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Fighting the Great War at Sea: Strategy, Tactics and Technology

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the book series's stated purpose of asking "the right questions." With the operational factors of time, space, and force still vital to success, few questions with which the Marine Corps must struggle in the twenty-first century relative to Ellis were asked. The editor's acceptance of "Air-Sea Battle" as a valid concept relative to Ellis falls short. The editor's comments fail to question shortfalls of the current Navy-Marine Corps team to sustain the logistics necessary for any large-scale amphibious operations in the maritime environment of the Pacific—a setting whose scope and scale have not changed since Ellis's day. Questions should be asked about whether current equipment procurement can fulfill the tenets Ellis was prescient in defining should they become required again in this century. This solid work of scholarship, produced by a junior Marine Corps officer, missed a chance to challenge current Marine Corps efforts by failing to ask tough questions the way that Ellis did a century ago. So, for practitioners of war, *read this book*, but keep a paper and pen handy to scribe your own tough questions for the future.

DAVID C. FUQUEA



Friedman, Norman. *Fighting the Great War at Sea: Strategy, Tactics and Technology*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2014. 416pp. \$85

This title is the most recent "tour de force" from this prolific and authoritative naval historian. It is a massive undertaking in almost every way, from its imposing 12" x 10" coffee-table format to its 360-plus pages (over 400 with notes) filled with dense, small print and lavishly illustrated with contemporary photographs. People familiar with

Friedman's other works will understand that it is no exaggeration to say that the detail that he provides in these captions alone could form the framework for any number of smaller, themed books were they to be collected and organized differently. So, coffee-table format it may be, but this is a serious work, covering all aspects of the maritime war in an encyclopedic fashion. The endnotes alone run to forty-plus pages and, while we may lament the imprecise citations in some areas, the notes are filled with further ideas to stimulate still more work in the future.

In many ways this is a book that only Dr. Friedman could have attempted; most others would have shied away from the immensity of the task and back into the comfort of a focused analysis on a smaller, more easily bounded theme. Friedman, however, has an almost unique ability to sweep across the disciplines, picking out the main points and delving into both the historical and technological detail where necessary. A case in point is his exposé of the loss of the three British battle cruisers at Jutland, a tragedy that he lays squarely at the feet of the poor magazine practices prevalent in certain quarters of the Grand Fleet at the time and not, in spite of the official sanction, the result of any undue design flaws in the ships themselves. Such an approach is not an easy one, and some may feel that the book sits rather uncomfortably between the true historical monograph or narrative and a specialist reference work as a result. Technically speaking, it is neither. The text is not chronological and is too dense and concentrated to be read easily from cover to cover, while the inconsistent citations, although far better than in other works, will likely still aggravate the serious scholar. Enticing and unattributed

comments like “in the words of one senior officer . . .” or “Jellicoe’s pre-battle correspondence reveals . . .” can make for a frustrating start for a researcher.

What the volume does do very well is to provide a technically well-informed, strategic, and tactical analysis of the main events from a maritime practitioner’s perspective. As Friedman himself explains in his introduction, “It is not a full, operational history, but instead it explores various themes in the naval history of the war, many of them technological and tactical.” He opens, logically enough, by examining the prewar strategic aspirations and expectations of the main protagonists, following with two very useful chapters on the resources available to each side and their expectations with regard to the new technology. Somewhere here in these first four chapters, however, there is arguably one of his few omissions, and this would be a more detailed coverage of Admiral “Jackie” Fisher’s interdependent and comprehensive series of reforms drawn out for the Royal Navy between 1902 and 1907. While admittedly taking place well before the period covered by the book, they (and Fisher’s character) were hugely influential in shaping the navy that fought the Great War—from the ships that it built to the intellectual leanings and the polarization of attitudes within the officer corps. Given the depth with which Friedman covers the other, related subjects and the controversies surrounding the advent of the “all-big-gun” ship to which he later refers, this would have been a useful foundation and might have enriched the rather truncated and one-sided discussion on the rationale for the battle cruiser that comes later in chapter 8.

