

struggle over land-based ASW aircraft dragged on because there was no clear higher authority to resolve the issues. Eventually, the Army ceded its ASW aircraft to the US Navy.

The protracted wrangling became just one example of poor management of resources that convinced officials that national defence need a single department head. A House of Representatives committee started hearings on changes to the national defence organization in 1944; subsequently after further hearings and in-fighting, both houses of the US Congress passed an act in 1947 creating the US Air Force out of the USAAF and placing all three armed services under a single Secretary of Defense. Monahan argues that it was the counterproductive effects of service parochialism and the pitfalls of divided leadership during wartime as much as strategic unease early in the Cold War that lay behind the military unification debates. He tells this story in a vigorous manner and includes George McBundy's words in *On Active Service in Peace and War* (1948 which he co-authored with Stimson) about Henry Stimson's view of "...the peculiar psychology of the Navy Department which frequently seemed to retire from the realm of logic into a dim religious world in which Neptune was God, Mahan his prophet, and the United States Navy the only true Church. The high priests of this Church were a group of men to whom Stimson always referred as 'the admirals.' These gentlemen were to him both anonymous and continuous". (285)

The Sea and the Second World War is a collection of thought-provoking papers about disparate maritime aspects of the Second World War. Recommended.

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Michael E. A. Ford. *Hunting the Last Great Pirate. Benito de Soto and the Rape of the Morning Star*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword History, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2020. vi+234 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £25.00, US \$39.95, cloth; ISBN 987-1-52676-9830-5.

In 1828, the English merchant vessel *Morning Star*, en route from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to the United Kingdom, when it was attacked by the pirate Benito De Soto and his crew on board the *Burla Negra*, a former slave vessel that had been taken over by mutineers.

After the pirates boarded, they assaulted and tortured the crew and passengers. After looting the vessel, they abandoned it with its hull pierced, intended to sink it. The captain and the mate of the *Morning Star* were executed by a shot in the head. Despite the bad condition the ship was in, the survivors of the ordeal managed to save the ship from sinking. A month later she sailed into the English port of Deal.

A few days after the attack on the *Morning Star*, the pirates attacked the American merchant ship *Topaz*. After seizing the ship and its cargo, De Soto had the vessel set on fire with the crew on board. In 1830 De Soto was tried, found guilty, and executed for his actions. A simple pirate's tale you might say, but there is more to it.

The *Morning Star* was Quaker-owned and hired to carry sick and wounded British army casualties from Ceylon (Sri Lanka). In accordance with strict Quaker custom, *Morning Star* was not permitted to carry munitions or weapons of any kind. The people on board had no means of defending themselves in case the vessel came under attack.

As a hospital ship, she was to be escorted by either a Royal Navy vessel or

an armed ship from the East India Company. Off St. Helena, it appeared to be the latter, but soon after departure, the *Morning Star* was left to fend for herself.

Unknown to most of those on board, the ship carried a precious cargo. It was the treasure of the Kingdom of Kandy; the sale would alleviate the British government's financial troubles, now headed by the Duke of Wellington, victor of the battle at Waterloo.

In England, news about the fate of the *Morning Star* led to political uproar and critical attention from the media. What did the government intend to do about the piracy on the high seas? Why wasn't there a naval squadron in the South Atlantic? Questions were raised about the role of the British East India Company. Shipping companies and the public demanded action from the government.

Call it Divine intervention: Benito de Soto's ship was wrecked on a beach in the south of Spain near the port of Cadiz. Local police arrested the crew and soon it became clear that they were the pirates who had attacked *Morning Star*. After a trial, most of them were found guilty, sentenced to death and strung up. De Soto, however, managed to escape to British Gibraltar. He was able to hide there for a while, until he was recognized and arrested. In his possession were items that had been stolen from the *Morning Star* and the American vessel *Topaz*, the ship that De Soto had torched.

After a trial that left something to be desired, Benito de Soto was found guilty and hanged in 1830. Interestingly, there were no witnesses from the *Morning Star* who could identify him. It was almost a century later before De Soto's guilt could actually be established. In 1926, in Galicia in the north of Spain where De Soto had grown up,

a treasure was found. It contained riches stolen from the *Morning Star* and *Topaz*.

The author tells a beautiful story about an ugly event. Sometimes close to over-dramatizing the events, Ford carries the reader along step-by-step. The accounts related to political, commercial and judicial matters are as gripping as the story of Benito de Soto himself.

This page-turner is more than a story of piracy on the high seas. It is a time capsule containing both the good and the bad of the era. Personal greed and failures, both inside and outside established structures and political machinations beyond belief, led to great loss of lives. In the cesspit of diplomacy, yellow press, corruption, commerce, cover-up, organised crime and religion, where the underworld meets society, De Soto almost got away with his crimes. With *Hunting the Last Great Pirate* Michael Ford has laid down the perfect foundation for a movie; a great story.

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Peter Fretwell. *Antarctic Atlas. New Maps and Graphics that Tell the Story of a Continent*. London, UK: Particular Books, www.penguinrandomhouse.co.uk, 2020. 208 pp., illustrations, maps, glossary, bibliography, index. UK £22.75, cloth; ISBN 978-1846-14933-7.

Most atlases include very few maps of Antarctica and often represent the whole continent with a single circum-polar physical map. Sometimes there is the narrow strip at the very bottom of a world map that, due to the limitations of map projection, does not usually show the South Pole. Without any doubt, Antarctica is the least covered continent