

# BOOK REVIEWS

BEBBINGTON Graham. *Ship Without Water*. Churnet Valley Books, 1 King Street, Leek, Staffordshire, ST1 35NW. 96 pages. ISBN 1 897949 634. Price £8.95 plus £1.50 p&p direct from the Publisher.  
(reviewed by Maurice AYLING)

This is the story of HMS *Daedalus 2* at Newcastle under Lyme from 1940 -1946, the apprentices training establishment. As it was the source of origin of so many AEOs of all specialisations – the vast majority of Ordnance Officers especially – who lasted well into the seventies, it might be of interest to those who relied on them to keep their aeroplanes strapped to their backsides, or to get out in a hurry should they decide otherwise. The book gives an unglamourised account of the hasty setting up of a naval establishment in an area more noted for coal mines and potteries, where sailors were practically unknown. *Daedalus 2* was therefore part of the FAA heritage. It may not be generally known that the trainees there during WW2 had their normal five years formal training shortened to three, followed by two years ‘in the field’ training. I, for instance, completed my ‘training’ on 1843 (CORSAIRS – CO LIEUTENANT COMMANDER BROWN RNVR, MAJOR NELSON-GRACIE, RM, and ACTING LIEUTENANT COMMANDER Pat CHILTON RN) in June 1945 while disembarked at Maryborough, Queensland. Apprentice training moved from Newcastle to Arbroath late 1945.

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BROWN D.K. *Nelson to Vanguard – Warship Design and Development 1923 – 1945*. Chatham Publishing, London, 2000. 244 pages, 200 photographs and illustrations. ISBN 1 861 76136 8. Price £35.  
(reviewed by J.F.P. EDDISON, RCNC)

This major work is the sequel to David BROWN’s two earlier studies of the development of the modern steel warship, *Warrior to Dreadnought* and *The Grand Fleet*, and brings the story up to within a generation of today’s warships. As with the earlier works, it is minutely researched, drawing on both official and personal high level sources, to give a wide ranging and authoritative view of the subject, enlivened and illuminated by the author’s own extensive experience in the field. It is comprehensively illustrated with tables, sketches, contemporary photographs, footnotes and references. Although it concentrates on ship design and naval architectural matters, it is accessible to all with an interest in warships because of

the clear and readable style. For the more technically minded, the Appendices provide further detail of specialist topics.

As we have come to expect from David BROWN, he starts by setting the topic in its broader historical and political context, and evaluates the fundamental influence of the various Naval Treaties of the period. This is supported by discussion of the associated financial and political constraints, including the Depression, and the effect of powerful personalities such as CHATFIELD, HENDERSON and GOODALL. In particular, the 1921 Washington Treaty had left the RN as the world's largest Navy numerically, and the equal of the USN in battleship tonnage, while still allowing a generous programme (by today's standards) of smaller vessels. The perhaps surprising support of the Treasury for Defence expenditure is noted.

Even so, there was a significant adverse effect on industry, leading to transfer of naval work from the Royal Dockyards in order to maintain an industrial capability. The introduction goes on to highlight the procurement and design problems ensuing from these limitations. Among these, the lack of high quality armour plate was significant, and led to the purchase of 11,000 tons from Czechoslovakia (shipped through Germany up to 1939!). Nonetheless, a considerable programme of work is described, touching on trials, technical development, armour, bombing and the extensive use of model and full-scale testing. The latter included at least two radio controlled target ships, the old battleships *Agamemnon* and *Centurion*, which were used for shell and bomb trials in the 1920s.

The main body of the book goes on to give an in-depth analysis of the various ship classes of the period, all done with the author's customary thoroughness. He provides a fascinating discussion of the design process, trade-offs and compromises, and compares where different countries put their design points in the speed/armour/armament balance. The first of these chapters describes the final development of the battleship, leading to recognition of the compelling reasons for abandoning them, shortly after *Vanguard* herself was completed, in favour of the more capable, but more vulnerable, carrier.

