

BOOK REVIEWS

BROOKS John. *Dreadnought Gunnery and the Battle of Jutland*. Routledge, London, 2005. 335pages, 14 diagrams. ISBN 0-714-65702-6. Price £70.
(reviewed by EUR ING David K. BROWN, RCNC)

In the early years of the twentieth century the likely range for a future sea battle increased, first to 10,000 yards and soon even greater as the effective range of the torpedo increased. These long ranges posed new problems and exacerbated old ones. At 18,500 yards the time of flight of a shell would be 31 seconds during which time the enemy ship would have moved a considerable distance in an uncertain direction at an unknown speed. The differential equations governing the fire control problem are simple – and the author obligingly produces them in an appendix – but there is no time for complicated sums in battle. Inventors came up with mechanical aides – computers – which would solve all or part of the problem. In the UK the main proposals came from Arthur POLLEN, an outside worker, and CAPTAIN Frederick DREYER RN. Much of the book is concerned with explaining their rival equipment in detail and their dealings with successive Admiralty officers.

The complete gunnery system is highly complex and interdependent so that improvements in a single aspect may not achieve the intent unless compatible with other parts. The first step was an accurate rangefinder and trials were held in 1892. By 1901 most big ships had two 4½ft rangefinders which could be used up to 8,000 yards. By 1906 a much more accurate 9ft rangefinder was being installed. The gunsights were much improved from 1900 and from 1906 various improvements were made to the hydraulic system for gunlaying and training.

In 1902 LIEUTENANT DUMARESQ devised a mechanical device for calculating rate of change of range and speed across the line of sight. This device, known as the DUMARESQ, was gradually developed and incorporated into more comprehensive systems. It needed a continuous bearing input and soon lost touch if the rangefinders were obscured by smoke. The SCOTT-VICKERS clock (1906) maintained an output of the best estimate for the changing range. These devices defined the state of the art when *Dreadnought* and the *Invincible* battle cruiser entered service.

The input for enemy course and speed was eyeball estimation corrected by observation of the fall of shot. It soon became clear that estimates could be improved if a continuous plot was kept of range and bearing either ‘true’ or relative to own ship.

Arthur POLLEN, Managing Director of the Linotype Corporation, became interested in gunnery and fire control in 1900 and spent the next 14 years working on the development of a mechanical system, which would develop all the settings needed at the gun. His first proposal in 1901 was rejected but a revised scheme with two observers 150ft apart leading to range measurements was tried in *Jupiter* in 1905-6. It was a failure but POLLEN persevered and came back with a gyro stabilized mount for a standard 9ft rangefinder. This was tried in *Ariadne* in 1907 combined with an automatic plot. The mechanism could only cope with yaws of up to 12½° and had to be locked for bigger turns. The trial failed to achieve the full objectives but there was enough promise to persuade the Admiralty to continue funding. The stabilized rangefinder mount was to form the basis for a later substantial production order.

By 1909 POLLEN claimed to have a fully developed system and trials were arranged in *Natal*. The original automatic plot would not function during turns but it was modified by May 1910. An ARGO clock to hold range was installed in

February that year. The trials compared POLLEN's automatic plots with manual plotting by two other ships. The POLLEN gear was condemned as unreliable but the problems of the manual gear were more fundamental. Further trials in *Orion* in 1912 were more successful and the Admiralty ordered five ARGO clocks. All this time there had been increasingly acrimonious debate over the commercial terms.

Frederic DREYER was an outstanding gunnery officer coming top of his highly mathematical long gunnery course in 1901. His reputation was further enhanced as Gunnery Officer in *Exmouth*. He was destined to come to the Admiralty as an assistant to the DNO but in 1907 he was sent as additional gunnery adviser in *Dreadnought* during her Experiment cruise. Later that year BACON (DNO) put him in charge of fire control work starting with the trial of POLLEN's gear in *Ariadne*. Relations between the two inventors were cordial at this stage.

DREYER had already submitted ideas for some simple fire control instruments though none were accepted. In some of these his brother, CAPTAIN John DREYER RA, assisted him. By early 1908 the DREYERS were beginning to think of a complete fire control system. Frederic DREYER went back to sea in 1909 and as Commander of the *Vanguard* he created a lash up system using largely existing components such as the DUMARESQ.

By late 1910 DREYER, with the assistance of Mr ELPHINSTONE of Elliot Brothers had a complete table design. In 1912 the Admiralty ordered five improved models for the latest battleships (ex *Orion* which had the ARGO system). By February 1916 fifteen battleships and battlecruisers had DREYER tables. It is interesting that there were two companies able to cope with the precision engineering of mechanical fire control systems at a time when British engineering is thought to have been in decline.

