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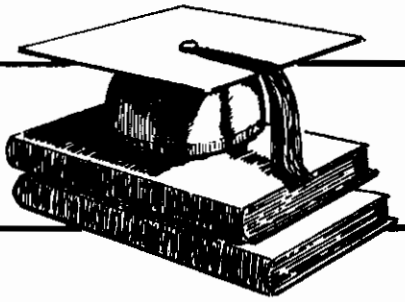

PROFESSIONAL READING

Parkes, Oscar, *British Battleships 1860-1950*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972. 701p., Rev. Ed.

Naval history texts normally concentrate on officers' wartime decisions on how to use the ships available to them, yet years before the war other officers participated in equally fateful decisions on what types of ships would be available. These actions are usually not studied, but in a peacetime navy, no officers make more important decisions than those about the selection of new ship designs. To Englishmen in the last half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century, the most important of that kind of decision dealt with battleships, the keystone of England's naval power. This book covers a period from broadside-mounted guns in full rigged iron ships to radar controlled 15 inch guns, yet the questions facing the men charged with determining the type of battleships to be built were always of a similar nature. If it is technically possible to build a larger gun, should we put it on our new ships even if that means a larger, more expensive ship? Should we sacrifice armor for speed or speed for armor or try for both at the price of fewer ships for the same money? Should we keep our reliable propelling machinery or try a new invention (compound engines, turbines, small tube boilers or oil fuel) which would improve the ship if it succeeded but render the ship worthless if it failed? Is the new weapon (ram, mine, torpedo boat, submarine, or airplane) as powerful as its supporters claim, and how much of the ship should we allocate to weapons and armor to resist this menace? What is a possible opponent's answer to the other questions, and what type of ship will they build? Can England afford to build such ships? Can England afford not to build such ships? Obviously such questions are still with us, and even though they worried about shell against armor instead of missile versus ECM, the English experience with battleship design is of interest.

The book explores what factors went into the answering of the questions and thus the selection of armament, size, and power of England's battleships. The tactical and technical factors are covered by small sections on the challenge presented by the ships other nations built during the same period. The state of the art in armament, armour, and antibattleship weapons like torpedo boats is discussed for each era. The author introduces short biographies of Directors of Naval Construction and Sea Lords to inform the reader of the caliber and personalities of the men involved in the decisions; professional rivalries could influence a design as well as military requirements. The political and budgetary forces which affected the designs are mentioned, and the distorting effects of peacetime scrimping followed by panic rearmament are well covered. Alternate designs that were considered and rejected are explored in some detail. The most interesting of these paper ships are the alternate *Dreadnought* designs and the canceled post-World War I battle cruisers.

The end products of the decision process were the ships that were actually constructed, and the book has a great deal of data on these vessels. Evaluations of seaworthiness, habitability, and usefulness by men who served on the ships are reported. The author gives his own interesting criticism on the armaments, armor, and purposes of each class of ships and has included many miscellaneous tidbits of information such as costs, comfort, and other items; modifications and modernizations; short summaries of the battles the heavy ships participated in and what lessons were learned from the ship's war service; and a brief listing of service life and final disposition is included for each ship.

Dr. Parkes spent 30 years in the making of this authoritative book on British heavy ships, with most of his data being drawn from Admiralty sources. The book is well written and is illustrated with over 450 rare photographs and plans. One regrets that this new edition's reproductions of photographs suffer slightly in comparison to the original English edition of 15 years ago due to being printed on flat instead of glossy paper, but this is probably necessary to control the cost of the book. The author's many sketches and plans are well drawn and informative. Individuals with an interest in naval history and what factors go into the evolution of ships would find this book well worth reading.

PHILIP J. SIMS

The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam. Senator Gravel ed., Boston: Beacon Press, 1971. Four vols. 2899p.

The publication of *The Pentagon Papers* by *The New York Times* on Sunday, 13 June 1971, was one of the most sensational events in the history of American journalism. Hitherto highly classified documents relating to national decisionmaking on Vietnam at top governmental levels were widely published. Their publication raised profound constitutional questions regarding necessary confidentiality of the U.S. Government balanced against the first amendment right of freedom of the press. This is an interesting issue, but it is a collateral issue as far as the professional military officer is concerned.

