

The Daybook

Volume 5 Issue 4

Summer 1999



Virginian-Pilot
THE NORFOLK LANDMARK SINCE 1808

SEA SCARRED AND RUSTY FROM SEVEN MONTHS' CRUISE, PRINZ ETEL FRIEDRICH DROPS ANCHOR IN HAMPTON ROADS

GERMAN U-12 RAMMED AND SUNK, TEN OF CREW SAVED

ELLEVEN SHIPS SUNK ON LONG VOYAGE FROM CHINESE PORT

CAPTAIN KILNE DESCRIBES SINKING OF U-12

SINKING OF FRYE UNFRIENDLY ACT, OFFICIALS THINK

CAPTAIN THIERICHENS TELLS OF LONG CRUISE TO ROADS

SHOWS EFFECTS ON LONG VOYAGE

SAN BEN INCENDIARY SHIP SENT TO BOTTOM

Mr. Merchants ... AUTHENTIC STYLE EDITION ... SWITCH YOUR WAGON TO A STAR ... IN WITH BE BIRD ... CALL NORFOLK 145 ... SERVICE BUREAU VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Other visible headlines include: "GERMAN U-12 RAMMED AND SUNK, TEN OF CREW SAVED", "ELLEVEN SHIPS SUNK ON LONG VOYAGE FROM CHINESE PORT", "CAPTAIN KILNE DESCRIBES SINKING OF U-12", "SINKING OF FRYE UNFRIENDLY ACT, OFFICIALS THINK", "CAPTAIN THIERICHENS TELLS OF LONG CRUISE TO ROADS", "SHOWS EFFECTS ON LONG VOYAGE", "SAN BEN INCENDIARY SHIP SENT TO BOTTOM".



*The Great War Comes
Early to Hampton Roads*

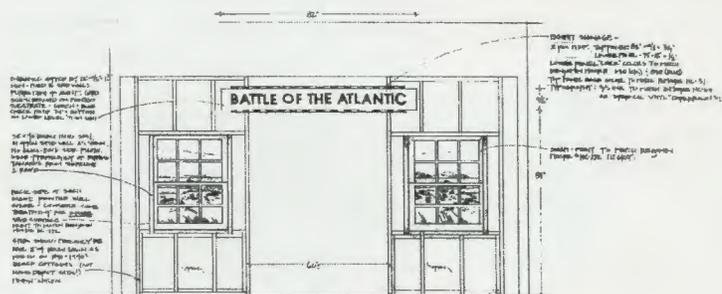
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In This Issue...

The Museum's New Battle of the Atlantic Exhibit and CD Collection
Page 4



The Prinz Eitel Friedrich Incident: The Great War Comes Early to Hampton Roads
Page 6



About The Daybook

The *Daybook* is an authorized publication of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum (HRNM). Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official view of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps and do not imply endorsement thereof. Book reviews are solely the opinion of the reviewer.

The HRNM is operated and funded by Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic. The museum is dedicated to the study of 220 years of naval history in the Hampton Roads region. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. The *Daybook's* purpose is to educate and inform readers on historical topics and museum related events. It is written by the staff and volunteers of the museum.

Questions or comments can be directed to the Hampton Roads Naval Museum editor. The *Daybook* can be reached at (757) 322-2993, by fax at (757) 445-1867, e-mail at gbcalthoun@comar.navy.mil, or write The *Daybook*, Hampton Roads Naval Museum, One Waterside Drive, Suite 248, Norfolk, VA 23510-1607. The museum can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://naval-station.norfolk.va.us/navy.html>.

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Features

The Director's Column-

On the Road Again.....2

Book Reviews..... 10

Academy on the James: The Confederate Naval School by R. Thomas Campbell
Reviewed by Maj. Angela Kay Manion

The Fighting Commodores: Convoy Commanders in the Second World War by Alan Burn. Reviewed by Alex Macensky



The Museum Sage jumps on the millennium retrospect bandwagon and draws up a list..... 12



Rear Adm. R.T. Ziemer
Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic

Cover Photographs: To the people of Hampton Roads, the Great War in Europe was nothing more than just another squabble in the Old World. That all changed when the *Virginian-Pilot* broke the story that a German commerce raider sought sanctuary from Allied cruisers and needed repairs in Newport News. The ship's arrival set off a series of events that potentially could have turned ugly.