Aircraft carrier design arguments are described in detail, showing the rapid evolution of the design and the forward thinking of those involved. The comparison with US principles is particularly interesting, and is still relevant to today's designers. The chapter on smaller and cheaper carriers shows the rapid design development in response to wartime experience.

Further chapters illustrate the rapid design evolution of smaller ships, made possible by a large building programme and seriously low costs by present day standards.

The chapter on submarine development contains interesting comparisons with German and US requirements and practice, and describes the rapid and continuous improvement in designs over the period. For the technically minded, there are discussions of major design features, including the determination of diving depth, the (experimental) use of HTP, and the reliable and long-lived Mk 8 torpedo.

Throughout, there are insights into technical aspects of the ships, into the process for generating the requirement and obtaining approval (amazingly simple), and into the procurement problems of the day. Capability creep, unrealistic build times, excessive costs and the need to compromise are shown not to be unique to the 21st century. All are laid out and explained clearly and simply.

There are also several chapters on more general technical and procurement matters, such as the value of updates against new build. Damage evaluation has a chapter to itself, tribute to the extensive records kept of wartime damage, and these are supplemented by the results of post war shock trials, including a considerable

number against submarines. Several full-scale submarine collapse trials are included; the design value was reassuringly accurate.

On the production and repair front, there are costing techniques and comparison with US build man hours/costs. The latter were much greater, a difference which still persists. The UK shipbuilding costing data and profit margins are also particularly thought provoking. So too are the photographs of damage caused by enemy action and by post war shock and structural trials. The photograph of the final failure of *Albuera* during hull collapse trials is particularly memorable.

There is perhaps too much in the book to take in at one go, but it is ideal for dipping into, in order to get a feel for a topic of interest and for pointers to further references. The points it makes, both technical and managerial, are as relevant today as they were 60 or 70 years ago, and are put across in a way that is at once readable and masterly.

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FRIEDMAN, Norman. *Seapower and Space, From the Dawn of the Missile Age to Net-Centric Warfare*. Chatham Publishing, London, 2000. 384 pages, 29 photographs. ISBN 1 861 76004 3. Price £25.  
(reviewed by EUR ING David K, BROWN, RCNC)

Much of the material in this book is appearing in open literature for the first time and many readers will be surprised how much is now de-classified. The first chapter is a simple guide to satellite mechanics and which orbits are possible. Following chapters deal with:

- Boosters
- Satellite navigation
- Communications
- Reconnaissance

leading on to their influence on naval warfare. The TOMAHAWK missile led to the requirement and the solution for over the horizon targeting. The need to destroy attacking aircraft before they launched their missiles led to the so-called Outer Air Battle. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant that the role of the navy became increasingly concerned with coastal or littoral warfare – coastal meaning up to several hundred miles inland. The vast amount of information available demands the highest standards of IT for its handling.

The background theme to this book is the struggle in the US between the navy and air force for control of space technology and, of course, FRIEDMAN has no doubts on this subject and makes it clear that the USN is the biggest user. He sees that space and missile technology has restored the (US) surface ship as the capital ship. A big missile strike can disable an enemy air defence system making it safe for an aircraft strike to follow. A missile strike involves no risk to one's own personnel, very important in the light of current popular opinion.

The book is very detailed and full of initials code names etc. For example, a Soviet era weapon will often have a Soviet name, a manufacturer's designation and a NATO code name. It is not easy to remember them all. The even more detailed end notes fill a further 48 pages and in small print too. The previous sentences are not in any way meant as criticism but the reader should be aware that it is a book to work at and well worth the effort.

His lessons for the RN will be of particular interest. The increasing use of cruise missiles will demand over the horizon targeting and even if this is provided by an advanced helicopter it is likely that satellite communications will be needed and if

such missiles are used in support of army operations further satellite communication will be needed. Since many of the allies of the USA have already installed common communication equipment, the cost may not be as great as is often assumed.

I do wonder how susceptible these systems are to interference – jamming, hacking etc.

