

BOOK REVIEWS

Henry Acton. *A Whaling Captain's Life. The Exciting True Account by Henry Acton for His Son, William*. Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, www.historypress.net, 2008 (Collector's Edition of the 1838 New England Classic). xiii + 113 pp., illustrations. US \$12.99, paper; ISBN 978-1-59629-417-2.

This little booklet is a reprint of the original 1838 edition. In their introduction, the editors of the History Press boast, "The charm of this book is that it is delivered from a father to his son with honesty and integrity. There are no descriptions puffed with drama" (p.vii). The father is Henry Acton, introduced as a whaling captain, speaking to his son William about the whale and seal hunt, and about the different species he encountered.

Despite its fairly handsome appearance, I think there is something "fishy" about this book on whales and whaling. Actually there are many flaws, in both content as well as tone. First of all, the cover promises the reader 112 plates of illustrations; I counted 13. Secondly, Acton only names a few whale species: the Razor Back (orca?), the Common Black (right whale), and The Cachelot (sperm whale). Interestingly, he does not differentiate between sperm whales and common whales. For example, he refers to the presence of whalebone (baleen) in the mouths of the Spermaceti as well as the Common Whale, instead of specifying the presence of teeth in the lower jaw of a sperm whale (p.11). A little later, Acton writes about taking whales without the use of harpoons when they became entangled in lines (p.31). He mentions the ship *Nautilus* capturing a whale in this manner in 1814. I checked this account against Alexander Starbuck's *The History of the American Whale Fishery* (reprinted in 1989 after its first publication

in 1877) which lists thousands of whaling voyages, and for the years 1811-1814 no ship *Nautilus* is mentioned. Furthermore, among thousands of names listed by Starbuck, no Henry Acton appears as a whaling master between the years 1830-1838. Finally, not once does Acton refer to his own personal experiences as a captain. This is surprising, to say the least.

The tone in which the booklet is written is bewildering as well. Told in the first person, Acton provides the information and dwells extensively on the perils of whaling, but also on moral issues. In 1811, one of William Scoresby Jr.'s harpooners kills a mother whale that tried to protect her calf. Acton highlights this incident as an example of doubtful, even immoral behaviour: "Is this not extremely painful, William, to destroy an animal of so much affection for its young?"(p.17). To this question no answer is given. Religious motives and references to the Bible are also plentiful.

I found it striking that only once in this little book does Henry Acton engage in a dialogue with his son. His phrasing is quite peculiar as, after focusing on the loss of whale ships, Acton writes: "William here asked his father if whale ships were not sometimes lost at sea? Yes my son, many fishing-ships as well as merchantmen have foundered at sea, and have never been heard from since their departure. I remember, father, says William, a piece of poetry which aunt Mary learnt me a long time since about the loss of a vessel" After the citation of this piece of poetry Acton continues: You will find, my son, by referring to Irving's Sketch Book, a most thrilling description of a wreck at sea" (pp. 34-35). Aside from an alternating usage of present and past tenses, this dialogue seems

to be artificial, specifically created to underline the educational value of the book.

At the end of the book, after describing whales, seals, the hunt, the perils of the sea and the deprived, primitive lives of the Inuit (‘their deprivation of the means of knowledge, above all the knowledge of the Bible’) the author seems to come to the essence of why the story about whaling and sealing is important. Still conversing with his son William, our whaling captain writes: “As you gain more knowledge of the different beings and things which God has made, you will gain also more and more proofs of his existence and of his amazing power, wisdom and goodness. Let that goodness sink deep into your soul, and form a part of your daily thoughts and feelings. How much kindness God has shown and is still showing you; how many sources of comfort and of enjoyment he gives you; how it grieves him to see you think or feel or act wrong; how he loves to see you be good and to do good, that you may go, after death, to be with him forever, - continually to improve in knowledge, in holiness, and in happiness!” (pp. 111-112)

Here, I think, the true character of the author and real message of the book is revealed. Whaling and sealing seem to serve as bookends, or better: points of reference for this moral message cited at length. If this is the case, the honesty and integrity the editors refer to in their introduction should be taken with several grains of salt.

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Dionisius S. Agius. *Classic Ships of Islam: From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, www.brill.nl, 2008. Handbook of Oriental Studies, vol. 92.

xxiii + 505 pp., illustrations, maps, figures, tables, appendices, glossary, bibliography, index. €140.00, US \$209.00, cloth; ISBN: 978 90 04 15863 4.

Rarely do books come along that make such a demonstrable contribution to the field of maritime history as Dionisius Agius’s *Classic Ships of Islam*, a work that effectively re-lays the foundation for the study of Muslim shipping in the western Indian Ocean. “This is what the book is about: the *Classic Ships of Islam*, the story of river boats and ocean-going vessels,” in the author’s own words, “these are the best examples of ship-types recorded by Muslim historians, geographers, travelers and storytellers. *Classic Ships of Islam* is about types of craft, their hull design, and equipment, but also about seamanship and technology in the context of the broader historical framework” (p.xiii).

Agius has executed this formidable assignment with clarity and skill. While I am unable to judge the accuracy of his translations or the depth of his use of Arabic primary source material, he has mined a formidable range of material including not only the standard historical and geographic works of Islam’s golden age and that of the fifteenth-century navigator Ibn Majid, but also the *Quran* and less well known but illuminating verses from pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.

Classic Ships of Islam is divided into six parts. The first reviews the geographic and temporal scope of the study, lays out the conceptual framework for the work and reviews the sorts of textual and iconographic sources that comprise the armature of Agius’s research. Part two offers an historical overview of the subject in chapters that cover the period from the earliest contacts between the civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley (third millennium BCE) to the demise of Persia’s

Sasanian Empire, and the nine centuries from the rise of Islam to the coming of the Europeans.

Parts three and four comprise the backbone of the work and cover the history of vessel types and boatbuilding techniques from the Bronze Age to the sixteenth century, aspects of seamanship and navigation, the use of ships in trade and in the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the limited application of naval warfare in the Indian Ocean before the coming of the Portuguese. On the last issue, Agius acknowledges that the sources have little to say on the subject of military-naval activities in the Indian Ocean, but his answer to the question, "What could be the reason for this?" deserved further amplification.

All things being equal, merchants prefer peaceful to violent trade. The cultural distinctions between Muslim merchants of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean are essentially nil, and as he demonstrates, Arabs, Persians, and Indians did fight at sea when the incentives were high enough to warrant the effort. To say simply that "Muslim merchants came to the coasts of India on peaceful terms as their primary interest was trade" (p.246) ignores a host of technological and geographical constraints on naval warfare in the Indian Ocean. While a more comprehensive answer would have been beyond the scope of *Classic Ships of Islam*, an analysis of these issues along the lines laid down by John H. Pryor in *Geography, Technology and War: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649-1571* (1988) is certainly in order. Thanks to Agius's pathbreaking work, such a study is much more likely to be written sooner rather than later.

Having established the historical milieu of maritime activity in the Indian Ocean, Agius leaves until last a more

comprehensive review of actual ship types. Many will find this encyclopedic section of primary value as a reference to vessels encountered in historical and geographical writing. Yet the author's careful analysis of ancient poetry and other texts shows how literature as a whole (and not just "maritime" writing) captures society's connections to maritime and riverine trade. Of particular interest are the parallels one finds between camels and ships. By way of example, he quotes (among others) the sixth-century poet Tarafa ibn al-'Abd's comparison of nursing camels to a sailing ship called a *khaliyya*: "(It was) as though the litters of the Maliki camels (at) morning / were hulks of ships in the wide-spaces of (the Wadi of) Dad" (p.280).

Elsewhere he considers the various explanations for the term *'adawli*, a ship type of the Red Sea and "one of the most contested words in ship typology" (p.292), which has been variously related to a tree of the same name, a town on the island of Bahrain, and (Agius's preference) the Red Sea port of 'Adawl (the Ptolemaic port of Adulis). The following chapter takes this line of inquiry into the Muslim era and examines ship types from the royal *zaww*, designed for pleasure cruises on the rivers of Iraq, to pilgrim *jalbas*, the pearl-diver's *dunij*, the pirate's *barija*, and the horse-carrier called the *tarrada*, which is related to the Mediterranean transport known as a *taride*.

Building on this linguistic analysis, part six examines how the spread of language is reflected in the cross-cultural adoption of nautical and maritime terminology—notably but by no means exclusively between Arabic and Persian—and the degree to which this reflects technological exchange. The comprehensive back matter includes tables showing ship-types mentioned by various authors from al-Tabari (d. 310 AH/922-3 CE)

to al-Maqrizi (d. 846/1442), and a 25-page glossary and index of Arabic maritime terminology.

Classic Ships of Islam may not revolutionize the already robust field of Indian Ocean maritime history, but it will certainly replace George F. Hourani's venerable *Arab Seafaring* (1951; revd. 1995) as the standard introduction to the field. One hopes that Brill will see their way to getting an affordable edition of this invaluable book into print as soon as possible.

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Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, www.cambridge.org, 2007. xvi + 399 pp, illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$109.95, cloth; ISBN 9780521780414.

Influenced by current trends in cultural studies and by historical methods, this book closely analyses the first-hand accounts of a highly cosmopolitan group of travellers—the pool is virtually all male—representing a range of ethnicities. The Indo-Persian designation in the title refers to the northern half of early modern India and early modern Iran, a large region unified to some extent by the predominance of Islamic culture and the wide use of Persian, although neighboring Ottoman and Central Asian territories and languages play significant roles as well. The purpose of the volume is to open a largely inaccessible world to those English language readers interested either in the early modern period in general or in the genre of travel literature. The authors have complementary expertise: Muzaffar Alam is a professor in the Department of South

Asian Languages and Civilisations, University of Chicago; Sanjay Subrahmanyam holds the Doshi Chair of Indian History at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The introduction provides a wide and deep context, ranging from the Ottoman Empire to China, and from the late ancient period into the nineteenth century. The authors develop an introductory essay around the intended and unintended value of travel literature, defined by them as personal accounts of travel undertaken for adventure, learning, business, or diplomacy. They then turn more specifically to the early modern Indo-Persian sphere, with its political differences but very permeable cultural borders.

The organization of the chapters is partly thematic but is also sensitive to changes over time. For example, the chapter titled “Courtly encounters” is situated in the sixteenth century, over the course of which a large portion of South Asia changed from a collection of competing local polities to an empire that the Mughals conquered and consolidated. One of the courtly travellers introduced here is an Ottoman admiral, Seydi ‘Ali Re’is, who was an accidental visitor to mid-sixteenth century India as the result of a ship wreck that put him ashore in Gujarat. His geo-political context was the co-existence of three sometimes mutually hostile régimes, the Ottoman, Mughal, and Safavid, all self-consciously seats of Islamic power and authority. The Ottomans were expanding their naval presence in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and the Arabian Sea, largely to deal with the Portuguese intrusion and partly to develop their empire. Seydi ‘Ali’s position as an Ottoman admiral certainly opened doors for him. He stayed for a while at the Mughal court in Delhi before eventually making his way back into Ottoman territory. His account of his

conversations with Humayun, the Mughal shah, provides us with a fascinating Ottoman self-portrayal.

While many of the trips in this book are by land, another one that has a maritime component is that of Bayazid Bayat, a sixteenth century notable of Mughal India, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca about two decades later than Seydi ‘Ali’s adventure in India. Bayazid’s first language was Turkish, but his oral account was transcribed in awkward Persian, and was intended to be used in the much larger account of the life of his sovereign, the famous Akbar. Bayazid’s account is not good literature but information from it fleshes out impersonal generalizations about the pilgrimage experience, including paying protection money (or a “toll”) to the Portuguese at Diu and accommodating travel plans to monsoonal patterns.

I have only three minor caveats for readers. First, knowledge of Persian is certainly not required to enjoy the engaging prose of this book, but at least a passing knowledge of Persian allows the reader to enjoy the allusions and the clever play on words by the travellers. The authors frequently supply transliterated Persian from their sources, along with the English translation. Second, the introduction is marred slightly by a politically correct but also tired argument intended to distance the authors from European paradigms and expectations. This book simply does not require such an argument. The third caveat is for readers of this particular journal who may expect more attention to maritime issues. While sea voyages are important to several of the sources, the book’s focus is clearly on those accounts themselves and not on maritime history.