On the Road Again

The Director's Column
by Becky Poulliot

The title for this issue's director's column comes from Helene Tisdale, our special events coordinator. That's how she described a recent docent field trip to Richmond museums. I think it's also an apt description of the museum's plans for the Fall quarter. Autumn has always been a time of renewal for our institution. It is a time to regroup from the summer hordes and to focus on our core audience here in Hampton Roads: the military, civilian locals, and schools groups.

With the help of our volunteers, we are



rejuvenating the museum Speakers' Bureau and taking our act on the road. This program enlightens civic groups about the museum and the Navy's history in Hampton Roads. A sampling of topics available include the Battle Off the Virginia Capes, the ironclads USS *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia*, a visit to the Jamestown Exposition, and Norfolk's Homefront during World War II. We offer programs that incorporate first person interpretations, like docent Hunt Lewis pictured here. Bob Mattetson, museum educator, says the

response has been great. We can still use more names of organizations. If you have suggestions about a Southside or Peninsula contact, or want to book a presentation, give Bob a call at 322-2986.

Training will begin in the Fall concerning a new sixth grade presentation. Titled "African-Americans in the Navy," this program will promote a hands-on inquiry based method of learning. Students will "serve" as crewmembers on a World War II battleship and work together on a learning exercise. This program meets the state's standards of learning required for the schools in history and complements a Nauticus temporary exhibit on African-American achievers.

A new course will begin in September to train docents for conducting tours and special programs. We are on the lookout for new volunteers. Our prerequisites are simple: an interest in naval history and a commitment to attend our training sessions.

Unlike many other museums, we do not require a stated number of hours to work per month. We are extremely flexible in scheduling and work with the individual to find a time that is mutually beneficial. Interested in learning more? Call 322-2986.

In closing, I am happy to announce that our children's activity book is close to being published. The book is a vibrant and fun look at the history of the U.S. Navy in Hampton Roads.

I wish to express a special note of gratitude to several organizations for funding the museum activity book for schoolchildren: the Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation, the Navy League of the United States Hampton Roads Council, and the Norfolk Naval Base Treasure Shop. Fifty thousand books will blanket Hampton Roads schools to engage and educate elementary-aged children about our Navy's heritage.

Becky



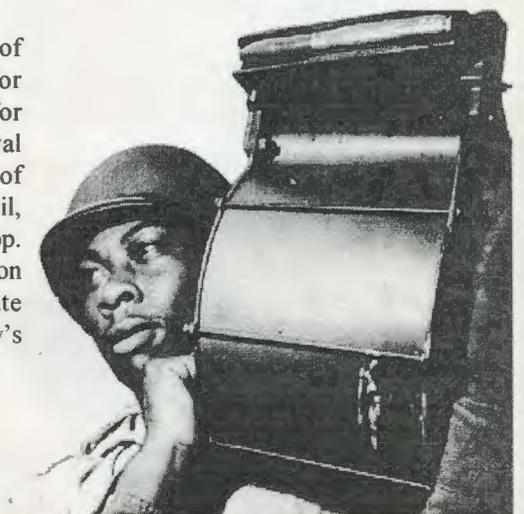
ATTENTION!

The Hampton Roads Naval Museum is currently looking for new volunteers.

Classes start in September 23.

No prior knowledge of Naval history is necessary! Flexible schedules available upon completion of the course.

Call Bob Matteson at 322-2986 for more information.