The Pentagon Papers are now a part of the public record. The study was commissioned by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara for use within the Department of Defense. It provides a rich documentary source, including papers that many officers would never see in the course of their careers. It also contains short analytical summaries of the various major subsections, and these summaries are followed by extensive, but succinct, chronologies which help keep the important events straight.

This is not comprehensive history, because only documents in the possession of the Department of Defense were used. The anonymous authors of these volumes did not have access to State Department and White House files, and this limitation is a flaw in *The Pentagon Papers*. Still, *The Pentagon Papers* are an important source of primary material for the professional military officer.

In his emotional foreword to the four-volume edition published by the Beacon Press of Boston, Senator Mike Gravel of Alaska says the American people have been misled, misunderstood, and ingored in the pursuit of a "reckless foreign policy which the people never sanctioned." He concludes that if the facts had been known, the war would have ended sooner. This is a highly questionable and certainly unprovable thesis, which nevertheless, enjoys a degree of popularity in some circles. The Senator goes on to say that *The Pentagon Papers* do not reveal any military secrets, only "an appalling litany of faulty premises and ques-

tionable objectives, built one upon the other over the course of four administrations. . . . "

The question of objectives and the premises upon which they are based is of primary importance and interest to the professional military officer. In the course of the discharge of his military duties, the professional must protect and further the interests of the United States in terms of achieving specified objectives by the tactical employment of military forces. Not all national objectives can be achieved by the employment of military force, and the military professional must be able to distinguish which objectives can be achieved by the employment of military forces and which cannot. The ability to make this distinction is fundamental to military professionalism.

The Pentagon Papers provide the raw data and some exceptionally fine analysis for study of the entire panoply of U.S. involvement in South Vietnam from the low levels of aid and advice to the major ground war and bombing of North Vietnam. In view of the highly biased and emotional oral and written outpourings on the subject that have emanated from the academic and liberal intellectual communities, a dispassionate examination would itself be unique. These volumes provide a splendid opportunity for the military professional and particularly for those associated with the various War Colleges to examine some important aspects of the recent past.

In conducting his examination the military professional must first analyze the U.S. objectives in Vietnam, at least from the 1954 Geneva Conference to the Nixon Doctrine of 1970. These volumes show the U.S. objective in South Vietnam has always been a non-Communist South Vietnam. At first the objective was simply one of containment of a Communist monolith, as perceived at the height of the cold war and in light of the Korean experience. A decade later the objective was perceived in terms of a free and independent South Vietnam. The evolution of this development is in itself fascinating and is fundamental to understanding what happened.

The military professional must also be ready to challenge the assumptions upon which objectives and actions are based. *The Pentagon Papers* show that the assumption that President Diem or his successors could adequately fight the war was fundamental to the extent and methods of U.S. involvement. The validity of this assumption and the consequences that flow from such a determination are crucial to understanding what happened in Vietnam and to evaluating that experience.

Next, the military professional must appraise expectations. That is to say, he must know what he can reasonably expect to result from any situation as a result of actions taken. Expectations cannot be reasonably appraised if the objectives are unreasonable, vague, or incorrectly described. Similarly, relevant assumptions must also be valid.

The spectrum of U.S. actions ranging from limited aid in the early period to a major military endeavor involving over 525,000 men in country and an intensive bombing campaign against North Vietnam speak loudly and clearly to a continuing disappointment of expectations by U.S. decisionmakers. Indeed, this is a fertile field for examination by the military professional. *The Pentagon Papers* provide much fallow and hitherto virgin territory for rigorous, scholarly examination.

It is axiomatic in military planning and in military theory that a strategy, to be successful, must give tactics the means to achieve the goals of strategy. *The Pentagon Papers* point out that the United States saw the struggle in South Vietnam as determinative of the fate of Southeast Asia and quite possibly of all South Asia, i.e., the domino effect. Despite this almost apocalyptic per-

ception, until mid-1965 the United States employed means which were "consciously limited and purposefully indirect." Examination of *The Pentagon Papers* reveals little appraisal of expectations, beyond pious hopes that whatever course of action adopted, it would succeed and more force would not be required.

