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Allied and American Naval Operations in the European Theater, World I

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movie." He can help fix that deficiency by reading *The Sleeping Giant*.

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Coletta, Paolo E. *Allied and American Naval Operations in the European Theater, World War I*. Studies in American History, vol. 7. Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edward Mellen Press, 1996. 588pp. \$129.95

Paul G. Halpern's splendid *A Naval History of World War I* appeared in 1994, providing an up-to-date general survey based on thorough primary research, and it soon became an essential tool for all students of the era. Paolo Coletta's *Allied and American Naval Operations in the European Theater, World War I*, regrettably, is no match for its precursor. In fact, the reader ultimately is left to wonder what induced Dr. Coletta to write the book, where his editor and proofreader were during its production, and why the publisher issued a work in this state and at such an inflated price.

Coletta's study shows little sign of being the fruit of thorough scholarly research. Although there is an impressive, if disorganized, bibliography, it includes only a smattering of documents, all American, and even these are rarely cited. He relies far more on official histories (whose reliability and coverage is highly variable), memoirs, and secondary sources.

Coletta starts by presenting a confused and inaccurate description of the Anglo-German naval race in the pre-war years. Thereafter, his coverage is

geographic, providing separate chronological descriptions of naval events in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Adriatic, and Baltic theaters from the outbreak of war to the Armistice. This approach makes it more difficult for both the reader and the author to comprehend the interplay between events in different theaters, and it leaves the impression that each operational area was essentially isolated. Furthermore, the narrative suffers from factual confusion and error, and it displays a glaring omission—operations in the Black Sea are completely ignored.

Coletta misses two great opportunities in this book. He provides greater coverage of Adriatic operations than do most general surveys, but it is marred by his excessive reliance on the Italian official naval history, which is among the most chauvinistic and bombastic of all national studies of World War I, and by his apparent ignorance of recent interesting work on the Austrian navy. Even more regrettable is the missed opportunity to offer an overall perspective of the first half of the Great War from a neutral American stance rather than perpetuating the European nationalistic biases that still flavor much of this war's historiography.

The final content problem of this study is in its errors of historicity. Much of the analysis is colored by late-twentieth-century perspectives, an approach that profoundly misunderstands the naval paradigm of the era. The most glaring example of this is Coletta's criticism of contemporary thinking on submarine warfare. It is true that unrestricted warfare on merchant shipping was ill handled by both the British and

German navies, especially early in the war. Coletta's analysis, however, misses the point that virtually no naval officers before the outbreak of war, even those who had thought deeply on the subject, in their wildest imaginings conceived of an unrestricted campaign such as was launched in 1915. It is a serious fault to impose modern thinking on participants in events of earlier times.

In addition to its problems of content, this book suffers from severe editorial omissions. There is, in fact, no evidence whatsoever of an editorial hand. The prose is replete with malapropisms, grammatical and syntactical slips, proofreading omissions, and caption errors. It appears to be a first draft put into print as it stood. With editorial attention this study could have become a worthy contribution to the literature. As it stands, it is a disgrace to its publisher, especially at its asking price.

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McIvor, Aidan. *A History of the Irish Naval Service*. Ballsbridge, Ireland, and Portland, Ore.: Irish Academic Press, 1994. 256pp. \$39.50

Aidan McIvor's book is the first history of the Irish Naval Service, published in time for the service's fiftieth anniversary in 1996. It is a scholarly work, concentrating on archival and published material.

McIvor does not have a seafaring background. He is a graduate of the University College of Wales and the

London School of Economics, and he obviously was more comfortable approaching this task from the standpoint of an academic than of a practitioner.

The book properly focuses on the modern-day Naval Service, which began its life in 1946, when the government decided not to disband the wartime Marine Service but to make it an element of the Permanent Defence Forces. However, the author did not completely ignore the great naval and maritime tradition of the Irish people: he devotes the first chapter to the Celtic missionary mariners, who may have reached North America, to the Irish in foreign navies, and to Irish maritime endeavour. Who remembers that the inventor of the first operational submarine, John Holland, was from County Clare? This chapter puts the Irish people in their proper context as an island nation.

The second and third chapters deal with failed attempts to form a navy after achieving independence, the use of sea-borne landings by government forces during the civil war, and the setting up of an emergency naval force at the outbreak of World War II. Even though almost a hundred pages have elapsed before one arrives at the point where today's service was formed, do not begrudge the use of those pages by the author; he uses them to paint the background for his work.

The author describes the beginnings of the Naval Service in 1946 as a time of demobilisation of manpower and disposal of ships of the wartime Marine Service. With the acquisition of three Flower-class corvettes in 1947 and the injection of new personnel, including a