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Mutiny: A History of Naval Insurrection

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When employed as in the Mediterranean with the support of stronger warships, the gunboats did valuable work. Tucker writes, "Small vessels continued to play important roles in the world's navies and do so at the present, but only in conjunction with, not in place of, larger warships." This is something to keep in mind as the Navy is called upon in the aftermath of the Cold War to shift from a blue-water strategy to one more oriented toward seaboard operations. Successful performance in coastal waters depends on maintaining superiority in the primary naval environment of the oceans.

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Guttridge, Leonard F. *Mutiny: A History of Naval Insurrection*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1992. 318pp. \$26.95

A fascinating work of synthesis, this first-rate, historically accurate casebook captures the reader's interest through its vivid and detailed depiction of the wide spectrum of recorded "mutinous" naval activity of the last two hundred years. Guttridge expertly presents a study that reveals the common threads among incidents of naval uprising as disparate as the classic mutiny on HMS *Bounty*, the hijacking of the Krivak-class Soviet missile frigate *Storozhevoy*, and the Vietnam-era sitdown strikes aboard the United States aircraft carriers *Constellation* and *Kitty Hawk*.

Guttridge exposes throughout his captivating examination of these sometimes bloody events the universal inability of governments and their respective courts to codify uniquely the act of mutiny. Historically we have called "mutiny" not only violent, chaotic, and murderous rampages but simple disobedience, cooperative acts of fleetwide insubordination, a group's refusal to do one particular job, and "carefully orchestrated acts of passive resistance." Guttridge insightfully deals with them all. He relates how society's semantic and legal reluctance actually determined the course of events during several incidents of large-scale disobedience. He also examines how punishment following those incidents was inconsistent, sometimes involving mass commutation of death sentences, sometimes immediate, unappealed execution, and sometimes total amnesty.

Each episode, with its wealth of action-packed detail and often colorful characters, is meticulously placed within the context of its historical period. The distinction is always clearly drawn between isolated responses to truly barbaric or insensitive leadership, acts tied up with national, regional, racial, or labor movements of the day, and reactions to specific circumstances. Guttridge's masterful use of historical perspective and his well researched characterization of the players make every page come alive. For example, we see Captain William Bligh as a total human being whose career was haunted by controversy—during his employment as sailing master with Captain Cook during Cook's fateful

last voyage; in the events related to his command of HMS *Bounty*; mutinous incidents in HMS *Defiance* and during the widespread rising at the Nore; and his imprisonment for seventeen months while governor of New South Wales during the Rum Rebellion.

My only disappointment was that Guttridge did not begin his history further back than Georgian times. The discipline problems encountered by Magellan are only briefly covered in the first chapter. Drake's problems that led to the execution of Thomas Doughty in the southwest Atlantic are not discussed at all, but they would seem to offer an additional and different slant on the officer-as-mutineer subtheme so aptly covered in *Mutiny*. I know Guttridge could have told those stories well.

The author avoids lecturing his readers on leadership and communication; rather, he straightforwardly uncovers the situations leading up to each incident. André Marty's entrance into French naval service as a known anarchist, a captain's refusal to acknowledge (or correct) the serving of maggot-infested meat to the men in *Potemkin*, and the German government's inability to connect lower-deck labor movements and the Independent Social Democratic Party in 1917—all are presented without the pedantic twenty-twenty hindsight so often seen in works like this. Additionally, the author uses repeated examples showing that the characteristics and temperament of leadership that brought success to wartime naval commanders were not necessarily those needed for effective

action when confronted with hostility from those commanded.

In an effort to put the worldwide post-Bolshevik reaction in perspective, Guttridge cleverly uses the ironic though non-mutinous tale of Captain Clark Sterns, USN, whose egalitarian initiatives as captain of USS *Roanoke* won acclaim for efficiency; the ship's performance earned him a Distinguished Service Medal in 1918. Three years later, Captain Sterns, after only 107 days in command of USS *Michigan*, was relieved by the Secretary of the Navy for reflecting "a Soviet spirit [which] had crept into the Navy," as evidenced by his establishment of Morale and Discipline Committees within the enlisted ranks, one of the keys to his former success.

This book takes a hard look at how throughout the last two hundred years the common and often repeated errors of good men ignited volatile situations. The events so well documented in this book actually happened; they happened to real people in ships deployed afar, and in ships alongside their home berth. The art of communication has not changed with the ages, nor has human nature. Every commander should read and understand the lessons of *Mutiny*.

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Taylor, Robert L. and Rosenbach, William E. *Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1992. 204pp. \$49.95
The quality of leadership is critical in any organization, and its significance