

these foreign powers is generally from before they joined the war against the British, at which time their damnations magically disappeared. Lack of recognition of this evident political reality diminishes the sub-thesis that privateers' legacy was damaged in the post-war period. Although that may be the case, more appropriate evidence should be offered to make that argument. These limitations may not be readily apparent to a casual reader, but to those with knowledge of the subject they may be irritants. Then again, better editing may have caught such marked concerns.

Does Hulbert expose the reader to "untold," stories or new ways to view privateering during the Revolution as intimated in the introduction? On that account, this reviewer would tend to report on the negative side of the ledger considering the quantity of literature available on the subject. That said *The Untold War at Sea* is a workman-like monograph that is well written, easy to digest, and informative. This book should make a fine introduction to those with an initial curiosity about privateers or maritime aspects of the American Revolution. Readers who are familiar with the subject may wish to tuck into something more substantial. I am, however, keeping a copy on my book shelf.

Michael Tuttle  
Clarksville, Tennessee

**John Johnson-Allen. *'Rosy' Wemyss, Admiral of the Fleet. The Man who created Armistice Day.* Dunbeath, UK: Whittles Publishing, [www.whittlespublishing.com](http://www.whittlespublishing.com), 2021. 256 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £17.99, paper; ISBN 978-184995-485-3.**

This is an interesting, but odd, biography concerning the life of Admiral of the Fleet Rosslyn 'Rosy' Wemyss (pronounced Weems), who played a significant, but often forgotten role, as a senior British naval officer during the First World War. The content and context is blatant hagiography; bordering on sycophantic hero worship which at times becomes annoying due to the book's one-sided use of sources (including books written by Wemyss himself and his wife), and heavy over-reliance on quotations from others. Even the title is misleading — while Wemyss was the Allied Naval Representative, at the Armistice deliberations in early November 1918, to state he created Armistice Day is a very long bow to draw indeed!

Wemyss certainly had a distinguished naval career commencing in 1877 as a 13-year-old cadet at Britannia Royal Naval College. He was of Scottish ancestry (Clan Wemyss) from Fife and part of the Scottish aristocracy. As luck would have it, Prince George (later King George V) was one of his friends at the college and they later served together in HMS *Bacchante* as midshipmen. This linkage to the royal family certainly assisted Wemyss' career and he

served frequently in the Royal Yacht HMY *Victoria and Albert* and also on royal tours in HM Ships *Ophir* and *Balmoral Castle*. He was seen by many of his peers as a court officer who progressed rapidly through the ranks due solely to his Royal connections.

This is partly true, but Wemyss was also an intelligent and highly motivated officer who was equally capable at sea, in command, and in leadership roles where a level of tact and diplomacy were required. Prime Minister Lord Palmerston (1784-1865) is said to have stated: "If I had a difficult bit of diplomacy on hand, I'd send for a naval officer" and Wemyss would prove to be the right man for these tasks.

In 1911 Wemyss was promoted rear admiral, well ahead of many of his peers, and at the outbreak of war in 1914, he was commanding a cruiser squadron in the Channel Fleet. By early 1915 he had been sent to the Mediterranean to create the naval and logistics base at Mudros (on the Greek island of Lemnos) to support the forthcoming Dardanelles campaign. While Mudros had a suitable harbour and fresh water sources, the rest of the island's infrastructure was quite basic and it was also neutral Greek territory; thus, the need for a capable and diplomatic senior naval officer to set up and manage this forward operating base. The logistics support to the campaign was rife with problems, but without Wemyss' calm leadership and management, it would have been much worse.

Following the withdrawal of Allied forces from the Gallipoli peninsula in late 1915/early 1916, Wemyss was appointed as Commander-in-Chief East Indies Station stretching from Egypt to Singapore, with the vital Suez Canal/Red Sea line of communication under his control as well the Persian Gulf and its seaborne oil supplies. Wemyss ensured his forces took an active naval role in ensuring Turkish forces were pushed back from these vital sea routes and providing sea transport and logistics support to T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) and Emir Feisal in their actions against the Turks. He also made attempts to re-open the Tigris/Euphrates River supply lines to the besieged British forces at Kut-al-Amara but these actions failed.

The supporting documents throughout the biography are exceptionally one-sided and there is excessive padding, using many pages of direct quotes with little, if any, real analysis. Much of the 'biography' describes Wemyss private and social life, particularly holidays with family and lunches attended that, while initially interesting, become quite boring; but it does show the lifestyle of the upper-class officers of that period.

In mid-1917, Wemyss returned to Britain becoming Deputy First Sea Lord and, following the abrupt dismissal of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe in December 1917, he stepped into the role of First Sea Lord. Wemyss subsequently became the Allied Naval Representative at the November 1918 Armistice negotiations.

This event is well described as are the subsequent peace negotiations, and the bitter disputes between Wemyss and British Prime Minister Lloyd George (Wemyss openly despised most Allied politicians) and US Admiral William Benson regarding the disposal of the German fleet then interned at Scapa Flow. Germany actually did the British a great service by scuttling their capital ships at Scapa Flow on 21 June 1919, as it defused what could have been a difficult situation between the Allies. The citing of Wemyss as the “creator of Armistice Day” negates the role played by many others in the November 1918 negotiations and the first Armistice commemoration was not until 11 November 1919, by which time Wemyss had retired.

“Rosy” Wemyss relinquished his position as First Sea Lord in late 1919 following more bitter in-fighting within the upper echelons in the Royal Navy, and British politicians, which saw Admiral Sir David Beatty, who had commanded the battlecruiser squadrons at Jutland, appointed as First Sea Lord. Wemyss then retired quietly to France, with his wife and daughter, where he died in 1933. Wemyss appears to have been popular within the Royal Navy, but descriptions of a “dark side” detailed in other sources are conveniently omitted or glossed over in this biography.

*Rosy Wemyss, Admiral of the Fleet* is still a good read and his contribution to the Royal Navy, the successful prosecution of the 1914-18 war and its conclusion, via the Armistice, is note-worthy. Johnson-Allen’s biography of Wemyss is a heavily, positively biased piece but the true story of this quite interesting admiral has yet to be written.

Greg Swinden  
Canberra, Australia

**John Jordan. *Warships After London: The End of the Treaty Era in the Five Major Fleets 1930-1936*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, [www.usni.org](http://www.usni.org), 2020. 320 pp., illustrations, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. US \$46.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-68247-610-9.**

This work is a sequel to Jordan’s 2011 *Warships After Washington* and continues his analysis of the building and modernization programs carried out by the world’s five major navies during the second half of the Treaty Era. Building upon his previous work and utilizing the same style for continuity, Jordan examines the six main types of vessels affected by the London Treaty’s design limitations. Each nation’s rationale and design process is well covered, showcasing the advancement of technology, the reactionary elements to foreign design, and the comparative results. Standardized charts, simplified blueprints, and photographs are located throughout for increased understanding, bolstered by an acronym and abbreviation glossary and unit conversion tables. A