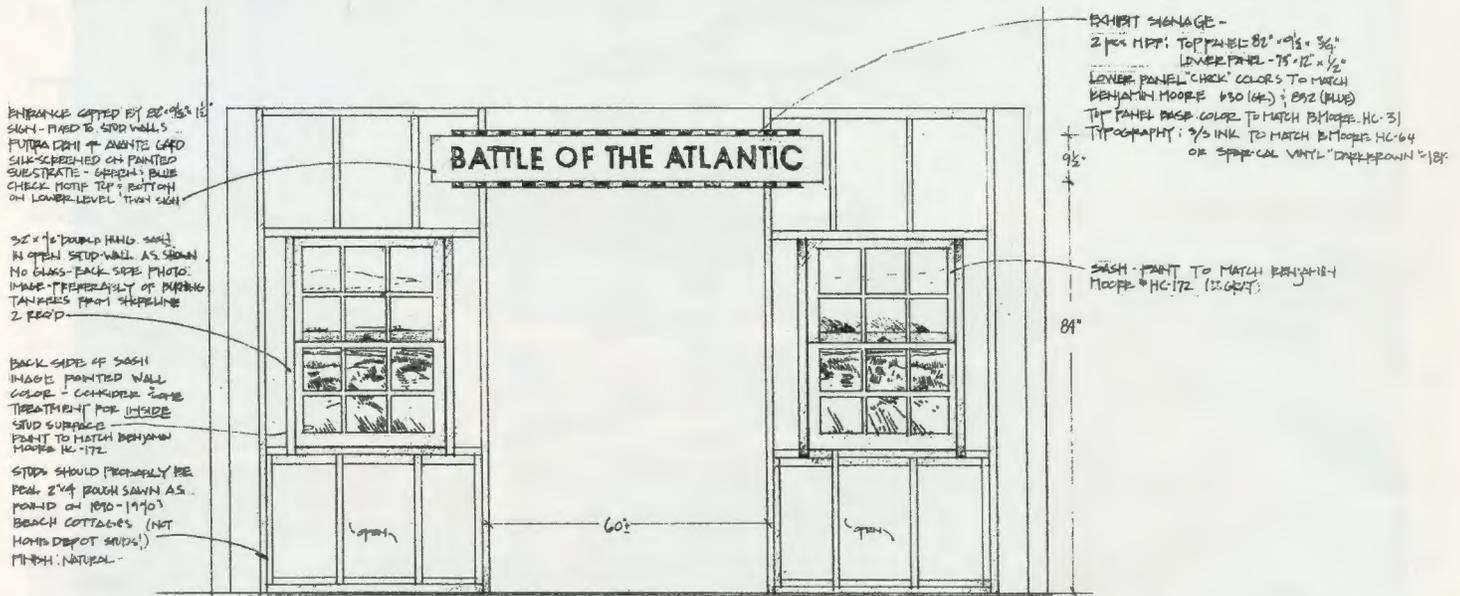
U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopters transport troops of the 10th Mountain Division from the Norfolk-based aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) during Operation Uphold Democracy. (Photo courtesy of the DoD Joint Combat Camera Command)

Pax Americana: The U.S. Navy in the Era of Violent Peace

An Exhibit on the U.S. Navy & Marine Corps and
Peacekeeping Operations in the post-World War II era
Open Now in the Museum's Modern Navy Gallery
Call 757-322-2993 for more information



Museum Plans New Displays for its Battle of the Atlantic Exhibit



This is an artist sketch of the entrance to the museum's new Battle of the Atlantic exhibit. It is scheduled to open early next year.

The Battle of the Atlantic was a deadly struggle between the Allies and the Axis for control of the sea lanes. German submarines, aircraft, and surface raiders attempted to cut the maritime lifeline to Britain. Allied sailors, airmen, merchant seamen, and code-breakers worked to keep the food, oil and raw materials flowing. The struggle lasted from the first day of the war until the last. It was the one battle of World War II that occurred in part on the doorstep of Hampton Roads, in early 1942.