BROOKS addresses the accusation of plagiarism at some length and shows that, if any, it was only on minor points. Two clever men, addressing the identical problem with a limited range of mechanical components are bound to produce results with some similarities. The DREYER gear was less well finished and required more maintenance but it worked. It should be noted that both systems relied on the gyro compass for own course input. The early compass was the ANSCHTITZ which was unreliable. It was replaced by the SPERRY during the war.

There are two chapters on encounters during World War I concentrating on the fire control aspects. The first was off Heligoland in August 1914 but because of the poor visibility the opening range was only 6,000 yards. In the Falklands battle STURDEE kept at long range - 16,000 yards - to preserve his own ships expending a great deal of ammunition. More could be learnt from the Dogger Bank battle in January 1915. The distribution of fire was incorrect, spotting deficient and the performance of the battle cruisers' fire control teams was poor. JELLCOE voiced his disquiet, politely, and BEATTY promised to do better next time.

Jutland is described in more detail. There are frequent comparisons of the ranges and rate of change in both British and German logs and with more recent analysis of ships' tracks (Now aided by the location of several wrecks). BEATTY, his signal team and most fire control teams come out very badly from this study. There was an initial failure to dispose his ships to best advantage starting with his most powerful ships of the 5th Battle Squadron were 5 miles away on the disengaged side while the weakest ships were closest to the likely enemy approach.

When the British ships opened fire at 1547 *Princess Royal* had the correct range of about 16,000 yards whilst the other ships made it some 2,000 yards more. BROOKS uses this incident and other to show that the British 9ft range finder, used properly, was only slightly inferior to the German 3m instruments. The real

problem lay in the training of the operators. The range finder problems were exacerbated by BEATTY's disposition which led to considerable smoke interference and probably contributed to the incorrect distribution of fire by the British ships. During the 'Run to the South', BEATTY's frequent changes of course made it difficult to maintain range and range rate.

Brooks attributes much of the British gunnery failure to lack of training of the fire control teams. The excellent performance of DREYER's ship, *Iron Duke*, gives strong support to this view. The German fire control system was basic but the operators were very well trained. This, combined with BEATTY's errors, enabled the battle cruisers of the High Seas Fleet to establish dominance over their opponents.

The fire control story is complicated and the reader needs to concentrate hard to follow it. Debate will continue between supporters of POLLEN and of DREYER but BROOKS has put forward a strong case. The book is expensive but is essential reading to any student of World War 1.

GOODWIN Peter. *Nelson's Victory. 101 Questions and Answers about HMS Victory*. Conway Maritime Press 2004. 101 pages, 76 photographs, 30 Illustrations. ISBN 0 85177 988 3. |Price £9.99.
(reviewed by John SHEARS)

This is one of the many books that will be produced to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. To review this book the reviewer decided to try a few test questions. The first was "How did they bring NELSON's body back?" This was answered in full gruesome detail!

The next stage was to get a group of work colleagues to ask a question. Unfortunately they hadn't read the questions in the book and so only 50% could be answered. Obviously a book this size can not cover all the questions that people will ask, but it does cover a broad spectrum and if you are asked to set a Pub quiz maybe the following could be used:

'226 miles of rope was used in HMS *Victory*'s rigging. True or False?'

Examples of the questions not answered were:

- How many Captains has *Victory* had?
- Why does the height between decks reduce as you go down below?
- How many men make up a Gun Crew?

One of the questions that was in the book that mystified the reviewer was:

'What was a Brodie Stove?'

How can you ask that question unless you have already heard of a Brodie Stove? This A5 sized book is in some ways a little gem and at £9.99 is thoroughly recommended.

HORE, Captain Peter. *The Habit of Victory. The Story of the Royal Navy 1545 to 1945*. Sidgwick and Jackson, 2005. 450 pages, 51 black and white photographs and prints. ISBN 0-283-07312-8. Price £25.
(reviewed by Doug MACDONALD)

From the Tudor Monarchs through the glorious defeat of the Armada, the triumphs of NELSON and the battles of the first and second world wars, this entertaining history describes how the Royal Navy turned this country into the world's foremost sea power. Based on rare material from the archives of the National Maritime Museum, including letters, journals and despatches, it tells of life in the navy as it was experienced by commanders and ordinary seamen alike. KIDD, BLIGH, PEPYS, JACKY FISHER, BLAKE, BEATTY and JELLICOE, heroes and villains, innovators and adventurers all feature in this fascinating account of British Military history.

