

assistance of overhead satellites. The Argentine Navy had just three destroyers, two anti-submarine helicopters, and two functional S-2E trackers. To make matters worse, the Argentine carrier and surface task force could only run at 20 knots due to defunct steam propulsion plants, whereas the British nuclear submarines could sustain 30 knots underwater. The fact that *25 de Mayo* did not meet the same fate as *General Belgrano* in the midst of waters infested with British submarines is a testament to their methods and tactics that worked in spite of the odds.

For those unfamiliar with ASW operations or tactics, Sciaroni explains the basics in laymen's terms and then explicitly describes the equipment, aircraft, and capabilities used. After stating the capabilities and limitations of the platforms, he carefully reconstructs a day-by-day account of the carrier's ASW operations from 3 May 1982 until finally returning to territorial waters six days later. He concludes that *25 de Mayo* returned home safely because the British submarines, in fact, were unable to sink the carrier, as opposed to their choosing not to sink it.

When describing what occurred, Sciaroni correlates material from British and Argentinian archives with firsthand accounts of the action. He even retrieved records related to HMS *Splendid*, a Royal Navy submarine, that mistakenly stalked the Argentine cargo ship ELMA *Formosa* thinking it was *25 de Mayo*. Although not a part of the Argentine ASW effort, examples like this capture the sense of the "fog of war" that covered the two nations battling at sea. The secretive nature of antisubmarine warfare sometimes begets more questions than it answers. For example, in an effort to learn more about their western adversaries, the Soviets would fly their Tu-95 Bear bomber over the Royal Navy task force to gather intelligence

– but beyond this interaction, a "ghost contact" gained by the Argentines would continue to fuel further questions and speculations of "who" and "what" it was when compared against Royal Navy and Argentine Navy archives.

*A Carrier at Risk* is an objective look at Argentine ASW operations. Grounded in fact with minimal conjecture, Sciaroni captures the complexities of ASW without becoming too technical. While only 72 pages long, the book is filled with information not found elsewhere. The Falklands/Malvinas War continues to be a veritable goldmine of lessons to apply to future warfare, especially for ASW operations. This book is a rich resource that covers the triumphs and failures of both the Argentine and Royal Navies.

Dylan Phillips-Levine  
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Douglas V. Smith. *Carrier Battles: Command Decisions in Harm's Way*. Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, 2020 (originally published 2006). xxxiii+346 pp., illustrations, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. US \$24.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-68247-502-7. (E-book available.)

This is a reprint of Smith's 2006 study on the decision-making processes of commanding officers during the five carrier battles of the Second World War in the Pacific Theatre. Six central chapters focus on the engagements from a primarily American perspective, although Smith includes some of the Japanese rationale as well. Drawing from an impressive array of sources, he aims to illustrate the factors that led to the offensive mindset of American commanders and their ability to make quick and effective decisions in combat situations. Maps and diagrams used throughout the work chart the movements of both sur-

face vessels and aircraft. Additionally, an appendix of the Japanese plans regarding the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere appears at the end to aid in understanding some of the Japanese planning and mindset. An extensive collection of endnotes, a bibliography, and an index round out the work. Smith's extensive footnotes contain additional information rather than just source citations.

Prior to describing the carrier battles, Smith spends thirty-two pages discussing the prewar education of the American naval officers involved in wartime operations. Largely focusing on how men were taught "the wrong stuff" in the "right way" to encourage tactically-offensive decisions, this segment includes examinations of the perceived role of air power along with a rather interesting examination of the infamous court martial of Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell (9). The chapters that follow represent the five carrier battles, with relevant pre-engagement data discussed within each. The length of discussion varies, with 28 pages devoted to the Battle of Santa Cruz while the eponymous Battle of Midway boasts 68 pages. The Battle of Coral Sea section includes an account of the attack on Pearl Harbor, extending the average discussion of four of the five battles to around thirty pages each.