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FRIEDMAN, Norman. *The Fifty-Year War*. Chatham Publishing, London, 2000. 640 pages, 16 photographs. ISBN 187161406. Price £25.  
(reviewed by EUR ING David K, BROWN, RCNC)

The author dates the start of the war with Soviet intervention in the Spanish Civil war and its end with the final lowering of the Soviet flag on Christmas Day 1991. He portrays it as a real war though fought at lower intensity than the two World Wars of the 20th century. The book is divided into six parts:

*Part I*

Deals with STALIN's opening moves from the Spanish Civil war to the end of World War II ending with the first atomic bomb.

*Part II*

Covers STALIN's moves into Eastern Europe and the perceived threat to Western Europe and also the rise of nationalism on both sides.

*Part III*

Shows how things changed when both sides had atomic bombs – and how few and complicated they were. The Korean War was little affected by US nuclear superiority.

*Part IV*

Opens with the missile race and the Cuban crisis.

*Part V*

Describes the effects of the Vietnam War and the problems when BREZHNEV's military build up coincided with a decline in US power.

*Part VI*

Shows how the USA under REAGAN raised the stakes while the computer revolution both showed Soviet weakness and began to give many Russians free access to 'information'.

The viewpoint is American (with a touch of Republican bias) but the author is at pains to show how the views of European allies and the UK in particular influenced US policy though these views are drawn almost entirely from American papers. The book is extremely well referenced.

FRIEDMAN is at pains to compare contemporary estimates of capability with what we now know. (I am not sure that all is yet disclosed). We are probably too close to the Cold War for a definitive history but this is an excellent early effort. Some time ago I reviewed David MILLER's *The Cold War* and the two books are not contradictory though taking a different viewpoint in places – I'm glad to have both. FRIEDMAN's earlier 'instant history' – *Desert Victory* on the Gulf War has stood up quite well to later revelations giving confidence in this new work.

*The Fifty Year War* is well written but is so packed with facts that it requires some effort in reading – that effort is well worth while.

GARDINER, Robert. *Frigates of the Napoleonic Wars*. Chatham Publishing, London, 2000. 208 pages, 85 plans, numerous illustrations. ISBN 1 86176 135 X. (reviewed by EUR ING David K. BROWN, RCNC)

This book was originally conceived as Part II of the author's *The Heavy Frigate* (Published 1994) and though it has developed since it follows much the same style and quality – of the earlier book. The first 6 chapters (61 large pages) give the design history, class by class. There are plans, reproduced from the National Maritime Museum collection, of all significant ships. These are supplemented by contemporary paintings etc. Good use is made of photographs of the survivors, *Trincomalee* and *Unicorn* both in overall views and of details. There are very detailed tables of particulars, builders, dates etc.

The next 5 chapters (84 pages) cover specific topics:

- Construction
- Design
- Modifications
- Armament
- Performance.

The final chapter (39 pages) deals with Frigates in Action. Robert GARDINER is the acknowledged expert on frigates of this period and he has presented a mass of new material and new thinking. I was particularly fascinated by the chapter on wartime modifications, which shows how effective the Admiralty was in implementing the lessons of battle and of arduous service. This was tempered by the need to keep ships at sea and not spend too long in refit.

The author does not name the 'prominent naval architect' who doubts the accuracy of the contemporary Sailing Quality reports – my paper giving what evidence there is on the subject is referenced below for those who wish to pursue the subject.\* However, this is a side issue; the book clearly demonstrates that the Admiralty had got the balance between quality and quantity about right. The big US frigates with their well motivated crews presented a real problem but this was overcome.

The chapter on 'Action' divides into sections on reconnaissance, both strategic and tactical, blockade, in battle etc. illuminated by examples. There are a number of points of interest and only a very few can be mentioned here. For example, it was not sensible to send one frigate to look for the enemy. If contact was made one frigate would shadow whilst another had to report back to the British squadron. In battle, the frigate's role was to repeat signals and to keep out of the way. Because they kept out of the way they would be undamaged at the end and could assist disabled ships. After the battle and great storm of Trafalgar, frigates played a great role in ensuring that all damaged British ships reached port.

