

vessels sailing to and from their harbours became “naval problems” (46). Oliver Cromwell employed an aggressive Caribbean strategy with his so-called “Western Design,” which contemplated the outright conquest of Spanish territory. Using “no peace beyond the line” as an excuse, he sent 38 ships and 3,000 men into the region. This was by no means a petty privateering adventure and Spain declared war in 1656. The subsequent experience featured the themes of many Caribbean conflicts to follow – command blundering, devastating disease, and mixed military results. Cromwell’s fleet failed to topple Santo Domingo, but it did capture Jamaica, which became a “centre of power” (63) for the British, not to mention a wealthy sugar producer.

Henry Morgan is, of course, the most famous Englishman to rampage the Caribbean, but his accomplishments were more those of a pirate than a navy man. Morgan enjoyed spectacular success, but his buccaneer armies were risky instruments of national policy. As Grainger writes, pirates “had their own aims and agendas, and could not be trusted” (71). Given the potential profits, it was hardly a surprise that Morgan’s freewheeling ways appealed to later Royal Navy officers. Throughout Britain’s Caribbean history these men resisted cooperative enterprises and were interested only in enriching themselves.

By 1729, the English Caribbean enterprise had finally evolved from scenes of buccaneering derring-do to a formal naval presence. The fleets were small compared to those back home – a force under Rear Admiral Charles Stewart consisted of only eight ships, “the largest a third rate” (134). At first, this was generally adequate for limited operations and chasing smugglers, but the eighteenth century brought a series of wars, including Jenkin’s Ear, the

Seven Years’ War, the American Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars, in which naval manoeuvring and combat between rival powers were very nearly worldwide. This meant diverse and complicated strategic goals. Perhaps Britain’s most impressive success was the capture of Havana after a long siege in 1762. Spain regained the “Key to the Indies” after an 11-month British occupation. Less impressive was the Royal Navy’s inability to stamp out smuggling and privateering during the American war. After Britain’s loss of Pensacola in 1781, the French navy was free to concentrate against Yorktown, directly leading to the overall British defeat. Grainger treats the nineteenth and twentieth centuries briefly, especially after the First World War when the Caribbean became an American lake.

There is much to admire in Grainger’s narrative. His inclusion of the Gulf of Mexico and its northern littoral, something too few Caribbean scholars bother to do, is particularly pleasing, as is his explanation of technological improvements like coppering and carronades. At 252 pages of text, his book provides an admirable and fast-paced overview of a fascinating subject.

John S. Sledge
Fairhope, Alabama

John Grehan and Alexander Nicoll. *Saipan 1944: The Most Decisive Battle of the Pacific War*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Frontline Books, www.frontlinebooks.com, Images of War Series, 2021. 191 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography. UK £14.99, US \$22.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-52675-830-9.

Although a select few of major Second World War actions – Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa – enjoy wide recognition over seventy years after the end of the war, that is unfortunately not the

case with dozens of other battles that took place across the broad expanse of the Pacific. Many of these campaigns remain virtually unknown outside of a narrow pool of academic specialists and avocational history enthusiasts.

With the release of *Saipan 1944*, authors Grehan and Nicoll have written an introductory history to one of the Pacific Theatre's most pivotal engagements and made it available to a wider audience.

By the summer of 1944, the Japanese empire, once the dominant military power of the Far East, was on its heels in a wide arc across the Pacific. US Army forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur were threatening Japanese possession in the Philippines. At the same time, the 1st Marine Division secured the island of Peleliu after a bloody, two-month struggle.

For the Americans, perhaps the greatest prize of 1944 was the Mariana Islands: Guam, Saipan, and Tinian. The Marianas constituted a key stepping-stone for Army Air Forces tasked with the reduction of the Japanese home islands. Situated just 1,500 miles from Tokyo, the Marianas offered ideal airfields for the most fearsome bomber in the American air fleet: the B-29 Superfortress.

The task of actually subduing the Marianas fell to the warriors of the United States Marine Corps, who had been honing their skills in amphibious operations over the preceding two years. The campaign for the Mariana and Palau Islands, codenamed Operation Forager, began to unfold on 15 June 1944, when Marine landings were carried out on Saipan, the most heavily defended island in the Marianas.

