

1981

Bowman Hendry McCalla: A Fighting Sailor

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Recommended Citation

Morse, J. P. and Coletta, Paola (1981) "Bowman Hendry McCalla: A Fighting Sailor," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 34 : No. 4 , Article 12.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol34/iss4/12>

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BOOK REVIEWS

Coletta, Paola. *Bowman Hendry McCalla: A Fighting Sailor*. Washington: University Press of North America, 1979. 210pp.

Bowman Hendry McCalla is one of those fascinating, little known naval officers whose career spanned the years of the Navy's stumbling transition from sail to steam and whom history will selectively remember as the man court-martialed for striking an enlisted man with his sword. A line officer in the finest sense of the word, Bowman McCalla was a strong individual with an irascible, often pugnacious disposition. He was also an educated man of international refinement, innovation, great courage and nearly fatal paradox.

Schooled at the Civil War site of the Naval Academy at Newport, McCalla stood in the upper part of the Class of 1864. His initial sea tours showed no particular brilliance although subsequent shore assignments at the Bureau of Navigation and the Detail Office gained him a reputation as a hard-working, industrious, and singularly competent officer. While assigned to the Detail Office, he developed exercise plans for the North Atlantic Squadron, proposed a Navy Department reorganization (including the merger of line and engineer officers), and pressed for the establishment of a Naval Reserve.

Following a brief expedition to Panama in 1885 to repel insurgents who had burned the city of Colon, McCalla took command of *Enterprise*, a bark-rigged steam sloop. "Billy Hell" McCalla quickly established himself as a strict, no-nonsense disciplinarian during operations with the European Squadron. One night in July 1888, McCalla struck a drunk, unruly, and disrespectful fireman with his sword, inflicting a small scalp wound that McCalla would never quite recover from. The press sensationalized this story and others of McCalla's brutality and, after a

court of inquiry and the one-sided press reports of his command, he was suspended from duty for a period of 3 years. In spite of this indelible blot on his career and his financial independence, McCalla returned to duty in 1893, serving until he was retired from the Navy by age in 1906.

The second part of his career reveals a more administratively cautious officer whose operational standards had not softened with age, seniority or his experience in *Enterprise*. McCalla had successive tours at Mare Island, the Naval War College, and in command of the light cruiser *Marblehead*. In the battle of Santiago, McCalla's broad knowledge of everything from surface operations to field tactics ashore clearly contributed to the military resolution of the Spanish-American War. A new dimension of the fighting sailor's personality came to light—that of the brilliant tactician and decisive combat leader.

McCalla later assumed command of a second-class cruiser, *Newark*, in 1899 and saw action during the Philippine insurrection and the Boxer Rebellion. Professor Coletta's lengthy chapter on China and McCalla's role as an at-sea and ashore commander is the most intriguing part of the book and recounts the final stages of McCalla's development as a military leader. The Boxer Rebellion required innovation, diplomacy, and flexibility in addition to military skills. The combat was often fierce. At one point, McCalla led a large flotilla composed of the men and vessels of six nations and subsequently received several international awards and commendations. More important, however, was the unconditional pardon granted McCalla by President McKinley in 1900 that restored McCalla's position in grade. Three years later, the Naval Examining Board recommended his promotion to rear admiral.

Following a tour at Mare Island and having served 43 years on active duty, Rear Admiral McCalla retired to an active civilian life in California where he died in 1910. Coletta has painted Bowman Hendry McCalla in distinctively bold and traditional Navy colors and deservedly so, for he represents the era well. However, his rocks and shoals management style and his ability to lead set him apart from his fellow officers. Admiral Taussig wrote after McCalla's death that "The United States Navy throughout its entire history has not developed a more forcible character of such energy." The author has written a fast-reading, well-researched and well-documented account that gives a glimpse at one of the important periods in the development of the modern Navy, and one man who had an active role in keeping that Navy afloat.

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Deese, David A. and Nye, Joseph S., eds. *Energy and Security*. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1980. 483pp.

Energy and Security is a product of Harvard's multidiscipline Energy and Security Research Project. Coedited by David A. Deese and Joseph S. Nye, faculty members of the John F. Kennedy School of Government, it very comprehensively points up the intertwining of the world's oil production, supply, refining, and distribution systems with national security factors. Deese and Nye note that nearly 40 percent of the oil consumed by the Free World's economy is vulnerable to terrorism, accident, warfare, and extortion and that in the span of approximately 10 years, the United States has gone from importing 3.5 million barrels of oil daily at approximately \$2 per barrel to a daily import rate of 8.5 million barrels at a unit cost at least 15 times higher!

Steaming and flying time cutbacks, Indian Ocean extended deployments, dollar erosion caused by spiraling

energy costs, uncertainty over increased energy expenditures and the specter of gas lines have all propelled "energy" into a priority topic. The national security implications include:

—deleterious effect of increased military energy costs upon other needed defense expenditures.

—effect of energy conservation measures on training and readiness.

—need for additional aerial and fleet refueling capabilities.

—more emphasis on protection of tankers, offshore and coastal POL facilities against conventional attack, small-scale raids, terrorist activities and sabotage.

—redesign of vehicles and weapon systems for fuel conservation.

—potential for civil disorder and disturbances.

—greater interest in some overlooked geographic areas.

—intensified sensitivity to the need to improve relations with Canada and Mexico.

—development of highly mobile joint service task forces able to deploy on short notice to remote areas.

The Deese-Nye prescription is multifaceted and covers such measures as regulatory, diplomatic, research for alternative sources, price decontrol, greater use of coal, fill-up of the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve, military and technical assistance to production countries and, of particular interest to *Review* readers, an extensive review of U.S. defense measures needed to ensure "energy security." The book is highly recommended.

JOHN A. HURLEY

Major, U.S. Air Force Reserve

Goodman, Grant K., and Moos, Felix, eds. *The United States and Japan in the Western Pacific: Micronesia and Papua New Guinea*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981. 289pp.

The focus of this study, a volume in the Westview Replica Editions,