CAPTAIN Peter HORE retired from the Royal Navy in 2000. Amongst his various retirement jobs such as a trustee of *Naval Review* and the Naval Museum Portsmouth he has had several books published and is now the writer of naval obituaries for the *Daily Telegraph*.

JAMES William. *Naval Occurrences of the War of 1812. A full and correct account of the naval war between Great Britain and the United States of America, 1812-1815*, with a new introduction by Andrew LAMBERT. First published in 1817: this edition published by Conway Maritime Press 2004. 400 pages, of which 262 pages are the main body and 128 pages are for the 121 Appendices. There are 6 illustrations. Price £25.
(reviewed by Iain HIME)

So you thought Spin-Doctors were a 20th Century phenomenon? Well not so! William JAMES, a lawyer, was in Philadelphia when war broke out in 1812 and was detained. He was astounded by the endless stories of USN ships defeating RN ships of the same nominal rate or greater and when he escaped in 1813 determined to investigate these well-spun claims. JAMES recognized that,

“The American accounts were written to boost public morale and create a national mythology.”

The claims were repeated in the UK press who,

“Unsuspectingly lent its aid in degrading the character of its own navy, and in exalting that of the United States.”

Well that's all a bit familiar. As is the misuse of ship designations to alter the political and public perceptions: the victor's sloop swiftly becomes a frigate to the loser. Not unlike our frigate and destroyer designations of the 60's: not to mention the through deck cruiser.

JAMES's logical legal mind led him to a complete re-evaluation of all actions between vessels of 'frigate' size and smaller using a system he devised to allow accurate and direct comparisons. In Chapter One he lays down the ground rules for his subsequent claims based on a standardized method of determining tonnage, the weight of broadside-metal and the complement of men and boys. Thus armed and with astonishing access to official reports on both sides and many interviews with survivors, he proceeds to examine the American claims.

The war of 1812 at sea ranged widely from the Mediterranean, across the Atlantic, into the Great Lakes, down the East Coast and into Chesapeake Bay, through the Caribbean and on to Brazil. The stories he tells offer a wonderful insight into

contemporary warfare and the astonishing amount of damage ships and their crews suffered and how close and personal the engagements became. Death and injury were all part of the sailor's lottery and it is surprising that so many survived. Each encounter is meticulously recorded and many bear more than a passing resemblance to tales by FORRESTER or KENT. And most are supported by the Reports of Proceedings of the protagonists in the 121 Appendices, which in themselves are a darn good read.

William JAMES is quite scathing of American claims and has his own brand of spin but, all in all, this is an excellent book. You can read it as an historian or you can read it as a series of exciting adventures. You can read it from cover to cover or you can dip into it at your leisure (but read Chapter One first). But do read it!

LEE David. *Beachhead Assault. The Story of the Royal Naval Commandos in World War II* – with a foreward by Tony PARSONS. Greenhill Books 2004. ISBN 1-85367-619-5. 272 pages with 33 photographs, 7 maps and 2 appendices. Price £18.99.

(reviewed by Iain HIME)

This book recounts the story of an unsung bunch of heroes from WWII – the Royal Naval Commandos. Starting life as the Royal Naval Beach Parties, they were charged with control of the landing beaches and covering any subsequent withdrawal. They were to be first onshore and the last to leave the beaches. After a tough baptism of fire at Dieppe they were trained as Commandos at their base, HMS *Armadillo* at Ardentynny and at the Archnacarry Commando School. And from then on they were at every major landing of the war and many 'minor' operations as well. In North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, the Normandy Landings – including Pegasus Bridge soldiers were confronted by sailors and were often deeply suspicious of them.

In his foreword, Tony PARSONS (author of *Man and Boy*), whose father was one of these heroes, observes,

“Every page is covered with tales of an almost suicidal courage”

What's more, each tale is told by the participants in a brilliantly linked series of anecdotes that leaves you gasping at the almost nonchalant, offhand accounts of extraordinary courage and dangers: met with the touch of humour and opportunism we would expect from Jack. On his way to a new Observation Post, LEADING TELEGRAPHIST Leonard LLOYD stopped in a tiny village and was invited to join a villager in his cellar for a glass of wine.

“We accepted gratefully, but, whilst taking advantage of this hospitality, the Germans targeted the village... When we eventually emerged from the cellar we found our Jeep had been hit and was a complete write off. I have never refused a glass of wine since.”

The FAA does get a couple of mentions. From the Normandy beaches comes the story of a SPITFIRE taken out by a full salvo of *Scylla's* six-inch guns.