Few will have the opportunity to study the enormous plans collection at the Museum and this book offers the chance to study 85 of them at moderate cost with a very readable and well informed text.

\* D.K. BROWN. 'The Form and Speed of Sailing Warships'. *Mariner's Mirror*, Volume 84/3, August 1998.

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HAGUE Arnold. *The Allied Convoy System 1939-1945*. Chatham Publishing London, 2000. 208 pages. 50 Photographs. ISBN 1-86176-147-3. Price £25. (reviewed by Iain HIME)

Arnold HAGUE spent 30 years in the Admiralty, many years with our Historic Branch and has written a number of books related to naval movements and operations. This is essentially a reference book for serious aficionados but with enough 'well I nevers' to keep the more casual reader entertained.

The book consists of 108 pages of narrative interspersed with statistics and photographs and 100 pages of statistics interspersed with photographs and narrative in the form of Appendices! The main body has 17 chapters addressing a different Convoy related topic and filled with so much detail that you suspect that the author's obviously encyclopaedic knowledge could produce a full length book on any of them. Of course the Convoy Systems, the Trade Division and Control of Shipping are covered but so too is the Threat, Intelligence and the Escorts that formed the basis of convoy protection. There are separate, albeit brief, chapters on:

- Wartime Weapons Development
- Aircraft Tactics and Weapons
- Catapult Aircraft Merchant (CAM) Ships
- Merchant Aircraft Carriers (MAC) Ships
- Rescue Ships
- Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships
- Replenishment at Sea
- Casualties.

I do have two complaints on this section, first there is no index covering the wealth of information in these chapters and secondly the author does, occasionally, duplicate information unnecessarily from chapter to chapter and even within chapters.

Then come the Appendices and it is quite mind boggling how much research must have been done over many years to put together this definitive set of statistics and explanations of **all** the convoys **all** round the world.

I found the photographs of particular interest because the author has attached detailed notes to them and his detective work in attributing date time and place to them is fascinating. Arnold HAGUE writes with a light touch, clearly an expert of experts but gentle with it. A must for anyone with a serious interest in Convoys and the place to start if we ever have to do this thing again.

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HARPER Stephen. *Capturing Enigma — How HMS Petard seized the German Naval Codes*. Sutton Publishing 1999. 174 pages, 11 photographs. ISBN 0 7509 2316 4. Price £14.99. (reviewed by John SHEARS)

The book's title is somewhat confusing as it implies the HMS *Petard* was the sole source of obtaining Enigma material. Once in the book the author soon explains that the action between *Petard* and the U-559 was one of several sources of such material, but when it happened it was when the Battle of the Atlantic was at a critical stage and the information obtained greatly influenced the outcome.

The first three chapters give a potted history of Bletchley Park, Enigma, and the Battle of the Atlantic. The actions with U-33 and U-110 are described, but nothing about the Americans and their Hollywood version! The book is dedicated to the three men who captured the material from U-559. Two of them, who went down with the U-boat, were only awarded the George Cross a year later. This award could not be any higher as the 'powers to be' did not want to alert the Germans to the importance of the action.

The story of *Petard* is then told from her launch in March 1941, to her end at Bowness in 1967 when she was broken up. The book can not be described as a good reference book, but it does tell the story of the ship, based on the first hand accounts of a few crew members (including the author). It leaves too many questions unanswered, but it does point the reader towards other sources in the Bibliography.

The ship had the unique distinction of sinking a submarine of three nations i.e. German, Italian and Japanese. It was after the action with the Italian boat *Uarsciek*, that the Captain was relieved on medical grounds. He had been with the ship since her launch and before that had spent over two years on Atlantic convoy duties. The author states he 'frightened' the crew and one thinks of shell-shock and this reviewer would have liked to know what happened to this man who had been awarded a DSO and DSC.

The Japanese J-27 action involved the sinking of the *Khedive Ismail* with the tragic loss of 1,297 lives. The account of depth charges landing among bodies from the *Khedive Ismail* brings back memories of a similar scene from the film *The Cruel Sea*.

