

text and most readers will find Rust's description of the German Naval Court Judicial procedures enlightening. Rust maintains that this report was motivated as much by a personal vendetta as a "patriotic and selfless act." Apparently, it was filed outside of "normal channels" and should have been squelched on the spot. Now, however, the German navy was under Admiral Karl Dönitz, who had begun to campaign ardently against all signs of political non-conformity and "defeatism" within its ranks. The men who could have intervened on Kusch's behalf either failed to act or were unavailable to head off the eventual trial. It is perhaps unfortunate that Kusch's case did not fall under the purview of the circle of officers around the German Naval Magistrate Berthold Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, the brother of Hitler's would-be assassin and a member of the July 20 plot. In general, at this stage of the war, German military and civil courts were under growing political and military pressure to root out "defeatists" and "dissenters" within the Third Reich. Post-war attitudes did not change much and it took two separate trials to clear Kusch's name to a limited degree. Even the former naval judge who insisted on Kusch's execution was only given a "severe" reprimand for choosing to impose the harshest possible sentence without any compelling legal justification.

This story is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, Dönitz, the self-proclaimed protector of his U-boat commanders, refused to help one of his own, despite a verbal promise to do so. Secondly, Kusch was one of the few officers of the *Kriegsmarine* to be executed for voicing his negative opinions about the Nazi regime and its leadership. It should not be forgotten that Hitler's regime had no qualms about spilling the blood of German officers or

civilians who in any way voiced opposition or even merely disparaged the regime. In fact, Germany executed almost 33,000 of its own sorely needed military personnel during the Second World War, many for 'crimes' like Kusch's. It is also notable that Kusch was not a member of the German resistance to Hitler's regime, and he was not known to even the small cadre of *Kriegsmarine* officers who were involved in the German resistance movement. Overall, this is a definitely recommended reading for those who are interested in *Kriegsmarine*'s "muddied" relationship with Hitler and the Nazi regime. It reminds us that even some of those who served under Hitler could recognize the evil of his regime – and were often severely punished for voicing their dissent. Rust and the US Naval Institute Press should be acknowledged for bringing this riveting and well-written account to our attention.

Peter K. H. Mispelkamp  
Pointe Claire, Quebec

Jak P. Mallmann Showell. *Hitler's Attack U-Boats: The Kriegsmarine's WWII Submarine Strike Force*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Frontline Books, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2020. vii+263 pp., illustrations, appendices, glossary, index. US \$34.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-52677-101-8.

One of the most prolific topics in military history must be the Battle of the Atlantic, arguably the most critical of campaigns for victory in Europe. The lengthy bibliography on the subject seems perpetually growing as more books and articles are added every year. It is also due, in part, to the fact that there is something about submarines that captures the imagination. These small boats, designed to sink and come

back up, and the men that go to sea in them, capture the imagination, producing a kind of romanticism that captivates the reader. The arrival of a new submarine book like *Hitler's Attack U-Boats* naturally draws the attention of those interested in the subject. Jak Showell is a well-known author having published more than 20 titles in the field. His first book, *U-boats Under the Swastika* has the distinction of being one of the longest selling naval books in Germany. His second book, *The German Navy in World War Two* was named one of the outstanding books of the year by the United States Naval Institute. His research and publications have also drawn him into the production of both radio and television programs as well.

In *Hitler's Attack U-Boats*, the author provides the reader with a study of U-boat development from the First World War forward across ten chapters. Backed up by four appendices, the text traces the development of German U-boat designs over the course of the war, detailing developments in deck armament, torpedo design, and both the internal and external features of the Type VIIC and the key crew positions and rolls. Starting with a general chapter about "attack U-boats" in the Second World War, Showell spends the next three chapters breaking down the lessons learned from the First World War, the consequences of the war for U-boat development, and the interwar development of submarine designs in Germany. While he specifically focuses on the Type VII and IX, he does discuss the earlier designs as well. Chapters five through nine examine the boats themselves looking at the new generation of submarines in general before going into their external features, internal design elements, and crew. Lastly, he examines the Operational Command set up for the fleet.

