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## The British Aircraft Carrier

Christopher C. Staszak

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Guardsmen and the general public understand how the Coast Guard came to be the unique institution that it is. Professor Johnson's objective, yet sympathetic, point of view and his clear and economical prose style make for fascinating and entertaining reading.

DAVID V.V. WOOD  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard

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Beaver, Paul. *The British Aircraft Carrier*. Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, United Kingdom: Patrick Stephens, 3rd ed., 1987. 256pp. \$19.95

Paul Beaver has written a very readable account of British carrier aviation, providing many interesting insights into a navy that closed World War II with 52 aircraft carriers in service and 18 under construction. Beginning with H.M.S. *Argus* in World War I, Mr. Beaver traces the history of the aircraft carrier in the Royal Navy through the Falklands to the present day. He also presents the story of the many innovations that the British have pioneered—the angled flight deck, mirrored landing system, armored flight deck, and the steam catapult.

The British aircraft carrier's history is a rich one, and this book provides a full account, highlighted by numerous personal interviews and photographs. Besides covering theaters of operations familiar to

many, such as the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean, Mr. Beaver also details operations in the Indian Ocean and those in conjunction with the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Equally interesting are the postwar actions, including the Korean war and the Suez crisis.

The Royal Navy's carrier force, like the U.S. Navy's, frequently has been the subject of debates concerning its role and composition. Most significant for the American reader are the circumstances that prepared the way for the 1966 decision leading to the demise of the large deck carrier force and its conventional aircraft.

The principal change to this third edition is an additional chapter which discusses British carrier developments since the Falklands. Most of this information relates to equipment changes on ships and aircraft. A new table has been added to the appendices, and two line drawings also have been added—one is mislabeled, indentifying H.M.S. *Eagle* as H.M.S. *Invincible*. While the book is worthy of purchase, there is little cause for an owner of the second edition to upgrade to the third.

Though not a definitive history, *British Aircraft Carriers* accomplishes its purpose: to present an excellent overall account of a fascinating subject. For American readers, who would tend to be more knowledgeable of U.S. naval operations, this volume provides much interesting and valuable information on a force

that was, and still is, in the vanguard of navies that operate aircraft at sea.

CHRISTOPHER C. STASZAK

Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Naval Reserve

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Lambert, Andrew, ed. *Warship, Volume X*. London/Annapolis: Conway Maritime Press/Naval Institute Press, 1986. 288pp. \$24.95

When the periodical *Warship* first appeared, I was impressed. I was also certain that, after its contributing authors had covered well-known warships or warship classes, it would fold from a lack of interest in less famous ships or classes. The appearance of the tenth annual collection of *Warship* articles is proof that the field covered by the periodical is so strong that it will never dry. That is good news for those who care—whether professionally or as amateurs—about fighting ships and about their operation and histories.

This particular volume contains a very diverse set of offerings. There is a two-part article on the ironclad turreted ship *Huascar*, built in England for Peru in 1865. Later captured by Chile, *Huascar* has been restored and preserved as a national monument by the Chilean Government. A small ironclad with a Coles turret, *Huascar* was purchased to thwart efforts by Spain to reassert her dominance over lost American colonies during the Civil War in the United States. She continued in the service of Peru and then Chile until 1901, and she is now a museum. Four

articles discuss the development of another 19th century fighting ship which has been preserved: *HMS Warrior*. These papers, plus another describing the preserved Norwegian torpedo boat *Rap*, are interesting introductions to the beginnings of modern warship design and combat.

More contemporary warships are also covered, including the French dreadnoughts of the *Bretagne* class, the nuclear-powered missile cruiser *Long Beach*, and the Imperial Japanese Navy's torpedo cruiser *Kitakami*. In each case, numerous photographs and drawings are provided. Some odd types are also reviewed. For example, there is an interesting discussion of the operations of the German *Elbing*-class torpedo boats (actually small destroyers) in World War II. This discussion might be the starting point for an investigation of the numerous and important small boat operations in European coastal waters in World War II—operations which might be repeated again in the event of a military clash between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. An essay on a special German type for coastal operations—the *Kriegsfischkutter*—provides more details about small military craft whose extensive operations went mostly unheralded during the war and are sadly ignored even now. The category of amphibious ships is covered by three essays on fast landing ships of the Imperial Japanese Navy, constructed during World War II to enable Japan to supply and support her many island garrisons threatened by the mobile forces of the U.S. Navy.