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Captain James Cook : A Biography,

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has not attempted to write another biography of Nelson, nor has he indulged in hagiography. Nelson's few faults as a commander are illustrated and his main human failings (vanity and an unscrupulous disregard for the sanctity of marriage) are also discussed; given the focus of this work, the author could easily have ignored them. In his subject's defense, Tracy argues that the traumatic head wound that Nelson received at the Battle of the Nile may have rendered him more susceptible to the seductive charms of Lady Hamilton.

Fortunately, Nelson's lapses in judgment were usually confined to the conduct of his personal life ashore and not his commands at sea. In the end, his vanity may have contributed to his death aboard the *Victory*—but when he was fatally wounded, the outcome of the Battle of Trafalgar was no longer in doubt. Tracy is undoubtedly correct when he alleges that because the Royal Navy has tended to emphasize the wrong aspects of Nelson's tactics and strategy, it has failed to appreciate the strength of his humanity, his leadership style, and the tactical freedom that he always sought and freely granted to his subordinates.

Overall, this is a well written and carefully researched study of the man and of the weapons, tactics, and strategy that contributed to the defeat of Napoleon's forces at sea. It offers insight into the successes and failures of the Royal Navy since the eighteenth century. There are many modern commanders who may still have something to learn from Nelson's example of the true essence of leadership. Therefore this will be a welcome addition to their library and of naval historians. It clearly shows

that the directors of Chatham have lost none of their "Conway touch."

PETER K.H. MISPELKAMP
Pointe Claire, Q.C.

Hough, Richard. *Captain James Cook: A Biography*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1995. 327pp. \$29.95

What always amazes me about Richard Hough is the number of books, both fiction and nonfiction, that he has written over the years about seagoing figures and maritime tales—keeping in mind that he served, not in the navy, but as a fighter pilot in the Royal Air Force during World War II.

This work is unlike his 1979 book about Cook's last voyage; it is more scholarly, with a less colorful narrative. Hugh begins his tale with a glimpse into the life of the newly commissioned lieutenant aboard HMS *Endeavour*, who in 1768 was given sealed orders to conduct celestial observations, discover an unknown continent, survey coastlines, study the people, examine the botany, and, with the support of the natives, colonize the land in the name of King George III. This was James Cook's first command.

Twenty-eight chapters trace the naval career of Captain James Cook. Through tireless research and analysis of archives, logs, and records from London to Tasmania, Hough brings to life one of the greatest navigators ever to exist. He reviews Cook's journey from a small Yorkshire town through three global circumnavigations. Hough begins with Cook's early infatuation with the sea. He joined a merchant shipping family

and in nine years reached the level of mate. However, discontented with sailing the English Channel, North Sea, Irish Sea, and the Baltic, Cook dreamed of exploring more distant shores and believed that the Royal Navy could satisfy his craving for discovery. In a harsh navy of sail and something akin to indentured servitude, Cook's maritime skills quickly surfaced and enabled him to become master's mate in two years. He served first aboard HMS *Eagle*, taking part in the capture of Quebec in 1759. Upon his return to England, he was given a warrant and appointed surveyor of Newfoundland in 1763. It was here that he became known for his passion for surveying and drafting charts.

Cook circumnavigated the world, completing accurate charts of Newfoundland, the South Pacific islands, Antarctica, the west coast of North America, and New Zealand. His work would serve navigators for decades. Hough has included fourteen maps and charts, a few of which illustrate Cook's own surveys of the Pacific islands and Newfoundland. There are also twenty-five illustrations

that introduce the reader to those who influenced Cook and his expeditions.

Cook's crowning achievement was the discovery of a totally unknown area, the east coast of Australia. Hough also describes a crew in awe of what they see as they cross the Antarctic Circle and come face to face with icebergs of a size they could never have imagined. Another subject is Cook's attention to his men's health; he forced them, under the threat of the lash, to consume sauerkraut and scurvygrass to prevent the dreaded scurvy. On Cook's second voyage he carried with him a newly developed chronometer, which allowed him to figure longitudes, which had always been a mystery. Captain James Cook met his fate at Kealakekua Bay in Hawaii at the hands of natives who had come to resent the English presence.

Richard Hough weaves a masterful tale of the famous Captain Cook. It is a heavily documented study that I recommend to those with a great interest in the life and times of Captain James Cook.

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