

success in securing the oceans. At the same time, the British blockade, which began in 1813, was hollowing out the American economy. Here Dudley exploits the latest British research, notably Brian Arthur's *How Britain Won the War of 1812* (reviewed *TNM* XXII, no. 2, April 2012), to qualify old mythologies.

Across the three campaign seasons the focal point of the naval effort steadily shifted from oceanic raiding to coast defence, and finally to the Great Lakes, where the bulk of American sailors were stationed by the autumn of 1814. Sailors, shipwrights, and cannon were shifted from the coast to the Lakes, initially to support a succession of failed invasions of Canada, and then to secure the American frontier against the British counter-attack. As Mahan observed, Lake Erie and Lake Champlain were the Navy's decisive battles, reflecting the reality of a conflict that ended with the economy in ruins, the capital destroyed, and parts of the country under British occupation. In contrast to operations on the ocean, the naval effort on the Lakes focused on moving and supplying armies. Command of the individual lakes enabled offensive operations; loss of command halted them. The victory on Lake Erie allowed American troops to cross into Canada, winning a key battle at the Thames: victory at Lake Champlain saw a British invasion abandoned. By denying the British command of Lakes Erie, Ontario, and Champlain the Navy helped stabilise the conflict, and encourage a *status quo ante* settlement.

Ironically, the War of 1812 ended because the downfall of Napoleon and a stabilisation of Europe allowed the British to demobilise the vast, costly warfare state after 21 years of almost continuous conflict. The peace they offered pointedly excluded any discus-

sion of "Free Trade and Sailors Rights," and the Madison administration, which had never cared for either issue, accepted. In essence, America chose the land over the sea. As Dudley concludes, the blockade worked: "had the war continued through another year, the United States might have had to sue for peace ... the country had a narrow escape" (293-4). The United States did not win the War, nor was 1812 a second war of independence, outside the propaganda of the Madison administration. British war aims remained strikingly modest throughout: Europe, not North America, was the critical point.

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José L. Bolívar Fresnada. *The Caribbean Front in World War II: The Untold Story of U-boats, Spies, and Economic Warfare*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, www.markusweiner.com, 2021. 275 pp., illustrations, charts, notes, bibliography, index. US \$26.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-55876-955-7.

José L. Bolívar Fresnada, military historian and relative of two US Navy veterans, brings his considerable knowledge of Puerto Rican, American naval, and Caribbean history to bear in order to more fully share the unsung but pivotal Second World War struggle for the oil and ore supplies out of the Caribbean. Particularly with the *Neuland* (New Land) offensive in the spring of 1942, along with a flotilla of effective Italian attack submarines known as BetaSom from Bordeaux, the Germans under *Großadmiral* Karl Dönitz made a determined effort to sever the Allied lifeline of oil from Venezuela via the refineries in Aruba and Curacao, and also the ore and bauxite routes from northeastern South America. They very

nearly succeeded before the Allies, particularly the Americans, could organize a concerted defense by gaining effective anti-submarine warfare techniques from the air and developing intersecting convoy, defense, and counter-attack measures.

It was a near thing, with nearly 400 allied ships sunk between January 1942 and July 1943 alone. In retaliation, the Allies were able to sink 72 German U-boats, with the loss of 522 German sailors. Though the Italian submarines like *Enrico Tazzoli* were highly effective, only one penetrated the Caribbean Sea proper, cruising between Aruba and Jamaica without sinking any ships. Given the literally fluid nature of the battle, the forces, and geography of the region, Fresnada's delineation of "Caribbean Sea" is expanded to include the north coast of Cuba, and to the southeast of Trinidad, along the South American coast, as well as the Gulf of Mexico, or the US Gulf. Given the convoy routes from Trinidad to Key West, Panama and New Orleans, this is understandable.