This is a highly intelligent and beautifully written study. The authors cite poetry and include maps and many black

and white renderings of miniature paintings, all of which enrich the text. Anyone whose intellectual interests are global will enjoy the challenging and rewarding adventure that the travellers and authors provide.

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Keith Butterley and Ken Macpherson. *River Class Destroyers of the Royal Canadian Navy*. St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell Publishing Limited, www.vanwell.com, 2008. 128 pp., illustrations, tables, bibliography. CDN \$29.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-55125-093-9.

This second edition of *River Class Destroyers of the Royal Canadian Navy* has carried out the task of updating the information contained in the first edition of the book very successfully. There are additional technical details and a chorus of new voices that describe freshly uncovered historical details of fourteen ships and crews that bravely undertook the challenge of fighting a war at sea.

Let’s go straight to the bottom line – this is an excellent book. It recounts with meticulous care a concise history of each of the fourteen members of this naval “family,” the first group of HM Canadian Ships to be identified as “River” Class destroyers. Keith Butterley and Ken Macpherson have so accurately related the individual triumphs and tragedies of these vessels as to encapsulate in miniature the role of the majority of RCN ships during the Second World War, especially the Battle of the Atlantic. This soft-cover book is a good compromise between quality and price and includes a significant number of my favourite things: pictures.

Notwithstanding the number of pictures though, I do like negative numbers to be included and neither they nor even photograph accession numbers are found in

this book. Anyone who has dealt with museums or archives can only imagine the frustration the staff experiences when they receive a request for a copy “of the photograph taken of HMCS *Fraser* off the coast of BC in 1937 (from page 31 in the book ...).” It is by far easier to request and receive a copy of the photo of HMCS *Fraser* (negative number E-2294). I was also concerned that the quality of the photographs, reproduced on a matte paper as opposed to glossy, had suffered. When I looked at the original photographs, however, and compared them to those enlarged and printed here, there is very little difference. It was also interesting to note that a significant number of the original photographs, for example those of HMCS *Fraser*, were all a bit fuzzy to begin with.

The same might be said of the original plan drawings of these ships held by Library and Archives of Canada (LAC). Unfortunately, unlike the photographs reproduced in the book, these have suffered in publication. The drawings reproduced here appear to be copies of photocopies as opposed to the printing of a digital scan of the LAC drawings. While these illustrations show that the interior design of a warship, even of the smaller classes like destroyers, is complicated, they are of little other use. It is not even possible to see the LAC document number just in case the reader wished to get better quality copies direct from the Archives. Blurry and virtually unreadable, they are a far cry from the quality of the general arrangement diagram facing page 32 in one of Ken Macpherson’s earlier works (*Frigates of the Royal Canadian Navy 1943–1974*. Vanwell, 1989. ISBN 0-920277-22-5).

Nevertheless, these shortcomings are easily offset by the amount of valuable information that is provided to the reader; information that is presented in the same

format and style throughout the book. Each ship’s history begins with a narrative briefly outlining its service in the RCN. It is always a subjective decision by the author as to the amount of information to be contained in a narrative of this nature. By preserving the text of the first edition of this work and only correcting details for which recent scholarship has uncovered new facts, these accounts of the life of the ship are clearly and unambiguously presented to the reader in the same style we have learned to expect and appreciate from Ken Macpherson.

Following the general narrative, there is a more intimate look at one or two of the high (or low) points of the ship’s life. Some chapters, entitled ‘Voices’, are the recollections of actual member’s of the ship’s company. Describing events either humorous (Admiral Hennessy’s recollections of the capture of the *Hannover*) or horrible (Stanley Meddings’ memory of the loss of the *Margaree*), they are compellingly recounted in the same even-handed and matter-of-fact fashion by individuals steeled to their duty by courage and the ever-increasing operational tempo of the growing conflict with the enemy in whatever theatre of operations these ships fought. Other segments, entitled ‘Closer Look’, undertake to report the same sorts of events with extracts from a number of authoritative works on naval history already in print. Both of the styles used here do indeed fulfill their intended purpose of making the life of each ship a little more familiar to the reader.

Each individual history concludes with an operational outline of the ship itself. The pertinent technical details of the vessel are provided, followed by an easy-to-read compendium of the ship’s location and movement, the Command to which she was attached and the dates and places of each event listed. To the best of my

knowledge, this is the clearest form of this kind of information on Canadian warships yet published.

Finally, there is a section on camouflage and weapons of war as they relate to the Canadian River Class ships. There is not a lot of detail here, but there is enough to allow photographs without captions or dates to be more accurately catalogued by the style or colour of the camouflage pattern. A very useful tool indeed.

This book would be an excellent addition to any naval library or to the library of anyone interested in the ships that have served Canada well during the first century of the Naval Service of Canada. To the authors – “BZ” (Well Done).

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Ben Buxton. *The Vatersay Raiders*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Birlinn, www.birlinn.co.uk 2008. xii + 178 pp., photographs, references, bibliography and maps, UK £9.99, paper; ISBN 13:978184158 553 6.

Exactly one hundred years ago, a remarkable trial took place in Edinburgh. Ten fishermen from the small island of Vatersay, in Scotland's Outer Hebrides, appeared before a packed Court of Session charged with contempt of court. The men had invaded, or raided, the island in 1906 and had refused to leave after illegally building huts and planting potatoes without the permission of the landowner. Why did the debate surrounding the case, which was largely conducted in newspaper columns, cause an outcry across Scotland?

Ben Buxton first explored the Barra Isles in the 1970s. Later, while studying for a degree in archaeology, he investigated the

history of Mingulay. His first book, *Mingulay: An Island and its People*, was published in 1995 and won the Ratcliffe Prize for Folklife in 1997. He now lives in Dorset, where he teaches adult education classes in archaeology.

This fascinating history of Vatersay commences with the evidence of 5,000 years of human occupation and the monuments of prehistory. In the nineteenth century, sailing ships *en route* to and from North America were often washed up on the islands, whose inhabitants considered them to be a special dispensation of a wise Providence to their treeless islands. On the other hand, the failure of the potato crop in 1846 led to the eviction of the entire population of Vatersay in the 1850s to make way for more profitable sheep-farming. The book also outlines the twentieth-century developments on the island, including the building of a 250m-long causeway in 1991 to join it to the adjacent island of Barra. The main purpose of the book, however, is to tell the story of the Vatersay Raiders and to reveal the human face of land reform and the advance of sheep farming.

Prior to the 1880s, emigration and land agitation in Scotland consisted of a series of apolitical and largely unconnected incidents. It is often assumed that the changes which swept Highland and Island society were greeted with a tame response by those affected. In fact, while emigration was clearly a final act of despair for some, there were many who fought for land rights to build a better life at home. By the turn of the century, the growing organization of crofters and cottars (those who held fewer than five acres in return for providing their labour to the tenants) led to escalating protest. Most of it concerned the island estates of Lady Gordon Cathcart, who had visited Vatersay only once in thirty years. In 1883, forty-five Barra cottars appealed to

her for crofts on Vatersay but, although the farmer had previously allowed them to grow potatoes there, the request was declined as she preferred them to fish full time. Instead, between 1886 and 1906 they made annual attempts to settle in Vatersay as they struggled to escape the poverty which, they claimed, the policies of the absentee landowner forced them to endure.

The author is sympathetic towards the raiders and clearly wants readers to identify with them in their fight. He quotes extensively from contemporary newspaper reports which saw the raid in 1906 as not simply a matter of land-hungry cottars seizing land but confirmation of the increasing assertiveness of crofting communities and a growing interest in their plight in urban areas where Gaels were becoming more organized. Politics and politicians became involved in the case and the Scottish Secretary was ridiculed for trying to cover up the events which led to the release of the raiders from prison. He was also strongly criticized because his handling of the incident had encouraged raiders in other places. Eventually, after two years of denials, the government bought Vatersay and created 58 crofts and crofting tenants returned to Vatersay, fifty-six years after their ancestors were evicted.

Buxton's academic background is reflected in his success in organizing his material and researching his extensive bibliography. One of his rarer sources is a private 38-page memorandum written in 1866 by Thomas Gray, the future head of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade. Gray's report is a damning commentary on life on the islands. He describes the inhabitants as living in a state of perpetual hostility, quarrelling among themselves yet, when a stranger came to the island or a ship arrived in distress, they quickly banded against the intruder. One of the worst casualties investigated by Gray

was the wreck of the *Annie Jane* in 1853 with a loss of almost 500 lives and which led to rumours of islanders pillaging the cargo and exploiting the survivors.

In this skillful telling of the story of the Vatersay raiders, the author has illustrated many aspects of Highland and Island history that distinguishes the book from other works on land agitation in Scotland. Due to the outcry over the debate surrounding their settlement on the island, the raiders remain famous in Vatersay, where their descendents still occupy the land they fought for and won. The subsequent history of Vatersay confirms the changes in social and economic trends in the Outer Hebrides, particularly the small islands, and the new attitudes of the state to such communities. This very comprehensive book is aimed at both historians and general readers and it not only offers excellent value for the potential purchaser, it also deserves to be another prizewinner for the author.

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R. Thomas Campbell. *Voices of the Confederate Navy: Articles, Letters, Reports and Reminiscences*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co. Inc., www.mcfarlandpub.com, 2008. 366 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. US \$55.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-7864-3148-9.

Most books on the Confederate Navy have a specific focus [either they are a personal memoir (a biographical book or journal) or a modern biography of a ship or one of its officers. Occasional overviews of general psychology or historical tactics turn up now and then, but this is none of the above. Instead, it is a compendium of excerpts from original sources -- including articles, letters, reports, and reminiscences, as the

subtitle suggests -- that are divided into sixteen segments. Some of the segments are geographical (Charleston, New Orleans, Galveston, the Mississippi, Europe), some are tactical (cruisers, blockade runners, torpedo bureau) and some divisional (the Marine Corps, the Naval School).

If you read much about the CSN, you may have already read much of this: excerpts abound from the likes of Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat*, Scharf's *History of the Confederate Navy*, and more. And, if you have a copy of the *ORN* (the huge but now widely-distributed on CD *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*) naval records of the Civil War you'll recognize a lot more. What you may have missed, however, are the many reminiscences that appeared in the *Southern Historical Society Papers*, a 52-volume work that began publication in 1869 and ended in the 1950s. These are after-the-fact gems that provide unique personal perspectives, individual recollections and personal recall of events, some fairly soon after the war ended, some distant memories from old age. Also drawn upon are articles from *Century Magazine*, some of which were compiled into the familiar *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, again offering personal memories from after the conflict. Add to that excerpts from personal journals, and you have here a very broad selection of wonderful stories and individual viewpoints about the CSN.

As a smorgasbord of windows into the Southern navy, this book is beyond filling, and its divisions let you pick and choose between theaters of war and segments of operations. So, if you're already pretty familiar with how the entire war drew itself together, was pursued, and finally brought to a close, you'll be pleased with all the extra details to be found here. If you're looking for a broader insight into how they were all connected and the dynamics of how the great historical event that was the Civil War on the waters went

down, you may be disappointed. One of the fascinating aspects of the CSN is that this amazingly small, hastily-assembled but tightly-knit navy was made up of individuals and families who knew each other and helped create what was ultimately a surprisingly integrated if patchwork quilt of stories that linked many distant theaters and actions together in a very short period of time. Officers sailing down a coastal river on an ironclad one month found themselves flung together again on a raider on the other side of the globe the very next season. Midshipmen in the naval academy found themselves becoming leaders in far-flung battles upon graduation (if they even had time for that), only to be reunited with fellow students in desperate rear-guard retreats only a year or so later. Officers and men often shared family, in-laws, sweethearts, and intimate personal correspondences intricately linked together along the way.

That's a side of the CSN which you get to see in complete journals and in some historical treatments of the war, but you have to search for it here, as the individual pieces are so isolated and episodic that it's hard to see the forest for the trees. The perseverant and previously-informed eye will pick out the connections, however, despite the fact that this book, with its wide columns and small print, is formatted like and has the drab and dreary appearance of a textbook rather than the series of adventure stories and windows of insight that it really is, compiled by an editor who has done so many other full volumes on many of these individual officers and ships. It's more like a collection of short stories than a mini-series, so the trick is to get past the encyclopedia-like format and dive into the individual pieces and you'll find yourself surfacing in all kinds of interesting and exciting places, though you may have to

provide the narrative between them for yourself.

