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Naval Prints from the Beverley R. Robinson Collection, Volume I, 1514-1791

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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

between 1545 and 1791. This beautifully produced book, slip-cased and oblong in shape, presents each print on its own page followed by a detailed description on the facing page. The compiler has transcribed, and where necessary obtained a translation of, the text appearing on the original prints and has listed with it the artists, publishers, and other relevant details. Dr. Sari Hornstein has provided a readable general introduction to the events of naval history, supplementing it with twenty one-page essays apportioned throughout the volume, giving background and explanations of the wars and battles depicted. The illustrations are arranged in rough chronological order according to the subject depicted. At the end of the book, there is a concordance of catalog and accession numbers, and also indices to subjects, ships, artists, and publishers.

The casual user of this catalog may easily be led astray by its organization. One must look closely to determine exactly how old an illustration is. While the subjects may stretch as far back as 1514, there is no print here made before 1599. Some, indeed, are nineteenth-century conjectures, revealing the romanticism of the Victorian era. While such depictions are relatively obvious to the practiced eye, the uninitiated will, in some cases, have to ponder long and hard to determine what is or is not a contemporary print. With a little effort, they may be able to answer their question by reference to the dates in the artist index, but dates are not given in all cases for the books in which prints appeared or for their publishers and print sellers. In addition, there are a

number of cases in which users of this volume could have benefited from the editor's learned conjecture as to dating, paper marks, type of print, use, or place of origin. In addition, one hopes that future volumes in so beautiful a series of books will expand beyond the basics of naval history to include essays on changing printmaking techniques and their use by naval artists, choices of theme and subject matter, schools of artists and publishers, political propaganda techniques, reflections on taste and interpretation, as well as the uses and limitations of naval prints as historical evidence.

For this early period, the Robinson Collection does not provide, by any means, an exhaustive catalog for the entire field of European naval prints in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Nevertheless, the book is representative of many important aspects of it. The scholarship and beauty of this pilot volume make an important contribution to the study of naval iconography. One looks forward to future volumes of this series in the hope that they will not only do the valuable and important service of beautifully and accurately reproducing naval prints but also further our understanding and analysis of them.

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Ebbert, Jean and Hall, Marie-Beth.
*Crossed Currents: Navy Women from
WWI to Tailhook*. New York:
Brassey's (US), 1993. 356pp. \$24
On 21 March 1917 Loretta Perfectus
Walsh was sworn into the Naval