

one ship at a particular time, one must scour Admiralty records for postings. It is time-consuming enough if you can get to Kew and prohibitively expensive if you cannot. Here, however, you can easily identify that thirty-eight of the officers included in the book served on HMS *Britannia*, one of the Royal Navy's first rates which served in the conflict. By examining the dates of appointments indicated, it is easy enough to determine the ship's captain and lieutenants (as well as the seniority among them) for any particular date.

The only limitations which a reader should be aware of are not the fault of the author nor the work itself, only of the sources underpinning them. Some information has, sadly, been lost to history. Not every officer will have a full entry; some will have no dates of death, for instance. There are doubtless some officers whose information was lost entirely. Some of the more obscure officers, those who never reached the rank of master and commander, cannot be found in the National Archives' Royal Navy Service Records collection. As a result, there are some individuals not accounted for in the book, through no fault of the author.

Some may know of a much older Navy Records Society publication: David Syrett and R.L. DiNardo, *The Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy, 1660-1815* (Aldershot: Scholar Press for the Navy Records Society, 1994), which is similar to Harrison's work, though it encompasses the whole of the "Second Hundred Years War." Doubtless, most or all of the officers here are included in Syrett and DiNardo's NRS volume. Harrison's work, however, is an excellent demonstration of the merits of quality over quantity: the NRS volume only includes the dates of birth, promotions, honours, retirement, and death. By focusing on one conflict of the period, Harrison is allowed the space to include much more detail. This is a must-have for any researchers of the Royal Navy of the Seven Years War and those of us who study the RN in later conflicts can hope that more reference works will follow.

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Dwight Sturtevant Hughes. *Unlike Anything that Ever Floated. The Monitor and Virginia and the Battle of Hampton Roads, March 8-9, 1862.* El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, www.savasbeatie.com, 2021. xvii+163 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, bibliography. US \$14.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-61121-525-0.

Unlike Anything That Ever Floated approaches the classic Battle of Hampton Roads between the *Monitor* and *Virginia* from two perspectives. It goes into great detail about the engineering and mechanical features of each vessel as well as the events of the battle itself. I presume that *Northern Mariner's*

readership includes devotees of both perspectives.

Although not the world's first ironclad vessels, their iconic battle is widely considered to be a turning point in the history of naval warfare. Their development is a classic example of an underdog attempting to employ advanced technology to compensate for inferiority in resources and the predictable response.

Descriptions of the features of each vessel extend far beyond those found in most naval histories. Though frequently referred to in history as the *Merrimac(k)*, the famous wooden vessel that had been the pride of the US Navy during the 1850s had been transformed into the Confederate ironclad *Virginia*. Above the *Merrimac*'s hull, Confederates had constructed an armoured vessel presumed to be impregnable to the ordnance of the day.

Monitor, by contrast, was a new design intended to meet the rebel challenge. Of metal construction with two guns in a turret, it was unwieldy, slow to reload but also impregnable.

By supplanting the open-air decks of the Age of Sail and even the sail/steam propulsion against which they contended, the *Virginia* and *Monitor* presaged a new era, particularly in submarines, in which sailors worked in hot, cramped, sealed interior spaces.

Author Hughes provides verbal descriptions along with drawings and photos to illustrate the devices that powered these vessels. Some photos are of the original vessels and others are of later models that had similar features.

The advent of the *Virginia* threatened havoc in the North. The specter of an ironclad leviathan marauding waterfronts from Washington to Boston spawned panic throughout the North, particularly in its political leadership. Her existence dominated Hampton Roads for weeks, blocked Union operations toward Norfolk, Portsmouth and Richmond and hampered naval support of McClellan's Peninsular campaign. Like the *Bismarck* 79 years later, *Virginia* incited an "at all costs" counter.

On 8 March 1862, *Virginia* had its day against the Union fleet in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Relying on shot and ramming, it sunk *Cumberland*, destroyed *Congress*, and forced *Minnesota* aground.

Having barely survived rough seas, the USS *Monitor* arrived to confront *Virginia* on 9 March. Through hours of manoeuvre, shot, and attempted boarding, *Monitor* and *Virginia* fought to a draw, inflicting dents on each other's armour and shock on their crews until *Virginia* withdrew from the contest. Neither could claim clear victory, but *Virginia* would never again mount an existential threat to the Union or its navy. Throughout their lives, crewmen of both vessels could boast "I fought at Hampton Roads." The sentiment was, according to Confederate Army Cpt. William Norris, "open sesame to the

hearts and minds of our own countrymen. Ah! The thrilling moments of those halcyon days.”(143)

Both *Monitor* and *Virginia* became models for their respective navies. Iron-armoured rams built on existing hulls would be the formula followed by Confederate naval architects seeking to overcome by technology their inferiority in numbers, while swarms of monitors would overwhelm Confederate forces.

Time was unkind to both vessels, neither of which would survive 1862. After being forced up the James River and being lightened to the extent that its wooden hull was exposed, *Virginia* was blown up to prevent its capture on 11 May 1862. *Monitor* floundered in a squall off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, on New Year’s Eve.

This book is chronologically organized into chapters that cover the events of a few hours or days. The text is supplemented by pictures of individuals referenced, battle scenes and ships, including their blueprints and machinery. The images and the author’s note of their inaccuracies aid the reader to visualize the tales being told. The Suggested Reading is more detailed than most bibliographies in that it provides both the identification of the book but also a descriptive paragraph and a picture. The appendices on Touring the Battlefield, Civil War Ironclads and The US Monitor Center at The Mariners’ Museum and Park aid those desiring to explore the vessels’ legacies. The Order of Battle is a valuable addition but an index would be helpful.

Overall, *Unlike Anything That Ever Floated* is a short but informative read for anyone interested in that moment in history when wood gave way to iron as the standard in naval construction or in the Civil War in which it occurred.

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Kylie A. Hulbert. *The Untold War at Sea: America’s Revolutionary Privateers*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, www.books@uga.edu, 2022. 240 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$114.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-8203-6070-6. (E-book available.)

Bold statements require bold measures or evidence to support them, especially in the face of contradictory data. Regarding privateers during the American Revolution, Kylie Hulbert writes, “Nevertheless, these seafarers’ story remains largely untold, eclipsed by the Continental army and navy, militias and minutemen, Founding Fathers and mythical heroes of the Revolution, *until now*” (3) (author’s emphasis). A bold statement indeed for a monograph that is an addition to a not unsubstantial list of maritime, naval, and privateering literature.