“The plane flipped over and crashed down vertically. I saw a parachute open and the pilot landed unharmed beside us. He was Fleet Air Arm and dressed in flying gear over his pyjamas... he said he thought he had been very lucky as the blast from the salvo had blown off his canopy, so that when the plane flipped over he just fell out!”

This is a page-turner of a book and David LEE has done a fantastic job in bringing together the stories of these extraordinary men. He clearly recognized that their

voice is the one to be heard and carefully restricted his guiding hand: the result is exceptional. If you only buy one book this year – buy this one

MCLAUGHLIN, Stephen. *Russian and Soviet Battleships*. US Naval Institute Press. (UK Distributor Greenhill Books). 514 pages, numerous photographs, line drawings etc. ISBN 1-55750-481-4. Price £65.
(reviewed by EUR ING David K. BROWN, RCNC)

‘All you ever wanted to know about Russian battleships.’

The great majority of the 49 chapters are devoted to the design history of individual classes, starting with the turret ship *Peter Velikii*, begun in 1869. There are a number of linking chapters outlining major policy changes following war, revolution or even the whims of a dictator. The design chapters concentrate on the formulation of staff requirements and the design response. Many clear line drawings of options leading up to the final design are of particular interest. For example:

- (Non-typical) the DREADNOUGHT concept is introduced in Chapter 25.
- In the following chapter (7 pages) some early studies are outlined with the aid of five sets of plans.
- There follows another chapter on the development of the SEVASTOPOL class, launched 1911, with 21 pages, 8 drawings and 4 photographs.

Russian design frequently differed from those of other navies, partly because of the differing requirements of the Baltic, Black Sea and Far East and partly from the political structure. Design was also limited by the quality of Russian industry. A particularly interesting chapter is that on the lessons drawn from the Russo-Japanese war. The defeated Russians concluded that the need was for thin armour over the largest possible area. This was a reaction to the Japanese use of high capacity shells at Tsushima, which caused much damage to the extensive unarmoured parts of the Russian ships.

Russian battleships were unusual – how about a design of 1913 with 84 torpedo tubes?

There have been earlier articles on STALIN’s ships, ranging up to 81,150 tons deep, but this book puts them in context. They are important, not only in their own right but an approach which differed in many ways from that of other navies.

The author learnt Russian in order to write this book and there is plenty of internal evidence of the value of his research in Russian archives and journals. The drawings, many by the author, form a valuable aspect of the book. The text is clear, interesting and easy to follow.

It is an expensive book but fills a gap in our knowledge of world battlefleets. No naval library should be without it.

NICHOLSON Arthur. Hostages to Fortune. *Winston Churchill and the Loss of the Prince of Wales and Repulse*. Sutton Publishing Limited. 223 pages with 32 illustrations, 2 maps and an appendix of 76 signals. ISBN 0-7509-3948-6. Price £19.99.

(reviewed by Iain HIME)

“This work does not dwell on the reality that the whole concept of the operation was one of CHURCHILL’s greatest blunders, on the feebleness of the First Sea Lord of the day in failing to maintain his professional opposition to such ridiculous arrogance, on the shameful underrating of the threat of air attack to ships at sea, on the impossible position in which ADMIRAL PHILLIPS was placed or on his mishandling of that situation, or on the supine shambles emanating from the Higher Command at Singapore.”

So writes ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET SIR Henry LEACH in his foreword and you know at once that you are about to be entertained.

Arthur NICHOLSON is a practising lawyer and a graduate of Georgetown University with a long time interest in warships and naval history. This is his first book. It is the result of very detailed analysis of a mass of information, some of which has not been available before. The book has four parts; 17 Chapters and 719 notes which, thankfully for the reader are neatly attached to the relevant chapter.

The first part relates how CHURCHILL pressurised the First Sea Lord into dispatching the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* to Cape Town despite the lack of a carrier and against the professional advice of the Admiralty and how VICE ADMIRAL Tom PHILLIPS, then VCNS, was appointed CinC Eastern Fleet. It is much less clear how, and by whom, the decision to proceed to Singapore was taken although it is pretty certain that CHURCHILL had an over optimistic view of this unbalanced force’s ability to deter the Japanese from going to war.

Once in Singapore, as Part II explains the die was swiftly cast. The ships arrived on 2 December 1941 just days before war in the Pacific broke out. In the absence of a direct order to withdraw and preserve his forces VICE ADMIRAL PHILLIPS had little choice but to confront the enemy. So on 8 December at 1730 the ships sailed. As CAPTAIN TENNANT said to the Ship’s Company of *Repulse*,

“We are off to look for trouble. I expect we shall find it...”

