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Air Power and the Royal Navy, 1914-1945

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reassurance that Gorshkov really is 70 years old.

This is, altogether, a very competent job resulting in an admirable and very useful book that will certainly be needed in every library where research on military matters is performed. It will be valuable for many years to come and then we hope that Myron Smith will bring it up to date again for at the rate the articles and books are proliferating, we need someone keeping track. The author of this book has proved himself equal to the task.

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Till, Geoffrey, *Air Power and the Royal Navy, 1914-1945: A Historical Survey*. London: Jane's Publishing Company, 1979. 224pp.

There have been a number of operational histories of the Fleet Air Arm, but this is not one of them. Written by a faculty member at the British counterpart of the Naval War College, the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, this study is a serious historical analysis of the influence of aviation on the Royal Navy. Dr. Till's work is the result of careful research and expresses a balanced judgment based on a deep understanding of both technical matters and the broad strategic issues of the period. The basic problems that the author examines are centered around the questions why the Royal Navy was unable to develop fully her initial innovations in naval aviation and why her lead in this field was shortly overtaken by the American and Japanese Navies. In dealing with these questions, one can see the manner in which airpower affected the role of the navy in the defense of Britain, and in those terms one can see some of the fundamental issues in British defense policy.

In approaching his subject, Till has analyzed six broad subject areas: people, ships, aircraft, bureaucracy, battle

doctrine and war experience. He shows that the shortage of men in the Fleet Air Arm as compared to the U.S. Navy symbolized the extent to which Britain's war resources had been surpassed by 1945. In other areas, he sees a similar relationship. For example, the British carrier construction program and aircraft production emphasize the industrial disparity between Britain and America. In terms of bureaucracy, he shows that there was too little coordination among those responsible. The division of responsibility for naval aviation between the Air Ministry and the Admiralty created competition without the means to plan, to direct and to administer the development of aviation at sea. In the same period, British battle doctrine tended to be based on the traditional assumption that sea battles would be decided by the concentration of battleships. Tactics were developed for the Fleet Air Arm that emphasized the role of the carrier in this situation. The use of aircraft in other roles was not fully worked out in terms of tactics and training. Tactical manuals dealing with such alternatives were not fully completed or made available to pilots. Till's discussion of the development of naval aviation in combat is the shortest of his chapters. This is understandable in view of his desire to avoid an operational history. However, given the experience of the U.S. Navy in this area, one might have expected a longer discussion here. Certainly, the U.S. Navy's carrier tactics were largely developed in actual war operations, not during the interwar period. One gleans from his remarks that this was also true of British naval aviation, in its rapid development between the Norwegian campaign of 1940 and its performance later in the war. This aspect of development could have been more fully explored. The author opens with a detailed discussion of the naval and air aspects of the Norwegian campaign to show the effect of interwar planning on wartime

operations. What he has to say here is most interesting and useful, but in light of his ultimate conclusion, it might have been even more appropriate to examine all aspects of that campaign, including the military side and the coordination of high command. It is a campaign that still wants an unbiased historian, but in its broad aspects it presents some of the very fundamental issues in which Dr. Till deals.

In his final chapter, Till concludes that the Royal Navy yielded the race in developing airpower at sea by 1939. The tendency to underrate the performance and potential of naval aviation, as well as to deny it appropriate resources, was the result of many factors. Among them was the lack of a bureaucratic organization to support progress and expansion. Another factor was the economic climate of the times which required cutbacks. Simultaneously, there was a lack of vision and leadership for naval aviation. Perhaps this in itself was because of the Fleet Air Arm's position as a hybrid between the advocates of seapower and those of airpower. It was caught in the rivalry and friction between two views that were attempting to exclude the other. Moreover, the struggle between air and naval advocates was as much a conflict between prophetic views as it was a struggle for scarce national resources. This was Britain's particular dilemma. She lacked resources for defense on land, at sea and in the air, but she needed all three. The battle for priority among the three was a partisan struggle that missed the essential point.

Dr. Till's analysis of this topic is an excellent contribution to naval history. By effectively breaking out of the narrow mold of naval historians, one can find here a valuable case study in some of the most basic issues in defense policy.

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Valle, James E. *Rocks and Shoals: Order and Discipline in the Old Navy, 1800-1861*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1980, 341pp.

During the past decade the study of naval history has expanded into several areas not previously examined to any degree. Since Harold Langley's path-breaking *Social Reform in the United States Navy, 1798-1862* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967) historians have increasingly studied not just ships, their commanders, and their battles, but also the enlisted men of the Navy. This work is a welcome addition to this trend.

In it Valle examines the nascent years of the American Navy, a time during which it was "a singular military organization characterized by smallness, scattered deployment, and peculiar values and ethos." His opening chapters sketch the Navy's system of administration, "among the [world's] most backward and poorly organized," and examine its judicial system that was not designed to dispense justice but to maintain discipline.

Valle next analyzes the provisions of the Articles of War of 1800, which served the Navy relatively unchanged from their passage until 1950, when they were replaced by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. In many cases the "Rocks and Shoals," as they were known, were nebulous, leaving much to the discretion of the enforcer. As in so many other ways, Commodore Edward Preble set the standard for their implementation. He disliked formal courts-martial and courts of inquiry because he believed that too many resulted from trivial matters, that they wasted time, but most importantly, that they gave the defendant too favorable an opportunity of either being acquitted or of receiving a light sentence. Thus he avoided formal proceedings whenever possible by such expedients as breaking major offenses down into a series of subjudicial charges that could be tried at captain's mast or imposing combined modes of