Naval War College Review

Volume 46
Number 3 *Summer*

Article 24

1993

Building the Kaiser's Navy: The Imperial Naval Office and German, Industry in the von Tirpitz Era, 1890-1919

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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*

History Review, Weir's work details Tirpitz's untiring efforts to construct the world's second-largest fleet. Closely following the British model, Tirpitz created an intricate system of regulation and protocol designed to uphold contractual product guarantees, pay schedules, patent rights, cost and weight changes, and the like. It was not an easy task. Fritz Krupp maintained a monopoly in naval ordnance and, with Dillinger, in armor plate; additionally, by 1914 the Essen giant had established a stranglehold on U-boat construction. Although Tirpitz sought to use outside competition, from Midvale in the United States and Thyssen in Germany, to drive down armor prices, Krupp's close ties to Kaiser Wilhelm II proved to be a "trump card." Weir concludes that the relationship between Krupp and Tirpitz was one of mere "coexistence."

The Great War brought the navy chronic shortages of time, labor, and raw materials. For industry, it was "costly, hectic, demanding, and full of anxiety, but immensely profitable." Weir argues that the navy's command technology climaxed in the "Scheer Program" of September 1918, whereby Germany planned to build 450 U-boats by late 1919. Weir dismisses the claims of earlier authors that the program was largely a public relations effort, but he does admit that the navy would have been hard pressed to find 40,000 new workers to join its existing force of 6,500 to build the boats.

What lessons emerge? First and foremost, Tirpitz makes the case that since national security depended in part on the navy, and since armament industries formed a major component of national defense, parliament was honor-bound to finance naval building. Second, since tens of thousands of jobs depended on fleet construction, budget cuts in national defense posed not only a security risk but also a danger to the national economy. As Weir points out, all of this has a highly contemporary and disturbing ring to it. Further, Tirpitz's "painfully cautious attitude toward research and development," combined with German industry's preference for profits over patriotism, meant that technological advancement was left largely to the private sector—with the result, among other things, that Germany failed to develop a single effective turbine for her fleet.

Weir has provided a welcome addition to the literature not only of the Imperial German Navy but also of military-industrial relations in general. He details both the extent and the limits of military procurement within the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II, thereby reminding us once more of the feebleness of industry's patriotism as measured against its profit margin. Officers should read this book carefully so they may understand the other side of the table in weapons production.

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