

especially Halifax, still operated as the financial, industrial, commercial and cultural leader for the region.

Where this volume really differs from earlier general histories is the extent to which the activities and role of formerly unrecognized groups and individuals is recognized. Before there was a Nova Scotia, there was Mi'kmai, and Conrad, rather than starting the story with European settlement opens with the First Peoples, unlike some earlier histories which ignored the original inhabitants after the arrival of the French and English. She treats them, and other later minority populations as a full part of the human story on a continuing basis. This is an area where the recent scholarship of writers such as John Reid, Stephen Davis and Ruth Holmes Whitehead comes to the fore. It is a testament to Conrad's writing skill that this inclusion is not an intrusion or an add-on but an integral and essential element in the story. *At the Ocean's Edge* is a very human story with individuals being allowed to tell their own stories — not simply the stories of the great and the good, but also the lesser saints and scoundrels, of which there are a good number, especially in the early European settlement period.

Originally planned as a history of Nova Scotia to the present, the volume leaves the post-Confederation story to another historian. That person will face an immense challenge matching the quality of documentation, analysis, and writing that Margaret Conrad exhibits in *At the Ocean's Edge*.

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Lt. Cmdr. Robert Crosby, USN. *Inspiring Innovation. The John A. van Beuren Studies in Leadership and Ethics. No. 1.* Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College

Press, www.usnwc.edu/press, 2018. v+197 pp., illustrations, acronyms, tables, notes. US \$37.50, paper; ISBN 978-1-9353552-46-4.

I must admit that when I volunteered to review this book I had no idea of its contents, but thought if the Naval War College Press had produced it then it "Can't be too bad." When the book arrived "down under" I discovered it was the history of African-Americans, both male and female, who had been commissioned as United States Navy officers, between 1944 and 1988, and subsequently reached star rank; Rear-Admiral Lower Half (or Commodores in Commonwealth navies) through to full (four-star) Admirals.

While the book, on the surface, might appear to be simply a collection of short biographies of these men and women, the true insight (and its value) is that it is a history of how segregation in the US Navy was gradually but permanently removed; and that the ability to rise to the highest ranks in the service was opened to all. It was not an easy path but those described in the book were more than equal to the task.

In early 1942 Black men, then described as Negroes, could serve in the US Navy but only as cooks or messmen. In April 1942 the rules were relaxed to allow men to enlist in other specialisations and by early 1944, the first African-American naval officers were commissioned. Their service was not easy and then-Lieutenant Samuel Gravely, who later rose to the rank of Vice Admiral, recalls being arrested in Miami, Florida, "for impersonating an officer."

There are several constant themes throughout the various biographies which point to why the three women (and female officers had it even harder than their male counterparts) and 57

men are detailed in this book. The first theme is family—all had family who encouraged them to work hard and do their best. Some came from single-parent families or were raised by grandparents or uncles, aunts or grand-parents. Most came from backgrounds of poverty, growing up on farms or in cities where their parents were blue-collar workers or lowly paid office staff. But all of them had strong family support and encouragement.

The second theme is education. All were encouraged (pushed at times) by family and various mentors (teachers, scout leaders, sporting coaches and the like) to finish school and where possible, go on to higher education. Many entered the Navy via the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) that existed in many American universities. Fewer than half were commissioned via the US Naval Academy.

Thirdly, all had the dogged determination to succeed and knew that as they were a minority (making up only 13% of the US population) that some in the Navy would find any excuse to remove them from training courses, or the Navy, or refuse to obey their orders. One officer recalled, however, that the Navy saw rank first and race as unimportant when one of his sailors refused to follow the orders of a “N.....r.”

The then-young ensign took the sailor to the ship’s executive officer where the sailor again refused to carry out any orders issued by a Black officer. This was then immediately elevated to the commanding officer who held “Captain’s Mast” on the spot and the sailor again refused to carry out any orders issued by an African-American officer; the sailor was discharged from the Navy three days later. Regardless of race, any challenges to good order and discipline would not be tolerated.