As stated before, the book can not be recommended as a serious reference book, but it is a starting point and is recommended to be packed for that holiday read.

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HILL, Richard. *War at Sea in the Ironclad Age*. Cassel, 2000. 224 pages, 133 illustrations, 21 maps. ISBN 0-304-35273-X. Price £20.  
(reviewed by EUR ING David K, BROWN, RCNC)

This book is part of Cassel's History of Warfare series and describes the strategy, tactics, technology and life at sea for the half century from 1855. It is a daunting task even for someone well known as the editor of the *Naval Review* and author of several books.

The book opens with a brief account of the philosophical background to strategy and tactics. A lengthy section follows this on technology in the period from wooden sailing ship up to but not including the DREADNOUGHT. The next section is about the people including the lowly status of the engineer. The second half of the book describes the numerous battles of the period – there were only two fleet encounters but many smaller battles and bombardments.

It is a very readable account of a very complex period and is generally accurate though there are signs that it was written in haste. For example, the first mastless battleship, *Devastation*, was designed by Edward REED not BAMABY. She was based on his *Cerberus* whose remains may still be seen at Melbourne. *Monarch's* rigging was little obstruction to her arcs of fire as all but a pair of stays were removed in action (Photograph in my book *Warrior – Dreadnought*). And the RCNC was founded in 1883!

The illustrations form an important component of the book. There is extensive use of contemporary, highly coloured – in every sense of the word – drawings as well as photographs. The maps are superb, the clearest I have ever seen, and reflect great credit on Malcolm SWANSTON and his team.

At £20 it is good value for money and is recommended as a survey of the problems of an important but little known era.

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JOHNSTON, Ian. *Ships for a Nation 1847-1972*. West Dumbartonshire Libraries via Argyll Publishing 2000. 360 pages, over 200 photographs. Hardback ISBN 0 9537736 0 4, price £25. Softback ISBN 0 9537736 1 2, price £14.99. (reviewed by EUR ING David K. BROWN, RCNC)

This book tells the story of John Browns, once Britain's most famous shipyard, from its early days as J & G Thompson. It is, however, much more than the history of one shipyard as the author skilfully weaves in a picture of life on Clydeside whilst it is also a history of shipbuilding working practises.

The story begins in 1847 when the brothers James and George THOMPSON opened a marine engine factory in Glasgow. In 1851 they started shipbuilding in Govan. The brothers quarrelled in 1863 and George continued on his own till his sudden death in 1866. Trustees ran the business until his sons came of age in 1874. A new yard was laid out at Clydebank where, initially, there were no houses and no services. Difficulties were slowly overcome amidst a series of financial crises, not helped by the younger brothers' profligate life style.

In 1899 the Sheffield steel company, John Brown, acquired the yard giving it the name under which it would become so famous. They were quick to adopt the new turbine technology and gained success as agents for the American Curtis turbines, which became the Admiralty's preferred machinery. Their fame rested on great ships such as *Lusitania*, *Aquitania* and the warships *Inflexible*, *Tiger*, *Barham* and *Repulse*. Like other shipyards, the slump of the 1920s and early 30s caused serious problems. Cunard's order 534 in 1930 seemed to offer security but work had to be suspended within a year. Work was resumed in 1934 and her launch as *Queen Mary* in September was a great relief. There was considerable media interest in this ship, which was a major factor in your reviewer's life long interest in ships.

*Queen Elizabeth* was to follow and, during the war, *Indefatigable* and *Vanguard*. Post war led to a shortage of orders and this, with some poor estimating, caused financial problems. Profits remained quite high but there was little investment in new equipment. Nationalization as part of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders did not help and shipbuilding stopped in 1971.

John Browns employed a photographer and work in the yard is recorded much more fully than is usual. Most of these photographs are held in the National Archives of Scotland and the author has made good use of them – unusually, the author is also the designer of the book and has made a fine job of it. These photographs with their captions make a fine record of shipyard working. The most obvious feature to modern eyes is the neglect of safety precautions – poor scaffolding often without a handrail, unfenced openings etc. The author includes some horrifying accounts of the injuries that followed.