The story of the next few days, and the seemingly odd decisions made, is comprehensively and well told from all sides of the battle. The resultant losses were hard felt throughout the English speaking world, no more so than in Singapore and no more so than by MIDSHIPMAN Henry LEACH who met the survivors as they arrived: his father CAPTAIN John LEACH was in command of HMS *Prince of Wales* and was not among them.

Part IV, The Aftermath is a good retrospective on Men and Machines and Causes and Responsibilities and I will not steal its thunder except to say that it sheds a different light on the grounding of *Indomitable*.

The book is best summed up by SIR Henry KEACH in his foreword:

“It is a benevolent book and a valuable, honest contribution to history. It is also easy to read and quite fascinating.”

RODGER N.A.M. *The Command of the Ocean. A Naval History of Britain 1649 - 1815*. Penguin Alien Lane, London 2004. 972 pages, 57 illustrations, 18 maps. ISBN 0-713-99411-8. Price £30.

(reviewed by EUR ING David K. BROWN RCNC)

This is Volume II of PROFESSOR Nicholas RODGER's naval history. Even the title is significant; Volume I was titled *The Safeguard of the Sea* (1997) whilst Volume II refers to the ocean marking the transition from a littoral navy to a world power. The subtitle is also significant, it is not just a history of the Royal Navy but of the contribution of the navy to the history of the country as a whole.

The main text is split into 36 chapters together with a short introduction and conclusion. There are 19 chapters devoted to operations, 6 to administration, 9 to social history and two to ships. There are seven short, statistical appendices. If you wish to challenge the author, there is a great deal of work to do; references fill 100 pages and the bibliography is almost as long. This great work was made possible by sponsorship from the National Maritime Museum, The Society for Nautical Research and others.

The chapters on operations tell a familiar story of battles and other actions from a different viewpoint from that of earlier writers. PROFESSOR RODGER is more concerned than with listing the ships engaged. He has also been ruthless in cutting the ancient myths created by contemporary spin doctors – the story of NELSON's telescope and the blind eye at Copenhagen survives!

In a brief review one can only pick out a very few of the fascinating topics raised by the author. The legend that French ships were superior to British, so beloved of historians and, even more, of novelists is dismissed. The author points out that from 1793 to 1815 France built 133 ships of the line and 127 frigates and lost 112 and 126 respectively. The despised British Master Shipwrights cannot have been all that bad. (Two of your reviewer's papers on the subject are referenced). More important, the two navies had different requirements. The RN intended to keep the oceans at all times protecting trade and coast from attack whilst the French ships were intended for raiding operations in favourable conditions. In consequence, they were more lightly built with a shorter life. The RN needed numbers so that individual ships tended to be smaller than their enemies.

From the 1790s British ships had new guns which, thanks to improved casting technology and 'quality control' introduced by BLOMEFIELD at Woolwich Arsenal, were stronger and could maintain a higher rate of fire. The author admits that it is very difficult to discover what rate of fire was actually achieved but the best estimate is that, over the period of the book, it increased from one round in five minutes to one in two minutes.

An important contribution to sustained oceanic operations was the health and well being of the crews. Medical and dietary standards were poor by 21st century standards but were leaders at the end of the 18th century. The much maligned victualling department did well in keeping the fleet well fed. The blockading fleet off Ushant with 36,000 men needed in a six month period 2,925 tons of biscuit, 1,671 tons of beef, 835 tons of pork, and 32,000 tuns of beer as well as other foods. All this had to be carried 215 miles from Portsmouth against the prevailing winds. Great efforts were made to keep up a supply of fresh vegetables; lemon juice was supplied to ships on foreign stations from the out break of the great wars and to all ships from 1800 – doctors were to complain that they had no work to do.

Recruitment was a continuing problem. Life in the Royal Navy was hard but so it was in the merchant ships or in many jobs on shore. The Press Gang was seen as essential but was less important than usually claimed. Magistrates had the power

to send convicts to sea but the Navy was not bound to accept them and usually rejected such recruits – except smugglers! The Great Mutinies at Spithead were almost entirely about pay and were led by long service, loyal Petty Officers.

PROFESSOR RODGER has an interesting and unusual viewpoint on the execution of ADMIRAL BYNG in 1757. He fought an inconclusive battle in the Mediterranean in June 1756 after which he was replaced and charged with,

‘Failing to do his utmost to take or destroy the enemy’s ships.’

He was found guilty and the death sentence was mandatory. Naval opinion was strongly supportive of the verdict and the appeal for clemency was badly handled by the new government of BYNG’s friends. There had been several earlier cases of officers failing to do their utmost and RODGER appears to support VOLTAIRE in that shooting an Admiral is good *pour encourager les autres*.