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Lawrence W. Coady. *The Lost Canoe: A Labrador Adventure*. Halifax, NS: Nimbus Publishing, www.nimbuspublishing.ca, 2008. xi + 243 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, endnotes, bibliography, index. CDN \$21.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-55109-658-2.

Lawrence Coady is a man with a quest: find the canoe that English adventurer Hesketh Pritchard left in stone-covered cache at the top of a 500-meter cliff portage while on a trans-Labrador expedition across the Barrens in 1910. The canoe itself is not of value, but what it represents: an era and mode of exploration in Labrador that has not been repeated since by non Inuit or Innu. In documenting the quest for the lost canoe, Coady documents the complete story of the Hesketh Pritchard expedition and his own quest to find the canoe.

Coady weaves the story of the exploration of mid-latitude Labrador by canoe and foot-trekking white men and a woman up to the last season of significant exploration in 1910. What interested early twentieth-century explorers discovering a portage route linking Ungava Bay to the modern-day Happy Valley-Goose Bay area on the Atlantic coast. He discusses the Moravian missions, Hudson's Bay Company explorations, and the Hubbard expedition of 1903 that resulted in the death of the explorer due to starvation. Finally, he documents in detail the explorations of rivers north of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay latitude west into the Indian House Lake area.

He points out how Hesketh Pritchard was not necessarily on an exploration and mapping trip, but rather

sought to explore the caribou hunting possibilities of the Barrens part of Labrador as part of his hunting and exploration writing career. The story of Hesketh Pritchard is thus part of a greater body of literature about how the English (and North American) middle class sought more interesting stories about shorter duration adventure expeditions capable of being accomplished by less than half-a-dozen people.

Coady faces a difficult writing task. He has to meld together the explanations of various attempts of exploration of this area along with the specifics of Pritchard's 1910 journey to his own explorations in 1999, 2000, and 2002. Coady has to explain the logic of why Pritchard chose the difficult Fraser River with its 500-m. cliffs as the river route when there were proven easier water routes to the south. This leads to a discussion of the various other explorers routes and success. Since Pritchard was not on a true exploration expedition, but on a rather difficult hunting trip, Coady has to explain the hunger at the time for literature of exotic adventure travel stories.

The author is able to tell a story with humour, especially regarding his own modern expeditions. He tells one funny story of how he convinced the Mapping and Charting Establishment of a discrepancy between maps of different scale for the same area after noticing a "missing" lake on one map. Another funny reoccurring theme is his lamentation of a detailed description of where the canoe was cached. Just when he thinks he has it figured out, he interprets Pritchard's published and private papers in a new light, thus sets out on a new expedition.

On a more serious note, Coady's travelogue reveals how Inuit culture and society has changed over the last 100 years.

Whereas they used to go into the Labrador Barrens as recently as the 1920s, they no longer do. Illness in the 1920s decimated the Inuit population. Coady is a biologist, and he also notes the change in wildlife due to man's influence not only to that of 1910, but his own previous biology career that began on the Fraser River of Labrador in 1973.

Since Coady has to complete 2 to 3 week hikes to look for the canoe, the importance of good historical research becomes clear. Coady did extensive research in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, primarily among the personal papers of various explorers, but also as the Smithsonian Institution for US expeditions to the region, the Hudson's Bay archives, and the Moravian Church records. Pritchard's own publications, letters, and diaries and field notes survive to this day. Coady even used photographs taken during Pritchard's trips to help recreate the exact route Pritchard took. Since so much depended on good research, I feel Coady did not leave a stone unturned (no pun intended) while doing his research. There is no doubt in my mind that Coady travelled within several hundred meters of the exact route Pritchard took in 1910 and often stayed over night in the same campsites.

The author uses short chapters as an organizational construct as he navigates between his own search and that of the original explorers. Thus, you can easily put the book down and come back to it if you chose this book to be your light reading before bed. Also, Coady has a fine sense of building up to a climax. In fact, each of his three expeditions has its own mini-climax.

My only complaint about the book is how near the beginning of the book he mentions geographic places in the text while recounting the other various explorers that are not always marked on the maps he

provides. Later in the book, he provides actual sketch maps made by Pritchard and compares that to his own trek. These are much more satisfying with their detailed place markings and good positioning within each chapter.

So the question remains, did Coady find the canoe? Now, why would I spoil this fine summer read as you are out canoeing or hiking!

Bradley Shoebottom
Fredericton, New Brunswick

Angus Curry. *The Officers of the CSS Shenandoah*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, www.wpf.com, 2006. xiv + 439 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$55.00, cloth; ISBN 0-8130-2943-0.

Most American Civil War enthusiasts know the basic histories of the Confederacy's three most famous commerce raiders, the *Alabama*, the *Florida*, and the *Shenandoah*. Many books have been written about them, from direct journals of the participants to socio-psychological analysis of the contexts of the period. This Australian-born book numbers among the latter studies, inspired by the visit of the *Shenandoah* to that continent on the way to her most important efforts. It's especially interesting because it focuses on a cultural and psychological profiling of her Southern officers and their motives and concerns which affected the voyage and its outcome. In the process, a great deal more detail of everyday life is included than in previously available volumes on the subject, drawing on unpublished journals, such as that of Lt. Francis Chew, although some of it may be a bit over-psychoanalyzed in the process.

The *Shenandoah* was the last of the Confederate raiders to attack Union shipping and due to lack of information about the end of the war, actually continued her depredation of the Yankee whaling fleet in the North

Pacific several months after the war was over. It then made the round-Cape-Horn voyage all the way back to Liverpool, the only Confederate vessel to circumnavigate the world. The thesis of the book is that the cultural upbringing of the Southern officers aboard called the shots for the *Shenandoah*'s sometimes wavering, but ultimately successful (in naval terms), operation. The book is full of personal insight about the officers' cultural origins, the mindset of Southerners of the period in general, and much more. The author speculates about the officers' "group cohesion" and other sociological concepts, from conflicts born of background racial and scientific biases (about everything from evolution to weather) to cultural concepts of honour, self-expectations, and fundamental ambition. Too much is attributed to the "Southernness" of the officers, however, when in fact they shared many of the same foibles and frustrations as would a similar set of naval personnel of any nation at that time under those circumstances, including the non-Southern participants aboard the same vessel. That includes a great many shared racial and cultural stereotypes typical of the time, not only in America but around the world.

As in other accounts of the voyage, the crux of all the problematic issues aboard the vessel reduces to how the captain, Lt. James Waddell, applied his controversial and equivocating style to manage the ship. No firebrand John Newland Maffitt (*Florida*) or elegantly self-assured Raphael Semmes (*Alabama*), Waddell was an often-vacillating group negotiator who uncomfortably turned the officer ranks from a reliable hierarchy into a political committee which ran the ship, at times simply by majority consent. This situation was compounded by the failing fortunes of the Confederacy which increasingly made indecision the option of the participants. From the beginning, Waddell made it clear that he did not trust his officers, but he kept changing his stance on this, both publicly and privately, which made for chaos

aboard. Ultimately, his was probably the wiser judgment at almost every critical moment, but that was not much appreciated by his fellow officers, partly because the overall effect was to increase mutual disagreements and disaffection between everyone on board.

In the long run, the tale of the *Shenandoah*'s officers and crew is about deciding what to do next with their lives as their world, along with the Civil War, was ending. The story is ultimately a view of a transition rather than a conflict, far different from, and more difficult and complex, than the careers of her predecessors. That is the focus of the book, and it's well treated at length, including how the participants' personal and official views of themselves changed as post-war history developed. One thing that is perhaps too-briefly noted is the context of essential authority on board any ship, which Waddell periodically and skillfully tapped, an authority -- despite the temporary Confederate Navy overlay -- which was already there, ensconced in standing naval and merchant marine tradition. Whether an operational Confederate warship or later, simply a fugitive from a finished conflict, the vessel itself and the crew had a unifying sociological affect upon the entire operation that the author touches on but does not sufficiently address. The unspoken loyalty of officers and crew to the deck that supported them may have ultimately, as so often happens, called the shots, regardless of any political and social affiliations.

John Townley
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Robert Darlington and Fraser McKee. *Three Princes Armed*. Privately published, 2008. Contact robadar@telus.net or fmck22@rogers.com. xviii + 206 pp., illustrations, credits, appendices, index. CDN \$20 + postage, paper; ISBN 978-0-9810274-0-1.

The initial impression of this book is one of thoroughness of research and eye appeal. The layout, many photos and illustrations, the appropriate lines from classic prose as an opener to each chapter, the personal comments from wartime crew members, the list of credits and a very good index, all add to the value of this exciting and engaging book about the three all-but-forgotten Princes, *Henry*, *David* and *Robert*. Initially peacetime luxury liners, they were converted to wartime workhorses in various valuable roles and then returned to only partially successful postwar service with two of them converted to passenger liners. A few editorial suggestions in the first fifty pages, which do not detract from the force of the story, have been passed to the author.

While the book's prime purpose is to tell the stories of the wartime activities of these ships, the pre- and post-war peacetime lives of the Three Princes provides an intriguing and very well told preface and finale. Moreover, the comments of former crew members add a special flavour of authenticity to the ships' wartime accounts.

The essential backdrop to this story is, as the authors dub it, "the well described involvement of the would-be empire builder, Sir Henry Thornton.". With the success of his Canadian National Steamships, "Lady Boats" on the Halifax/West Indies passenger and trade runs, Thornton then challenged the CPR monopoly of the West Coast triangle ferry route, Vancouver, Victoria and Seattle, with the construction and operation of the three luxury Prince liners named after members of Sir Henry's board of directors, including one for himself. The ships were only partially successful, having been overtaken by the economic collapse of the great Depression. By 1939, with a "White Elephant" soubriquet, all three were purchased by the Department of National Defence. With their lives revitalized, they

would become valued complements to Canada's hugely expanding navy.

Whether as armed merchant cruisers or anti-aircraft cruisers, landing ship infantry or serving in the Aleutians, relieving Hong Kong, participating in D-Day, and operating in the Mediterranean from the south of France to Greece, the three Princes' Canadian naval contribution during the Second World War makes an exciting hitherto almost unknown and unsung story.

Once again, the team of Darlington and McKee has produced a quality book. This one surely must be added to the lexicon of Canadian naval history. It is a thoroughly enjoyable read for not only those of us with continuing naval connections, but also for the layman with a thirst for maritime history.

Peter Chance
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Gary Gibson. *Service Records of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Officers Stationed on Lake Ontario During the War of 1812*. Watertown, NY: Sackets Harbor Battlefield Alliance Inc., store@jeffersoncountyhistory.org, 2005. 180 pp., sources. US \$35.00, paper; available from the Jefferson County Historical Society.

This book provides a complete listing of service records of all the officers who served on Lake Ontario during the War of 1812. The author introduces military life on Lake Ontario and presents a history of the US Navy in the area, followed by conditions, along with other facts like salaries and the age of various officers. He then lists the naval and Marine Corps officers in alphabetical order, where and when they served, and aboard which ship. Some officers, mostly those of higher rank,

are featured with a picture and more detailed service records. Gibson has used several sources, especially the US National Archives, to create a thorough record of each officer's service. These detailed records will prove beneficial to any researchers interested in the naval War of 1812, especially in those men who served on the Great Lakes.

Gibson divides an officer's service record into sections by rank; for example, from enlistment to midshipman, then the period between midshipman and promotion to lieutenant. Each record begins with the officer's birth date, his family history or relevant connections, and his marriage records, if they were available. At the end of each officer's service record, Gibson presents additional information like date of death, pensions, and any honours awarded to the officer. He expands on a few high-ranking officers or noteworthy lower ranks, but he never elaborates too much on any one person.

