

# The Northern Mariner / Le marin du nord

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## From the editor

In September 2021, the governments of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States [announced](#) a new “landmark” defence pact: AUKUS. Building on their “common tradition as maritime democracies,” the first step in the three-nation alliance involves cooperation in the procurement and development of a new fleet of nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy – a step that involves the extensive sharing of naval technology and leveraging of expertise. The relationship between the US and post-Brexit Britain has been a complicated one and some [commentators](#) suggested that the chaotic American withdrawal from Afghanistan signaled the relationship’s failure. AUKUS, however, serves as a reminder of the “long-standing and ongoing bilateral ties ... and deep defense ties” between the two countries. As the [joint leaders’ statement](#) on AUKUS, explained: “For more than 70 years, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, have worked together, along with other important allies and partners, to protect our shared values and promote security and prosperity. Today, with the formation of AUKUS, we recommit ourselves to this vision.”

The complexities, conflicts, and mutual benefits of the Anglo-American relationship course through the two research articles and the review essay published in this issue of *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord*. Few international relationships have been the subject of more intense scholarly scrutiny than this one, yet each of the authors featured in this issue highlight just how much work remains to be done to understand its history, impact, and evolution.

Frank Blazich’s article, “Inventors and Innovators,” underlines the impact that on-the-ground, technical working relationships between relatively low-ranking British and American personnel and organizations – and their sharing of technology

and leveraging of expertise – had on the invasions of German-occupied Europe during the Second World War. Blazich explains the development of the simple steel box pontoons, the pontoon causeways, and the massive lighterage barges that ensured logistical success during these complicated, large-scale amphibious assaults. It is a story of cooperation and collaboration, as the simple pontoons, developed by American engineer Captain John N. Laycock, were adapted by Royal Navy reserve officer Captain Thomas A. Hussey for offensive amphibious operations. Blazich's detailed account offers a new look at how Anglo-American cooperation fostered the technological innovation that allowed the Allies to overcome the logistical challenges of offensive amphibious operations.

Of course, Anglo-American interests have not always aligned. Real and potential conflict defined the relationship in the nineteenth century. In his article, "Great Britain, Blockades, and Neutral Rights: Royal Navy Operations during the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848," Stanley Adamiak explores the Royal Navy's efforts to navigate the blockades and commerce raiding that defined the war's naval dimension. While much has been written about the contentious Anglo-American relations and conflict caused by the Royal Navy's blockade of Napoleon's Europe, Adamiak breaks new scholarly ground in his study of how Britain dealt with the US Navy's blockade of Mexico's ports and coasts, as it sought to protect British interests and promote trade and neutral rights. The professionalism of both American and British naval officers, Adamiak concludes, along with willingness of both governments to compromise, effectively diffused any potential crises.

The conflictual side of the historic Anglo-American relationship also emerges in Evan Rothera's review essay, featuring Richard Anderson and Henry B. Lovejoy's edited collection, *Liberated Africans and the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, Mary Wills's *Envoys of Abolition*, and Jeffrey R. Kerr-Ritchie's *Rebellious Passage*. While this detailed review highlights many other themes in the three books – particularly the fact that, despite two pieces of legislation barring the transatlantic trade in human cargo, slavery and the slave trade continued and intensified after 1807 – Anglo-American tensions over slavery and the slave trade did much to shape state relations in the first half of the century.

In completing this issue, I enjoyed a great deal of help and support. I very much appreciate the assistance and guidance provided by editorial board members Roger Sarty and Richard Gimblett, the support offered by book review editor Faye Kert, and the article feedback provided by our anonymous referees. Both research articles in this issue were made stronger by the inclusion of over thirty high-quality visuals – all made possible by the hard layout work of production editor Walter Lewis, who really went above and beyond for this issue. Finally, I would like to thank the authors for sharing their innovative and thoughtful work with the journal. I hope you enjoy the issue.

All the best,

Peter Kikkert

Editor, *The Northern Mariner*