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The Navy as a Fighting Machine

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magic, and in due course was awarded a master of operations analysis degree from the Naval Postgraduate School.

I can not summarize the significance of this straightforward, tightly written, two-hundred page book more adroitly than has Vice Admiral Jack Baldwin in his foreword. He writes that McCue "validates the usefulness of their [the wartime analysts'] techniques even as he clarifies and identifies the limits of their analysis [in the midst of war]. In a key finding, he stresses the overwhelming importance of selecting appropriate measures of effectiveness when attempting to quantify military operations. Beyond its obvious appeal to the military operations research community, McCue's essay generates broad principles—supported by both empirical evidence and analytical modeling—of interest to national security strategists and policymakers. For example, his critical analysis of the troubles with the 'top-down' approach used by current defense analysts has great currency for modern policymakers. McCue's conclusions might reasonably be extended to the measurement of other military endeavors, such as bomber operations or antimissile defense studies."

Fiske, Bradley A. *The Navy as a Fighting Machine*. Annapolis, Md.: The Naval Institute Press, 1988. 387pp. \$32.95

Bradley Allen Fiske (1854-1942) was the Thomas Jefferson of the American Navy. He was a Renaissance man who set his hand and mind to many things and did them all quite well. He invented naval "appliances," commanded ships and fleets at sea, and wrote widely on the uses of naval power and the operations of navies. Fiske was an early champion of preparedness and quantitative thinking. His book is as stimulating to read today as it must have been when it was first published in 1916. While reading Fiske, this reviewer had the distinct impression of being engaged in a lively, real-time dialogue with a very modern mind.

Fiske graduated from the Naval Academy in 1874, and spent the next eighteen years in various posts while turning his mind to the invention of naval appliances (his word). These included electric logs (speed indicators) and depth sounders, and electric drives for ammunition hoists, turret training and gun elevation machinery, and range finders. He attended the Naval War College in 1896 and was exposed to and influenced by that magnificent collection of minds assembled there in the late nineteenth century. This influence became apparent when Fiske began writing for the Naval Institute *Proceedings*. His articles examined the navy as an integrated system for the application of naval power to national purposes. After four years at sea, as captain and rear admiral, he was aide for operations to Secretary of the Navy,

Josephus Daniels, in Washington. Unfortunately, Fiske and Daniels held incompatible views on naval matters; against Daniels's wishes, Fiske argued for the creation of a centralized naval staff for preparedness and operations, which now exists in OPNAV. Fiske retired in 1916.

Perhaps we are fortunate that Fiske retired when he did, for it allowed him the time to write this book, which the Naval Institute has republished as part of its "Classics of Sea Power" series. Wayne Hughes, of the Naval Postgraduate School and author of *Fleet Tactics*, has written an introduction and footnotes. Hughes's introduction places Fiske in both his historical and contemporary context, and his footnotes are superb.

Fiske appears to have been a pragmatic, plain-spoken fellow not overly enchanted by grand unified theories. His objective was to understand what navies do, how they should do it, and of what they are made. These questions are every bit as important today as when Fiske played an active role in founding the modern navy.

His thesis was that great nations, such as the United States, are built by vigorous "masculine" populations with extensive foreign trade and commerce. He concluded that the fundamental role of a navy is to ensure a nation's commerce and to prevent a foreign power from shutting it off—and if necessary do so by firm, forward, offensive action.

Fiske viewed the influence upon land events as the proper exercise of naval power, for it is on land where

the political will is forged or broken. Though events at sea may win wars, they do so by altering the course of economic and political events on the land. Fiske supplied examples ranging from the American Revolution to the Russo-Japanese War. He believed that the purpose of a navy is to go somewhere and make something worthwhile happen. His perspective is echoed by current naval writers such as Wayne Hughes, who says, "the seat of purpose is on the land." We would do well to ponder this as we contemplate such defensive marvels as the Aegis ship and remember that its justification must be that it ensures the safe and timely arrival of such land-influencing naval forces as carriers and amphibious ships.

Fiske's more specific discussions regarding the principles of naval power clearly defined the correlative relationship between policy and strategy in national and naval affairs. Save for the Victorian phrasing, one could be reading a précis for the Naval War College's "Strategy and Policy" class. He also believed that war games were of fundamental value as exercises of the mind as well as training tools for naval operations.

Throughout the discussions of designing and operating "the machine," Fiske made frequent use of fundamental numerical comparisons. In so doing, he made his point that numbers assure clarity of communication. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in his use of numerical tables, based on force units in opposing navies and relative combat effectiveness

per salvo, to demonstrate basic tactical principles of concentration of one's own forces and division of the enemy's. However, although an early advocate of quantitative thinking and expression, Fiske had no illusions regarding the accuracy of numbers when expressing subtle concepts.

One should savor this book; there is much to absorb and contemplate in each section before moving on to the next. Perhaps little has changed in the operational art of naval forces since the early twentieth century, but we are indebted to Fiske for his clear and timeless exposition of the basics.

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Perla, Peter P. *The Art of Wargaming*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1990. 364pp. \$29.95

Bravo Zulu, Peter Perla! Well done! This book would deserve the time-honored naval expression even if it only provided the principles of wargaming it contains. That it contains far more will make this a definitive work on wargaming for years to come. *The Art of Wargaming* carefully explains the nature of the game and how to use it. Authoritative, comprehensive, and readable, there are portions that are a "must" read for a broad range of military officers, civilians in the field of national security, and wargaming hobbyists.

Perla has managed to combine a complete history of professional wargaming and a detailed review of the

growth and current status of hobbyist wargaming, with a thorough discussion of where and how wargaming fits into the larger setting; the techniques essential to exploring all aspects of warfare. Perla is convinced that wargaming is an important tool for the professional, but he is concerned that it may be poised on the brink of diminished stature and popularity—an up-and-down cycle that has long plagued wargaming.

Perla is uniquely qualified to write this book. He is an experienced naval operations research analyst. He is also an avid wargaming hobbyist whose interests and experience in this area are, if anything, even more impressive than his professional credentials. Perla provides the reader with a better understanding of how powerful a tool wargaming can be, if properly used, for educating military and civilian decision makers, and examining a broad range of military and political issues.

"Wargaming and the Naval War College," (Chapter Two) should be required reading for every senior officer in the U.S. Navy. With care and accuracy Perla has demythologized the role of wargaming at the Naval War College and its importance in the history of the U.S. Navy. He gives credit to McCarty Little for inventing the art of *naval* wargaming during his thirty years at the Naval War College. Frank McHugh is also recognized for his important contributions.

Of particular value is Perla's discussion of the wargaming conducted between the World Wars at the Naval