The format which Gibson uses to arrange the officers' service records is difficult to read. Each record appears as one long sentence that is separated only by commas and semicolons. This allows the information to run together, making the individual service records difficult to examine. The only break in the long, continuous sentence is when an officer is promoted and the new rank appears in bold lettering, making it stand out from the other information. Although more difficult to read, this system does allow for quick referencing. Those seeking information quickly might find this format useful, but most researchers will prefer a narrative format.

Gibson's excellent information about the naval and Marine Corps officers stationed on Lake Ontario is arranged in alphabetical order by name, which is useful

for locating a known officer, but might be a hindrance for other researchers without a specific name in mind. Perhaps Gibson could have arranged the officers by service on the lake, grouping the men by ship or station. If the officers were arranged in this order, a clearer understanding of service on the lake and of certain ships could be featured, showing more clearly who served where. Despite these issues, Gibson provides a lot of information within a short amount of space, albeit without any clarification for the casual researcher.

The book would be a good source for researchers seeking information on a specific officer or to understand who served on Lake Ontario, where, and when during the War of 1812. There are many details concerning when an officer was ordered to serve on a certain ship, when he reported for duty, any pay or bills an officer collected during service, and where he served, as well as any other special duties performed during his Lake service. While a good research resource for individual service records, the book does not focus on the ships on the lake during that time, making it of little use to a casual reader. For anyone interested in the basic facts about American naval and Marine Corps officers of the War of 1812, military history, and history of the Great Lakes, this book is a very useful reference tool for initial research.

Katherine Anderson
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John Grainger. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia 1854-56*. Woodridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, www.boydell.co.uk, 2008. xv + 207 pp., maps, sources, bibliography, index. US \$95.00, UK £50.00, cloth; ISBN 9781843833543.

The two-year Crimean War at the middle of the eighteenth century was a clash of Great

Powers which affected two nations on the Pacific, China and Japan, which would nowadays be termed “developing.” France and Britain went to war in Europe to check Russian expansion at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. They were able to project naval power and landed an army in the Crimea. The Pacific dimension of this confrontation was comparatively minor, but came about because the British and French used their naval forces, already largely in-theatre, to try to locate and destroy Russian warships which were seen as a potential threat to trade. These in-theatre forces also faced a potential threat from merchant ships armed as raiders. Because operations were suspended during the winters, there were two Pacific campaigns against Russia (1854 and 1855) which took place against a complex backdrop of interactions between several regional and outside powers. Britain’s Opium Wars (1839-42) had weakened the Chinese empire. Japan, aware of what had happened to China, was about to open itself to trade with outside powers. As it happened, Britain and Russia negotiated port access treaties with Japan during the Crimean War while the United States completed the final stage of its arrangements. Serving an expansionist Russia, Count Muravev, the energetic governor in eastern Siberia, exploited the geopolitical situation to push settlement to the Pacific and to adjust the Sino-Russian border southwards to the Amur River. Merchant ships - whalers and trading vessels from the burgeoning United States - were ubiquitous and played a key role in the events surrounding the sporadic encounters between the Russians and the British and French.

This 200-page study by British military and naval historian John Grainger is apparently the first to concentrate on the Pacific campaign. The author is forthright in explaining that he is not a linguist and

has used largely British archival and secondary sources because, in his words, “the central players in these events were always British” (p.xiv). The Royal Navy maintained two fleets in the Pacific, the Pacific Squadron, which had no proper base but worked out of Valparaiso, Chile, and the much larger China Squadron, stationed in several ports along the China coast. When war came in 1854, both were commanded by officers well into their sixties who had become Captains almost four decades earlier at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. They were responsible for a myriad of Imperial interests in this vast region -- everything from fighting a riverine war against Burma to upholding British interests in New Zealand, Australia and the new Crown Colony of Vancouver Island and combating pirates along the Chinese coasts. They also had to manage a presence in South American waters, maintain British influence in the Hawaiian Islands, and monitor developments along the west coast of North America, where the United States had just aggressively acquired California and was settling the Oregon territory. Finally, following the disappearance of Sir John Franklin in quest of the Northwest Passage., it was one of the tasks of the Pacific Squadron to transport supplies to warships searching the western Arctic for the Franklin expedition. War with Russia was expected in 1853 and the two widely separated Admirals had been instructed by the Admiralty to cooperate with French naval forces in the Pacific. Little was known about the sparse Russian settlements in the northwest Pacific nor this fog-shrouded and, for the British and French, largely uncharted area.

John Grainger points out that while the expansion of telegraph links as well as steamship and railway communications enabled the Admiralty to monitor and control Crimean War operations in the

Baltic and Black seas, the squadron commanders in the Pacific were left to execute instructions which took weeks to travel from London. It took roughly seven weeks for orders from England to reach the Pacific Squadron Commander, sixty-three year old Admiral Price, in South America via Panama. Price knew that there were at least three Russian ships in the Pacific, and once he was notified in early May 1854 that war had been declared, he and the local French Admiral sailed from Callao for Kamchatka via Honolulu. Their most powerful warships, frigates, were sail powered but they had a few smaller stream-driven vessels which would repeatedly prove their worth. Their 2,000-man fleet eventually arrived off Petropavlovsk, the Russian stronghold in Kamchatka, at the end of August. Observing two Russian ships inside the defended harbor, they decided to first launch an attack to take the shore batteries. Admiral Price, apparently overwhelmed by his responsibilities, now committed suicide. The early September Anglo-French attack by 700 sailors and marines was a failure. The Allies returned to warmer waters for winter. Although Grainger does not describe the visit, the British called at Esquimalt to land their wounded for treatment and to replenish stores.

The second year's campaign in 1855 involved ships from the China Squadron. The Admiralty dispatched further ships and ordered another foray to Petropavlovsk. Because the two Pacific Admirals were not in direct communication, the Admiralty without missing a beat, ordered a precise rendezvous south of Kamchatka where two China-station steam warships were to join the Pacific Squadron under a new admiral. Like his predecessor, Admiral Henry Bruce was sixty-three when he was sent out from England. This time the Anglo-French force

reached Petropavlovsk in the third week of May, but the Russians had spotted the China Squadron ships back in mid-April and had cut a channel through the ice allowing the two ships which had wintered there to escape. Petropavlovsk itself was largely deserted as the garrison and inhabitants had either left in the two ships or taken to the interior. Admiral Bruce then took his fleet to check Sitka. Under a cozy arrangement between the Russian America Company (active in Alaska) and the Hudson's Bay Company -- which both depended on mutual trade -- it had been agreed that Alaska would be neutral when war came, but government vessels were not immune. The Admiral then headed south again via Esquimalt where hospital facilities had been constructed in the intervening year.

Ships of the China Squadron became involved in tedious investigation of the unknown coasts of Sakhalin and the Siberian mainland in their search for the elusive potential Russian commerce raiders. In the process, they unlocked the riddle of Sakhalin's status as an island and its relation to the mouth of the Amur. The ever-present Yankee vessels — whether whalers operating close to the ice edge in the Sea of Okhotsk or trading vessels off Sakhalin — were a source of intelligence. A British force discovered several Russian ships inside a bay on the mainland in mid-May but, believing the odds to be unfavourable, did not attack. When the British force withdrew the Russian ships took advantage of the fact that ice in the strait had melted to escape northwards. During the campaign they discovered that the China Squadron Commander, Admiral Stirling, had exploited the port access treaty he had negotiated with the previous year by using Japanese ports as bases in 1855, which Grainger points out was a violation of the treaty.

Based on contemporary reports, Grainger's narrative generally follows the activities of the British warships. Glimpses of arresting events emerge from the archival sources. There was a classic sailing navy adventure when a Russian ship was sighted obviously aground in the shallows at the northern end of the Gulf of Tartary in August 1855. Several cutters and a barge set off on a five-mile pull to the stranded ship, sounding cautiously as they went. The Russian crew took to their boats but after an epic chase most were eventually captured and yielded valuable intelligence. Then there is the glimpse of Madame Zavoika, wife of the Russian governor in Petropavlovsk. Heavily pregnant, she and her eight children had been unable to get away from Petropavlovsk with the two warships and the rest of the garrison and inhabitants in 1855. Her baby eventually arrived and she was permitted to join her husband on the mainland in an American whaler which arrived providentially. Finally, there was a brig flying American colours which was stopped in the Sea of Okhotsk by the steam powered HMS *Barracouta* in July 1855. Investigation showed that she was in fact registered in Bremen and was carrying 277 Russians who had been shipwrecked when their frigate sank off Japan the previous year.

While the sections describing Russian expansion down the Amur River to the Pacific are based on secondary sources, they are concise and clear. Cogent details emerge about how the Admiralty conducted war and the Royal Navy operated in this period when the steam-driven warships proved handy in towing frigates into attacking positions and carrying out investigations of strange harbours. The First Lord, Sir Charles Wood, corresponded with his Admirals on distant stations through both official and private letters. He used these to outline sweeping ideas about

how the war could be prosecuted, citing notions such as transferring British troops stationed in India or inciting Poles reported to be in exile on the Sea of Okhotsk to revolt. Intelligence was gleaned from reports by passing (mostly Yankee) merchant ships and alert British consuls and officials in various harbours who made a point of talking with visiting merchant skippers. Both French and British warships were affected by scurvy and on occasion had to be detached for warmer waters so that their crews could recuperate.

The narrative is largely a synthesis of contemporary reports and while it flows easily, it requires the reader's careful attention. The text is full of particulars about ship movements, but dates to help provide a framework are intermittent. Little is said about the individual ships and their characteristics — or factors such as whether crew members who died through illness were replaced — so there tends to be a blur of names. The narrative does not pause periodically to summarize developments. The fact that events occur in an area probably unfamiliar to most readers is an added complication. The author acknowledges the problem caused when geographical names differ in various languages but then uses the archaic title Straits of Sangar for what is now commonly known as Tsugaru Strait between Hokkaido and Honshu. He has been poorly served by the publisher because only two of the five maps are useful in situating geographic points which anchor the story line. For example, one of places actually shown on a map is an old Russian settlement on the Sea of Okhotsk which appears in the text as "Aian." On the maps it is labeled Ayan.

This is not a particular problem but suggests that the editors applied little thought to helping the reader sort through unfamiliar geography. The author second-guesses tactical decisions. His tone is

surprisingly chauvinistic as he ridicules suggestions that the Russian successes in slipping away from superior British forces were well executed. Indeed, he concludes that the Russians had “foiled” the protracted British searches “in a landlubberly fashion by withdrawing the ships from all possible contact.” (p.185). This is odd since the First Lord is quoted as telling Admiral Stirling that, in his opinion, the Russians “seem to have managed their affairs very adroitly” (p.162) in escaping from Petropavlovsk and concentrating in the anchorage where the British Commodore considered he lacked a sufficient margin of force to attack. (Receiving such remarks in a letter written in London several weeks earlier must have been disconcerting for the Admiral on the spot.)

The First Pacific War is a welcome book-length account of little-known events in a distant theatre of the Crimean War. While concentrating on two naval campaigns, this account provides a window on the broad scope of the Royal Navy’s undertakings in the Pacific at mid-century. The events are described against a complex backdrop of geopolitical developments. The northwest Pacific region with its intersection of Chinese, Korean, Russian, Japanese and American interests has assumed far greater strategic significance in the intervening century-and-a-half. This is an interesting look back at an era when the outside European powers, Britain and France, were far more powerful.

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Malcolm Scott Hardy. *The British Navy, Rijeka and A.L. Adamić, War and Trade in the Adriatic 1800-1825*. Oxford, UK: Archaeopress, www.archaeopress.com ,

2005. 97 pp., map, notes, £9.50, paper; ISBN 0953992381.

The British Navy, Rijeka and A.L. Adamić examines the struggle between Great Britain and Napoleonic France in the Adriatic theatre during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. British activity in the region was designed to prevent Napoleon’s expansion into the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire, maintain proper communications and channels with the Austrian government, and ensure that the French did not attempt to build additional vessels out of Venice, which they had recently acquired. Initial British commercial interest in Rijeka and its surrounding areas is illustrated by an oak timber project arranged by British Navy Board agent John Leard and Andrija Ludjevit Adamić, a successful local merchant. By extending its focus to British relations with the port city of Rijeka, the book demonstrates the complexity and difficulties that plagued commercial and naval activity during this tumultuous period, as well as the extensive and problematic involvement of British covert activity in the region.