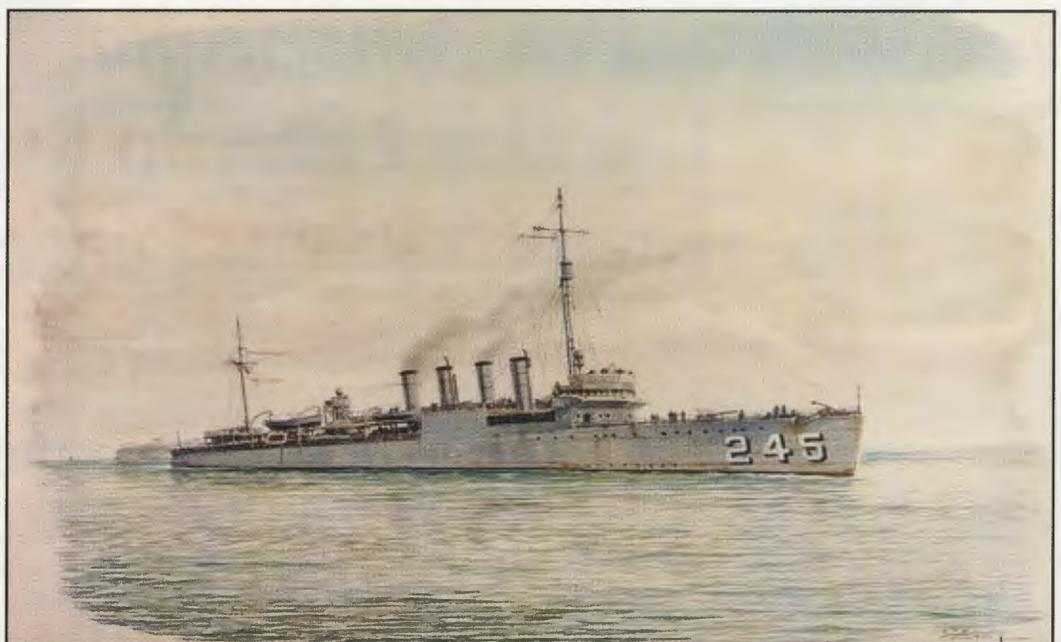
The museum is in the middle of an ambitious project to remake the "Battle of the Atlantic" electronic exhibit. The current exhibit, an electronic map accompanied by a "slide show," was installed at the museum's former home, the greatly missed Pennsylvania House, in 1980. This map, having put in its twenty years hard service, will be retired this fall. In its place will be an exciting new exhibit.

The star of the new display will be an interactive computer kiosk that tells the story of the epic sea

battle from three points of view. Each point of view is represented by a fictional person. Visitors can pick one of these characters and use a computer touch-screen to experience the war through the character's eyes. The first person is a sailor, who is

working at the Norfolk Navy Yard as a civilian and then decides to enlist. The second character is a nurse, who works at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital and who is

New displays continued on page 5



USS Reuben James (DD-245), sunk by a U-boat in September 1941. The new displays on the Battle of the Atlantic will include hundreds of pictures like this one of the campaign that users can lookup and research. (HRNM photo)

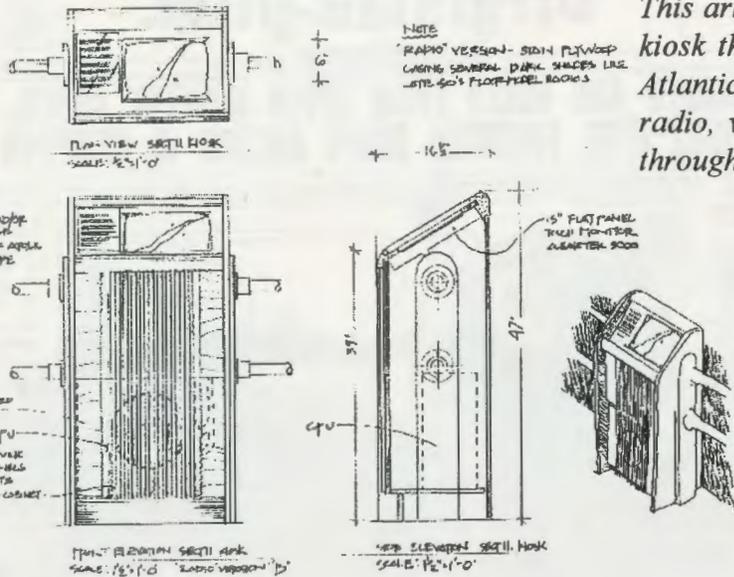
This artist's sketch shows concepts for an interactive kiosk that will be featured in the new Battle of the Atlantic exhibit. The kiosk, which simulates a 1940s radio, will allow visitors to experience world events through the eyes of three characters.

artifacts that visitors will see.

