BOOK REVIEWS

THE IMPORTANCE OF SEA POWER

Holmes, James R., and Toshi Yoshihara. *Chinese Naval Strategy in the 21st Century: The Turn to Mahan.* New York: Routledge, 2008. 167pp. $140

Although China's sudden quest to dominate its littoral waters with an ever expanding fleet and deliberately innovative weapons continues to be well publicized, the theoretical impetus for this radical reorientation remains murky. As their book's subtitle indicates, Holmes and Yoshihara attribute the major thrust to the conscious study and explicit adoption (and adaptation) of Mahan's apparently timeless discussion on the essential nature of sea power.

In eight concise but informative chapters based upon extensive research using primary sources, *Chinese Naval Strategy* examines how this intensifying, sea-oriented aggressiveness and underlying strategic vision have managed to evolve over the past decade within the persistent countercurrent of such heritage concepts as Mao's land-based "aggressive defense"; reprises current analyses in the light of Mahan's assertions on the necessity of commanding the commons and his historical analysis of the American situation; describes Liu Huaqing's formative influence in shifting the direction and concept of naval affairs; dissects recent evaluations, taking exception to those that dismiss the naval abilities of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as outmoded; and examines efforts to overcome operational constraints imposed by the extended "first island chain." The perceived threats posed by the contiguous powers of Japan and South Korea are also noted, and the danger of possible confrontation with American "hegemonic" power is summarily explored before the book is brought to an end with an incisive overview of possibilities and projections.

Holmes and Yoshihara deliberately focus upon littoral waters, resulting in a sustained examination of the relevant strategic issues that necessarily excludes any contemplation of potential PRC clashes with Southeast Asian countries or India (with whom the PRC is already embroiled in an arms race despite a conspicuous "charm offensive"). They succinctly analyze the Taiwan question in terms of the island's strategic significance as an intolerable constraint when exploited by enemy forces but a formidable bastion for future PRC power

projection. Moreover, while avoiding the entanglements of hard force specifications, they note the growing arsenal of land-based intermediate-range ballistic missiles and cruise missiles that might be employed in an integrated sea-denial effort, with possibly dire consequences.

Before receiving his PhD in international law and diplomacy, James Holmes had a lengthy career as a naval engineering officer, studied at the Naval War College, and pursued crucial oceanic issues. Toshi Yoshihara, who has competence in both Chinese and Japanese, has focused on Chinese strategic questions since earning his doctorate from the Fletcher School. Amid the highly balkanized world of contemporary Chinese security studies, the ongoing dialogue of these two Naval War College professors has produced a perceptive, balanced analysis that remains sensitive to operational constraints and escapes the narrow perspective often characterizing works by single authors.

Apart from issues explicitly raised, the book prompts numerous questions for contemplation. For example, what are the implications of "command of the commons" in peacetime? (Can the PRC exclude other nations from its littoral waters simply by threat and coercion, thereby achieving Sunzi's ideal, or will assertions of localized superiority inevitably spawn conflict?) How will Mahan's thrust be realized in the South China Sea, through land bases or vulnerable naval assets? Thus, despite the lamentable lack of maps and inevitable source constraints, *Chinese Naval Strategy* should be deemed critical reading for anyone concerned with PRC strategy and intentions.

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Erickson, Andrew S., Lyle J. Goldstein, William S. Murray, and Andrew R. Wilson, eds. *China's Future Nuclear Submarine Force*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2007. 412pp. $45

From the title, readers might expect this book to focus solely and closely on the People's Republic of China's aspirations to develop nuclear submarines as a means to enhance the reach of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). However, the seventeen chapters in this volume range well beyond submarines, considering more broadly what may be inferred from evolving naval capacities about the PRC's grand strategic objectives. Contributors to this book sift evidence—much of it from Chinese sources—for insight about what, specifically, Beijing is developing the capacity to do and what it is likely to do with it. Therefore, this work is likely to appeal not only to the submarine enthusiast but to any reader who is curious about the role of naval development in the PRC's quest to expand its military power.

