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Gray Steel and Blue Water Navy: The Formative Years of America's Military-Industrial Complex, 1881-1917

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available to anyone who is interested in the subject. One hopes that this excellent volume will be followed by supplementary volumes on the earlier history of Canada as well as poetry, fiction, Ph.D. theses and periodical articles relating to the Canadian military experience.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF
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Cooling, Benjamin Franklin. *Gray Steel and Blue Water Navy: The Formative Years of America's Military-Industrial Complex, 1881-1917*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1979. 286pp.

The term "military-industrial complex," evoking as it does the image of corporate executives and Pentagon officers conspiring to defraud the taxpayer with yet another unneeded weapons system, invites criticism. Events of the past two decades have tended to make this criticism both easy and popular. It is all the more necessary, then, to be able to treat the subject objectively and dispassionately. On the whole, this book does so.

Cooling has considerable competence, both on the time period he has selected and the subject matter. His focus is the developing contractual relationship between the Navy Department and "big steel" for the furnishing of ordnance and armorplate for the vessels of the New Navy. This relationship, emerging in the 1880s out of the laudable desire of the Navy Department to escape dependence on European suppliers, was an ambivalent one. Critics at the time argued that the companies—principally Bethlehem Steel, Carnegie Steel, and Midvale Steel—were foisting shoddy products on the Navy at usurious prices. Company spokesmen retorted that they didn't really need or want the Government's business, and were earning only a modest return on their investment. Because the companies

refused to furnish the Government with supportive data, fearing that this might somehow be leaked to competitors, congressional and naval critics remained unconvinced—until the Government built an ordnance plant and foundry at Charleston, West Virginia.

Cooling is surely correct in suggesting that studies of the U.S. Navy, in this or any other time period, have tended to focus upon "broad strategic, diplomatic, or administrative facets," thus neglecting the industrial and technological dimension. At the same time, he admits that his work merely breaks the ground. "Steel armor and ordnance," Cooling observes,

remain but a portion of the military-industrial phenomena of that age. More work needs to be done to integrate procurement of small arms, provisions and clothing, noncombat equipment, and even shipbuilding itself together with what has been treated in this study. The task then remains one of revising the broader patterns of naval and business history.

It is regrettable that the author was unable to obtain access to corporate records. Perhaps the companies did—and do—have something to hide. There is a lingering suspicion in this reviewer's mind, however, that Andrew Carnegie, Charles Schwab and the other titans of steel have received a bad press. It would be helpful if we knew more about the economics of steelmaking; whether Government contracts were in fact essential to the survival of the firms in question; whether there was an international cartel operating to fix prices of armorplate; whether the other industrial nations encountered comparable difficulties in providing armor and ordnance for their warships.

Cooling devotes much of the book to developments in the 1880s and '90s. The Roosevelt-Taft-Wilson era thus

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receives much more cursory treatment. Technological changes associated with the development of the dreadnought and battle cruiser must have challenged all parties involved in a variety of ways. Conceivably, this would warrant treatment in a separate volume. This, however, does not diminish the overall value of the study in terms of what it reveals concerning the growth and changing nature of naval-industrial relationships. The book belongs in every naval library.

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Ennes, James M., Jr. *Assault on the Liberty*. New York: Random House, 1979. 299pp.

This is thus far the most complete attempt to explain the complex incident on 7 June 1968 that brought the U.S.S. *Liberty* (AGTR-5) to center stage of world affairs. The assault, the events preceding and the aftermath have been shrouded in secrecy stemming from military necessity and political and diplomatic sensitivity. The complete and accurate story may never be told, but Mr. Ennes' account has successfully peeled away another layer of misinformation and provided a foundation for further investigation.

The events leading up to *Liberty's* short notice assignment to the Mediterranean are thoroughly discussed as is the bureaucratic infighting that led to the message ordering the ship to withdraw from the area prior to the attack. The details of how this crucial message was misrouted are sobering.

The author takes great pains to provide background on the ship's leaders and the prevailing atmosphere on board. *Liberty* must be judged as having been a loosely run ship. The author describes extensive officer and enlisted drinking on board, a callous disregard for liquor storage regulations and high-level evasion of a federal investigator probing into the matter.

Further descriptions of a liberty incident in Rota, Spain suggest that the ship exercised some very unusual management practices. Mr. Ennes has done a great service by telling it like it was, but by quoting an Admiral Renker as saying "but no ship could perform any better than *Liberty* did, violations or not. Maybe we should put liquor back on all ships," he puts in words the implication in the book that the unorthodox conditions in *Liberty* contributed to the ship's effectiveness.

Ennes clearly aligns himself with the ship's company and many others who cannot accept that the Israeli attack was accidental. Citing repeated early Israeli reconnaissance flights, the unique characteristics of the ship and the clear presence of the national ensign, he is convinced that there was no mistake. As a firsthand witness on the morning of 8 June and a participant in the subsequent salvage effort, I agree with his conclusions. The author also proposes a possible motive that the Israelis desperately desired to keep their preemptive attack into Syria under wraps and attacked *Liberty* because the ship's presence threatened that effort.

Ennes contends that the Court of Inquiry headed by (then) RADM Isaac Kidd supported an interpretation of the facts that was politically acceptable. Reports not supporting the view of accidental assault were said to have been filed separately. Captain McGonagle, *Liberty's* Commanding Officer, presented testimony in conflict with several of the other reports. Ennes states, "Admiral Kidd handled conflicting preattack reconnaissance reports by acting as though McGonagle was the only reliable witness." In summary, the Court is implicated as being part of a plan to minimize disruption of U.S./Israeli relations and to drive the entire story off the front pages as quickly as possible. Ennes further suggests that the presentation of Captain McGonagle's Medal of