

2019

## Champion of the Quarterdeck: Admiral Sir Erasmus Gower (1742–1814)

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### Recommended Citation

Hattendorf, John B. and Bates, Ian M. (2019) "Champion of the Quarterdeck: Admiral Sir Erasmus Gower (1742–1814)," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 72 : No. 3 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol72/iss3/13>

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document the way in which China is incorporating social media into the work of its security services, creating a socially enabled totalitarianism.

*Like War* is a work of journalism, not social science. Readers seeking original research or big-data analysis in support of the authors' conclusions will be disappointed. The book's source notes frequently cite blog posts alongside peer-reviewed studies, with no obvious distinction in how much weight is given to each. Still, Singer and Brooking have done thorough research into the psychology and sociology of how and why messages become viral and what gives viral messages power, as well as numerous interviews with a variety of actors in the social media space. They have assembled a compelling anecdotal narrative with short, evocative profiles and vignettes that bring texture and life to their story.

The most disappointing omission from the book is any concrete sense of what can be done to counter the pernicious effects of social media. The authors conclude with a call for readers to be discerning consumers of news—a call that feels both pro forma and inadequate to the threat they describe. Singer and Brooking have illuminated an important problem but offer little cause for hope or optimism about its resolution.

*Like War* enters a crowded field of books on the political impact of social media. It is distinguished by its readability and thorough research. I highly recommend it to policy makers and military officers seeking a better understanding of the information forces that are shaping contemporary and future battles.

DOYLE HODGES



*Champion of the Quarterdeck: Admiral Sir Erasmus Gower (1742–1814)*, by Ian M. Bates. Pomona, QLD, Austral.: Sage Old Books, 2017. 384 pages. \$38.

Admiral Sir Erasmus Gower is, perhaps, the least known of all the British admirals during the age of Nelson. Although little known today as a naval officer, his name is indeed on the map: Cape Gower in China, Gower Harbour in Papua New Guinea, Gower Island in the Solomon Islands, Gower Lake in Newfoundland, Gower Point in British Columbia, and Gower Street in Saint John's, Newfoundland. A man of such note is undoubtedly worthy of a biographical study. Ian M. Bates, who retired after a career with Australia's Department of External Territories in the public service of Papua New Guinea, has taken up the challenge and produced this extensively researched study of Gower's naval career.

A modest man, Erasmus Gower left neither a memoir nor personal files of correspondence, leaving Bates to ferret through masses of archival material to piece the story together from official documents to verify and expand on the few printed notices of his life that appeared in the contemporary *Naval Chronicle*. Born in Wales in 1742, Gower joined the Royal Navy at the age of thirteen in 1756 and served until 1807, when he retired as a vice admiral, and later rose to admiral of the white on the retired list. Bates has summarized Gower's varied and extensive career in the following lines: "No other contemporary officer approached his accumulated experience or could claim to have completed two circumnavigations of the world. Crossed the equator eighteen

times, the Atlantic twenty-four times, the Pacific twice, been shipwrecked and stranded, conveyed a first-of-its-type diplomatic mission, served in the Caribbean, East Indies, and China, three times in the Mediterranean and Newfoundland, numerous times off the French, Portuguese, and Spanish coasts. Add to this, inclusion amongst those more widely celebrated naval officers for cutting out expeditions under heavy fire, being wounded in battle, receiving the thanks of both houses of Parliament, [and] sharing in the capture of more than fifty ships” (p. 1). Bates provides a highly detailed narrative description, with extensive quotations from original documents, describing Erasmus Gower’s naval career. The volume has twenty-five chapters, with five appendices, which include a handy section of short biographical sketches of people closely associated with Gower and an annotated list of all the ships that Gower served in, commanded, or captured.

The book offers much detail of great interest to specialists in naval history. General readers are likely to be interested in the chapters on Gower’s experiences with Carteret’s voyage (1766–69), his subsequent shipwreck in HM sloop *Swift*, and the two chapters that describe the naval aspects of Earl Macartney’s voyage to China as Britain’s ambassador in 1792–94. During the voyage to China, Sir Erasmus Gower commanded the flagship, the sixty-four-gun HMS *Lion*, which, along with two accompanying vessels, carried the embassy to and from China. In telling this story, Bates has used Gower’s previously unpublished manuscript journal now held at Cornell University Library. The final chapters of the book discuss Gower’s final

active-duty assignment as commodore and governor of Newfoundland. Some prominent naval officers held the post of commodore-governor of Newfoundland between 1729 and 1825, but in most naval histories and biographies, historians typically summarize their roles in only a few lines. Additionally, the battle of Trafalgar dominates most naval history for the years 1804–1806. It is beneficial to find in this volume a detailed account of Erasmus Gower’s work in civil, military, and naval administration as well as fishery protection during these same years.

All in all, Bates’s volume on Admiral Gower sheds light on the life and career of a very interesting and highly accomplished naval officer whose experiences scholars have overlooked for too long. The volume makes a valuable addition to the extensive literature on the age of Nelson and a useful reference volume for any library collection in that area of naval history.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF



*Tidal Wave: From Leyte Gulf to Tokyo Bay*, by Thomas McKelvey Cleaver. New York: Osprey, 2018. 320 pages. \$32.

*Tidal Wave* covers well-trodden ground, looking at the final nine months of World War II. With so much previously written, finding a new angle is challenging, and Cleaver sets up to focus on the epic battle between the Japanese special-attack units—the *kamikaze*—and the U.S. Third/Fifth Fleet. Unfortunately, *Tidal Wave* fails to deliver new analysis. Insightful in spots, the book wanders to earlier battles to trace the lineage of aviation squadrons and