The author felt compelled to write this book because previous studies directed too much attention on the prominently involved British officers, while Croatian studies relied only on French and local records. The text was originally written as part of a collection of essays to be published by the Town Museum of Rijeka in connection with a presentation of a monograph on one of the book’s chief characters, Adamić, in Rijeka in April and May of 2005. Furthermore, the study was designed to present a more balanced analytical approach and to place British Adriatic activity in its proper context within the larger political framework. The book was published in

the Croatian language in addition to English.

Hardy relies almost solely on the British National Archives for source material. Most of his documents consist of letters and correspondence between the various diplomatic middlemen and agents of the British Navy Board and the Foreign Office between London, Malta, Rijeka, and other disparate points of contact on the upper Adriatic. The author also makes use of journals and diaries, such as the diary of Robert Wilson, the signalman on HMS *Unité*, the command ship of the British fleet in the Adriatic from 1806 to 1809 under Captain Patrick Campbell. Unfortunately, the book completely lacks a bibliography or works-cited page. Throughout the text, there are footnotes to primary sources, but practically none for secondary sources, although they are mentioned intermittently in the text.

It is evident the book was written originally for a Croatian audience because the author seems to expect the reader to be familiar with certain popular local myths and legends concerning events in the region, especially stories about the British attack on Rijeka in early July 1813. There are no footnotes explaining these previous historical myths or where they germinated. The text also suffers from some strange sentence structure and the occasional grammatical error. Since the book was originally written in Croatian, it is possible some of the odd-sounding sentences may be the result of translation issues.

The book is stripped bare of nearly everything but the text itself and confused by a structure that is both awkward and unorthodox. It completely lacks an introduction or anything similar; the first chapter begins immediately after the table of contents. Lacking any bibliography or index, the book merely ends after the last

chapter and a single paragraph epilogue. Absolutely no information on the author is provided, though it is clear from his name that he is likely not a native of the upper Adriatic region. Strangely, the back cover of the book is not plastered with the usual text summary that accompanies nearly all modern books.

The British Navy, Rijeka and A.L. Adamić covers a narrow research topic and it can easily confuse those not familiar with the region. The nature of the Napoleonic era was fairly confusing itself: Napoleon was manufacturing various new states in the area, such as the Illyrian Provinces and the Cisalpine Republic; British command in the Adriatic changed hands four times; and there were various figures who covertly dealt with the British and their designated middlemen. Although a decent map is included with the text, it is too small and fails to show the location of many of the recurring locations discussed in the book. The book assumes the reader is fairly adept on west Balkan and Adriatic geography, and if the reader is not, a detailed map on hand is essential to keep track of where exactly events are taking place.

The text achieves nominal success in evaluating the relationship between the British, Rijeka, and Adamić. There seems to be two simultaneous directions in Hardy's work. One covers the strategic wartime actions of the British Navy in the Adriatic and the general developments on the European continent in Italy and with the Austria Empire. The other examines the communication, commercial efforts, and subterfuge of Adamić and Navy Board agents in and around Rijeka. Despite efforts to not become too preoccupied with British activities that have no direct relation to Rijeka or Adamić, roughly only half the book really discusses the connections of the British Navy, Rijeka, and Adamić. Given the brevity of the book, the result is a

limited amount of information on Rijeka and Adamić. Nevertheless, the book is certainly valuable to anyone with an interest in the region or in British activity in the Adriatic because of the lack of English-language material available. *The British Navy, Rijeka and A.L. Adamić* is a definitive contribution to maritime studies as it displays the importance of a naval force in the Adriatic arena during the Napoleonic War and reveals the complications involved in maintaining activity and communication across the sea during a time of shifting chaos.

Anthony Buscemi
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David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler. *Encyclopedia of the War of 1812*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, www.navalinstitute.org, 2004. xxxvii + 636 pp., maps, illustrations, appendices, chronology, glossary, bibliography, index. US \$34.95, paper; ISBN 1-59114-362-4.

Among the strengths of this work is its utility, the ultimate test of an encyclopedia. There is a 16-page index where people, battles, places, treaties, agreements, ideas, ships, strategy, tactics, navies and political events are listed, usually with multiple page numbers. There is a 25-page bibliography, a glossary and a chronology listing political, diplomatic and military events from 1805 through 1815. The entries describing the military and political context of the war are extensive. There is an American bias, an example being the 12th Congress Vote on Declarations of War is listed by voter, party, decision etc., but this should simply be looked on as an asset. The activities of Great Britain are covered and listed in the index and it has to be said that the editorial choices of entries appear balanced. In Appendix 3: Documents,

there is finally an opportunity to examine directly the treaties, acts and decrees so often only mentioned in historical works on the subject. This appendix starts with the “American Berlin Decree, November 1806” immediately followed by the “British Order in Council, 7 January 1807” and ends naturally enough with the “Treaty of Ghent, 24 December 1814.” These are the rules of intercourse, of aspirations and belligerency between nations and they are usually written in elegant prose.

Since my “study” is only a matter of minutes from the Royal Navy Dockyard, Kingston, Ontario, my strategy was to start locally and then move to the more global entries as a test. The hours in the day do not exist for a complete reading of all 600 pages of entries. As sites of naval bases, both Kingston and Sackets Harbor, New York, have long entries, each followed, by sources and recommended readings. Briton James Lucas Yeo and American, Isaac Chauncey, the opposing naval commanders on the Lakes, each have cogent entries that include the usual personal backgrounds as well as an analysis of their strategic decisions. The entries for the major and minor players are the same.

There is an entry that does not appear in the index. The descriptions under “Ship Types” is reductionist and at least two of the definitions, brigantine and schooner, are just misleading. The British launched a “ship of the line” at Kingston in 1814, although the text states otherwise. Regrettably, the glossary of mariner terms leaves a great deal to be desired, since it is an understanding of the technology that helps us comprehend, for example, the decisions made by naval commanders constrained by the operating characteristics of their vessels. I would say, however, this does not interfere with overall value of the encyclopedia.

This is a work to have in your library in the years leading up to the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812.

Maurice D. Smith
Kingston, Ontario.

Timothy Jenks. *Naval Engagements, Patriotism, Cultural Politics and the Royal Navy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, www.oup.com. 2006. x + 334 pp., illustrations, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. UK £61.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-19929771-1.

This slim volume, densely printed I'm afraid, seeks to examine the development of the Royal Navy as an integral element in British national identity during the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. It opens with an evocation of William Cobbett's astonishment at the glorious sight of the Channel Fleet at anchor at Portsmouth, and how that sight awoke feelings of pride, patriotism, pugilism and, importantly, ownership and commitment. Powerful feelings that furnished the background of all right thinking Britons for the balance of the nineteenth, much of the twentieth, and, dare it be suggested, even has a resonance to the present day.

Jenks has written a scholarly volume, essentially an extended monograph, on the subject of patriotism and cultural politics throughout the period in question. Consequently, it is technically oriented and demands a great deal of application and attention from its readers. Those unfamiliar with the current discourse on social and political history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are likely to find this work beyond them. Context will be lacking and much of the terminology and constructs foreign. In brief, this is not a volume for a casual before-bed read, nor is it a topic that will engage many outside the professional

social historian class.

Yet for all that, Jenks has written a fine volume and clearly relates how popular culture evolved from an era when such a thing was essentially meaningless, so confined and narrow were people's lives, to one in which it drove political life. To bring the argument to the current world, I think most will concede that the role of popular culture in most arenas is pervasive and potentially excessive. Good public policy, in other words, is driven out by cultural politics and the need to pander to popular fancies. One can perceive the roots of our reality in the time period under review. That alone makes Jenks' story well worth examining.

The book is organized with an introduction to set the scene and provide some necessary theoretical context. It includes a useful discussion on the differing perceptions of the army and navy in popular culture – the former suffering from being present locally and directly involved in suppressing unrest, whereas the latter benefited from being “far away” (in port cities) and conducting its affairs in the “national interest” (commerce), without oppressing the populace. In addition, the army was seen as the preserve of the aristocracy (e.g. purchase of commissions) in contrast to the navy that had specific tests of competence (e.g. necessary sea time, lieutenant examinations, boards, etc.) and was notionally open to all. “Jack Tar” was the general benign perception of the common sailor, in contrast to the “scum of the earth, recruited for drink” image of Wellington's redcoats. Yet both the navy and the army were unquestionably sources of national pride and patriotic fervour, and in turn, sources of identity.

The first chapter examines how “The Glorious First of June” engagement was reported and responded to in the early

years of the Anglo-French wars. The second explores the conflicting image of the heroic and patriotic navy during the mutinies of 1797, particularly in contrast to the victory at Camperdown later in the year, which restored the original image.

The third chapter touches on the “re-conceptualisation of the public patriotic sphere” in consideration of Nelson’s victory at the Nile in August, 1798. The fourth embarks on a review of what can only be described as the apotheosis of Nelson after Trafalgar and what this extraordinary man meant to the British public. Nelson’s role in the pantheon of British public heroes is absolutely central and one that has by no means atrophied. The final chapter builds on how Lord Cochrane’s chequered career and role in British society rounded out the period in question. Cochrane’s story is fascinating on many levels, not least due to his current popularity as the model for Patrick O’Brian’s hero, Jack Aubrey. Cochrane’s political role is not well known. As a ‘radical’ or Whig in the late years of the Napoleonic Wars, his eclipse can be interpreted as a triumph for Tory values; the more so given his representation as Westminster’s MP, long a bastion for radically-inclined Royal Navy officers. Common throughout the narrative is an extensive examination of literature (particularly poetry), newsheets and other popular forms of communication throughout the period.

Jenks, a Canadian academic based at East Carolina University in the United States, has written a densely argued, jargon-laden volume of social and political history. The role of the navy in such spheres is not overdone and it is clear much new ground has been covered. That said, the ultimate position of the navy in British national affections is well understood, even if not grasped from a theoretical and social science perspective. To that extent, Jenks’

effort fills a gap and is therefore a valuable addition to the literature. The only significant criticism is lack of accessibility. Could the essential elements of this story not be expressed in language and terminology readily understood by intelligent lay readers? One suspects that it could. Surely the duty of the historian is to bring the products of his or her research to such an audience and broaden the understanding of the past for as wide a public as possible. This is an insider’s book, a valuable one to that sliver of society no doubt, and yet clearly one with limited appeal for those outside it. This is a pity as the story is interesting.

A final note on production relates to the rather small font. As an OUP publication the standards are high, but the small type is not that easy to read, albeit this could be more a question of aging eyes than anything more significant. There are a few illustrations, pertinent to the issues at hand, but I believe more could have been incorporated into the volume. A goodly proportion of the documentation cited is, of course, in the nature of diagrams and illustrations and hence, useful to include.

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Brian Lavery. *River-class Frigates and the Battle of the Atlantic, A Technical and Social History*. Greenwich, UK: National Maritime Museum, www.nmm.ac.uk, 2006. 256 pp., illustrations, drawings, maps, appendix, notes, index. UK £14.99, paper; ISBN 978 0948065 736.

In all, 135 River-class frigates were built during the Second World War; 57 in Britain and eight in Canada for the Royal Navy (RN), two in Canada for the RN but transferred to the USN (Lavery omits these two); 60 in Canada for the Royal Canadian

Navy (RCN) and another eight for the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) down there. Only one remains, the RAN's HMAS *Diamantina*. Lavery suggests they were the epitome of the wartime anti-submarine vessel, in both function and appearance, although one might argue with that choice, given the late war successes of the many fewer Castle-class corvettes with their considerably more effective Squid mortars. But... "Depends what you mean..."

In addition, there were the Bay-classes frigates, which had quite another function, designed more as anti-aircraft ships for the Pacific War, and the Loch-class frigates which were an advance in design, particularly in hull form, from the Rivers. These were intended for more mass production, but came later in the war and were fewer in number.