Life was rugged with poor housing and few amenities. Job security was non-existent, even for senior staff; no wonder there was frequent disputes.



Technically, the most interesting passage is that dealing with model tests of alternative hull forms for *Queen Mary* leading up to the form of the *Queen Elizabeth*. *Queen Mary* was often criticized as old fashioned in comparison with the highly touted Yourkevitch form of *Normandie* but the British ship needed less power at speeds below 30 knots. A small bulb would have increased top speed by 0.2 knots with no effect at lower speeds but was not proceeded with, probably for fear of degrading rough weather behaviour.

It is a wonderful record of the rise and fall of British shipbuilding and is strongly recommended. (The author's previous book on Beardmore's yard is still available – he is an associate producer of the forthcoming Channel 4 series on the history of the battleship.)

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LAMBERT, Nicholas A. *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*. University of South Carolina Press, 1999. 426 pages, 15 illustrations and maps. ISBN 03 0201 0099 54321. Price\* £26-69.

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

In this important book the author re-examines Sir John FISHER's role in budgetary, strategic and technical changes in the Royal Navy prior to World War I. Any book on FISHER's thinking and actions has the fundamental problem that FISHER 'fired for effect'. Even when he was telling the truth it was often a highly selective truth. For example, he wrote,

'I had an excellent secretary. Whenever I asked him for facts, he always asked me what I wanted to prove. There is no doubt that facts are most misleading.'

Some of FISHER's views are well known but the author often finds a new twist. It is clear that FISHER was not a great enthusiast for the DREADNOUGHT battleship; he preferred the battlecruiser. Later writers have shown him as wrong, citing the loss of three battlecruisers at Jutland as disproving his views summed up in the aphorism 'Speed is armour'. It is now clear that the losses were primarily due to defective ammunition whilst today's generation, familiar with totally unarmoured ships facing more powerful weapons, should be more sympathetic to FISHER's views. The rapid deployment of two battlecruisers to destroy SPEC's squadron at the Falklands showed how FISHER intended them to be used (and the less well known deployment of *Princess Royal* to the West Indies as a long stop). The speed at which an overwhelming battlecruiser force could be deployed made it unnecessary to maintain small squadrons, usually of obsolete ships, all round the world.

The traditional view is that the Navy, led by reactionary admirals, was opposed to the introduction of the submarine and even as late as 1914 had failed to realise the threat posed by the submarine. This is clearly nonsense as the RN submarine force in 1914 was almost as large as that of the next two navies combined. What is surprising is the number of admirals who are on record as supporting submarine building and seeing submarines and mines as making at least the southern North Sea as a no-go area for battleships.

The history of submarine building in this era is unclear and the author has clearly tried hard to unravel it (so have I!). The problem was the contract with Vickers made it almost impossible to use other shipbuilders unless the designs came from

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\* This book is virtually unobtainable in ordinary book shops but may be obtained over the web from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) at £29.94 including postage – my copy took 14 hours to arrive.

abroad. This led to some very unsuccessful boats based on Italian designs – here I must disagree with LAMBERT who claims that DNC supported the Italian designs, my information is the exact opposite. He also says that the DNC form for a fast fleet submarine was poor. In fact the Haslar model tests show that this form (Model UR), used for the J and K classes was the best for its speed length ratio ever tested – at least until 1988. I would also object to the statements that some classes were ‘designed’ by Roger KEYES.

FISHER also favoured ‘Flotilla Defence’ in which the North Sea was to be held by submarines, destroyers and by the use of minefields. The battlefleet could hold the northern approaches. FISHER saw the DREADNOUGHT as cost saving, reducing the number of ships in commission. LAMBERT is incorrect in suggesting that commercial yards built faster than the Royal Dockyards; in fact the figures show that the dockyards averaged about a year faster than commercial yards. From 1905 onwards the government was Liberal, not much interested in defence, dedicated to cutting spending whilst increasing social security payments. FISHER negotiated this situation with great skill, getting rid of older ships produced genuine savings whilst some exaggeration of the German threat helped maintain the budget.

