

Captain Chris O'Flaherty, RN. *Naval Minewarfare. Politics to Practicalities*. Gloucester, U.K.: The Choir Press, enquiries@thechoirpress.co.uk, 2019. xvii+394 pp, illustrations, diagrams, tables, notes, annexes, bibliography, index. UK £34.99, semi-cloth; ISBN 978-1-78963-086-2.

This fascinating, long overdue volume is written by an expert, Chris O'Flaherty, who is Captain, Maritime Warfare Centre at HMS *Collingwood*, and has spent much of his career involved with clearance diving and mine warfare. While the first 50 pages are a general review of the development of mines and mine warfare, the book concentrates on the principles of the threat and the use of this 'pernicious' device, a careful review of the rarely-observed legalities involved. These are surprisingly still measured by infractions to the Hague Convention of 1909. Among civilized nations, these regulations are conceived as applicable, at least in part, to major powers, just not from most of those currently employing mines.

There is a fascinating and educational recording of mining use on 24 tactical and operational occasions throughout the world since the end of the Second World War. It offers a sobering review of the actual recent and on-going use of sea mines. The problems faced by various warships and merchantmen, from the severe damage to two RN destroyers in the Corfu Channel in 1946, in a supposedly free passageway, through their use in the Indo-China war of 1965-1973, the Falklands in 1982, the Gulf War in 1991 (where Canada's ships had to be cautious of them), and more recently, off Yemen in 2017. (Chapter 3, pp.57- 161, plus 15 pages of reference notes to these events). Each is a tale of threatened or actual encounter with opposition mining, ranging from a few

paragraphs to several pages. In itself, this section is a serious warning to those who may regard this ancient weapon as of little or easily handled concern; 'just a threat.'

The major thrust of O'Flaherty's work is to serve as that warning. Throughout, he makes the point that while publicised mining of sea passages and harbour approaches may be covered, even complied with, by civilized major nations who at least notionally would be in adherence to those 1909 Hague Peace Conference Conventions, there are those who refuse to publish warnings but allow free passage to non-belligerent ships. The rise of minor inter-nation squabbles and outright wars by semi-rogue states has led to completely unregulated sea mining, costing many ships—and lives, thanks to the availability of some relatively simple mining devices, available to the smallest of non-state organizations. O'Flaherty describes and provides diagrams of increasing levels of possibility, threat and actuality. The correlation of effort to threat to measures of success is not necessarily related to ships sunk, too easy a measurement when the threat of mining is its major advantage, at almost nil cost.

The final chapter headings indicate the value of this text above the normal 'this is what happened' earlier books on minewarfare: 'The Law of Naval Mining' and 'of Naval Mine Countermeasures,' 'The Statecraft of Naval Minewarfare,' his conclusions in 'Measures of Effect' and his valuable actual 'Conclusions (336-342)'. These chapters are what makes this volume so important and so different from earlier histories presenting the use of mines as a mere adjunct to wider naval warfare.

This text should not only be on the bookshelves of those navally responsible for preparations to meet the threat

of hostile mining of our harbours and passages, such as the St. Lawrence estuary, but available to those providing the funding for at least a minimal countermeasure. Here Captain O'Flaherty provides a close scrutiny of what is required in statecraft to meet the all-too-real threat alone. While he covers the possibility of mining opponents' waters (after all, he leads an RN minewarfare school), the application of preparations to deal with the potential mining of ours, quite possibly by the most minor of groups—not even major powers—is where this volume is at its most valuable. An unusual, an essential, read for quite a range of leaders, apart from anyone with an interest in the subject.

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Lawrence Paterson. *Eagles Over the Sea 1943-45: A History of Luftwaffe Maritime Operations*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, www.seaforthpublishing.com, 2020. Distributed by Naval Institute Press. xvii+382 pp., illustrations, maps, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. UK £30.00, US \$44.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-5267-7765-2. (E-book available).

This is the second volume of author Lawrence Paterson's examination into the history of Luftwaffe maritime units and operations during the Second World War. Primarily focused on the period of 1943 to 1945 with initial discussions of relevant 1942 events woven into combat theatre histories, Paterson narrowed the overall focus of the work to be predominantly on the bomber units repurposed for specialized maritime roles. Additional aircraft units and pilots are discussed when relevant, but the scope was specialized to prevent the need to create further volumes in what was ini-

tially intended to be a single book. As with his previous works on the Kriegsmarine, the author makes excellent use of primary sources from both the axis and allies to present a solid chronology of operations within several theaters of engagement. Contemporary quotes and images are spread throughout the work, and the main text is bookended by a lead-in glossary of terms and unit organizational structures and an appendix guide to relevant aircraft introduced from 1942 to 1945, followed by endnotes, bibliography, and an index.

While this book is the second volume of the author's first foray into the airborne operations side of the naval war, his pattern of analysis bears a distinct similarity to his earlier work, *Hitler's Forgotten Flotillas: Kriegsmarine Security Forces*, in which Paterson focuses each chapter on a specific theater of operation, covering the early dispositions of each theater in the first half of the work, followed by their late war situations in the latter half. For *Eagles Over the Sea*, he divides the treatment into three; France and the Atlantic, North Africa and the Mediterranean, and the Arctic and Eastern Front. While the book title implies a focus solely on 1943 forward, the first half actually covers large portions of 1942 for the various theatres as well, providing context and background for the primary period of focus.

The first three chapters of the work set the stages for the various theatres of operation, covering assigned squadrons, equipment, situations and operations. In addition to Paterson's stated focus on converted bombing units, there is a definite early emphasis on U-boat escort duty around the Bay of Biscay, with the Mediterranean operations more varied in nature to include sea rescue, supply transport, and reconnaissance. The northern units offer an interesting view