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## American Wars and Heroes: Revolutionary War through Vietnam

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another serious challenge. With the Germans thus confined to port, the British tightened their control of the world's oceans, moved rapidly to correct the technical deficiencies evident at Jutland, eventually contained the U-boat menace, and, with the surrender of the German Fleet, experienced the greatest naval triumph in history.

Hough's insights and expository powers in the tactical sphere should not obscure serious limitations with regard to strategic and policy considerations. For example, insufficient interest is evident in the organizational developments and policy battles of the prewar years in which, even after the 1911 decision in favor of a Continental strategy toward Germany, a policy for the optimum employment of naval power might have been salvaged. Concomitantly, efforts at naval staff development and actual war planning are inadequately appreciated. This skewed perspective is particularly evident in the author's treatment of the Dardanelles campaign, which has served as a foil for various strategic perspectives since. He attributes little merit to the effort, but not through appreciation of the strategic dilemmas confronting policymakers by early 1915. Rather, the enterprise is dismissed as a "sideshow," a misunderstanding of seapower (the "true" nature of which is obscure), and as a *naval* expedition promoted by the impulsive and erratic Churchill. Hough's lengthy enumeration of technical difficulties and tactical malfeasance is valid; but the critical

strategic question of widening the war militarily to accommodate the political dimension of war aims and termination is cursorily dismissed, yet ultimately comprises the strategic imperative of maritime power in global war.

These deficiencies notwithstanding *The Great War at Sea* is well worth the read. Its treatment of men in action is a model of the art, and its exposition of the radical alteration of naval war from the romantic ideal of Trafalgar to the exigencies of a modern global maritime campaign superb. There is much to learn here about the Elephant and the Whale.

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Ulanoff, Stanley M., ed. *American Wars and Heroes: Revolutionary War through Vietnam*. New York: Arco, 1985. 378pp. \$19.95

This book is an adaptation—or perhaps more accurately, an abridgement—of *American Military History*, which is an ongoing project of the Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army.

As is true with many official histories, this is long on description and short on analysis, especially when social and economic considerations might be involved. But in fairness, a lot of military history is compressed into a single volume. Also to be expected is the focus on land operations, although sea and air come into their own from time to time. One interesting example can be drawn from the discussion of Gen. Ulysses

S. Grant's operations in 1862 to take Fort Henry, on the Tennessee River. Grant proposed a joint Army-Navy expedition, with him commanding 15,000 men ". . . supported by armored gunboats and river craft of the U.S. Navy under Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote." This success was quickly followed by the surrender of Fort Donelson, the significance of which was described as follows: "The loss of the two forts dealt the Confederacy a blow from which it never fully recovered . . . Foreign governments took special notice of the defeats. For the North the victories were its first good news of the war. They set the strategic pattern for further advance into the Confederacy. In Grant the people had a new hero and he was quickly dubbed 'Unconditional Surrender' Grant."

In reading the circumstances surrounding the origins of the Spanish-American War, one is struck by the possible similarities to ambiguous crises involving naval forces in foreign ports and waters. Are these forces there to protect American lives and property, or are they hostages to the designs and aspirations of conspirators or politicians who are uninterested in mediation or the peaceful settlement of disputes? Nonetheless, the Naval War College comes in for some complimentary words, being singled out as having ". . . provided the Navy with a strong corps of professional officers trained in the higher levels of warfare and strategy, including the far-ranging doctrines of Mahan."

The book ends with the war in Vietnam, and takes no sides in the current and sometimes heated debate over "who lost Vietnam," which is a blessing. The conclusion does sum up neatly the book as a whole, and concludes on a modest note. "In Vietnam, the United States Army fought a war of contrasts . . . In a way it was two wars, a military campaign involving a compendium of all the Army had learned from the Revolution through Korea and at the same time a vast civic action project, using the men and tools of war in the task of winning the confidence and support of a people. For the United States, Vietnam was a limited war in the classic sense of the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Indian wars, the wars with Mexico and Spain, and Korea. In the same way that history cannot prophesy, only illuminate, this war of contrasts produced no clear pattern for the warfare of the future."

The writing style is understated, but very clear; the maps and charts are helpful; the detail does not get in the way of the larger strategic picture. In sum, the book makes for a "good read."

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Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983. 224 pp. \$29.95