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Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739-1748

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the nation's "largest naval fleet," are inaccurate.

The United States' first foreign war was the undeclared naval war with France, the Quasi-War, fought between 1798 and 1801. While it is true that trouble with the Barbary pirates prompted Americans to begin the construction of six frigates in March 1794, it was the crisis with France, which began three years later, that caused Congress to refine a program that had stalled, to reestablish the Marine Corps, and man the service's ships. Virtually all of the officers and warships that appear in the pages of Whipple's narrative first entered service and made their marks during the war with France. During the Quasi-War the U.S. Navy deployed as many as four squadrons to the Caribbean, and over twenty men-of-war—a force larger than that deployed to the Mediterranean. The Americans also developed the logistical know-how to conduct sustained operations far from American ports. Even the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps activities ashore (political intrigue and involvement in the affairs of Hispaniola (Haiti) in 1799 and 1800, and a small amphibious landing on Curacao in 1800) foreshadowed the dramatic cross-desert trek of William Eaton and Presley O'Bannon.

While Whipple is guilty of trying to oversell the extent to which the Tripolitan War served as the catalyst for the "birth" of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, the author is to be applauded for stressing the fact that the conflict was "America's first war with

an Arab tyrant." Too often, Americans and Europeans view the U.S. Navy's presence in the Mediterranean as uniquely an element of the Cold War. In fact, the United States has maintained a naval presence in the Mediterranean for about 150 of the last 200 years! There are, as Whipple points out, similarities between the American effort to face down the Tripolitan bashaw's state-sponsored terrorism and such efforts in the 1980s as the April 1986 El Dorado Canyon strikes against Muammar Qadhafi's Libya. For Americans, hostage-taking, limited military actions, and attempts to undermine Arab states politically are nothing new.

That being the case, there are insights to be gained from the Barbary War experience, and from Whipple's book. I would note especially one of the author's conclusions: that "a hostage situation nearly always requires some sort of negotiation, however unpleasant the prospect," a reality this nation's leaders have recently had to relearn, and ought not again to forget.

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Swanson, Carl E. *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739–1748*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1991. 299pp. (No price given)
This is a study of privateering in colonial America during the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739–1748), also known

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as King George's War. It is clearly written and well researched from newspapers, manuscripts, secondary sources, and a computer data file of 3,973 entries on "instances of prize actions," drawn mainly from colonial newspapers and the few surviving vice-admiralty court records.

The author's thesis is that privateering was an important and popular form of maritime enterprise in eighteenth-century America and the most significant American contribution—during the War of Jenkins' Ear—to the British Empire's war effort against the French. It fit nicely into the prevailing mercantilist thinking of the time. According to Swanson, privateering not only allowed a nation to mount a major military effort with private capital (at no cost to the government) but also was a way for individuals to profit from the war. The French and Spanish seaborne trade was greatly reduced with the capture of their merchant ships and goods; privateering destroyed their overseas trade while the wealth of the British increased. Moreover, Swanson illustrates that because of the great impact that American privateering had on the Spanish and French, American trade conversely suffered greatly at the hands of the French and Spanish privateers.

Included are well-founded discussions on the law of privateering, the impact of privateering on the American labor market for seamen, and the costs of fitting-out privateers. However, the question of whether or not the owners of privateers made great

profits is less clear, due to the lack of documentation. This is a relatively minor flaw.

Swanson has made a significant contribution to eighteenth-century American maritime history. This study should be read by anyone who wishes to understand the role of privateering in colonial American war-making.

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Weir, Gary E. *Building the Kaiser's Navy: The Imperial Naval Office and German Industry in the von Tirpitz Era, 1890–1919*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1992. 289pp. \$36.95

Over the past two decades, historians have analyzed most aspects of Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz's creation of the Imperial German Navy. Basically, these works have centered on the political-strategic parameters of the Tirpitz plan, its operational underpinnings, and the men who manned the fleet. However, the development of a German naval-industrial complex under Tirpitz has largely escaped analysis. This gap in the literature has now been filled by both Gary Weir, of the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C., and historian Michael Epkenhans in Germany.

Based on archival materials at Freiburg and Essen and on two exploratory articles published in 1984 in *Military Affairs* and the *International*