Another young Black officer, who

later became a four-star Admiral, stood his ground against none other than Admiral Hyman Rickover when trying to enter the nuclear power program. Rickover told the midshipman he needed to improve his class standing, at the US Naval Academy, by 20 positions in order to be considered and required him to sign a document accepting this offer. The midshipman refused, since while he could work hard, so would the others in his class, and while his grades might go up, so would others’ and there was no guarantee he could jump 20 positions. At first Rickover refused to accept this, but the midshipman stood his ground and was accepted into the program.

The final theme is mentoring within the US Navy. Many of the African-American officers rose to high rank because their mainly white superiors saw that they had the ‘right stuff’ and were prepared to support them and assist their career. Or as one Black officer put it, he was lucky to serve under officers who were “ladder builders” (helping others to advance through the ranks) rather than “ladder climbers” and only interested in furthering their own careers.

The biographies also follow the history of de-segregation in the US Navy but it was a long and, at times, difficult journey. One female officer recalled that even in the late 1980s sailors would cross the road in order to not salute her and that at one mess social occasion, when she was in civilian clothing; she was mistaken for one the wait staff!

I am highly recommending this book. Readers will need to look beyond what might appear to some to just be a collection of 60 biographies of US Naval officers during war and peace and observe how integration actually worked in the US Navy. There may be other agencies in the US (and Australia for that matter) that could learn from

the US Navy on how to better integrate all genders and races to ensure “good order and discipline is maintained.”

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Kevin Desmond. *Electric Boats and Ships. A History*. Jefferson, NC: McFarlane & Co. Inc. www.mcfarlane-pub.com, 2017. vii+273 pp., illustrations, appendices, table of builders, notes, bibliography, index. U.S. \$39.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-4766-6515-3. (E-book available.)

The author of this comprehensive book concerning electric motive power on the water was in a library researching a history of motor-boating. The librarian asked if this included electric boats? Mr. Desmond agreed it should, so was given a slim file of mostly old newspaper clippings and ads. From that meagre beginning came this thoroughly researched description of the slow development of boats and ships powered, at least in part, by various versions of electric motors. Today, the industry is still very much a work in progress, due at least in part to the current growing demand for the use of more ‘green energy.’ In fact, Desmond’s last six chapters are devoted to the most recent developments, and incentives such as 2016 Paris Climate Agreement, at whose goals we are supposedly aiming.

As he recounts, the history of electric motors began in the 1830s with experiments, mostly in Europe, with electro-magnets, moving on to the concepts of the ‘accumulator’ or storage battery by 1848, the ‘Grove cell.’ Soon a few, usually well-to-do, supporters adopted the idea for small and quiet launches for their enjoyment, for local transport and for the demonstration of possibilities, not only in the U.K., but particularly in

Russia, France and Italy. This soon led to slow-speed races and cross-Channel competition. By 1870, thanks to an interest in the surge of railways there, Viscount Bury went to Canada and met with Thomas Edison to discuss the concept of electric trains to solve the problem of steam engine emissions in tunnels. On his return Bury founded a company to make electric engines suitable for boats. In the U.S., it wasn’t until 1888 that electric batteries in motor boats began to appear, with a few manufacturers experimenting with electric accumulator-powered small craft.

The first two chapters chronicle all this development up to 1914, some successful, others less so, illustrating its progress with multiple drawings and photographs, sometimes referred to as the ‘Golden age of electric boating.’ The major problem with making the concept a wider commercial success was the weight and complexity of larger batteries, their relatively modest electrical output, and the constant requirement for recharging, at home or *en route*. But some trials, a few of which are still in use, were surprising: in Germany, and briefly along New York’s Erie Canal, barges carrying produce, coal and other items powered by electricity drawn from overhead trolley wires like streetcars, supplemented in open areas by relatively brief endurance batteries proved both practical and economical. The author gives multiple examples of local electric motor ferries across rivers and canals, where recharging was readily available and speed not a criterion. Until about the 1950s, the electric power at sea industry pattered along relatively unappreciated.

The development of efficient and more powerful gasoline inboard and outboard motors and their easy and wide availability tended to discourage serious attention to larger electric mo-