As in Volume I the maps are outstanding. A novel – and valuable – feature is that the maps of the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean show currents and prevailing winds; so important in the days of sail.

It is not light reading – the book weighs 4 pounds! – more seriously, almost every sentence poses ideas which need thought. The effort is well worthwhile and it should be read by everyone who serves the Royal Navy in any capacity, they will be proud of their predecessors.

TAYLOR Bruce. *The Battlecruiser HMS Hood. An illustrated biography 1916-1941* –with a forward by VICE-ADMIRAL Sir Louis LE BAILLY. Chatham Publishing 2005. 272 pages, 24 colour, 14 illustrations and 208 black and white photographs. ISBN 1-86176-216-X. Price £35.00.
(reviewed by Glyn WILLIAMS)

Reviewing this book was a pleasure for me. My grandfather served on the *Hood* as an Able Seaman in 1939. I have always had an affinity for this great ship and first heard of its phenomenal characteristics sat on his knee when I was about four years old. Difficult to imagine now that I am approaching my 30th year in the Navy myself. Like the ship my grandfather was remarkable. He had lost his badges and later rates, more times than he lost at uckers! Quite a bold claim, but he was a man who did a lot of talking with his fists (or the pistons of doom as he liked to call them) during his extremely chequered career.

In his forward by VICE-ADMIRAL Sir Louis LE BAILLY, mentions that he must be the last of HMS *Hood*’s ship’s company to have served in part of her four final commissions between 1932-1939. He goes on to describe *Hood*’s role from peace to her controversial sinking.

This book is indeed an accolade to the ship that was crowned the greatest warship ever built. The chapters reveal in incredible detail, her design and build until her sudden and tragic loss at 0600 24 May 1941. Her features are skilfully supported by a wide range of first hand accounts of what life was actually like onboard at that time. There is also a wide range of unique black and white photographs, such as a picture of the Ships Company taken in Topsail Bay Newfoundland that includes ‘Joey’ the ship’s wallaby. Joey was known for his boxing skills and a ravenous appetite for tobacco.

Another contrasting factor was the photograph of the CAPTAIN Harold REINOLD’S AC TOURER sports car parked between guns on the Port side of the ship adorned by its RAC member’s badge. There is also a rare opportunity to see some previously unseen colour photographs transposed from some 16mm film taken by

the then Commander (E). Also there are some stunningly detailed colour illustrations of the ship, as she was in all her splendour revealing internal detail of her engine room and 15" turrets.

The book allows the reader to follow *Hood's* progress in Nine chapters, from her initial pre war experiences, which includes a detailed tour of the ship, supported by cutaway deck plans and compartment layout. It goes on to highlight the ship's routines and life onboard. Also covered is *Hood's* part in the infamous Invergordon Mutiny, fuelled by a 25% pay cut for about 70% of the Navy. It also follows the ship's entry into the war and her role right up to her sad loss in May 1941.

At the back of the book there is an appropriate conclusion to the ship's life with four appendixes that include senior officers, scheme of compliment, ship's routines, and family attachments. A ship's chronology from 1915-1941 and corrected roll of honour of those lost follow this. This is a superb book and is a must for all *Hood* and naval fans alike.

THOMAS, Graham. *Furies and Fireflies over Korea*. Grub Street, London, 2004. 191 pages, 42 black and white photographs. ISBN 1 904010 04 0. Price £17.99. (reviewed by Doug MACDONALD)

Not enough has been written about the air war over Korea in the early 1950's and this book is a welcome addition to the history of the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm. The book features the story of the men of the Fleet Air Arm, RAF and Commonwealth who defended South Korea from 1950 to 1953. It is well illustrated by a number of photographs not published before, a comprehensive chronology and glossary at the appendices.

The book is largely told from the point of view of half a dozen of the FAA's elite pilots who flew in the war over Korea from the Aircraft Carriers, *Triumph*, *Theseus*, *Glory* and *Ocean*. This does unfortunately lead to some repetition of some of the raids and airborne conflicts. There are also one or two schoolboy howlers throughout the book, the worst being the mention on page 85 of the Carrier HMS *Impeccable*! Another one when summarizing Lieutenant Alan LEAHY's Royal Navy career has him ending his time as air commodore in charge of the submarine base at Faslane.

Notwithstanding these errors and very little said about maintenance apart from such pearls as rough running engines; nor does the seemingly unending expenditure of air ordnance receive an explanation as to how it was supplied, the book merits a place on your naval aviation bookshelf.