Like Trinidadian Gaylord TM Kelshall, who wrote the first book *The U-Boat War in the Caribbean* in 1988, published by Naval Institute Press, Fresnada utilizes German, French, American, Puerto Rican and myriad other resources to carry on where Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, the US Navy's historian during the Second World War, left off. And what a story it is. U-boat historian Michael Gannon (*Operation Drumbeat*) has emphasized the need to tell both sides of the story, and Clay Blair (*Hitler's U-Boat War*) and Guðmundur Helgason (*Uboat.net*) bring the highest standards of data dissemination to the field. The challenge to those of us documenting these watery battlefields is where to stop, and what not to leave out. If an Allied defensive measure never influenced the battle, does it

merit inclusion? Does a reported attack on a submarine when no U-boats were actually in the area deserve a mention? These questions are not so easy to answer in the context of a 275-page book covering dozens of nations and well over a million square miles, yet author Fresnada handles the material adroitly and keeps readers engaged.

Like Key West, Puerto Rico is described as the Gibraltar of the Caribbean: US Navy publicists had quite free reign within widespread censorship, creating zingers like "sighted sub, sank same," and at one point in 1942 claiming to have sunk more U-boats than had actually arrived in the Americas. Fresnada covers the German assaults by U-boat patrol, and then wisely, rather than covering all 400 attacks, he focusses on 50 or fewer, some of them, like the *Maldonado*, closer to Bermuda than the Caribbean. Since Castro's time, Cuba, with Havana being the largest city in the Caribbean, has received less attention for its Second World War support of the Allies, yet its contributions along with air bases like Borinquen in Puerto Rico, must be recognized, with the Naval Operating Base (NOB) Guantanamo protecting the most used gateway to the Caribbean serving as a centerpiece of Allied defense.

Unfortunately, Cuba can also serve as a large geographic magnet; in this case, the attacks on *Michael Jebson*, *Standella*, and *Empire Corporal* by U-598 under Gottfried Holtorf on 14 August 1942 occurred as close to Ragged Island, in the Bahamas, as to Cuba, but were attributed to being off Cuba, a not-uncommon error in the narrow Old Bahama Channel. Placing the sinking of U-176 by Cuban forces with US air support on 15 May 1943 "South of Haiti," when it is confirmed to have been sunk between Cuba and Cay Sal Bank, Bahamas, was an error of wider margin.

Reporting the shelling of Mona Island, between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, is more understandable, given that the *Grey Lady* herself (*The New York Times*) printed a report the next day, as it arrived from Rexford G. Tugwell, the US Governor of Puerto Rico and highest law in the land. Tugwell received a report from Remberto Casaba, of the National Youth Administration, that on the evening of 3 March 1942, 170 young witnesses camping on the island with their adult supervisors witnessed and heard some 30 shells slamming into the cliffs of the islet, considered by most to be uninhabited.

Of course, this “attack” was immediately attributed to German U-boats roaming the area. While there is no doubt that someone shelled Mona that night, a close, mile-by-mile, hour-by-hour study of every German and Italian U-boat and *sommergibile* proves that there was simply no Axis submarine anywhere near Mona at that time, and that not one of them logged deck gun practice. Almost certainly, therefore, it was a live-fire exercise by an Allied warship which, having been detected and immediately reported to the Governor, was as quickly hushed up and the German enemy made to take the blame.

Fresnada admirably covers an impressive range of topics, which prove that this polyglot region, which provided so many essential supplies to the Allies, was much more of a linchpin than most of us realize. From the Caribbean, cargos went to Burma (on aircraft via Bahamas, Guyana and Brazil); to Africa, for the battle against Rommel in North Africa; as part of the southern aircraft supply line to the UK when U-boats and the Luftwaffe made the northern route untenable. For example, if the Germans could sink the shuttle tankers from Maracaibo to Aruba, it

would take the Allies over a year to replace the specialist craft. In fact, they nearly succeeded, but in a critical attack the U-boat gunners left a plug in the muzzle of a gun, killing a crewman. Then, when they were starting to shell a refinery, a bunch of Dutch and expatriate boarding school children excitedly ran out to watch. Their screaming led the Germans to believe they were under counter-attack.

