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Warship, Volume VII

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Such a mammoth work is bound to suffer some imprecision and typos, as an elusive NAS Charleston, S.C., referred to on page 49 of the *Domestic* volume. And important exact dates are not always given, as for NAF Litchfield Park, Ariz. Several inaccuracies ought to be corrected in any second printing, such as this sampling: John (not Joseph) Reeves commanded at Adak. F. Julian Becton's dates of command at Long Beach are jumbled. The A-1 and A-2 planes in 1911 were individual craft, not types. The F-4 was a Phantom II, not a Wildcat in 1960. The FG Corsair was built by Goodyear, not Grumman. The F6F was the Hellcat, not the Skyray; and the SB2C the Helldiver, not Navigator. Eugene (not Richard) Ely made the first landing on a ship. And, as usual, *Liscome Bay* is misspelled.

Still in all, this remarkable set fills in many gaps and provides less-known nuggets that even make browsing a pleasure. One can only hope that some editor will produce similar useful reference tools for the researcher interested also in the Army and Air Force.

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Roberts, John, ed. *Warship, Volume VII*. London, England: Conway Maritime Press; dist. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1983. 288pp. \$23.95

Gray, Randal, ed. *Warship, Volume VIII*. London, England: Conway

Maritime Press; dist. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1984. 288pp. \$23.95

As most naval buffs are aware, England's Conway Maritime Press turns out the quarterly magazine *Warship* covering rare bits and pieces of ship-oriented history. The publisher subsequently binds each year's four issues into hardback volumes which are distributed in the United States by the Naval Institute Press. *Warship: Volume VII* covers the magazines published in 1983; *Volume VIII*, those in 1984. Each contains a wide range of naval subjects, many by well-known naval authors and historians. A number of the articles are related to books which the authors have published or are in the process of preparing. Each volume has something for everyone interested in naval history and its fighting vehicles, primarily ships.

Volume VII has articles on such specialized subjects as the British Northern Patrol at the start of World War II (parts one and two, Donald Kindell) and the 1899 German-built Russian cruiser *Askold* (parts one and two, Andrzej Jaskuta). The latter article includes detailed plans of the *Askold*, the only five-stack cruiser of its time. Of more general interest is an article on the development of the British escort carrier at the beginning of World War II. While these ships were not numerous because of the massive U.S. programs that replaced them, they contributed significantly to the development of this type. The British explored the basic idea first. There is an intriguing three-part

series on Japanese battleship design philosophy as it developed between the wars. While this material was assembled by Hans Lengerer, much of it appears translated from the Japanese and covers not only design considerations but personalities such as the eminent naval architects Hiraga and Fujimoto. All of this led to the 1935 *Yamato* class which would have eventually seen its nine 18-inch guns replaced by six 20-inch guns, the idea being to stay ahead of the Americans. All three articles are accompanied by *Yamato* photos of amazing detail and excellent plans, profile and lines of that ship, none of which are referenced in the text. Although not particularly well written, the material is priceless to those following Japanese naval ship design development. Also of interest are articles on the British M-class 12-inch-gun submarine monitors built shortly after World War I; the huge, for then, French *Surcouf*, a submarine cruiser with two 8-inch guns and a scout plane. There is an operational review of the German World War II torpedo boats designed during the twenties. These were not much larger than current FPBs. The final *Bismarck* action is reviewed again and there's a continuing series on British naval ordnance. There are interesting pieces on British naval battle damage during World War II. All in all, there is no major message; just material to enjoy.

Volume VIII looks at much the same type of material, covering different subjects. Captain Villar reports on British experience with merchant

ships during the Falklands; the series on British naval guns is continued; Norman Friedman covers the U.S. "Brownwater Navy" created during the Vietnam conflict for riverine service. Also of interest is the British experience in developing naval gas turbines starting with their early postwar high-performance ships. The British were the Free World leaders in this area at that time. Friedman also covers the development of anti-submarine submarines (SSK) during the late forties and early fifties. The three small K-1 class plus seven fleet host conversions are described, their most distinctive feature being the large sonar arrays added, all incorporated as a matter of course in SSNs now. Then there are the French Mogador destroyers of the thirties, a personal favorite. These were huge then, with impressive armament (eight 5.5-inch). They were twice the size of our *Porter*-class destroyer leaders of the same period but only half the size of a *Spruance* today. U.S. monitor designs are covered. These interesting anachronisms owed much of their authorized existence to the Civil and Spanish American wars. Additionally, one finds British scout cruisers, Japanese Kaibokan escorts, German S-boats and the reborn *Iowa* class.

Both books are well illustrated with rare photographs and often detailed drawings. Each contains book reviews and readers' comments ("A & As") on articles and pictures published previously. Overall, each volume has something for everyone and much about which one might

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care less, but which is interesting. If you are a true lover of little-known naval detail, you should have these volumes. In that context, each is worth its rather impressive price.

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Gardiner, Robert, ed. director.
Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships 1906-1921. London, England: Conway Maritime Press, 1985. 439pp. \$39.95

This large book is one of a series of four reference works published over the past eight years by the Conway Maritime Press in Britain and marketed in the United States by the Naval Institute Press. This series follows a novel approach, providing a long overdue aid to the naval historian and student of warship history. These books are concise, in fact highly compressed encyclopedias of basic data on the major warships of the world's navies for the time period covered by each book. This latest volume in the series deals with World War I, the *Dreadnought*-building 'naval race' years that preceded that war, and the immediate aftermath; a very appropriate division. Earlier volumes have covered 1947-1982 (in fact, two volumes that together total 544pp., published 1983); 1922-1946 (456pp., published 1980); and 1860-1905 (440pp., published 1979).

The books' common format includes provision of ship lists by design class, with brief notes for construction dates and fate. Basic character-

istics given include displacement (normal and full load); dimensions; machinery (including speed and endurance); armor thicknesses; armament; and complement. Textual notes for larger ships add some background information on design concept, technical features of special interest, and occasionally, operational activities. Profile line drawings and small photographs are numerous, illustrating most of the ship classes from destroyer types upwards.

The novelty of this apparently straightforward approach is that most of the commonly available historical sources of warship data are riddled with errors or are incomplete. Most of these commonly used sources, contemporary "naval annuals," were published as guides to current fleet strength. This was the approach taken by all the great naval yearbooks, beginning with Brassey's *The Naval Annual* in 1886 and continued with *Jane's Fighting Ships*, *Les Flottes de Combat*, and Weyer's *Taschenbuch der Kriegsflootten* around the turn of the century. Any such description of contemporary naval strength has been constrained to some degree by restrictions upon the release of official information. At times these official sanctions have had extreme effect, such as in late-1930s' Germany, Italy, and Japan, and in the present-day Soviet Union. No one has ever gone back to redo one of these yearbooks using official data that became available perhaps twenty years later. The Conway series' *All the World's Fighting Fleets* attempts an analogous task, taking a 15- to 45-