The book, an outgrowth of a conference sponsored in 2005 by the China Maritime Studies Institute at the U.S. Naval War College, features contributions by some of America's most prominent (and promising) analysts of PRC naval affairs. It offers readers an incomparably thorough view from open sources of an emerging phenomenon and of the debate among analysts about the significance of this development. As with many edited volumes, this book offers in variety and breadth of topics what it may lack in cohesion and focus. Yet it does provide persuasive evidence that the PLAN is substantially expanding its submarine force—apparently making

subs rather than aircraft carriers the "centerpiece" of its development.

Contributors are generally in agreement that "hard" evidence about what the PRC is developing is still rather spotty. Where evidence is solid the news is bracing, though hardly surprising. It suggests that the PLAN is rapidly building and buying naval capabilities with the concerted aim of deterring the United States—particularly from action in the waters surrounding Taiwan—and, in combat, of significantly damaging American assets. Although that story pertains to far more than the proliferation of nuclear submarines, the book explains how integral China's evolving undersea capabilities are to that mission. Questions remain, though, about whether the PRC also intends its submarines to be deployed as part of a strategic retaliatory force—a far more menacing, though equally unsurprising, ambition.

Threaded throughout this volume is a debate about what Beijing's increasingly assertive maritime doctrine means for the United States. While some contributors make evident the colossal technical and operational obstacles that the PLAN still faces in mastering the arts of submarine warfare, others caution against complacency. Andrew Erickson and Lyle Goldstein assert that Beijing's program to develop nuclear submarines may offer "one of the best single indicators of whether or not China has ambitions to become a genuine global military power." Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt, U.S. Navy (Ret.), observes that although the PRC is taking considerable strides toward the implementation of a more robust maritime strategy and appears to have the economic resources to continue along that path, the United States also has the resources to maintain its formidable advantages over an evolving PLAN, if Washington remains determined to use them for that purpose.

ALAN WACHMAN
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Walton, C. Dale. *Geopolitics and the Great Powers in the Twenty-first Century: Multipolarity and the Revolution in Strategic Perspective*. New York: Routledge, 2007. 160pp. $125

C. Dale Walton, PhD, is a lecturer at the University of Reading, in the United Kingdom, specializing in strategic studies and foreign policy.

Over the past half-century the field of geopolitical studies has been void of scholarly works at the (Sir Halford) Mackinder and (Nicholas) Spykman level of inquiry. However, Walton's *Geopolitics and the Great Powers in the Twenty-first Century* is a work of such foresight and ambition that it just might stand in such company. Unlike most of his fellow classical realists, who tend to limit their prescriptive endeavors to sensible warnings—or at best general policy recommendations—Walton pushes the prescriptive and predictive potential of history to its limit (in some cases possibly over the limit) as he uses history to formulate specific strategic guidelines for the making of policy in the future. Walton effectively merges the lessons from the past with the post–Cold War political, demographic, technological, and cultural patterns to explain the most likely geopolitical context of the near future.

Walton's message is quite simple: although it is hard to predict the future, it is possible to locate some trends that will heavily shape the future environment of international politics and that, combined with what we know about the past, will present useful criteria on what we should expect to witness in the future. His warning is also clear that security communities that "understand, accept, and encourage" such changes will have an advantage over those that do not. His two main arguments are, first, that eastern Eurasia will replace Europe as the most geopolitically important area of the world, an arena in which strategic competition will take place in a multipolar environment created by the rise of minor powers and the decline of major ones (especially the United States); and second, that the rapid pace of technological advancements will likely produce another "revolution in military affairs" of such significance that its importance will be second only to the ability of security communities to undergo a "revolution in strategic perspective" (RSP) that allows them to adapt effectively to the changing security environment.