The illustrations are familiar and poorly reproduced but this does not distract from a splendid book. In places it is controversial but the author supports his views with a very large number of references. Any student of the RN at the start of the 20th century should read this book – and then re-read it. It may also help in dealing with parsimonious politicians.

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REYNOLDS, Leonard C. *Home Waters MTBs and MGBs at War 1939 – 1945*. Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 2000. 215 pages, 100 illustrations. ISBN 0 75092 518 3. Price £20.

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

This is the third in a series covering all MTB and MGB operations in World War II.\* According to the author there were 266 ‘short’ boats fighting 308 engagements in Home waters with the loss of 76 boats and 285 men. There were few suitable craft available at the outbreak of war and the author makes much of this apparent neglect. However, up to 1940 there was no enemy coastline within range of these craft and, with so many other shortages, the Admiralty may be excused in this area. There were specific problems in engines and in weapons.

Pre 1940 designs had favoured the Italian Isotta Fraschini engine, which ceased to be available when Italy joined the war, or the Rolls-Royce MERLIN of which 107 marinized versions were built. Only when the US PACKARD became available did these craft again develop worthwhile speeds. Originally, MTBs and MGBs were seen as separate types but later the more powerful engines and stronger hulls enabled both guns and torpedoes to be carried. The effectiveness of their torpedoes was greatly enhanced when the Mk VIII with the CCR magnetic pistol was introduced.

This is a book of actions and of people and makes thrilling reading. The ‘Aces’ are still remembered – Robert HICHENS (‘Hitch’), Peter DICKENS and ‘Harpy’ LLOYD – but many others did their share or more.

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\* *Dog Boats at War* and *Mediterranean MTBs at War* have been reviewed and are still available.

The numerous photographs are well selected though, perhaps, with too many 'family groups'. On a personal note, I am delighted to see how many come from the remarkable collection of Geoff HUDSON who has been studying the history of Coastal Forces since we were at school together more than half a century ago.

The author's trilogy forms a remarkable record of these flimsy but powerful craft who, it is claimed in one Admiralty press release, fought 780 actions in European waters, firing 1,169 torpedoes and sinking more than 500 enemy vessels for the loss of 170 of our craft. There seem to be only a few minor errors. If you enjoyed the earlier books hurry up and get this one.

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TUCKER, Spencer C. *Handbook of 19th Century Naval Warfare*. Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 2000. 288 pages, 158 illustrations. ISBN 0 7509 2171 4. Price £25.

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

Until quite recently the navies of the 19th century have been badly served by historians with few books and many errors of fact. During the 1960s a small group, mainly working for the National Maritime Museum, including Tony PRESTON, David LYON and your reviewer, met regularly vowing to correct the history of the period with some success. Many of the old fallacies derive from a book *Naval Administrations* by a senior civil servant named BRIGGS and now recognized as a political tract rather than history.

TUCKER avoids most of the pitfalls and has produced a short and readable account of the ships and naval operations of the period. Technical advances such as steam, screw propellers, iron hulls followed by steel and in guns are covered. The author seems a little confused over armour developments, particularly at the end of the period when developments were so rapid.

Operations, which were more numerous than usually recognized, are well covered. The author is American and there is a welcome input of USN (and Confederate) material, particularly from the civil war and the US war with Spain. The photographs are well selected and well reproduced.

There are a number of errors, mainly trivial – no author can avoid these – but one or two are more serious. He repeats the fallacy that the First Lord, MELVILLE, wrote to the Post Office in 1827 advising against the purchase of steamships which, might destroy Britain's naval supremacy. This has been shown in several of his sources to be a later fabrication, probably by BRIGGS, and can also be seen as unlikely as by that date MELVILLE, himself, had ordered a number of steamships for the RN. TUCKER also defines range of stability as the,

'angle to which a ship could heel before it began to right itself.'

It is the opposite – the angle at which righting moment vanishes.

TUCKER covers much the same ground as HILL's *War at Sea in the Ironclad Age*, also reviewed here and the choice is best seen as a matter of taste.

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