

Naval War College Review

Volume 74
Number 3 *Summer 2021*

Article 2

2021

From the Editors

Robert Ayer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Ayer, Robert (2021) "From the Editors," *Naval War College Review*. Vol. 74 : No. 3 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol74/iss3/2>

This From the Editor is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

FROM THE EDITORS

It long has been the fashion to contrast an “American way of war” with a “British way of war,” the difference corresponding roughly to a reliance on attrition or maneuver. In “The British and the Limitations of Maritime Maneuver,” Geoffrey Till provides a succinct overview of Britain’s long-standing preference for maneuver in warfare, with particular reference to the key role of the Royal Navy in enabling that preference. At the same time, he emphasizes the barriers to executing maneuverist warfare successfully, owing to the intrinsic difficulties of amphibious operations as well as the enemy’s failure to cooperate, and thus the inescapability of attrition as a default mode. In a new era of great-power competition, the United States faces adversaries who show every indication of eschewing attritional methods while threatening to employ novel capabilities such as cyber that particularly lend themselves to a maneuverist mind-set. The implications of all this for American naval strategy today deserve to be pondered. Geoffrey Till holds the Dudley W. Knox Chair for Naval History and Strategy at the Naval War College (the College).

In “Water under the Bridge? The Revival of New Zealand–United States Maritime Cooperation,” Steven Paget comprehensively reviews the U.S.–New Zealand defense relationship as both nations strive to overcome the estrangement that followed New Zealand’s expulsion from the ANZUS alliance in 1985 as a result of Wellington’s opposition to visits from nuclear-armed or -propelled American naval vessels. While it continues to maintain some distance from American foreign policy, particularly relating to China, it is evident that New Zealand fully embraces a close defense relationship with the United States and a policy of maritime cooperation, especially in dealing with the small island states of the South Pacific, where internal political instability increasingly is intertwined with aggressive political-economic meddling by the Chinese. Steven Paget is affiliated with the University of Portsmouth (U.K.).

For the most part, the stability of civil-military relations in the United States has been taken for granted in recent years. Very recent developments suggest this no longer should be the case. In “‘An Object Lesson to the Country’: The 1915 Atlantic Fleet Summer Exercise and the U.S. Navy on the Eve of World War I,” Ryan Peeks reconstructs the inside story of the political impetus behind the fleet’s summer exercise that year. The larger story is the antagonism between senior

USN officers—including the most senior among them, Admiral Bradley Fiske—and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels. (It should be added, though, that Fiske’s intrigues were abetted covertly by Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt.) The exercise simulated a German naval expedition against the East Coast of the United States; it was rigged to result in a resounding German victory, primarily to help the Navy pressure the administration and Congress to make up for its deficit (to some extent self-inflicted) in battle cruisers, but more generally to prepare public opinion for higher defense budgets in the changed international circumstances of the time. Ryan Peeks is a historian at the Joint History and Research Office.

The Second World War continues to be a rich source of lessons in maritime naval operations. Milan Vego, in “Redeployment of the German Brest Group through the English Channel, 11–13 February 1942 (Operation CERBERUS),” provides a detailed reconstruction of a largely forgotten encounter between the German fleet and Britain’s Royal Navy in the early stages of the war. He shows that, despite the Germans’ relative inexperience in naval warfare, they demonstrated a high degree of operational virtuosity in the daring redeployment of the Brest Group through the English Channel with minimal losses, in spite of Britain’s many advantages in this theater. Milan Vego is the Admiral R. K. Turner Professor of Operational Art at the College.