Because much of the book focuses on the future role of technology and its likely impact on warfare, at times it appears as though Walton has abandoned classical realism and become a technophiliac futurist. He warns that the American proclivity for allowing moral issues to blur strategic clarity could prevent it from embracing the RSP. This theme, while pervading, tends to get lost in the discussions about technology—one of the very few flaws in this work. Also, Walton tends to speculate in depth about the potential of biotechnology, nanotechnology, and computer science but pays little attention to the likelihood that the future will witness an increase in competition over the strategic exploitation of space. Nonetheless, he more than makes up for these slight flaws with his thought-provoking geopolitical analysis.

Walton argues that the "Columbian Epoch" actually ended in 1991, and not at the beginning of the twentieth century as Mackinder argued. Although he delivers a sharp critique of the great British geographer, Walton actually endorses Mackinder's reasoning, recognizing that Mackinder got much more right than he did wrong and that his Heartland Theory still serves as the most useful guide for geopolitical analysis.

Geopolitics and the Great Powers in the Twenty-first Century should be mandatory reading for all American students of geopolitics. One should expect that military schools and other institutions of higher learning in Asia will certainly embrace its message, particularly as it is given by a Westerner who attempts in a reasonable and persuasive manner to make the connection between Asia's rise and history's geopolitical patterns. Although many of Walton's predictions are speculative, he has surely succeeded in constructing a new framework for students of geopolitics. Few will argue with his choice of questions, but ideally his answers will spark a much-needed high-level debate about the future path of geopolitics and strategy. A work like this invites challenges, but the gauntlet that Walton has thrown down will provide no easy opportunities for dissent. I would suspect that like Mackinder, Walton will be one of a very small group of strategists who in their

attempts to anticipate the patterns of future strategic history will be more right than wrong.

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Schleifer, Ron. *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada: Israeli and Palestinian Media Politics and Military Strategies.* Portland, Ore.: Sussex Academic, 2006. 272pp. $69.50

In the wake of the second Palestinian intifada against Israel (2002 through 2006), it has been easy to lose sight of the fact that the first intifada (December 1987 through October 1991) was largely nonviolent but highly successful. It achieved the primary goal of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)—forcing Israel to recognize the PLO by initiating negotiations. In this work Ron Schleifer offers a unique, though logically flawed, perspective of the first intifada, which he describes as "political warfare." That is, he examines how the PLO assumed control of what began as a spontaneous nonviolent uprising in December 1987 to produce a successful campaign that was based on a range of largely persuasive techniques and lasted more than three years. Schleifer analyzes the successful Palestinian tactics and compares them to the unsuccessful Israeli response through the components of "psychological operations" (PSYOP) as presented in the *U.S. Army Manual of Psychological Warfare.*

Schleifer's book is based on research gathered for his doctoral dissertation completed at the University of Leeds. He chose the PSYOP manual and its taxonomy as his theoretical basis, and he is at his best when using the components of the PSYOP manual to analyze and compare how both sides prepared their campaigns, determined and applied consistent themes or messages, chose and used dissemination techniques and tactics, responded to enemy messages, and applied countermeasures. He offers convincing evidence that within the first few weeks of the uprising, the PLO seized and maintained the initiative and dominated what we now call "the information environment," while the Israelis, riven by internal ambiguity and dissent, floundered.

Unfortunately, this work is ultimately unsatisfying, because its organization and thesis have logical flaws. Readers interested in a more concise, better organized analysis of nonviolent conflict based on psychological operations can find it in Schleifer's 2006 article "Psychological Operations: A New Variation of an Age Old Art: Hezbollah versus Israel," published in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* volume 29, pp. 1–19. For readers interested in the specific tactics used in the first intifada, this book will serve as a high-quality resource. This work has several critical shortcomings, one of them its title. A better title might have focused on the key concept and not the methods. Second, although he thoroughly reviews how "propaganda" and "psychological operations" acquired their negative connotations before and after World War II, Schleifer applies only a restrictive definition of PSYOP. The PSYOP manual, however, uses a different primary definition and categorizes different types. He analyzes a complete taxonomy in terms of his own different, limited, definition.