While an intriguing book at so many levels, it is also a study of ship design that is lavishly illustrated with unique and fascinating photographs and drawings. I find this incredible because, so often, books tend to use and reuse the same type of images. Showell's unique photos can be as revealing as his text in describing ship features, stations, and operations, and are a definite advantage to the reader. The author also provides the reader with a wealth of information in his descriptions of the boats and the challenges of operating them. He addresses everything from battery gas venting into the hull through the difficulties of functioning in the engine room due to noise and vibration, to the challenges of torpedo maintenance and operation. Combined, they provide a vivid image of the incredible challenges faced by the U-boats. In the process, Showell gives the reader a sense of the command structure aboard and the way the Germans exercised control within the boat for almost everything.

Sadly, the book also has some serious problems. The author's discussion of issues like HF/DF and radar seems to have a problem of chronology and understanding. HF/DF has a long history but the way the author presents it makes him seem unaware of the technology or how it was even used. This is similar to his discussion about the Wolfpack doctrine and how Operational Command exhibited control over the boats from the rear. Often this seems to contradict what is known in the literature. The problem is Showell does not back up his statements. The lack of citation and supporting evidence is a critical problem. Incredibly detailed technological discussions, charts, graphs, and statements regarding the operational doctrine and control need to be verified and substantiated by documentary proof. Despite his previous competent use of

interviews and documents, also used in this book, he is missing the evidence of a paper trail, which decreases the value of the text considerably. The fact that the author even points out errors made by other historians in these issues is not missed. But again, he fails to cite specific authors, books, or articles, to give credence to either the problems or the sources of his evidence. He does not even indicate which authors are in question. If you are going to criticize someone's work, you must back up the point you are making. And Showell fails to do that. Even the illustrations are problematic. An almost identical font is used for both the text and the captions for photographs. With so many photos interspersed within the text, it is often difficult to determine where the text ends and an image description begins. This is frustrating, as there are some incredible descriptions and they just lead to the entire text washing out.

While I enjoyed the book, and I can appreciate the author's attention to detail, I find myself frustrated with the text size and the absence of citations in a history. Making statements about highly technical information and doctrine/training that challenge the accepted wisdom is an important part of research and publication, but they need to be reinforced with citations. It is essential for credibility and to make the text a valuable tool for research and study. *Hitler's Attack U-Boats* struck me as a glorified coffee table book, good looking and interesting, but not something of substance. That does the author a disservice for all the incredible effort and work he has put into it and limits the book's value for anyone in an academic pursuit.

Robert Dienesch  
Windsor, Ontario

William N. Still, Jr. and Richard A. Stephenson. *Shipbuilding in North Carolina 1688-1918*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Office of Archives and History, distributed by University of North Carolina Press, [uncpress.org/](http://uncpress.org/), 2021. xi+462 pp., illustrations, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography. US \$40.00, paper; ISBN 978-0-8652-6494-6.

North Carolina is a southeastern state facing the Atlantic Ocean, between Virginia in the north and South Carolina to the south. Its nearly three thousand miles of coastline, estuaries, and waterways are well known for their natural beauty and hazards. A combination of geography and prevailing weather patterns, that include constantly shifting shoals, hurricanes, and tropical storms, has earned North Carolina the reputation for ships as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic." Consequently, major ports and related maritime industries developed elsewhere, and previous historians and writers have assumed that shipbuilding done in North Carolina remained only limited and small-scale, except during times of emergency such as the two world wars. This book, based on a half-century of research in national and state archives, ship registers, census records, and a wide range of other sources, dispels this notion with a deep narrative and a database of ships built in North Carolina up to 1914. William Still, Jr., known for his scholarly work over many decades on the Confederate Navy and armour-clads, wrote most of the text, while Richard Stephenson provided the tables, statistical analysis, and numerical data. Still and Stephenson are each professor emeritus from East Carolina University in Greenville and its well-regarded maritime studies and underwater archaeology graduate program. Given the long gestation of the book, publication was made possi-