This book was planned as a detailed examination of the Rivers focusing on design, construction, equipment and armament, engines, crew planning and function, with a few operational assessments and uses included. There is almost no mention of the Canadian River-class frigates except the odd reference where one chanced to serve in a British-led Escort Group, or the occasional note of equipment differences, and nothing of the RAN's ships. As an added note, however, Lavery rather deplores the final post-war appearance of the RCN's *Prestonian* modifications, with which I tend to agree, having served in a predecessor, HMCS *Royalmount*. Thus, as noted in Ian Tew and Kathy Crewdson's review of David Brown's *Atlantic Escort Ships* in the last issue of this journal, this book is very much an RN view of their ships, not of the Rivers as a whole. The RN was quite determined to call them "twin screw corvettes," but the Canadian choice of the term "frigate," despite messages from the Admiralty to the contrary, eventually prevailed throughout.

There were differences, in part due to differing attitudes among the two navies as to crew facilities, the RCN's lack of up-to-date asdic and radar equipment in particular, and the latter's much greater use of commanding officers from the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR). The author confirms that the Canadians did manage to scrounge more modern sets when based in the UK, although, if one believes David Zimmerman's *The Great Naval Battle of Ottawa* (University of Toronto Press, 1989) this tended to infuriate Naval Headquarters here. And Lavery approves the far more practical inboard fitting of the RCN ships' davits compared to the easily damaged hull-side RN fittings. The book has major descriptions of hull design and construction, deck and space layouts with detailed descriptions of messes, radar offices, the galley, sick bay, C.O.'s cabin, the bridge, engine and boiler rooms -- practically every space aboard. The author gives frequent examples, by named ship, of modifications, both due to sea experience and construction variations.

The book includes assessments of the gunnery, depth charge and hedgehog equipment, with descriptions of their drill and successes, giving occasional examples for each. There is a nostalgic review of work-ups at Tobermory and of asdic procedures in both hunt and attack, with duties of all those involved, including convoy screens, search patterns and the later so-named "*Strawberry*", "*Pineapple*" "*Banana*" and "*Observant*" searches for U-boats suspected or known to be around a convoy. Lavery assesses the variation between the Close Escort Groups, mostly corvettes with maybe a frigate as Senior Officer's ship, and the Support Groups, made up largely of sloops or these frigates. These enlarged corvette-based ships were relatively rapidly designed and built, once

the open-ocean shortcomings of the corvettes had been assessed and absorbed. The author considers them as good seaworthy ships, except for their low quarterdecks, unavoidable due to their large depth charge outfit.

The book includes many small items of interest. For example, the engines were all made double-ended, with the drive shaft extended fore and aft, so that they could be fitted in as they arrived, port or starboard, with all controls centralized inboard. The first 23 frigates were equipped as mine sweepers, although without the winches. One wonders what the Admiralty was thinking, but they obviously soon changed their minds about using such large ships close inshore. The first six ships were turbine powered, but produced little extra speed and little more room in the engine space. RNR engine room staff usually found those engines more difficult to build and maintain, so the steam triple-expansion engines used on corvettes were employed on all the rest. The book ends with a chapter evaluating the contribution of these ships to the RN's war, and the eventual fate of many of them. Then Lavery compares their post-war RN successors as escorts, the Types 12 to 23 frigates, suggesting they developed from experience of the Rivers and Lochs.

I have two major quibbles with the book. While some drawings – of the Oerlikon and 4-inch mounting, the depth-charge thrower and the hedgehog projectile, taken from various Admiralty “Pocket Books” – are clear and exemplary, many others copied from ships' plans are unreadable without a magnifying glass. This is the same problem reviewers Tew and Crewdson found with Brown's book. More surprisingly in a book by this historian and the NMM, there are too many errors that better proof reading would have caught. “Eastbound” for “westbound” or

“westward” (p.161, 176); there are missing words: “side”(p.60), another on p.42, and “groups” – or something – on p.168. A full paragraph is repeated on pp. 59 and 60, another on p.89, and two photos have cut-lines reversed (pp.126 and 146). Lavery confuses detonators with primers in depth charges (p.82), and uses the term “bearing deflector” when we certainly used “bearing indicator.” In a couple of cases, descriptions change part-way through: C1 group becomes C2 (p.180) and in the hedgehog firing sequence on p. 89. This is an all-too-obvious and ongoing problem with the text.

On the whole, however, this is a very detailed coverage of the RN's River-class frigates, and a useful addition to any naval bookshelf for anyone wanting to closely examine these major wartime workhorses of both fleets.

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Robert Malcomson. *Capital in Flames. The American Attack on York, 1813*. Montreal: Robin Brass Studio, www.rbstudiobooks.com (published and distributed in the US by the Naval Institute Press, www.navalinstitute.org), 2008. xxi + 489 pp., illustrations, maps, tables appendices, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. CDN \$39.95, US \$42.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-896941-53-0.

The first joint operation in American history combining United States Army and Navy forces occurred at the frontier hamlet of York (modern Toronto), 27 April 1813. This little-remembered operation is described in a well-researched and effectively written study by Robert Malcomson. One of a coterie of Canadian specialists in War of 1812 studies, Malcomson's detailed account of this engagement and its consequences adds

significantly to our understanding of the Lake Ontario theatre during this conflict.

Malcomson is a devotee of the detailed study of battles, witness his account of the battle of Queenston in *A Very Brilliant Affair* (2003). *Capital in Flames* also demonstrates his growing maturity in scholarship and analysis when one compares it to *HMS Detroit: The Battle for Lake Erie* (1990). York, or Little York as it was often known, was a small village on a good-sized bay on the northern shore of Lake Ontario, chosen by John Graves Simcoe in 1793 to be Upper Canada's capital. Its population was less than a thousand in 1812 when Major General Isaac Brock illogically selected it as the site for a second naval shipyard on Lake Ontario. Violating the military principle of concentration by creating this shipyard far from the more militarily defensible and more logistically supportable base at Kingston, York became vulnerable to attack after the U.S. Navy secured dominance on the lake in late 1812.

Although Secretary of War John Armstrong desired Commodore Isaac Chauncey and Major General Henry Dearborn to focus on the more critical British base at Kingston, the regional commanders chose to attack York, first since its harbour was not clogged with ice so early in the season. Caught in an operational vice requiring him to defend York and Kingston while not controlling the lake, Major General Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe correctly understood that the ice at the St. Lawrence River's headwaters made York the more likely American target in the early spring. He defended Upper Canada's capital with local militia and elements of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment of Fencibles. The largest U.S. Navy squadron that ever sailed on the Great Lakes brought Dearborn's soldiers and their brigade commander, Brigadier General Zebulon

Montgomery Pike, across Lake Ontario and landed them skillfully on the Canadian coast. While Chauncey's schooners bombarded shore fortifications, Pike's troops advanced. Sheaffe's attempts to stop Pike's men at the water's edge failed and an orderly retreat became a rout.

Sheaffe's evacuation of York was unplanned, ill-conducted and infuriated the champions of British valour over the dastardly republicans from the United States. Expecting a reincarnation of Isaac Brock, many Canadians blamed Sir Roger solely for the disaster at York. But the general can be credited with two positive developments. First, he directed the destruction of the grand magazine which, when it exploded, threw stone fragments into the area, one of which mortally wounded General Pike. Without effective leadership on the field (Dearborn remained on Chauncey's flagship), the American ground forces stopped fighting and the British withdrew from the town without pursuit. These troops survived a difficult retreat to Kingston to fight another day. Second, the high number of casualties inflicted on Dearborn's troops forced a delay in a second amphibious attack on Fort George at the mouth of the Niagara River until 27 May 1813. While that operation was in progress, an unsuccessful British joint operation against Chauncey's base at Sackets Harbor, New York, so unnerved the commodore that he never supported a joint army-navy campaign for the remainder of the war.

In his conclusion, Malcomson dispels two myths about the York raid. First, it did not contribute directly to the Royal Navy's defeat at the Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813 since the artillery for the newly constructed HMS *Detroit* did not arrive at the western end of Lake Ontario until a couple of weeks before Oliver Hazard Perry's celebrated victory.

More important was the American army's control of the Niagara Valley and Perry's dominance of the upper lake which precluded any cannon being transported to the Amherstburg shipyard. Second, the burning of many private residences and of non-military public buildings in York was probably not an excuse for the burning of various edifices in Washington, D. C. in 1814. Malcomson concludes that the York fires were less the product of American depredations than those of disgruntled Canadians. Moreover, it was the unnecessary burning of the villages of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Port Dover by the Americans that probably provided the excuse for the fires in the American capital, as if Vice Admiral Sir George Cochrane and his subordinates needed a pretext.

As we've grown to expect from this publisher, Robin Brass Studio copiously illustrates this volume, some might say excessively so. As usual, the maps are superb. Even though I've made this error, it is hard to explain how a Canadian like Malcomson could call Brock the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada when he was really politically titled the president of the provincial executive council. These small criticisms to the contrary, *Capital in Flames* will remain the definitive treatment of this engagement for years to come.

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Edward J. Marolda (ed.). *The United States Navy and the Korean War*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2007. v +428 pp., illustrations, maps, suggested readings, index. US \$45.00, cloth; ISBN 9781591144878.

The United States Navy and the Korean War, edited by the Navy's senior

professional historian, is an anthology of extended essays that appeared earlier to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of "the forgotten war." The first essay by Thomas J. Cutler, however, appears here for the first time and gives the book chronological symmetry since it deals with the first three months of the war, June-September, 1950.

Since the essays are written by a distinguished crew of contemporary naval historians, they provide more focused, well-written, and better-researched accounts than the official history by Field (1962) and the semi-official history by Cale and Manson (1957). The authors include Thomas B. Buell, Joseph Alexander, Bernard Nalty, and Malcolm Muir, Jr. In addition to the chronological, operational essays, the book covers amphibious operations, racial integration, naval air operations, and senior leadership. The difficulty of joint operations is a theme that runs throughout this book.

As one might expect, the authors communicate the frustrations of the senior admirals of Naval Forces Far East, the theater command, and the Seventh Fleet, the operational force. The most interesting participant observer is Admiral Arleigh Burke, who served in the theater in various billets from 1950 to 1952, and who wrote wisely and often on the war's conduct. Naturally Burke and his nominal superiors, C. Turner Joy and Arthur D. Struble, believed naval superiority gave United Nations Command a force-saving capability in 1950 (twice) and an unexploited strategic advantage in 1951-1953. Their arguments mirror those of General Douglas MacArthur for more pressure on the Chinese forces outside Korea.

If the book has limitations, they are not crippling, with one exception: the fear of Soviet naval intervention from bases on

both sides of the Korean peninsula. History leans towards what happens, not what does not. Strategy and operations, however, reflect “worst case” contingencies, and Korea is no exception. Naval operations in Korean waters always had limiting factors because of the Soviet naval aviation and submarine threat. When this threat could be discounted, it reflected the work of joint signals intelligence operations, not a subject in this book.

In sum, *The United States Navy and the Korean War* is a sound, readable account of “sea power” and the experience of the U.S. Navy and its attached Allied warships in supporting United Nations Command.

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Eric Osborne. *The Battle of Heligoland Bight*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, www.iupress.indiana.edu, 2006, ix + 149 pp., maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$ 29.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-253-34742-8.

Britain and Germany had been at war for only 24 days when the Royal Navy made an audacious sweep deep into German waters in the southeastern North Sea catching patrolling light cruisers and torpedo boats completely by surprise in misty conditions. The British attack force consisted of destroyers and submarines, supported by cruisers and five battle cruisers. German reinforcements, light cruisers at anchor at high readiness in coastal bases, were fed into the area piecemeal. Several German ships were overwhelmed by their opponents in short engagements. The well-handled British battle cruisers emerged from the mists just in time as the British destroyer flotilla commander was facing superior odds. What became known as the Battle of Heligoland Bight (or Bay), really a series of

single ship actions, was the most significant skirmish between the two navies in the early days of the First World War. This welcome success helped dispel the public and naval unease experienced right at the outbreak of hostilities when the Royal Navy bungled the search for two powerful German warships in the Mediterranean, *Goeben* and *Breslau*. This tactical failure had huge strategic consequences because it helped push Turkey into war as an ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary, thus closing the Dardanelles and depriving the allies of access to Russia. The Battle of the Bight was hailed in Britain as an encouraging triumph at a time when news from the fighting in Belgium and France was dark. Winston Churchill, first Lord of the Admiralty, was ecstatic, and later wrote with a characteristic flourish: “British light forces were rampaging about the enemy’s most intimate and jealously guarded waters.” (p.107)

This slim volume by American academic Eric Osborne is based on records from both sides as well as secondary sources. Professor Osborne contends that the battle was decisive in shaping the German high command’s attitudes toward how they would fight the war at sea and their reluctance to commit fleet units to possible engagements.