At the Naval War College students are taught to evaluate proposed military actions by the classic tests:

- *Suitability*—Will the action accomplish what is desired?
- *Feasibility*—Are the means available sufficient to accomplish what is desired?
- *Acceptability*—Is the accomplishment of the action worth the price that will probably have to be paid?

The military professional has the rare opportunity to use *The Pentagon Papers* as valuable source material to apply these criteria to the major U.S. military actions in Vietnam.

Leslie Gelb, Director of the Study Task Force that produced *The Pentagon Papers*, noted in his letter of transmittal to Secretary of Defense McNamara that writing history where it blends into current events is treacherous. Writing about Vietnam at this time is even more treacherous, because of the passions that disagreement, disappointment, and frustration have released. Military professionals can avoid compounding these errors by studying and analyzing what data are available. By utilizing the tools provided by a sound grasp of military theory, the military professional can make a positive contribution to American scholarship and to his profession.

(Editor's Note: Lieutenant Commander Simpson, of the College of Naval Command and Staff faculty, used *The Pentagon Papers* as textual material for his seminar "Conflict, Strategy and Politics.")

B.M. SIMPSON III
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Powley, Edward B. *The Naval Side of King William's War*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972. 361p.

Marcus, G.J. *The Age of Nelson*. New York: Viking Press, 1971. 504p.

While there are few men who would dispute the claim that the physical and technological demands of modern naval warfare exceed any challenge faced by earlier generations of seagoing fighting men, it is difficult to read about the days of "wooden ships and iron men" without at least one small pang of regret. In our current state of rapidly advancing technology, it is occasionally satisfying to reflect on the age of sail and its more personalized confrontation with the elements.

Both of these new books recall that lost era, and it is appropriate that they be reviewed together for they represent the genesis and conclusion of the most protracted naval conflict in history. With only brief interludes of peace—often characterized by a feverish rebuilding of battered warships—England and France fought each other on the seas for over a century, from 1688 to 1815. In these two books we catch a glimpse of the personalities and weaponry, the tactics and strategies of naval warfare at the beginning and at the end of that struggle.

Both volumes are labors of love, and within their covers one can rejoice with the authors in the elemental challenge of the sea, and in the pleasure of a tale well told. But if attention to detail and exhaustive research are any measure, Mr. Powley hath the greater love.

His book is one of those rarely found and even more rarely appreciated volumes of historical purity. His sources are voluminous and unimpeachable, and he seldom allows himself to editorialize or glamorize historical events. The story of King William's War unfolds slowly and almost ponderously. Much of the work is, in the author's own words, "a factual journal to illustrate the course

and routine of naval business." (p. 71) Not that the story is not a good one, for it is.

The antagonist is the deposed Catholic King of England, the self-styled James II. The protagonist is the Protestant Prince of Orange, proclaimed by Parliament to be William II, the rightful King of England, France, and Ireland. Fleeing from the nation he once ruled, James turned to the Catholic King of France, Louis XIV, for protection. Louis, however, was not disposed to boarding houseguests unless they could prove to be useful. He therefore arranged for James to be sent to Ireland to lead a rebellion of the discontented Irish-Catholic majority against their British rulers.

This was the origin of the Naval War of 1688-89, and perhaps more significantly in our own view, it was also the origin of the bitter Catholic-Protestant antagonisms that scourge Northern Ireland today. It was a fierce struggle characterized by determined and courageous fighting on both sides. The siege of Protestant-held Londonderry by the Irish Army of James II rivals the heroic resistance of Leningrad in our own century. The story ends abruptly on the eve of the crucial Battle of Beachy Head in 1689 for the authors unfortunate death cut short the peroration to his work. But in any case, Beachy Head was not the end of the Anglo-French naval wars; the end came in 1805 with Admiral Nelson's victory at Trafalgar.

In *The Age of Nelson*, Mr. Marcus, like Mr. Powley, tells a good story, but, quite frankly, a story that has been told before. The author's assertion that "... the naval side of the War of 1793-1815 has never been fully and comprehensively treated," is simply not valid. (p. 11) Literally scores of works have been published during the past century dealing with the naval aspects of the Napoleonic Wars, of which A.T. Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire* (1892) is the most conspicuous.

