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Every Man Will Do His Duty

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having previously been victimized, O'Connell does at times come close to agreeing with some of Ehrenreich's views. Thus by the beginning of the third millennium B.C. "aggression could be dealt with in one of three ways—flight, submission or resistance—with the choice depending to a considerable degree on population size and the value, or at least replaceability, of the territory occupied. In the case of foragers, the obvious course was retreat, since almost any alternative range could support their typically sparse inhabitation densities. Alternately, small agricultural centers farming at low levels of productivity, when confronted by similar but more determined groups, might either accept accommodation and amalgamation or fall back on the inconvenient but still possible option of going elsewhere. Yet large populations dependent on the very limited quantities of land suitable for intensive cultivation were faced with the stark choice between submission and the probable loss of at least some of this vital resource—or resistance using an equivalent level of violence."

During the next millennium, cavalry began to displace absolute reliance on foot soldiering, and by the middle of the first millennium "mounted troops would prove extremely useful; hanging on the edges, reconnoitering and harrying the survivors of broken formations to prevent them from rallying, and . . . running them down and conducting the after-battle slaughter. Isolating victims, leaving them no avenue of escape and then killing them as prey—this was the ruthlessness of the hunt applied in practically its purest form." Ultimately, therefore, it would seem that O'Connell, while making no suggestion that man

was ever a predatee, also comes round to the view that while man might originally have resorted to war to preserve his possessions, he still behaved, as Ehrenreich suggests, as nothing better than a predator.

It might not be out of place to mention here the view of another writer interested in the origins of warfare. Dudley Young's *Origins of the Sacred: The Ecstasies of Love and War* (1991) has cautioned us against too easily accepting the view that war stems from hunting. While "common sense [might] say so, this has been questioned recently in the study of seemingly pacific paleolithic hunters, notably the Bushmen, the Eskimos, the Pygmies, and the Hadza of Tanzania. Each of these, however, are now living in reduced circumstances, and almost certainly practiced warfare in their heyday. . . . What is at stake here is ultimately Rousseau's noble savage, the peaceful paleolithic that knew no warfare until the neolithic and the domestication of animals. . . . To have a war you need not covet your neighbor's ass nor even his goods: his wife and above all his *territory* will suffice."

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King, Dean, and John B. Hattendorf,
eds. *Every Man Will Do His Duty*.
New York: Henry Holt, 1997.
406pp. \$27.50

The nearly twenty years from 1793 to 1815 continue to be viewed as the "Golden Age of Fighting Sail." While some readers may have been introduced to the naval campaigns of that period by historians like Alfred Thayer Mahan, most became acquainted with them by reading the novels of Forester, Parkinson, Kent, Pope, Woodman, or O'Brian (and it is to O'Brian that this book is dedicated). *Every Man Will Do His Duty* provides the opportunity to shift from fiction to fact, to read first-person accounts of events during this same eventful period. Indeed, according to the editors, one of the articles, written by Captain Thomas Cochrane in a small, fourteen-gun brig, became the historical basis for much of Patrick O'Brian's novel *Master and Commander* (although this connection is revealed to the reader only in small print, buried in the notes at the end).

This book contains twenty-two articles by seventeen authors; they are personal narratives, and all have been previously published. From the title one might infer that the authors were all ordinary seamen, but although some of them were in fact seamen or midshipmen, many later went on to become warrant officers, commanders, captains, or flag officers.

The events described here include three large battles: the First of June, Cape St. Vincent, and Trafalgar. Also included are the frigate duel between the *United States* and *Macedonian*, the encounter in Valparaiso between *Essex* and *Phoebe*, as well as the subsequent battle between them, and a number of smaller but no less interesting actions. There is also an interview with then-Captain Horatio Nelson after the battle

of Cape St. Vincent, at a time when he had yet to learn of the service's reactions to his audacity at that battle (in taking his seventy-five-gun ship *HMS Captain* alongside Spanish ships of much greater force—for which in fact he would win promotion and knighthood).

The editors have arranged the articles in chronological order, which is helpful to the reader, and they have also provided two useful summary maps, as well as detailed maps for six of the articles. King and Hattendorf have also provided informative summaries of each article (although readers who peruse the articles out of order should be warned that a portion of the summary of some of the articles appears at the conclusion of the article that precedes it). Readers can be thankful that the editors of this volume, as well as those of earlier works from which these articles have been taken, have corrected or updated the spelling and other errors that are likely to have appeared in the original versions, even though spellings like "Chili" and "Buenos Ayres" and "Margot" have been retained. The need for such editorial corrections is made painfully apparent by the inclusion of two articles written by Jacob Nagle that unfortunately contain the original spellings. Perhaps the original editor of Nagle's work would not permit updating.

Reading this work helps one to experience the uncertainties created by sightings of a "strange sail," as well as to appreciate the various measures that captains used to deceive other ships while trying to avoid being deceived themselves. The stories are a

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useful reminder that life at sea then consisted of one part discipline, one part seamanship, and one part destruction. The essays are generally clear and direct, although some betray the writing style of the early nineteenth century. There are a few euphemistic lapses when events are described years later (such as when a Vice Admiral of the Red recalls that as a midshipman at the end of a battle he and his gun crew "committed to the deep" the bodies of shipmates killed in battle. It is more likely that they unceremoniously threw the deceased over the side).

A book like this raises an important question. Should the general reader's understandings of some historical period rely more on factual or on fictional accounts? This book suggests an ambivalent answer. For example, the Cochrane case: it is somewhat reassuring to learn that the fabulous exploits of the fictional Jack Aubrey were based on real exploits of the historical Captain Thomas Cochrane. In another case, the Nelson whom fictional Jack Aubrey encounters at a dinner table appears to be consistent with the Nelson described

(after the battle of Cape St. Vincent) in an article by Colonel Bethune. But in other cases, the factual accounts contain details about flogging or avoiding impressment, for example, that would only rarely be found in fictional accounts.

Yet despite the clarity and directness of the factual accounts here, readers may sense that writers of such personal narratives may themselves have harbored some unstated but powerful motive: to persuade readers of the evils of impressment or flogging, or to impress readers with the bravery and unique experiences of the author, or to support the author's perception of honor. Writers of fiction strive to engage and sustain the attention of their readers, although they too may have larger motives. However, the reader may come away from this book with a renewed respect for the skill of the novelist who creates for us the "reality" of an earlier age.

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