During a horrific three weeks of combat, the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions, bolstered by the Army's 27th Infantry Division, struggled against 30,000 Japanese troops who put up a characteristically dogged defense. For

the Americans, who possessed a decided advantage in men and materiel, the battle was, nonetheless, a costly affair. By the time the Americans secured Saipan on 9 July, they had suffered over 13,000 overall casualties. Japanese troops, who rarely surrendered on the battlefield, endured a worse fate: some 24,000 Japanese military personnel perished during the fighting.

The campaign likewise witnessed the crippling of Japan's Imperial Navy. In a swirling air and naval battle in the Philippine Sea on 19-20 June, Japan's 1st Mobile Fleet was largely wrecked by American carrier-based aircraft. The Japanese suffered irreplaceable losses: three fleet carriers were sunk and over 600 aircraft were shot down during a lopsided engagement which exultant American fliers nicknamed the "Great Marianas Turkey Shoot."

With Saipan firmly in American hands, Guam and Tinian were seized following amphibious landings in July 1944. The success of the American campaign ensured that the Marianas would serve as an ideal base for the Americans to take the war directly to Japan.

In the wake of the battle for Saipan, the results of the American victory irrevocably altered the strategic balance of power in the Pacific. With her fleet all but destroyed subsequent to the Battle of the Philippine Sea, the Imperial Japanese Navy found itself helpless to halt further American gains.

Saipan 1944 is the latest offering from the *Images of War* series from Frontline Books, an imprint of Pen and Sword, one of the world's most prolific publishers of military history books. As the series title indicates, this volume is heavily illustrated with black and white photographs taken during the Second World War. Coming in at 190 pages in total, there is a shortage of text, although the book does give the reader a good introduction to Operation Forager

and the epic fight for Saipan.

Along with offering a good grasp of Saipan's grand strategy, the authors thoughtfully included accounts from the common soldiers who were actually on the ground. The text includes captivating vignettes that highlight the sacrifices of men who were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor after sacrificing their lives for their fellow Marines.

By pairing such sobering accounts with period photography, *Saipan 1944* offers a brief but unvarnished glimpse at the horrors of combat in the Pacific Theatre.

Joshua Shepherd
Union City, Indiana

Edward Hampshire. *The Falklands Naval Campaign 1982: War in the South Atlantic*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2021. 96 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, bibliography, index. UK £15.99, US \$24.00, CDN \$32.50, paper; ISBN 978-1-4728-4301-2.

This work is the 361st entry in Osprey's Campaign Series and the author's sixth Cold War-era contribution to Osprey's catalogue. British naval historian Hampshire offers a compact yet comprehensive coverage of the naval aspects of the Falklands War from the initial Argentine moves on South Georgia on 18 March 1982 to their surrender on 14 June of that year. As is the style of the Campaign Series, there is a brief summary of the war's origins, followed by a short chronology, a discussion of opposing commanders, forces, and operational plans, then an examination of the war itself. The book concludes with an analytical discussion of the war's aftermath and an accounting of present-day memorials to the battles. Maps, period images in both black and white and colour, paintings, and tables are

used throughout the text for added visualization and quick reference, with a short index and bibliography at the end to complete the work.

Hampshire's three-page examination into the origins of the Falklands War succinctly covers the 1690 to 1933 history of the small island chain, along with increased Argentinian pressure over ownership which came to the forefront in the 1960s and 1970s. He touches upon the country's anti-communist "Dirty War" era, and the need for Argentina's military junta to find a galvanizing "act of audacious nationalism" to secure their wavering position as part of the lead-in to the one-page chronology and examination of the opposing commands (6). He covers both British and Argentinian forces in detail, devoting three pages to the commanders and command structure, photographs of key leaders, background information on commanders' combat experience, and charts of the two command hierarchies. Force disposition for both sides follows, with tables of available vessels and aircraft paired with text relating information on force equipment, readiness, and advantages, such as Britain's invaluable Ships Taken Up From Trade (STUFT) requisitioning plan for Cold War era crisis actions (12).

An account of the campaign naturally takes up the bulk of the work, although the relatively limited length of the conflict allows for more details within the space constraints of the Campaign series. Hampshire does an admirable job of maintaining a human element in the discussion, naming the Argentinian pilots involved in various attack runs on British ships, contextualizing the casualties of *General Belgrano's* loss with descriptions of how the men were gathered below in the mess decks, and detailing sacrifices made aboard British vessels as they were hit, such as engineer Paul Henry passing his respirator