TREACHER ADMIRAL Sir John. *Life at Full Throttle. From Wardroom to Boardroom*. Pen & Sword Books Ltd. Barnsley 2004. 260 pages, 36 photographs. ISBN 1844151344. Price (reviewed by Geoff HIGGS)

The memoirs of retired senior service officers are often a lot of things but seldom dull reading. So it is with ADMIRAL Sir John TREACHER but in addition his book is a well-crafted account of his life and times told succinctly with no hint of the embellishment that characterizes so many autobiographies. To those who knew John TREACHER there was never any doubt that he was destined for high rank and

to no one's surprise a series of influential appointments destined to give him the necessary experience was a model for the fast track officer.

His story embraces earliest childhood in South America where he was born, returning home to school in England at St Paul's - later the scene of GENERAL MONTGOMERY's pre D Day briefings to his officers and others - all nicely woven into the world events of that time. After Dartmouth, wartime service in surface ships provided him with invaluable experience at the sharp end before finally commencing flying training shortly after the end of WW2. He was then fortunate enough to add to his wartime experience by taking part in the Korean War as a front line squadron pilot. Then fortune dealt him a further ace when he became involved in the introduction of Airborne Early Warning in the Fleet Air Arm and subsequent command of the first AEW squadron.

His career appointments thereafter contained all the ingredients for experience required at higher command with sea and staff duties alternating to lead eventually to command of an aircraft carrier. By that time too, his several staff appointments had provided exposure to the intricacies and perhaps deviousness of the Whitehall scene. Here he treads a delicate path in his comments on the various people with whom he became involved but equally displays a penetrating and perhaps ruthless approach to overstaffing in the Whitehall Directorates. During his time as Naval Assistant to the Controller he pursues the matter of inefficient use of staff and this led to the introduction of Management Consultants in all Departments of State. This intrusion into their cosy world was predictably unwelcome particularly as the ramifications were felt in industry with competitive tendering and tighter contracts. Later on as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff he brought the overstaffing chestnut out of the fire again but he had chosen the wrong time - there was a great deal of interservice rivalry for funds. Some might argue that it was the right time !

His last appointment as Fleet Commander he describes as 'the best appointment in the Navy' and this may provide some clue why after only eighteen months he decided to resign without seeking further employment. The timescale for the top job was not perhaps in his favour anyway but there were other more compelling personal reasons for his decision. Be as it may, it caused surprise and disappointment with his many friends that his considerable and broad experience would be lost to the service.

Throughout there is a feeling that his charismatic personality coupled with sufficient steel to balance the charm enabled him to achieve influence and win battles where others might have failed. Not that he fought shy of confrontation as his tussle with the Ship Department revealed. And he has some outspoken observations on the French relationship with NATO, sentiments with which those of us who served in a NATO command prior to 1966 would have no difficulty in empathising. Later, when he had joined Westlands, his experience with French cooperation - or lack of it - gave him no just cause to change his attitude.

Strange then that his post naval career should be such a stop start affair with no clearly defined objective. He had many influential contacts in industry both here and abroad, enjoyed a fine reputation and yet his first two positions in the outside world appear oddly out of character. Certainly a short period with Mr HEFNER's organization must, in retrospect, give him cause for thought. Subsequent involvement with Westlands as a director and deputy chairman provided him with the impetus he needed and the opportunity to use his many world wide contacts. His account of this period leads naturally to the Westland/HESTLETINE affair in which he played a major part and on which he sheds further light on the shenanigans and chicanery of that sorry business - 'Oh what a tangled web we weave/when first we practice to deceive; might have been specially scripted for/the players on that particular stage.

Coincidentally with his various positions after leaving the Navy his restless energy steered him to other part time activities and opportunities on a broad front, not all successful and one at least backfired and dealt him an unkind blow, an experience unfortunately shared by other retired senior officers.

John TREACHER shows himself to have been a hard player, enjoying life to the full, never afraid to accept a challenge. His book is the embodiment of 'speak well of your friends of your enemies say nothing' and it is not difficult to see why he made many of the former. Modestly written but with no false selfeffacement it is a story of success and achievement by a man who knew what he wanted.

A thundering good read throughout and very well recommended. A little bereft of depth in places probably due to the author's inability to refer to non existent diaries as he says he was no diarist by inclination - but the upside is there will no fast forwarding of pages.

WARLOW Ben LIEUTENANT COMMANDER Royal Navy (Compiled by). *Battle Honours of the Royal Navy*. Maritime Books 2004. ISBN 1 9044 5905 6. Price £19.95.

(reviewed by David HOBBS)

Until the publication of this volume, the only listing of Royal Navy battle honours was contained in AFO2565/54. The list contained a number of errors and omissions and was not available to the general public. The new book is the first officially authorized record of the Battle Honours awarded to HM Ships and Fleet Air Arm Squadrons and the Naval Historical Branch is to be congratulated for sponsoring it.

