caveat by no means detracts from the author's research.

Mark Lardas is a lifelong maritime history enthusiast, prolific author, and knowledgeable authority on life at sea during the eighteenth century. He offers a concise and gripping account of one of the most pivotal, if unheralded, naval engagements during the wars of Revolutionary France.

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Jim Lotz. *Canada's Forgotten Arctic Hero: George Rice and the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, 1881-1884*. Sydney, NS: Cape Breton Books, www.capebretonbooks.com, 2009. 192 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography. CDN \$14.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-895415-94-0.

After Henry Grinnell's first expedition to locate Sir John Franklin in 1850, the United States began to direct part of their expansionist interests toward the extreme northern part of the American continent. Most of the daring adventures that characterize the expeditions toward the North Pole during the latter part of the nineteenth century have featured American military officials. Relatively little attention within the mainstream narrative of Arctic exploration has been reserved for people from other countries. The story of George Rice, a Canadian photographer who joined the Lady Franklin Bay expedition in 1881, is a refreshing example.

Jim Lotz, a Fellow of the Arctic In-

stitute of North America and author of 24 books, sheds light on the life of this heroic Canadian in his book *Canada's Forgotten Hero: George Rice and the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, 1881-1884*. The book is enriched by a series of George Rice's Arctic photos.

This book is mainly based on Rice's diary, dating from 7 July 1881, the day the expedition left the port of St. John's, Newfoundland, until 2 August 1883, when all members decided to leave Fort Conger in Lady Franklin Bay (Ellesmere Island) in a tragic attempt to save themselves from starvation.

The Lady Franklin Bay expedition, led by US Army Lieutenant Adolphus Greely, was organized as a scientific expedition for the third International Polar Year. The official purpose of this expedition, promoted by Captain William Henry Howgate of the US Army Signal Corps, was to establish a temporary station near Lady Franklin Bay, to serve as a base for scientific observations and explorations. In reality, as Lotz asserts in his book, the expedition's main purpose was part of Howgate's ambitious scheme for colonizing the Arctic.

George Rice joined the other 21 members of the expedition as a volunteer, and during the various extreme missions around Ellesmere Island, he proved to have all the necessary qualities of a good leader.

After reaching the western coast of Greenland, where two Inuit joined the expedition, the *Proteus* got to Cape Frazer, Ellesmere Island, on 4 August, and finally arrived at Discovery Harbour, on 18 August, where the carpenters started to build the Fort, named after Michigan Senator Omar D. Conger, who had supported the expedition.

Three members of Greely's expedition were able to reach the highest latitude ever attained at that time, setting off from the northern coast of Green-

land, while Rice reached the northern part of Ellesmere Island, after a dramatic journey that represents one of the most interesting parts of Rice's diary.

In particular, when Rice and his companions reached Cape Hecla, they found that the ice floe on which they stood was delimited by the open Arctic Sea, the existence of which was only supposed by previous expeditions. The crew felt lost when they realized that the floe was turning around by itself, leaving them at the mercy of the sea. Thanks to Rice's readiness and leadership skills, the men saved themselves, reaching the mainland.

Rice also proved himself to be a good sailor, further earning the respect of expedition members, as supported by their private diaries. The commander, Greely, was one of his strongest admirers, and on many occasions, he showed his confidence in Rice's skills, giving him responsibility for many important missions, such as asking Rice to conduct a launch into Sun Bay, in order to prepare the retreat journey. On another occasion, Greely chose Rice to lead a party to rescue a boat in Greenland, left by the Nares expedition in 1876.

Lotz's book represents an important document, opening a window for readers to discover many aspects of daily life in the Arctic and the difficulties that people had to face there in the nineteenth century. Another important feature of this book is its depiction of the difficulty involved in organizing a rescue expedition, partly due to the inefficiency of the technology of the era, but also to the disorganization of both the expedition crew and of the military authorities.

The tragedy of the Lady Franklin Bay expedition was determined by a series of poor command decisions by Greely, who decided to conduct his crew towards the southern part of Ellesmere

Island, after having waited two years for a relief vessel. As Lotz highlights in his book, Greely was ambitious but also “a rigid authoritarian, widely disliked by all the men of his expedition” (1). In fact, the US had tried to send the *Neptune* to Fort Conger in the summer of 1882, but the ice forced the members of the expedition to leave 250 rations at Cape Sabine, before heading back to civilization.

After two years, the men of the Franklin Bay Expedition left Fort Conger and started their last, dramatic journey towards the south, in the hope of meeting a relief vessel.

The US sent out the *Proteus* again, but its sinking drastically reduced the hope of rescuing Greely’s party. In February 1884, the first two members of the expedition died, quickly followed by other men. Rice’s turn came on 9 April, in a courageous attempt to retrieve some rations left at Baird Inlet by previous expeditions.

On 22 June, the *Bear* and the *The-tis* reached Cape Sabine, saving Greely and the last five men who remained and consigning them to history, while the life of people such as George Rice had to wait more than a century to be unearthed.

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R. Bruce McDonald. *Sisters of the Ice. The True Story of How St. Roch and North Star of Herschel Island Protected Canadian Arctic Sovereignty*. St. John’s, NL: Harbour Publishing, www.harbourpublishing.com, 2021. xiii+146 pp., illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. CDN \$19.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-55017-928-6.

*Sisters of the Ice* is an unusual book for a number of reasons: first of all, it

is a biography of not one ship but two; second, both of these vessels played an important role in Canadian and Arctic history; third, both ships are still extant—one as a museum ship, and the other as a still-active sailing vessel; and finally, because the author is unashamedly biased when it comes to the subject of the book as he is the owner of one of the ships. The two ships are the *St. Roch*, the famous British Columbian Arctic patrol vessel, today presented at the Vancouver Maritime Museum, and the lesser-known but equally interesting *North Star of Herschel Island*.

Given the numerous publications already available on the *St. Roch*, a patrol vessel owned by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that made the first circumnavigation of North America, and the fact that the author himself owns the *North Star of Herschel Island*, it is no wonder that there is a certain focus on the latter vessel. What is much more interesting than the portraits of the two ships is the way the author frames their biographies by focusing on their respective contributions to securing Canadian sovereignty over the area today known as Arctic Canada.

Consequently, the book does not begin with the construction history of the ships, but with a broad introduction to the Canadian Arctic, in particular Herschel Island, and the issue of Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago. While some of the topics are oversimplified, for example the discussion of the end of Arctic whaling does not even mention the rapid development of Antarctic whaling, they provide a good introduction to a complex topic and most important the role of individual traders and their interactions with the Indigenous population in this context.

In the following sections it becomes obvious how a very small number of ships could secure sovereignty over