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A Bloody War

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important and refreshing, his use of German and Russian sources and emphasis on the Eastern front constitute a healthy corrective to the Western tendency to view the Anglo-American campaigns as the key to Allied victory.

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Lawrence, Hal. *A Bloody War: One Man's Memories of the Canadian Navy 1939-1945.* Annapolis: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1979. 193pp. $17.95

A Bloody War is a fascinating personal account of World War II seen through the eyes of a man who joined the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve in the early days of 1939 and survived the war years at sea (and ashore). Beginning as an eighteen year old "snotty" assigned to the singularly unglamorous gate tender *Andree Dupre,* Hal Lawrence quickly adapted to life at sea and by war's end, had transferred to the regular navy with the rank of First Lieutenant, assigned as executive officer of HMCS *Sioux*. Although a decidedly casual and narrowly focused history of the wartime Canadian Navy, the author's carefully researched factual material adequately shores up the ancedotal sea stories of patrol duty, convoy operations, bizarre wardroom antics and memorable port calls to Halifax, New York, Scapa Flow, and even Polyarnoe. Moreover, the book captures some of the intensity of the battle for the Atlantic and the personal drama of a few of its incredibly primitive actions at sea.

The book's principal focus is convoy operations and the difficult challenge of ensuring "a safe and timely" arrival of millions of tons of fuel, grain, phosphate, ammunition, and iron ore to sustain the Allies' wartime production. In simple terms, this meant long transits in U-boat-infested waters protected only by the escorts' limited capabilities, weather, and more than a little luck. Until late in the war, routes were being marked on an alarmingly regular basis with sunken merchant hulls.

During 1942, U-boats sank 1,160 ships, a total of nearly eight million tons. Despite the eight or so escorts that might be assigned to an 80-ship convoy, the U-boats operated with virtual impunity, positioning themselves along the convoy's intended track (determined by long-range surveillance aircraft and refined by intercepted radio signals) and taking advantage of the significant gaps in friendly air coverage from Canada, Iceland, and England. Poor weather often worked against the convoy, slowing the ships to bare steerageway from their normal cruising speeds of 8-10 knots.

Possessing limited surveillance equipment ("Huff Duff"—HF direction-finding gear—was just barely developed, shipboard radars were not introduced until 1942, and early Asdic sets were extremely limited in range and sensitivity) and a modest offensive punch (racked depth charges, 3"-5" guns, and (in some ships) thicker hull plating forward that was used for ramming), corvettes and small destroyers shepherded countless merchants across the Atlantic; there was little doubt the probability of a safe crossing in convoy was considerably higher than that of a single ship.

Lawrence's career spanned the entire spectrum of convoy operations including escorting tankers from the Southern Atlantic, the dangerous Halifax-UK run, and, following Russia's entry into the war, Scapa Flow to Murmansk. One of the most interesting actions recounted in the book occurred when the Canadian corvette *Oakville* sank the *U-94* just south of the Windward Passage. In what could

be termed very close-in ASW action, Lawrence jumped from the *Oakville*'s forecastle to the deck of the surfaced submarine and "captured" the crew just before the crippled boat sank. For his "gallant and courageous action" Lawrence was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and began a short RCN-sponsored speaking tour at the insistence of the navy's public relations branch.

As one of a series of "great war stories," *A Bloody War* delivers just that. It will never become a classic in terms of historical naval writing, for the book offers no burning tactical lessons or weighty conclusions, but its fast moving and colorful style will be appreciated by anyone who has wondered what it was really like to sail on a convoy escort during the war.

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Carlisle, Rodney P. *Sovereignty for Sale: The Origins and Evolution of the Panamanian and Liberian Flags of Convenience.* Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1981. 278pp. $19.95

Rodney Carlisle complains that the existing literature on flags of convenience contains "too much information about inconsequential contemporary detail and too little accurate explanation of crucial historical developments and institutional evolution." Even though many may feel that contemporary details are actually more important than historical antecedents, this book should be read by everyone interested in the American merchant marine. It is a thoroughly researched, fair, well-written treatment of the entire subject of foreign registry since World War I.

It was at first disturbing to find no mention at all of the major "flight from the flag" during the US Civil War. But Carlisle is only interested in the development of the present system of flags of convenience.

Although Panama and Liberia entered the maritime registry business at different times, they shared certain characteristics that attracted American shipowners. They were poor, small (one million people each) nations with no ships of their own, and therefore no safety or labor regulations that made operating a US flagship so expensive. There were also no significant taxes to be paid, as long as profits were plowed back into ship construction abroad. Most important to the US government, which tolerated, approved, and sometimes encouraged the transfers, was the dependence of those two nations, until recently, upon the United States. This gave us the confidence that American-owned ships flying other flags were still under "effective control," and would be available to our government in case of emergency.

Carlisle demonstrates that neither Panama nor Liberia initiated flags of convenience for their own interests. American shipping interests sought them out, frequently with the encouragement and cooperation of the US government.

Sovereignty for Sale thoroughly explains the economic conditions that motivated shipowners to transfer their vessels to Panamanian or Liberian registry, and the laws, government policies, and court decisions that allowed the transfers to take place. There were sometimes conflicts within the federal government. While Congress was passing legislation to improve conditions for American crews and the National Labor Relations Board was trying to enforce these rules on US-owned but foreign-registered ships, the State Department and Maritime Administration were encouraging transfers and fighting NLRB jurisdiction