Current plans call for the old map to be removed this fall. Then installation of the new exhibit will begin, probably in January 2000.

Money for the new exhibit was applied for and received from a special funding source dedicated to preserving the Navy's cultural resources. Part of the same grant paid for scanning primary documents from the U.S. National Archives relating to the Battle of the Atlantic. These documents, preserved digitally, have been placed on a compact disk (CD) and will be available for researchers and visitors. The documents include after-action reports, war diaries, diplomatic issues, and casualty reports.

In addition, hundreds of photographs relating to the campaign, the Naval Base and other Battle of the Atlantic subjects have been scanned and are being placed on a series of CDs. The digital format will make the images easier to transmit, to use, and to educate. These tools of the 21st century will help us understand one of the most important events of the 20th.



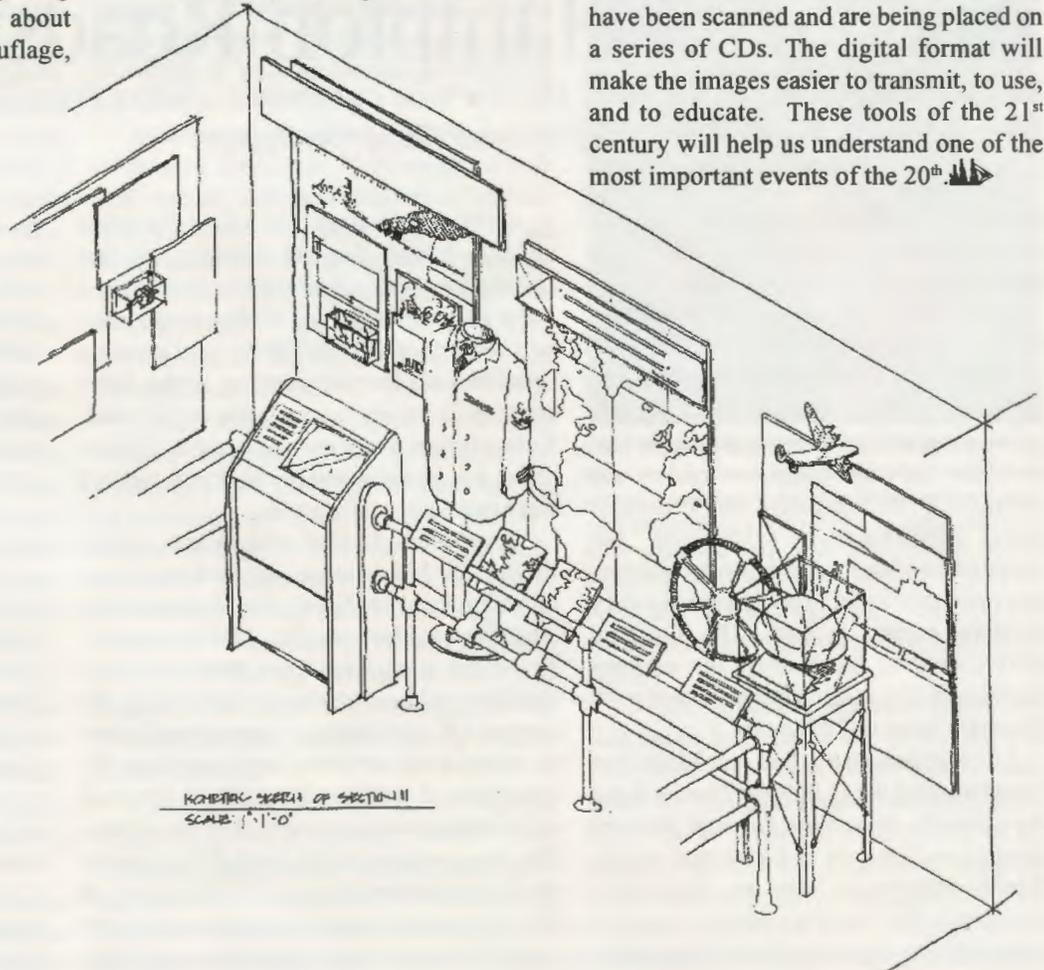
New displays continued from page 4

married to a naval officer. The third person is a young man who delivers the leading African-American newspaper of the day, the *Journal and Guide*. All are residents of Hampton Roads.