Ben WARLOW is well known for the depth of his research into shore establishments and ships' names and spent a considerable time working on this volume. His list of sources is contained on the last page. *Battle Honours* puts an official listing before the public in a neat little volume published by Maritime Books of Liskeard. It comprises 224 pages with a number of illustrative black and white images that show famous ships, badges and an honours board. There is an Introduction by the First Sea Lord, ADMIRAL Sir Alan WEST, GCB, DSC, ADC and a Foreword by CAPTAIN C.L.W. PAGE, MA, FIMECHE, Royal Navy, the Head of the Naval Historical Branch.

The book sets out all Battle Honours awarded since the Armada in 1588 and lists the criteria for the awards. It is a wealth of useful information, including honours awarded to Commonwealth warships up to the recent past.

As in any work of this magnitude, however, there are a few 'niggles'. On seeing the book, I turned first to HMS *Heron*, my own establishment, and saw that it is credited with 'Atlantic 1940'. This despite the fact that the *Heron* of 1940 was the naval air station that still exists at Yeovilton. This seems to be an error carried forward from the AFO resulting from the re-naming of an Egret class sloop from *Heron* to *Auckland* in 1938. Turning to the section on FAA Squadrons, I noticed that the first, 700 Squadron is credited with "River Plate 1939". STURTIVANT'S *Squadrons of the Fleet Air Arm*, however, shows this squadron as having formed on 21 January 1940, after the Battle of the River Plate. The SEA FOX spotter aircraft from HMS *Ajax* that fought in the action was actually part of 718 Squadron at the time of the battle. Editorially, the ubiquitous single honour awarded to the Royal Marines needs explanation and should have been treated more sympathetically.

These are small points in a book, which has a wealth of factually correct material. It is long overdue and will hopefully form the first in a long series that will be kept up to date. It would be difficult to imagine anyone with an interest in naval history not buying this reasonably priced work and it is thoroughly recommended.

REPRINTS

Conway Maritime Press have reproduced the first two volumes of their 'History of the Ship' series in soft back. These volumes are:

MORRISON John Professor (Ed). *The Age of the Galley*. Conway Maritime Press, London, 2004 (Hardback 1992). 208 pages, numerous illustrations. ISBN 0 85177 955 7. Price £16-99.

LAVERY Brian (Ed). *The Line of Battle 1650 - 1840*. Conway Maritime Press, London, 2004 (Hardback 1995). 256 pages, numerous illustrations. ISBN 0 85177 954 9. Price £16-99.

(reviewd by EUR ING David K. BROWN, RCNC)

Both these books take the form of a series of essays on the various aspects by a large team of experts from various countries – Galleys has 16 authors (including Dr John COATES RCNC, Designer of the replica Trireme) while Line of Battle makes do with 8.

The 16 Chapters of the Galley book cover such topics as early oared warships, Greek and Roman ships and later vessels followed by more specialised topics such as naval architecture, oar mechanics, geographical aspects of the Mediterranean, logistics etc. (The sub-title makes it clear that the book is confined to Mediterranean oared vessels; those of other seas, such as the Baltic are covered in the second book). Some of the topics seemed surprising – though they should not have done – such as ventilation and hygiene for 150 sweating rowers. The reader is warned that much of the material is conjectural since a waterlogged galley will float rather than sink to the bottom, where it might be preserved.

Only the first of 14 chapters of the second book deals specifically with the ship of the line and this is followed by frigates, sloops, fore and aft rigged warships, fireships and mortar vessels. (My only complaint in this book is of inadequate treatment of the Crimean War mortar vessels, including the first numerous class of iron hulled vessels). There follow chapters on topics such as design, rig, fittings, guns and then seamanship and tactics. It is good to see the series editor, Robert GARDINER, taking his turn as author of the frigate chapter. The line of battle ship of 1650 looked, superficially, much like the later 19th century ships but there were major differences. The later ship handled better, its structure was much stronger but, most of all, the rate of fire had improved from one round in six minutes to a round a minute. The book does not give sufficient credit to improvements in casting technique and 'quality control' at Woolwich in the late 18th century under BLOMEFIELD, which made such rates of fire possible.

Both books are profusely illustrated, mainly from contemporary plans and drawings, though good use has been made of photographs of the Trireme replica, *Olympias*.

Both books are very valuable state of the art surveys of the latest thinking on their respective periods by some of the world's leading experts. Re-printing in quality soft back format has made these books available at a very low price and they are highly recommended as value for money.