The second half of the text examines the nature of the ships themselves, starting

with the capital ships and the fleets into which they were organized, before moving on to consider the newer forms of warfare, including inshore warfare, amphibious warfare, submarines and their counters, trade protection, and mine warfare. This is where Friedman excels, his eye for detail and technical acumen allowing him to describe accurately the precise ways in which new technologies altered the very nature of the maritime problem. As has often been said, while the big fleets and the capital ships that make them up may underwrite the notion of a nation’s claim to sea control and act as its overall guarantor, it is the smaller craft that actually exercise it. So it was with the Great War, and Friedman amply recognizes this point, affording each and every aspect of the naval problem good coverage, thereby cementing the comprehensive nature of his work. Here again, though, the interrelated nature of some of his chosen themes, and in particular the first eight chapters, which deal with differing aspects of essentially the same capital-ship dilemma, can lead to a tendency toward repetition, which is unfortunate, even if understandable.

The overall message, though, is timeless—as valid today as it was one hundred years ago. Friedman concludes that the strategic flexibility conferred by allied sea power was the decisive factor, allowing the allied powers to continue to trade and to run the world’s economic engine for their benefit across the maritime trade routes while denying the same luxury to the Central powers. As Friedman explains, the fact that Ludendorff was not beaten in the west was ultimately irrelevant. Ludendorff’s lack of viable allies by 1918 meant that he had no other options but to hold on in the west: a path that was as futile as it was exhausting.

The only bright light was the submarine offensive, which, for a while at least, looked as though it might threaten the British trade security. Once the allies recognized the threat, their subsequent mastery over the sea gave them all the options they needed to maintain an unpredictable and intolerable pressure over their adversary, an advantage that could only lead to one outcome.

In summary, this is not a book for the casual-interest reader. It will, however, suit those who have a background in the basics of the period and in maritime warfare generally, and who wish to know more. Dr. Friedman's research credentials are impeccable, and the huge amount of factual detail he has unearthed will be sure to delight many. While not definitive in any individual theme area, there is nothing comparable in either depth or scope out there, and for this reason, if no other, this book is likely to become a standard work on the naval aspects of the Great War.

ANGUS ROSS



Patalano, Alessio. *Post-war Japan as a Sea Power: Imperial Legacy, Wartime Experience and the Making of a Navy*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. 272pp. \$112

The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) is one of the world's most powerful naval forces. As Alessio Patalano points out in his new history of the JMSDF, *Post-war Japan as a Sea Power*, its surface force is twice the size of that of the Royal Navy's, and Japan has three times as many submarines as France. However, the JMSDF has been the focus of surprisingly little writing by international historians. In fact,

prior to Patalano's welcome contribution, only three English-language books have been dedicated to the subject: Jim Auer's *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1941–1971* (Praeger, 1973); James Wolley's *Japan's Navy: Politics and Paradox, 1971–2000* (Lynne Rienner, 2000); and Euan Graham's *Japan's Sea Lane Security, 1940–2004* (Routledge, 2005).

Post-war Japan as a Sea Power is particularly important because it offers unique insight into JMSDF history by exploring its organizational and cultural identity. Patalano investigates the extent to which the modern JMSDF draws on the experience and culture of its predecessor, the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN), through access to previously unavailable archival materials, specifically records from the service's education system, recruitment data, and internal JMSDF guidance documents such as the *New Instructions* issued by each incoming chief of staff from 1961 to 2012. On top of this bedrock of archival research, Patalano, a professor at King's College London who averages several months a year in Japan, took advantage of his well-developed relationships with JMSDF officers of all ranks to conduct both focused interviews and group surveys. Patalano's extensive research reveals how heavily the IJN legacy influences the structure, role, and strategic outlook of the JMSDF.

When Japan sought to establish a maritime security force in the aftermath of World War II, its leaders studied the IJN—both its dramatic rise and catastrophic defeat. Patalano explains that the founders of the JMSDF, many of them IJN veterans, determined that the prewar navy had been plagued by its narrow professional focus. They concluded that IJN leaders and planners had