Third, although his basic premise is that the Palestinians were conducting "political warfare," he only briefly discusses the concept and does not apply all the elements of his definition to the intifada. Schleifer asserts that the term, invented by the British to replace "propaganda," encompasses a broader range of strategies, everything from nonviolent propaganda and civil disobedience to violent terrorism and insurgency. He claims that the primary commonality of these strategies (to replace or complement conventional warfare) is sufficient for a theoretical analysis of the intifada. But he excludes violent action (terrorism and insurgency, as practiced primarily by Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah) from his analysis of how the Palestinians conducted political warfare. Examining only a few categories of political warfare appears to undermine his theory.

In sum, Schleifer has written an interesting study of how the PLO and its partners used a variety of nonviolent persuasive tactics to achieve a significant short-term political goal. Future study should define "political warfare" more precisely and examine how and why this term substantively differs from civil disobedience, nonviolent conflict, low-intensity conflict, propaganda, and psychological operations, and whether it offers a significant new perspective.

ROBERT L. PERRY
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West, Diana. *The Death of the Grown-Up: How America's Arrested Development Is Bringing Down Western Civilization*. New York: St. Martin's, 2007. 256pp. $23.95

"Stop, before you hurt yourself! Why? Because I said so"—a common diktat from a caring parent to child, about setting limits on behavior. The historical role of grown-ups has been to nurture, protect, and teach fledglings about self-destructive behavior. So how, then, is raising children the unifying theme of a book about the decline of Western civilization?

The answer, as Diana West argues convincingly, is a direct correlation between decades of moribund moral norms, owing to vanishing societal maturity, and America's inability to grasp the seriousness of emerging global dangers. Like a child that keeps playing, unwilling to obey the call for bedtime, America is simply not paying attention to a world of growing challenges. Worse yet, the author contends, there are no adults around to take away the toys.

Of course West, an esteemed syndicated columnist and writer, is not the first to observe the decline of adult influence or the erosion of individual responsibility, nor is she original in excoriating society and lamenting the erosion of the nuclear family. Nonetheless, West's meticulous assemblage of tangible evidence, superb research, insightful analysis, and application of theory to national security issues make this book extraordinary.

According to West, the gradual "death of the grown-up" began not with the revolutionary 1960s but rather directly following World War II. Business visionaries saw the exploding generation of youth as future consumers with unparalleled financial potential. Throughout the 1950s the magic of the anti-adult was personified, according to West, by the likes of music's Elvis Presley, fiction's Holden Caulfield, and

Hollywood's James Dean. Fed by postwar consumerism and entertainment focused so exclusively on adolescents, adult influence rapidly declined. West quips that by 1960, "American culture was no longer being driven by the adult behind the wheel; it was being taken for a ride by the kids in the back seat."

Indeed, West offers a point of view echoed by other thinkers of "second thoughts" that the entire antiwar movement of the 1960s was driven less by concern about American foreign aggression than by mere self-interest in avoiding military service. Evidence the 1970 campus violence that forced this reviewer to carry an Army Reserve Officer Training Corps uniform in a paper bag. One year later, the draft lottery quelled most opposition from college-aged adolescents who, like children, no longer "had to do" what they did not like. The consequences of national immaturity became clear when a "Huey" helicopter lifted off from a besieged Saigon rooftop in 1975. By then, however, Americans had been distracted by *Jaws* and dancing to "You Sexy Thing." In 1977, Jimmy Carter made good on his campaign promise to grant draft-dodgers amnesty, revealing that adult responsibility was dead in the White House as well.

Remaining ignorant as they aimed to understand "the other," Americans lost their sense of themselves. It therefore follows as no surprise, according to West, that when faced with terrorism on a global scale, America declared war on a tactic instead of the people and culture who used it. West believes that our biggest handicap is "a perilous lack of cultural confidence . . . our renunciation of cultural paternity [which is] a natural consequence of believing in our own illegitimacy."

A snapshot of popular news headlines suggests West is correct. Frightened of and ignorant about Islam, Americans—63 percent of whom, *National Geographic* says, cannot find Iraq on a world map—are like kids with no one to advise them. So they blissfully amuse themselves with self-absorbing distractions, such as Hollywood drama, reality television, and who gets voted off the island. Meanwhile, modern-day religious fascists plot their destruction.

