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Submarines and the War at Sea, 1914-1918

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Strait) was almost completed at a cost to Western Union of over \$3,000,000. In the summer of 1866 Cyrus Field's fifth try at an Atlantic cable succeeded, and the Collins project was stopped. During World War II, however, when it was clear that a Japanese threat to communications to Alaska no longer existed, the road and oil line continued. Professional pride plus access to the public treasury proved to be a hindrance to making hard and timely decisions.

Twichell is a former professor at the Naval War College. He is linked to Alaska through his father's role as an engineer officer in this epic and also through the drama of discovery in his first book, which covered the Alaskan feats of General Allen, for which the author won the Allan Nevins Prize in American History.

Students of strategy, logisticians, sociologists, and adventurers who are interested in Alaska, or anyone who loves drama will benefit from reading this book. Building the Alaska highway was not strategically critical, but it was a heroic accomplishment.

WILLIAM FRED LONG
Colonel, U.S. Army, Ret.
Newport, Rhode Island

Compton-Hall, Richard. *Submarines and the War at Sea, 1914-1918*. New York: Macmillan, 1991. 314pp. \$19.95

Most readers are familiar with the exploits of the German submarine arm in the two world wars, but few are

aware of the tactical and technical innovations that all the major navies had to develop to make the submarine a viable weapon system. Richard Compton-Hall has provided us with that information. *Submarines* is a book about the people, equipment, and tactics of a naval arm that most senior naval leaders initially considered at best a technical curiosity with some possible use in coastal defense.

Compton-Hall's narrative takes the reader aboard those early British, German, and Russian submarines and provides a feel for the primitive and dangerous conditions in which submariners then served. It was a perilous profession with little promise of career rewards. It is a view that strips away the romantic myths about the early days in submarine service. Compton-Hall explains why the naval leaders of the pre-World War I era expected so little of their submarine; yet, those early pioneers persevered and provided results that shocked the world and changed naval operations forever.

The author is a former career submariner in the Royal Navy, and from his past experiences he has an insight that few can match into submarine operations. Unfortunately, he periodically laces his narrative with chauvinistic pronouncements (such as that Royal Navy sailors had more spirit, were more chivalrous, did more with less, were more innovative, than anyone else, etc.). Such statements detract from an otherwise outstanding account. Still, that is only a minor

distraction in a story written with rare credibility and enthusiasm.

This is a thorough and passionate look at the people, tactics, and equipment that shaped the world's first submarine campaigns and influenced submarine designs and operations well into the 1950s. It is a book for the serious naval historian or enthusiast.

CARL O. SCHUSTER
Commander, U.S. Navy

short introductions that place each selection within the literature.

Inasmuch as in such a work the choice, truncation, arrangement, and introduction of the documents precondition what a reader can hope to take from them, the qualifications of the editor are crucial. Professor Stamp's, of course, are of the finest: the classic study of slavery, *The Peculiar Institution*, is only one of his many books, awards, and distinctions. Stamp as historian is represented here by a passage from that book, one that presents his own conviction of the centrality of slavery in the war's causes.

Stamp, Kenneth M., ed. *The Causes of the Civil War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991. 255pp. \$10

"The Civil War," says Bernard de Voto in one of the selections in this collection, "is the crux of our history." Evidence of that fact is the number and variety of sources in this new third edition of Kenneth M. Stamp's *The Causes of the Civil War*, which first appeared in 1959. The book pulls together, in a way accessible to general readers, selections representing what appears to be the whole spectrum of opinion on the subject held by persons writing at the time or ever since. The present edition adds five new documents to the last (1974) version, for a new total of eighty-seven: primary and secondary, contemporary and subsequent. Stamp, as editor, provides a background summary (1787-1861), pithy comments on the study of historical causation in general, a list of recommended readings, an index, and perhaps most usefully,

The editor sorts his documents among seven interpretive "prisms," or broad groupings of opinion as to those causes: that they lay in a conflict between a "Slave Power" and the "Black Republicans"; or, between states' rights and nationalism; or, between attackers and defenders of slavery; or, that this was fundamentally an economic matter; or, one of gross failure of leadership; or, a systematic failure of democracy to adjudicate internal contradictions.

Documents in all these sections are selected so as to address simultaneously, as if in a matrix, three related and overarching questions: Why had the sections been so mutually hostile before the war, and for so long? Why was secession the immediate response of the Deep South to Lincoln's election? Why were most Northerners unwilling simply to let the Southern states go? Professor Stamp offers no concluding assessment of these issues,