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British Naval Documents 1204-1960

William James Morgan

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somewhat exaggerated title of this book is justified. An account of this early Anglo-Russian cooperation is welcome, and its subtitle defends its author from any suggestion that it might have been better had he extended his study to include Anglo-Russian cooperation to include the efforts of Admiral Seniavin and Sir John Duckworth in 1807. The whole work is richly annotated with references, some of which might have been condensed, if not taken for granted.

However, the maps are not very clear and are of little help, and the contemporary illustrations, though charming, contribute little to the understanding of so scholarly a text. This work devotes all its eight chapters to an episode which, though interesting in itself, has nevertheless been dealt with, elegantly and more economically, by Piers Mackesy in chapters two and three of *The War in the Mediterranean 1803-1810* (1957). Flayhart devotes his first three chapters to the outbreak of the War of the Third Coalition, to the war itself, and then to the formation of the coalition, in that order. This takes almost one-third of his text and as many pages as Mackesy needed to deal with the entire affair.

One wonders whether the book suffers from a desire to associate the Mediterranean fleet with the Mediterranean expedition to an unrealistic extent: "It is unlikely that Pitt in his wildest imagination ever expected that the most important outcome of sending a British expedition to the Mediterranean in

1805 would be the annihilation of the French fleet." Quite so.

The nub of the thesis is neatly put in two sentences on page 120: "The Battle of Trafalgar cost the British fleet its admiral and the French admiral his fleet," and "The Anglo-Russian invasion of the Two Sicilies commenced, approximately three weeks after the French troops left the country." It is the treatment of the relationship between these two propositions that is perplexing as regards the relevance of the book. It is interesting to read the book, and it does reflect creditably on the industry and interests of its author. But he perhaps makes too much of the connection implied in his title, while his text is rather slender as a study of Anglo-Russian cooperation. It is nevertheless a very useful essay on an all-too-neglected episode in the long fight against France, which until this century was known as the Great War.

A second edition should remove inconsistencies about the dates of Ulm and of Trafalgar, and delete the given name of Admiral Collingwood, which he ceased to sign on his elevation to the peerage.

A.B. SAINSBURY
Captain, Royal Navy Reserve
London, England

Hattendorf, John B. et al., eds. *British Naval Documents 1204-1960*. Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press, 1993. 1,196pp. \$109.95

In 1986 the Council of the Navy Records Society, looking ahead to the Society's centennial year, voted to have prepared

and published one volume of British naval documents. It is mindboggling to think of selecting, from virtually unlimited documentary resources spanning more than seven centuries from the Middle Ages to the nuclear age, a mere handful that will be considered most representative of Britain's naval history.

Five editors were selected to undertake this herculean task. Each is a recognized scholar and uniquely qualified by experience: John B. Hattendorf of the United States Naval War College; R.J.B. Knight, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; A.W.H. Pearsall, also the National Maritime Museum; N.A.M. Rodger, Public Record Office; and Geoffrey Till, Royal Naval College. The editors' stated purpose was "to produce a collection, as comprehensive as could be within a single volume, intended to serve as an introduction to British naval history for the beginner and as a basis for further enquiry for the more expert." They have achieved that goal admirably. A total of 535 documents were chosen to trace Britain's sea heritage from 1204 to 1960.

The volume is divided into seven chronological parts, for example Part I with 1204-1485, and Part VII with 1900-1960. The choice of years included in each section was not arbitrary but was determined by the density of significant naval developments; Part III examines only forty-five years, whereas others review a century or more. Each section, after a general introduction, comprises topical breakdowns (the same

ones for all): Policy and Strategy, Tactics and Operations, Administration, Materiel and Weapons, and Personnel. Under each heading is a short summary of the documents selected, and then the documents themselves. The introductions and the topic summaries are well written and informative. A user of this volume will gain a basic understanding and appreciation of British naval history.

The documents are numbered consecutively, and the source of each is listed separately near the end of the book. My preference would have been to give the source in a footnote immediately below the document, rather than several hundred pages away, but this is a minor complaint.

The Public Record Office is the holder of the great majority of the documents, which are the heart of this work. Other depositories also are well represented, including the National Maritime Museum, British Library, Imperial War Museum, and university libraries. Most of the documents are of an official nature, with such concerns as fleet strength and deployment, cost estimates, women in the navy, ship design, Admiralty Board minutes, strategy, the responses of flag officers to criticisms of their actions, reports of mutinies, and morale.

Although severely constrained by a one-volume limit, the editors—wisely, in my view—managed to include several letters from seamen to parents or wives describing shipboard life or damning having to wear the tropical white uniform while coaling ship.

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There is also an amusing document (written, I surmise, with tongue in cheek) labeled "Care of an Office Cat." It is proof positive that bureaucracy is not a new phenomenon: the keeper of the Admiralty Office, citing increased cost of milk and food, requested a small increase in the amount allowed to sustain a cat kept in the office to control the rodent population. The keeper's request was bucked up through the Admiralty chain of command for cominent and recommendations for two months before it reached the First Lord, who gave his approval "on considerations of humanity," which precluded any further delay.

A scattering of maps, a bibliography, notes on contributors, indexes, and an extensive glossary round out this work. The glossary will be particularly helpful to readers unfamiliar with nautical terminology, as well as to all those unfamiliar with British usage.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the continuation of Britain's naval supremacy seemed assured. By mid-century, after the two world wars, this had changed dramatically. No longer the worldwide, independent arbiter, the Royal Navy operated with other national navies. Professor Till writes in his introduction to Part VII: "The Navy also had to accept that it was now part of the western maritime team, and although an important player, it was not necessarily the captain. . . . By 1960 [Britain] was still a great power, if not a superpower."

From the Middle Ages to the Atomic Age, from wooden ships and smooth-bore cannon to nuclear propulsion and

guided missiles, one constant thread runs through this study. That is, the never-changing ingredient of national survival is to keep the sea lanes open, and that this aim is realized through naval strength.

A resounding "well done" goes to all who have contributed to bringing an assignment of the first order of difficulty to a successful conclusion. This work is of enduring value and impeccable scholarship.

WILLIAM JAMES MORGAN
Silver Spring, Maryland

Trumpy, Sigurd H., comp. and ed.
Naval Prints from the Beverley R. Robinson Collection. Volume I, 1514-1791. Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Academy Museum, 1991. 419pp.
\$65

Since 1933, when Beverley Robinson first offered to loan (ultimately to donate) his collection of prints to the U.S. Naval Academy, American naval scholars have recognized the collection's importance. In the passing years, it has become more widely known through the 1953 publication of a catalog and through use in exhibitions and book illustrations. Following the establishment of a trust fund for preserving and expanding the collection, its managers have found the resources to publish an illustrated catalog. This is the first in a projected series of four volumes that will not only catalog the collection in detail but also provide a richly illustrated overview of the era of fighting sail, from about 1514 to 1873.

Volume I reproduces 268 prints (thirty-two in color) for the 277 years