This book is intense, no-nonsense, challenging, and clearly written with passion reflecting parentlike frustration. Readers—most of whom, like the author herself, are products of post–World War II parents—may become uneasy, as I did, when West's rapier finger pushes a personal button. However, this book is a must, since eventually violent extremism will force America to shake off decades of immature behavior and grow up. As West aptly concludes, "A civilization that forever dodges maturity will never live to a ripe old age."

JEFFREY H. NORWITZ
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Vogel, Stephen. *The Pentagon, a History: The Untold Story of the Wartime Race to Build the Pentagon, and to Restore It Sixty Years Later*. New York: Random House, 2007. 626pp. $32.95

This title accurately describes Stephen Vogel's book, but it does not do his engrossing story justice. Vogel, a veteran military reporter for the *Washington Post,* has written the biography of a building, complete with its conception, formative years, aging, and even crisis

events. The building comes to life through the experiences of the strong cast of personalities who planned, built, upgraded, repaired, and worked within it throughout the first sixty years of its history. Vogel's story takes shape in early 1941, with Franklin Roosevelt's War Department and its concerns about the ability of the United States to plan for and wage what it saw as a coming global war. At that time, the War Department had twenty-four thousand employees, scattered throughout Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland, in twenty-three separate buildings, including apartments, shacks, and even a Leary's Garage at 24th and M streets. After Germany invaded Russia in June 1941, the requirement for more space was urgent, and the Army turned to Brigadier General Brehon B. Somervell, its Quartermaster Corps's Chief of Construction Division, to solve the problem.

Vogel fills with color and detail his story of the fast-paced construction of the largest office building in the world. By March 1942, over ten thousand men were working on the site. They dredged 680,000 tons of sand and gravel from the Potomac and pounded in 41,492 concrete piles and columns that would support a building with 17.5 miles of corridors and five floors, plus a mezzanine and basement.

Vogel does not end his story with the completion of the building in February 1943. He describes numerous later events as diverse as General Eisenhower's getting lost in the building, the Navy brass refusing to move in, and stories of secretaries of defense James Forrestal and Robert McNamara. His book includes chapters on the Vietnam antiwar protests at the Pentagon on 21 October 1967 and on the over-billion-dollar "remaking" of the Pentagon during major improvements and upgrades during the 1990s. The two concluding and most moving chapters relate the tragic loss of 184 lives and the destruction and repair of the west side of the Pentagon from the horrific impact of the hijacked American Airlines Flight 77 on 11 September 2001. Despite the damage the building held, in part due to the strength of the spiral steel reinforcing bar used in the concrete columns during its original construction. Perhaps this and the related remarkable story of the rebuilding of the Pentagon in less than a year are fitting testimonies to the quality of the people and builders of yesterday and today. Vogel has stated that "it took me longer to write the book than it took them to build the Pentagon." No doubt true, but Vogel's book and its story of a Washington landmark and a globally recognized icon of American power were worth the wait.

WILLIAM CALHOUN
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Kinnard, Douglas. *The War Managers: Thirtieth Anniversary Edition.* Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2007. 216pp. $19.95

This unique and classic book was based on a sixty-item questionnaire administered to 173 U.S. Army officers who served as commanding generals in the Vietnam War. The author, Douglas Kinnard, a West Point graduate and Princeton PhD, served two tours in Vietnam, including one as a brigadier general, and was known to many if not all of his respondents. The postal survey

was fielded in September 1974, when the author, having retired from active duty, was on the faculty of the University of Vermont. Kinnard's guarantees of anonymity and his rapport with his peers elicited a response rate of nearly 70 percent. Many of those surveyed also added written commentaries. Questions dealt with a range of issues, including strategy, tactics, personnel management, the role of the media, rules of engagement, and recommended changes "if we had to do it over." The findings are disturbing, not only for people who lived through the Vietnam era but for those of us who are witnesses to history repeating itself in Iraq. Nearly 70 percent of the generals who responded stated that they were uncertain of the Vietnam War's objectives. Many conceded that they had overestimated the capability of South Vietnamese forces and had underestimated the extent of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam's corruption and ineptitude. Over 50 percent of respondents thought that U.S. forces should not have engaged in combat in Vietnam. These views were recorded some seven months before the fall of Saigon.