Heligoland (then known to the British as Heligoland), 25 nautical miles (40 km) off the coastal islands, occupies a strategic location dominating the approaches to Germany’s major North Sea ports. This recently-fortified rocky bastion was well situated to block approaches to the newly expanded naval base at Wilhelmshaven where the battleship and battle cruiser forces were normally based. The Kiel Canal, which enabled the transfer of major warships to the North Sea from the Baltic, had just been completed, further enhancing the strategic importance of

Helgoland and the Bight. The action at the end of August occurred well before British signals intelligence hit its stride. In fact, it would be several weeks before the German naval code book (which the Russians famously recovered from the wreck of the cruiser *Magdeburg* in the Baltic) arrived in Britain. The British intelligence picture had been built up through submarine probes into the Bight. It was known that German light forces regularly patrolled to seaward of Helgoland to forestall mining by British submarines and destroyers. Water depths off Wilhelmshaven hampered the reaction times of the battle fleet. Deep-draught warships could put to sea only at high water because of the bar off the harbour. Unless they were anchored outside the bar they were trapped. Commodores Tyrwhitt and Keyes -- respectively in charge of the destroyers and submarine flotillas based in Harwich on the east coast of England -- drew up their bold plan and convinced the Admiralty, including First Lord Churchill, to approve it. The submarines were to lure the German torpedo boats towards superior British destroyer formations. The attacking force would consist of eight submarines and 31 destroyers, including their two flotilla leaders which were light cruisers. They were to be backed up by two battle cruisers and a cruiser squadron operating well to the west. Fortunately, Admiral Jellicoe, commanding the Grand Fleet, added two further but separate supporting forces when he became aware of the plan: three battle cruisers under the flamboyant Vice Admiral Beatty and six light cruisers under Commodore Goodenough. .

Keyes' submarines deployed first while Tyrwhitt's 31 destroyers sailed at midnight on August 26, reaching the area patrolled by German destroyers 28 hours later at first light in patchy visibility. Both sides made mistakes and the British narrowly avoided an encounter between

their own forces because the Admiralty had not properly informed Tyrwhitt and Keyes about the last-minute forces committed by Jellicoe just as the units from Harwich were getting underway. The Germans failed to concentrate patrolling forces once enemy formations or individual ships were glimpsed through the mists. A series of short sharp engagements ensued. In the end, the British sank three German light cruisers and a destroyer and were then able to extract themselves successfully. A brand new British light cruiser had been damaged and three destroyers heavily damaged, but all returned to port safely. The author points out that both the British light cruisers and destroyers were more heavily armed than their counterparts. The British light cruisers had 6-inch guns while the Germans carried 4.1-inch mountings; the RN destroyers mounted 4-inch guns as opposed to the German torpedo boats' 3.7-inch weapons. Starting a decade earlier, the British had in fact developed "torpedo boat destroyers" to defend major units against attack by "torpedo boats." The Germans were also building destroyers by 1914 but they were not present in the Bight. British destroyers were roughly one-third larger than the German torpedo boats and could, in fact, throw three times the weight of shells than the torpedo boats could fire. After the actions, however, the Admiralty observed that the British sinkings were achieved with an unexpectedly heavily expenditure of ammunition and torpedoes (only one shot, which struck a German light cruiser, was a hit). It would have been interesting to learn what percentage of the ammunition and torpedo outfits (prescribed loads to be carried in their magazines) were expended by the ships actually engaged. The Admiralty was reacting after the very first multi-ship engagement of the war and apparently comparing pre-war estimates of ammunition expenditure to actual conditions. It would have also have been

interesting to learn whether ammunition and torpedo expenditure rates were as high in subsequent engagements. Osborne records that German firing was rapid and accurate. He underlines the fact that these warships proved able to take considerable punishment, two of the four sank due to scuttling by their crews rather than action damage. The Germans noted that a percentage of the British shells failed to explode. It is not made clear whether the British knew this at the time, but they did note the confusion experienced by their several forces and how inadequate enemy reports had contributed to it.

Among those in the RN who knew about the problems that had occurred there was internal disappointment and a general feeling that better results should have been achieved, but Osborne doesn't dissect these opinions. The operation was obviously flawed because of careless planning and because some of the British forces were unaware of the others committed. But one wonders whether other pre-war conceptions based on manoeuvres did not contribute to the climate of frustration around opportunities apparently lost. Once the "friction of war" came into play on the misty reaches of the North Sea, results did not match expectations. Indeed, the friction of war affected both sides; skies were clear in Wilhelmshaven and the German Admirals there didn't realize the low visibility conditions out in the Bight. When sighting reports started coming in, they imagined that their light cruisers out in the area would handily speed to the scene. Instead these outgunned cruisers groped through fog, mostly individually. Several British commanders made sound tactical decisions. One of the most notable was Admiral Beatty's correct decision to press through the mists deep into the Bight at 27 knots when he became aware that the British destroyers had not withdrawn westwards as

rapidly as planned and were apparently in difficulty. Commodore Tyrwhitt's flotilla was in disarray and separated. Beatty's timely arrival saved Tyrwhitt's crippled light cruiser flagship and scattered destroyers from being overwhelmed by two German light cruisers.

Osborne has mined the contemporary literature, and like earlier analyses of the Battle of the Bight, concludes that it helped cement the opposition of the Kaiser and his army-dominated high command to committing the battle fleet unless conditions were clearly favourable. Osborne goes further and argues that the battle was decisive in forming attitudes but he provides no new evidence that this battle changed opinions already held. The author explains that he set out to provide an account which included the individual ship actions. The details are graphic and underline the fact that, while the Germans fought tenaciously and suffered heavy casualties, it did not take long to pound their warships into wrecks when they were caught by superior forces. The Battle of the Bight was a curtain-raiser to modern naval warfare as experienced by the two dominant navies of the time. These encounters at the start of the Great War were marked by chivalrous actions. The British stopped to pick up German survivors and acknowledged the bravery of their captives. Commodore Keyes ordered his destroyer flagship alongside a shattered German cruiser to take off 220 survivors, including the naval officer son of Admiral von Tirpitz, the driving force behind the creation of the powerful German Navy in less than two decades. In another incident, Keyes shouted to the officer in charge of a British cutter that he was being cowardly in not edging closer to recover German sailors in the water. Admiral Beatty wrote to his wife about how well the Germans had fought. Four years of grinding war would

change the attitude of many. When the German Fleet surrendered to the British in 1918, Beatty, by then the Grand Fleet's commander, made this a humiliating ceremony. Roskill noted that the Admiral spoke to his former flagship's crew about his contempt for his German opponents. (*Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty* (1980) p. 280)

The modest price of this book is attractive but there are curious errors in the text. For example Admiral Beatty is given the rank of rear admiral (p.96) and vice admiral on page 109; the Ems River is southwest of Helgoland, not southeast (p. 38), and the date of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand is given as July 28 instead of June 28. (p. 27). The list goes on but better proof reading could have eliminated these problems. The maps provided are not particularly helpful. One, taken from the German official history published seventy years ago, depicts the intended German patrol screen to seaward of Helgoland but is too small to decipher easily and, unfortunately, no translation is provided for the detailed explanations.

The Battle of Heligoland Bight provides the context behind the creation of the German and British battle fleets and then goes on to describe the first encounter between multiple ships of the two navies. Much of the warship technology which underwent brief tests of battle on August 28, 1914, was new and untried in operations. Both sides made mistakes and poor visibility proved a major factor in determining the outcome. This book's descriptions of the encounters between the two sides provide glimpses of how individual ship actions were fought.

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John H. Schroeder. *Commodore John Rodgers: Paragon of the Early American Navy*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, www.upf.com, 2006. xvi + 255 pp. illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$59.95, cloth: ISBN 0-8130-2963-5.

John Rodgers was one of the most important and influential officers in the U.S. Navy during its formative years. As a warrior, administrator, and diplomat, Rodgers helped forge the infant American navy into a professional sea service. Despite his significance in this regard, Rodgers has had only one biography written of his life, that penned by Oscar Paullin nearly a century ago. John H. Schroeder's *Commodore John Rodgers: Paragon of the Early American Navy*, then, is a long overdue scholarly treatment of this important naval figure. Having written a biography of one of Rodgers's protégés, Matthew C. Perry, and another book on the commercial and diplomatic role of the U.S. Navy in the antebellum period, Schroeder is well qualified to survey the life of the Maryland-born captain.

The sources for a study of John Rodgers's career are extensive and wide-ranging. In addition to the commodore's official correspondence in Navy Department archives, there are five major collections of Rodgers's papers in private and public repositories. Schroeder has drawn on this rich documentary record to produce a well-written narrative of the commodore's life. In it he relates how John Rodgers rose to prominence in the U.S. Navy, coming to symbolize, at the peak of his career, the very model of a naval officer—brave, professional, disciplined, patriotic, and devoted to the service. It was this high standing in the eyes of his peers and his civilian superiors that enabled Rodgers to shape the Navy and the men who served in it.

Schroeder navigates the course of John Rodgers's life in ten chapters, from his birth in Havre de Grace, Maryland, in 1773, to his death in Philadelphia sixty-five years later. He devotes nearly three-quarters of his text to Rodgers's service afloat, experiences at sea that were both varied and challenging. They included commanding merchantmen on trading ventures to the West Indies and Europe; participation in three wars; peacetime command of the New York Station and flotilla; and command of the Mediterranean Squadron during a diplomatic mission to the Ottoman Empire. The remaining pages of Schroeder's book cover the period of Rodgers's tenure as president of the Board of Navy Commissioners, a post in which he spent nearly half of his naval career. Established shortly after the War of 1812, the Navy Board oversaw the Navy's shipbuilding program, managed shore establishments, and superintended the equipment, supply, and repair of the fleet. It also served as technical advisor to the Secretary of the Navy and Congress on a range of professional issues.

Schroeder's portrait of John Rodgers reveals a man whose most distinctive characteristic was an intimidating personality. Stern in manner, formal in bearing, quick to anger, and physically imposing, he was a difficult and demanding officer to serve under. While such a temperament enabled Rodgers to establish himself as a forceful naval leader, it did not endear him to many in the fleet and led to professional disputes with fellow officers and civilians, most notably James Barron with whom he nearly fought a duel. This bluff, authoritarian mien, on such prominent display in his public life, melted away in private moments with Minerva Denison, whom he married in 1806. Here the author breaks new historical ground in his exploration of the passionate

relationship between John and Minerva, revealing a side of the commodore's personality that is quite at odds with the austere and dour persona he projected to his naval contemporaries.

Schroeder generally gives Rodgers high marks as a quarterdeck warrior though his record on that score is uneven. The commodore displayed little initiative in his first independent command during the Quasi-War, proved an energetic squadron commander during the Barbary Wars, but a cautious, error-prone frigate captain in the War of 1812. Moreover, Rodgers had little actual battle experience. In a service that glorified the officer who dared lay his ship alongside the enemy's, win or lose, Schroeder's depiction of the risk-averse Rodgers as a combat commander junior officers sought to emulate is less than persuasive.

Schroeder correctly describes Rodgers as a tough disciplinarian with a reputation for running a taut ship. He credits the commodore with establishing shipboard practices and routines (the "Rodgers system of discipline") that came to be adopted throughout much of the service. But this judgment and others regarding Rodgers's influence on the disciplinary mentalité of the Navy lack force because the author offers little evidence or analysis to support them. Beyond Thomas Truxtun, Rodgers's first commanding officer, Schroeder does not discuss the disciplinary methods and philosophies of other navy captains or the extent to which they mirrored or differed from Rodgers's own system. Even in the case of Truxtun, the author leaves unexamined some important differences between mentor and pupil. It might have interested readers to know, for example, that Truxtun and Rodgers held diametrically opposed views on the subject of flogging, a practice that the former abhorred but which

the latter embraced. Such comparisons would have enabled a fairer assessment of Rodgers's influence in shaping the disciplinary ethos of the American fleet.