Smith's analysis of the engagements is quite complimentary to the American commanders, particularly Admiral Frank J. Fletcher. A man often maligned for abandoning the Marines on Guadalcanal, Fletcher's decisions are defended via historical analysis and direct primary source citation, lauding his decision to preserve the carriers and surface vessels for future engagements. The author's breakdown of engagements and decisions is fairly detailed, highlighting the American ability to deviate and improvise in ways alien to

the highly orchestrated plans of Japanese naval warfare. He believes that the pre-war American textbook, *Sound Military Decisions*, served as the key educational cornerstone for the American naval officers involved in the carrier battles, and consistently drives home how the lessons and techniques the men were taught in their pre-war education gave them the foundation to succeed in actual combat scenarios. Smith further breaks down his analysis of battles in retrospective conclusions, where individual decisions are given a school-type "grade," an admittedly more subjective part of the work.

Nevertheless, several suggestions for improvement come to mind. The book makes very little use of photographs, generally placing a single small image at the start of each chapter. Including a few more of the many images available to illustrate personnel, ships, and engagements would help with the visualization of both the personalities involved and the situations faced during the battles. There is a wide range in quality of both maps and engagement diagrams from highly detailed examples to almost useless, unlabeled shapes (64, 105, 115, 132, 140, 160). The replacement of the more crude diagrams from the Naval War College with more detailed scaled examples would be greatly appreciated. Furthermore, the Japanese perspective was relatively lacking. The expansion of the analysis to better examine Japanese pre-war training, commanders, and their decision-making would further enhance the work and help account for why one nation's officers triumphed over another's. Finally, the foreword seems almost disconnected from the rest of the work, focusing more on the submarine war than dealing with carrier battles. Addressing these issues in a future edition would definitely strengthen the work.

*Carrier Battles* is a good resource

for those interested in the role of American commanders in the Pacific Theatre. It is by no means perfect, with several venues available for improvement and expansion. For students of American naval tactics, however, or those interested in the actions of Admirals Fletcher, Nimitz, Kincaid, and Spruance, and scholars seeking a compendium of key carrier actions during the Second World War, the work offers a solid compilation of data and analysis. Hopefully Smith will further refine his work to improve on his relatively solid foundation.-

Charles Ross Patterson II  
Yorktown, Virginia

Anthony Tibbles. *Liverpool and the Slave Trade*. Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2018. ix+118 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. CDN \$32.95, £14.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-78694-153-4.

*Liverpool and the Slave Trade* is the companion book to the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool. It introduces readers to the story of the slave trade and, in particular, Liverpool's role in that notorious trade and the profit it reaped from trafficking in humans. Brief, yet uncompromising, it is a valuable addition to our understanding of slavery, especially its role in bringing prosperity to a city through which relatively few slaves directly passed.

Six chapters tell the story from the start of the slave trade to the abolition and aftermath for Liverpool. The first lays out the slave trade cycle as it related to Liverpool (though Tibbles does occasionally touch on other European cities). The merchants of Liverpool who engaged in the trade would send ships with merchandise desired in western sub-Saharan Africa to trade for Africans captured by the local African slavers

and their European collaborators. The captured men, women, and children were then loaded on ships and carried to South America, the West Indies, or North America. There they were sold, and ships' captains then either bought goods from these areas (i.e., sugar and coffee from South America and West Indies, cotton from the colonies), or simply brought back bills of sale, that could be exchanged for money upon arrival in Liverpool. Though the English slave trade began in the ports of London and Bristol, Liverpool gained prominence by 1750, sending more slave ships to Africa than all the other British ports together. Between 1780 and 1807, Tibbles informs the reader, 80 percent of the British slave trade, and half of Europe's slave trade, originated in Liverpool.

Tibbles explores the Liverpool families who benefited from the slave trade and the men who went to sea to carry it out. He touches on the trade goods sold to acquire slaves, which included coiled brass wire bracelets and pieces of brass or copper, called manillas, that were used as currency in West Africa. At the height of the commerce, some 200 Liverpool merchants dominated the trade. Most worked in groups to arrange and finance expeditions. Shares in the voyage were sold to local investors, which increased the number of possible profiteers from slavery. A trade voyage was costly to organize and financial rewards could take a year, or more to recover.

Once ships reached Africa, acquiring the number of slaves needed to fill the ship could take months. Ship captains (often with a financial stake in the journey) would arrive at a slaving port and negotiate with their local contacts bartering for slaves. Having reliable contacts in the local system of slavers was critical for success, so Liverpool merchants spent money and time on building relationships with African chiefs who dealt in slaves. The mer-