The author expounds on the expropriations in Puerto Rico, rum consumption, revenues, segregation amongst the military, the war economy, espionage. (Most of it imagined, since the Germans, with Milk-Cow supply boats and the upper hand, really never needed local complicity to attack, and would not normally go near enemy shores without a military necessity. They were, however, known to destroy inter-island schooners to obtain protein, chickens, and fresh fruit and disrupt regional trade.) He covers oil, airbases, rationing, base negotiation and diplomacy, women in the military, base construction and employment, the sugar industry and the awkward and resource-draining crisis of French forces under Admiral Georges Robert bottled up on the island of Martinique, which were left in limbo by the Germans over-running Vichy France, and the scuttling of 77 French Navy vessels in the Mediterranean. He even covers the issue of Jewish and other refugees aboard ships like the *Capitaine Paul-Lemarle*, and how some of them settled in Sosua, near Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic.

Finally, Fresnada gets it right with respect to the loss of U-153 under Wilfried Reichmann, whereas even leading lights in the genre, like Clay Blair, “fell” for mistaken post-war attribution by Navy publicists for the loss of this sub. In an effort to spread credit and medals, the USN awarded the 6 July

1942 sinking of U-153 to both a single pilot off Aruba (A-20A Havoc under Dr. Marshall Groover, which Fresnada correctly confirms), and, a week or so later, to a veritable panoply of American minelayers, aircraft, destroyers, etc. who were actually bombing a well-known freighter still spewing oil. While the German experts, including Dr. Axel Niestlé, concur, the US Navy is more intractable. Having spent years re-attributing the loss of U-84 in 2019, not everyone is willing to take up the case with Naval Heritage Command.

For taking on this task and succeeding so well in researching and explaining the many facets of this aquatic, sub-sea, and airborne battlefield, Dr. José Bolívar Fresnada should be congratulated. He has done an exemplary job of delivering lively details involving the little-known Caribbean Front of the Second World War.

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James C. Hamilton. *Captain Cook and the Search for Antarctica*. Barnsley, South Yorks: Pen & Sword Books, www.penandswordbooks.com, 2020. 303pp., illustrations, charts, notes, bibliography, index. US \$42.95, UK £25.00, cloth; ISBN: 978-1-52675-357-1.

Antarctic history, and in particular Antarctic maritime history, is too often understood only as the history of the expeditions during the so-called heroic age of Antarctic exploration between the late nineteenth century and the years shortly after the end of the First World War. Earlier expeditions to the Southern Ocean and the search for Antarctica itself are a topic about which even most professional Antarctic historians have only slight knowledge. British explorer

and Royal Navy Captain James Cook, on the other hand, is mainly renowned today for his work in the Pacific, and in particular, his exploration of the South Sea, Hawaii, the Australian east coast and the first circumnavigation of New Zealand. Nevertheless, during each of his three major voyages in the years 1768-71, 1772-75, and 1776-79, Cook sailed substantial regions of the Southern Ocean, explored the shorelines of a number of islands that are today considered as sub-Antarctic islands, and tried to solve the riddle of whether the mythical southern continent, *terra australis incognita*, really existed. Although he did not reach the Antarctic continent and came to the conclusion that *terra australis incognita* (Antarctica) did not exist, Cook needs to be understood as the first systematic and serious explorer of the Antarctic.

Captain Cook and the Search for Antarctica is the first book that is exclusively dedicated to the history of Captain James Cook as an Antarctic explorer. As such, Hamilton not only closes a long existing gap but showcases the fact that Cook was much more than just the main early explorer of the South Sea. He is also proof that exploration of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean actually began well before the heroes of the heroic age of Antarctic exploration arrived on the continent.

Divided into five main sections, the book combines a chronological with a thematic approach. Hamilton presents an introduction to Cook's voyages, including detailed information on the ships he used, followed by a discussion of his visits to Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn in 1769, the three crossings of the Antarctic Circle, the exploration of the sub-Antarctic islands, a discussion of Cook's contributions to natural and Antarctic science and finally, a chapter devoted to the impact of