Schroeder is on much surer ground in his estimation of John Rodgers's accomplishments as president of the Board of Navy Commissioners. Schroeder praises the Rodgers-led board with reforming the Navy's accounting system, revising its personnel regulations, and advocating improvements in the education, pay, and promotion of officers. Rodgers's success as board president, he writes, was due to the commodore's formidable talents as an administrator, his high degree of professionalism, and his tireless work ethic.

While Schroeder has crafted a fine narrative of John Rodgers's career, his work is sometimes characterized by sloppy scholarship. In the chapters for which I systematically reviewed the author's citations (those on the Quasi War, Barbary Wars, and War of 1812), inaccurate quotations appear with discouraging frequency. Factual errors pepper the text throughout as well. For example, Thomas Tingey, one of Rodgers's closest friends, is referred to as Thomas Tingley. Rodgers spent twelve-and-a-half months at sea in *President* during the War of 1812, not twenty (p.126). The number of floggings that occurred in *North Carolina*, Rodgers's flagship in 1825-27, is given as thirteen when that ship's logs record nearly two hundred such punishments, an especially egregious error since the author uses the lower figure to debunk one contemporary's "harsh description of life onboard the *North Carolina*." (p.185) More careful copy-editing and fact-checking might have eliminated such mistakes.

John Schroeder has written a lively and informative account of the life of Commodore John Rodgers. His study is

better researched and more critical than Paullin's earlier treatment of that naval officer. Though specialists may disagree with Schroeder on the manner and degree to which John Rodgers shaped the naval service, few will dispute his contention that Rodgers was the dominant figure of the early American Navy.

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Peter Yule and Derek Woolner. *The Collins Class Submarine Story. Steel, Spies and Spin*. Melbourne, Aus: Cambridge University Press, www.cambridge.org, 2008. xx + 364 pp., illustrations, notes, index. US \$75.00, cloth; ISBN 978-0-521-86894-5.

While it is well known and oft-repeated that Admiral Jellicoe characterized the efforts of engineers and stokers ("the engine room department") as "the prelude to battle," there is generally less recognition of and insight into the extensive acquisition campaign (almost a Wagnerian ring cycle in relative analogous terms) that precedes the delivery of new naval equipment to the fleet. The *Collins Class Submarine Story* is a substantial contribution to bridging that gap, tracing the development of the objectives, strategy and tactics of the Collins acquisition, and documenting the many twists and turns, defeats, reversals and victories along the way.

The broad context of the story can be briefly summarized. In the early 1980s, the Royal Australian Navy embarked upon an indigenous project to replace their existing British-designed and built *Oberon* class conventional (i.e. diesel-electric powered) submarines. This project concluded with the delivery of the last of the six 3,053-ton Collins Class submarines, HMAS *Rankin*, in March 2003, 21 years after the establishment of the project office,

and 16 years after the signing of the contract. Between these two dates (and even continuing after the last) the Collins Project attracted powerful and vocal cohorts of both supporters and detractors, to the point that the *Collins* project has entered the popular mythology of project management superlatives, being variously hailed as either a nation-building engineering achievement on the scale of Australia's famed Snowy Mountains Scheme, or the epitome of a catastrophic military procurement misadventure.

Of course, the truth is never as simple (nor easy to determine) as the polarized factions might view it, and this book does an excellent job in attempting to disentangle the threads of fact, fiction and misconception in outlining the sequence, cause and effect in the fortunes of the project. It also does a very good job of exploring and illustrating the complexity of the undertaking, in technological-scientific terms, in requirements formulation terms, and in project management/contractual-corporate terms.

To begin with, Australia had never built submarines before, although they had operated submarines with distinction since before the First World War. Canadian readers will note with interest that Canada's building of H-class submarines during the same war is noted as a capability benchmark (although more recent Canadian experience with modern submarine acquisition might suggest the benchmark is very dated and correspondingly flawed). The authors' tale depicts the technological complexity of design and construction of a modern (even non-nuclear) submarine very well in both quantitative integration terms (4 million parts, 75 kilometres of cable, 200,000 on-board connections, 23.5 kilometres of pipe, 14,000 pipe welds and 34.5 kilometres of hull weld), and in terms of the subtlety and significance of impact of

systems interaction on noise, vibration and performance. The role of Australia's Defence Science and Technology Organization (DSTO) in bringing science to the rescue of technology is a very interesting sidelight on the story that has its counterpart in many defence procurement stories.

The challenge of setting and maintaining relevant naval requirements over the life of such an extended project, and the ability to address changes in requirements, is another interesting and central theme of the story. It is notable that of the \$1.17B voted for the "quick-fix" of the submarines following the McIntosh-Prescott Report of 1999, only \$143M was for areas in which the submarines failed to meet contract requirements, while \$300M was for changed operational requirements and \$727M was to address technological obsolescence. These bald statistics and the notion of a "quick-fix" solution belie the true complexity in contracting for and managing the development of sophisticated systems over a timescale in which the enabling technology itself is evolving in generational terms. As is clear through this story, doing this successfully is as much if not more a product of the contractual relationships which are established, and the means for their own evolution, as it is of the mastery of technology. The implied conclusion that one needs complex and resilient contracts to acquire complex leading-edge systems is one that is currently registering with defence acquisition professionals around the world.

This last point is particularly evident in the chapters referring to the development of the *Collins* Class combat system. This development had very ambitious operational capability goals which were ultimately not realized in the form initially intended, partly due to the tensions between parties to the contract, and

even more to being overtaken by events on the technology front. It is noted in particular (p.155) that the choice of Ada as a software language for the combat system, and the associated choice of processor, was one discrete but critical system-design decision which got left behind in the wake of the micro-processor revolution of the mid-1980s. This fact, coupled with the rigidity of contract arrangements and the increasingly intransigent polarization of parties to the contract, led inevitably to the point where the only solution to the combat system requirement was to start again. While with hindsight (and with the benefit of insight from wide-ranging interviews after all the dust has settled) this may have the clarity and inevitability of a classic tragedy, the strength of this account is that in the telling it becomes clear and understandable just how this could happen. This is a cautionary aspect of the tale that will certainly repay a careful reading and consideration.

Other themes explored through the book include the key role and impact of personalities (both positive and negative), the impact of media on public perception of a project (even after the point of achieving success), and the perils of politicization of the debate following changes of government. All these are well-recognized themes, and the matter of their timing relative to the search for solutions is well noted.

All the above might suggest that this is a weighty and difficult tome, but this is not the case. It is a lively and well-told story, based on extensive interviews with over 170 participants in the events described. It maintains an even tone, generally non-judgemental, and leaves the opinions in the voices of the players. If I have one minor quibble, it is with the title – the *Steel, Spies and Spin* subtitle implies a sensationalist exposé of the investigative

reporting genre, as opposed to a measured, balanced historical review of the myriad complexities in a real-life example of project management of a highly sophisticated system. This book is very much the latter. It should be considered very highly recommended (even required) reading for anyone involved in procurement/project management of highly complex defence systems, and indeed for any others whose historical or operational interests require an insight into the challenges and pitfalls in development and acquisition of leading edge naval capabilities.

Overall, the *Collins Class Submarine Story* is an outstanding addition to that slim library of volumes that focus on the materiel acquisition aspect of naval history, and thereby provides a window on those collisions of personality and politics, science and engineering, finance and management that shape the material evolution of naval fleets.

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Lee Allen Zatarain. *Tanker War: America's First War with Iran, 1987-1988*. Drexel PA: Casemate Publishing, www.casematepublishing.com, 2008. 320 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$32.95, cloth: ISBN-978-1-932033-84-7

and

Harold Lee Wise. *Inside the Danger Zone, The U.S. Military in the Persian Gulf, 1987-1988*. Annapolis, MD : Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org 2008. 272 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$36.95, cloth: ISBN-978-1-59114-970-5.

Both books describe in detail efforts by the United States to maintain the sea lines of communication inside the

Persian Gulf during the long Iran-Iraq War. As such, these two books fill an important gap in the recent history of United States military involvement in the Middle East, and they also illustrate some very important developments in warfare at sea during the period. The peculiar circumstances of military engagement short of war, particularly in the relatively confined waters of the Persian Gulf, make these two studies special and the parallels with the current potential crisis between the United States and Iran in the same waters make them timely. These two books also provide an important link to understanding the entire period of the American confrontation in the Gulf Region from 1980 to the current day.

Both of these books build on a foundation formed from four crucial incidents that demarcated the “Tanker War,” what became a quasi-war between the United States and Iran during 1987 and 1988 in the midst of the long war between Iran and its neighbour, Iraq. The principle interest of the U.S. in that conflict was security of the threatened oil transport routes leading from the Persian Gulf; that concern eventually resulted in President Reagan’s decision to reflag and escort Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Gulf with U.S. Navy ships. As a consequence of that intervention decision, American military forces came into direct contact with the forces of the two belligerents in the narrow waters of the Persian Gulf.

The first of the four major incidents chronicled was the Iraqi missile attack on the USS *Stark* on 17 May 1987, which actually preceded the first escort missions in the Gulf. The second was the mine strike on the SS *Bridgeton* on July 24, 1987, which began the active phase of operation *Earnest Will* as the escorting of the Kuwaiti oil tankers through the Persian Gulf came to be labeled. The third major incident was the U.S. counterattack on Iranian oil

platforms and ships in the Gulf on April 18, 1988, known as operation *Praying Mantis*. The fourth was the tragic shoot-down of an Iranian airliner by the USS *Vincennes* on 3 July 1988. These four incidents show very clearly the complexity of the conflict and the difficulty any military forces would encounter attempting to provide air and maritime security in such closely contested waters over a 26-month period.

Of these four events, the mine warfare and maritime convoy escort preparations for *Earnest Will* and the joint force integration of the *Praying Mantis* attack provide the most valuable lessons. The far more useful take-away from the actions described in both of these books, however, is the necessity for the close integration of situational awareness and command decision-making during such uncertain and contentious military activities.

Both books do an admirable job of detailing the tactical innovations of the conflict, such as the integration of both maritime (Navy Sea-Air-Land special boat forces) and Army helicopter Special Operations Forces (SOF) within what had been an almost singularly surface Navy environment. Wise and Zatarain also reveal the important role that Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) forces played in all of these tactical actions. They also make clear that the development of Rules of Engagement (ROE) in such complex environments was at a neophyte stage in the U.S. military at the time and needed much more improvement. Both authors give solid credit to the improvisation of the forces involved (including the creation of ad-hoc sea platforms), and they both review with concern the development of “flexible” command structures, and not so flexible command attitudes in this very immediate aftermath of the Goldwater-

Nichols legislation that demanded “jointness” within the U.S. armed forces.

Successful commanders like Admiral Harold Bernsen and Commander Paul Evancoe are lionized by both authors, and those who were responsible for the errors in execution, such as Captain Glenn Brindel of the *Stark*, Admiral Dennis Brooks (commander of the joint task force in the Middle East) and Captain Will Rogers of the *Vincennes* are treated fairly but critically. Admiral William Crowe, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time also shines in both author’s views as an aggressive and insightful advisor to all levels of command. Since command and control issues were central to both tactical successes and failures in the Gulf, this emphasis on command and commanders is only appropriate. An unintended but useful sub-theme in both books becomes the crucial interrelationship between command and control systems, intelligence processing and effective communications in a region of confined seas and great strategic impact.

Both of these books suffer just a bit stylistically from being based extensively on ships logs and military after-action accounts, but they are well-paced and factual, plus both authors clearly understand the details of war at sea, and both have profited from an extensive array of other sources, including pertinent interviews. *Inside the Danger Zone* is a bit more readable and more entertaining than *Tanker War*, which lacks the intimate insight and passion of Wise’s book. Both, however, provide useful context for the actions they describe and both are quite accurate in their detailed accounts of the actual events in the Gulf.

As the United States discusses a possible conflict with Iran in the global press, the important lessons outlined in these two books become particularly

valuable. Even given the significant and lasting advances in joint command and control and the near-expert skill with which U.S. forces now manage ROE, any future conflict in the Persian Gulf region will still have to pay heed to many of the same challenges faced by Admiral Bernsen and his fellow commanders in the late 1980s.

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