Among the richest data in the book are the marginal notations by the respondents. It was widely acknowledged that the system for measurement of progress, based on body counts and kill ratios, fell victim to the natural optimistic bias of military men. The system was denounced by one respondent as "a fake—totally worthless." Another general replied, "The immensity of the false reporting is a blot on the honor of the Army."

Kinnard devotes a good deal of attention to the fact that despite such perceptions, dissent had been uncommon among the generals. This is not surprising, given the risks such dissent would have posed to their careers. Writing in 1976, in the immediate postwar and Watergate years, Kinnard was cautiously optimistic that the officer corps could henceforth stand up and be counted. Unfortunately, thirty years later, dissent still remains hazardous to one's career.

Without wishing to strain comparisons between Iraq and Vietnam, one cannot read Kinnard's book without developing a sad sense of history repeating itself. He reminds us that "in the Vietnam War there was too much tricky optimism from LBJ on down." Misplaced faith in the integrity and capacity of the local forces has a familiar ring. So too do cover-ups of egregious human rights abuses and insensitivity to indigenous culture.

One hopes that among the generals who have served or who will serve in Iraq, there is one who might be tempted to follow in Kinnard's footsteps and seek the candid views of his or her peers about the conflict. The same lessons remain to be learned.

PETER GRABOSKY
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Holloway, James L., III. *Aircraft Carriers at War: A Personal Retrospective of Korea, Vietnam, and the Soviet Confrontation*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2007. 479pp. $34.95

For three decades, Admiral James L. Holloway III has been one of the great supporters and promoters of the work of the U.S. Navy's historians, through his role as president and then chairman

of the Naval Historical Foundation, a position he has actively held since retiring from active duty as Chief of Naval Operations in 1978. With the Naval Historical Foundation, Holloway has played an essential role in developing the "Cold War Gallery," now in progress at the National Museum of the U.S. Navy in the Washington Navy Yard. His connection to that ongoing project led him to think about the broader aspects of the Cold War, as well as his own personal reminiscences of it. With the publication of this book Admiral Holloway now makes his own direct contribution to the writing of naval history, as well as providing a fascinating memoir of that period.

The genre of the naval officer's memoir is a specialized and important one in naval literature. Unfortunately for historians, few American contributions have been published in recent decades, although those of us working in this field have benefited from the growing body of transcribed oral history interviews, for use as sources.

Holloway is at his best in his well-crafted and evocative descriptions of personal experiences at sea and in the air. The book opens with one of his most compelling—a dramatic description of the view from the Mark 37 fire-control director in USS *Bennion* (DD 662) as he watched a formation of Japanese battleships moving at twenty-five knots with all guns firing as they emerged from the Surigao Strait off Leyte on 25 October 1944.

Admiral Holloway insists, "This book has been about aircraft carriers." That is true—aircraft carriers provide a central strand to Holloway's career, as well as a central theme to his book—but the book is about much more. It is not just an enthusiast's view of his favorite ship type, although that comes through clearly enough; his views and experiences are so balanced that they make the book more than one written for naval aviators alone. This is a book for everyone interested in the U.S. Navy in the second half of the twentieth century. It is a carefully crafted personal view of the Cold War era from the changing perspectives of an exceptionally fine officer as he rises to the top. He keeps this sharp professional focus, judiciously avoiding personal and tenuous issues. Throughout, Admiral Holloway shows himself to be an excellent writer, one who has additionally benefited from very sound advice in preparing this memoir.