This latest work is for the most part well written, but offers little new material. The main contribution of the book is the narration it provides of the years of "lame duck" warfare which followed Trafalgar. During this period, the French Fleet remained continuously in port while the battleships of the Royal Navy beat back and forth across the harbor entrances in tedious blockade duty.

Both books were written primarily for history buffs, but *Nelson* will doubtless have some general readership because of the nature of the subject. They are, however, worthwhile reading, and in their pages the origins of our naval heritage can be rediscovered.

CRAIG L. SYMONDS
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Sellers, Robert C., ed., *Armed Forces of the World, a Reference Handbook*, 3d ed. New York: Praeger, 1971. 296p.

This reference handbook provides a summary of the armed forces of the world in terms of size, composition, major weapons systems and items of equipment, defense budgets, defense spending as a percent of gross national product, and other information of use in estimating the nature of the defense activities of a given country. The handbook provides no qualitative judgments as to the effectiveness of utility of these forces. A reader knowledgeable in current weapons systems and major items of equipment will find enough information to make some generalizations as to the modernity of the forces under consideration. There are a number of useful appendices dealing with key defense agreements and treaties, munition production capabilities, nuclear weapons potential (and interestingly here the editor includes Israel with the present five nuclear powers as having an immediate nuclear capability), capability

to use space to launch a nuclear attack, and, lastly, should one want to write for more information, the addresses of the national defense headquarters. The handbook is very similar in format to the *Military Balance*, published by the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London.

JOHN B. KEELEY
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Sheehan, Neil. *The Arnheiter Affair*. New York: Random House, 1971. 304p.

Neil Sheehan has made a penetrating inquiry into an affair involving people, an institution, and a deeply revered Navy concept—command at sea. While on first reflection Arnheiter's command may conjure up memories of *The Caine Mutiny*, the entire episode is really more akin to a Greek tragedy with the leading characters committing professional suicide. Torn between the divine right of the sovereign—command authority at sea—and the need to maintain the integrity of *Vance*'s crew as well as their own psychic balance, the ship's officers tried to deal, within their own individual limits, with a situation which was nearly intolerable. However, the shenanigans and conflicts aboard *Vance* are not the prime concern of the interested reader. The issues are the reaction of the press to Arnheiter's being relieved as Commanding Officer of *Vance*, and how did the "system" allow him to gain command.

Once the Arnheiter episode became public knowledge, the Navy was quickly attacked by conservative and liberal alike. The American public, as evidenced by the *Pueblo* affair, is suspicous of any institution which might protect itself at the expense of the individual. Recognizing this, members of the press and some public officials (plus some senior retired officers, but for a different reason) were quick to make the affair a public controversy. Besides being plagued by instant communication, this affair was to suffer from instant analysis. As the author points out, members of the press—the author admitting he being one—were quick to report and comment on Arnheiter's dismissal without having conducted even the minimum research into the case's background. Mr. Sheehan's work is, therefore, instructive for the press and the Navy in the field of managing and reporting of adversary relationships between men and institutions, especially those instances involving individuals as aggressive and freewheeling as Arnheiter.

Both the naval officer and the layman will find the puzzle of how Arnheiter got command an intriguing one. Mr. Sheehan does his best to answer this knotty problem but admits that he is not fully satisfied with his research into Arnheiter's assignment to command. Captain Alexander's sponsorship of Arnheiter in the command selection process and some apparent irregularities (bypassing checks in the system) in his assignment to *Vance* do shed some pertinent insights into Alexander's later actions in which he supported Arnheiter. Alexander was warned by friends that the case was fraught with danger and would ruin his career, but he acknowledged "I was in trouble up to my neck . . . I guess I rationalized it [siding with the Arnheiter forces] as the best way to get out of hot water."

For the crew of the *Vance*, Arnheiter was prophetic when in departing the ship he said, "You will never forget me." Indeed they will not, nor will his seniors up to and including the Chief of Naval Personnel. And what of Marcus Aurelius Arnheiter? The reader must draw his own conclusions as to the man and his style.

R.M. LASKE
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