There are many incidents of broad interest to be found in this volume. For example, readers interested in the history of the Naval War College will take particular note of Holloway's account of how the secretary of defense intervened in the Navy's selection of the President of the Naval War College with a new requirement to interview the Navy's candidate, Vice Admiral James Stockdale.

Most importantly, however, Holloway's memoir puts into context his major career achievements, not only in developing the nuclear carrier program but equally in his concept for the operational organization of the carrier battle group and his personal involvement in improving the Navy program management through *Strategic Concepts for the U.S. Navy* (NWP-1A). Additionally, Holloway's memoir provides interesting insight into the failed Iranian hostage rescue operation of 1980 from his experience as chairman of the Special Operations Review Group.

In "The Future: The Past as Prologue," Holloway concludes with an overview of recent naval trends and with his carefully considered views on the present and future role for aircraft carriers. In short, Holloway's combination of memoir and history with an explanation of his professional judgments makes this a book that deserves to be read widely, by people both inside and outside the U.S. Navy.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF
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Dickinson, H. W. *Educating the Royal Navy: Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Education for Officers*. New York: Routledge, 2007. 258pp. $125

From time to time every reader experiences the peculiar delight of discovering a fascinating gem of a book lurking behind an unremarkable cover and prosaic title. While not for the casual reader, *Educating the Royal Navy* is just such a find for those with an interest in the profession of arms at sea. The author, Harry Dickinson of King's College London, has done masterful work at charting the surprisingly convoluted and highly politicized course of educating the men who led what was at the time the world's greatest navy. His book is well worth reading.

Dickinson dispels many casually held beliefs concerning Britain's senior service and its officer corps. For example, the vaunted lieutenant's exam, established by Samuel Pepys and later enshrined in C. S. Forester's *Hornblower* series, was not a uniformly applied rigorous test of an officer's professional skill and knowledge but a most uneven event that at times entered the realm of the absurd. He also makes clear that patronage and classism were as rampant in the British naval officer corps as in its army equivalent. Correcting the historical record is just one of the book's contributions to the field.

Dickinson focuses on a major theme in each chapter, while maintaining a more or less chronological approach. The first theme of note is the British attempt to determine if it was more beneficial to train officers ashore or afloat and, if afloat, whether on board dedicated training ships or on vessels sailing on active service.

Another theme concerns the men who did the actual educating. Dickinson fully describes how shortcomings in the naval education system led to professional "tutors" who used "cramming" as a means of getting officers to pass required exams, which did little or nothing to help those officers retain their temporarily gained knowledge or deepen the intellectual capital of the service.

Dickinson, who has taught at the Royal Navy colleges of Greenwich and Dartmouth and at the U.S. Naval Academy, does not shy away from comparing British educational efforts to those of Britain's rivals. He concludes that the Royal Navy lagged badly behind those other naval powers, including Germany. Dickinson also admits that the Americans developed a "genuine naval war college" well in advance of their British cousins.

Dickinson's book is so interesting that one wishes he had specifically examined the impact of the Royal Navy's unquestionably successful seagoing performance and of the complacency that

success may have created in naval leaders of the day when it came to efforts to change the service's professional education. While there were occasionally spectacular failures, such as the *Camperdown/Victoria* collision of 1893, British naval officers could invoke the contemporary equivalent of "if it's not broke, don't fix it" as justification for leaving educational structures intact.

It is also important to note that while Dickinson's history is deeply rewarding, *Educating the Royal Navy* illuminates military educational issues and questions that remain to the current day. How do military education systems adapt themselves to emerging political and technological needs? To what degree should seafaring practicality drive naval education? Can officers acquire more than a practical education at sea? Is time at sea more important to an officer's education and eventual contribution to the service and nation than attending follow-on schooling assignments ashore? Do navies operate in such demanding environments and possess such unique cultures that officers must be captured at an early age if naval life is ever to seem both reasonable and natural to them? How much education can a resource-constrained navy afford? What is the proper blend of theoretical and applied knowledge? Dickinson, as is appropriate, does not take a side when identifying these questions, but he reminds us they remain to be answered for every generation of sailors.

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