Another feature of the exhibit will be a kiosk housing three games for young people, which will help them learn about topics such as code-breaking, camouflage, and hunting U-boats.

These interactive elements will be supported by a traditional museum exhibit that will use artifacts, photographs, artwork, and maps to tell the story of the campaign. A sonarman's uniform, a cypher wheel from an Enigma machine, a civil defense helmet, medals, and flags are some of the

This "bird's eye view" of the new exhibit shows the central section of the display. The kiosk is on the left. On the wall are a petty officer's uniform, a model of a B-24 "Liberator," a civil defense helmet and the wheel of USS Augusta (CA-31). The center image is a map of the Atlantic Ocean.



President Woodrow Wilson would win the 1916 Presidential election using the campaign slogan "He kept us out of war." He almost did not get to make that claim. In the spring of 1915, the war arrived in Hampton Roads in a most unexpected way.

After months of rather mundane news, the people of Hampton Roads woke up with their morning coffee on March 11, 1915, to one-inch, panic-stricken headlines in local papers. They announced that the Great War just anchored off of Newport News in the form of a German commerce raider. A two-stack cruise liner turned commerce raider by the name of *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* arrived in the region for repairs.

Friedrich's commanding officer, one Capt. Thierichens, was an enthusiastic and extremely optimistic fellow who was more than willing to talk to American reporters. After he released several hundred captured

Read It
That means when a paper is in the classified series of the "The Virginian-Pilot."

Virginian-Pilot

THE NORFOLK LANDMARK

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THREE CENTS PER COPY.

SEA SCARRED AND RUSTY FROM SEVEN MONTHS' CRUISE, PRINZ EITEL FRIEDRICH DROPS ANCHOR IN HAMPTON ROADS

GERMAN U-12 RAMMED AND SUNK; TEN OF CREW SAVED

British Admiralty Announces That Submarine Was Prey Of Destroyer Arlet

GERMANS BEGIN NEW OFFENSIVE IN EAST

It is Another Attempt To Break Through Russian Lines In North Poland

ALLIED FLEET STILL ON THE MOVE



After many months of dull, mundane events, the *Virginian-Pilot* dropped a bombshell on its readers on March 11, 1915. Capt. Thierichens is pictured next to his ship. (March 11, 1915 *Virginian-Pilot*)

seek out two German gunboats in Shanghai harbor to receive armaments and extra sailors. War had been declared in Europe and Thierichens was to hunt for Allied ships.

His raiding campaign began off the coast of

nearby which began to hunt for the German vessel.

Thierichens continued heading east and around Cape Horn before heading north. The Allied squadron, which consisted of

ELEVEN SHIPS SUNK ON LONG VOYAGE FROM CHINESE PORT

86 Passengers And 247 Seamen From *Manila* Said To Be Landed At Newport News

LOOKS LIKE GERMAN WILL BE INTERRED

Commander Says He Entered Roads For Urgent Repairs To Overworked Boilers

ONLY PASSENGERS

40,000 Tons of Trouble Drops Anchor in Hampton Roads

In the middle of the Great War, the German commerce raiders Prinz Eitel Friedrich and Prinz Wilhelm make heroic dashes into Hampton Roads

by Gordon Calhoun

merchantmen and their captains, he began his news conference by telling reporters of his ship's trek across the Pacific Ocean.

Thierichens' ship was one of 17 German-flagged civilian cruise liners and freighters that the German government converted into commerce raiders when the war began. It was a common practice for maritime states to turn merchant ships into commerce raiders and privateers. In the later part of the 19th century, some governments subsidized the construction of steam passenger liners for the expressed purpose of making them auxiliary cruisers during a war. The German government at the turn of the century subsidized the construction of some 25 passenger liners and freighters.

The German steam line Norddeutscher Lloyd operated the 16,000-ton *Friedrich* and she normally cruised the Far East between German settlements in China and Japan. While making a trip to Shanghai, Kriegsmarine commanders ordered Thierichens to cancel any further trips and to

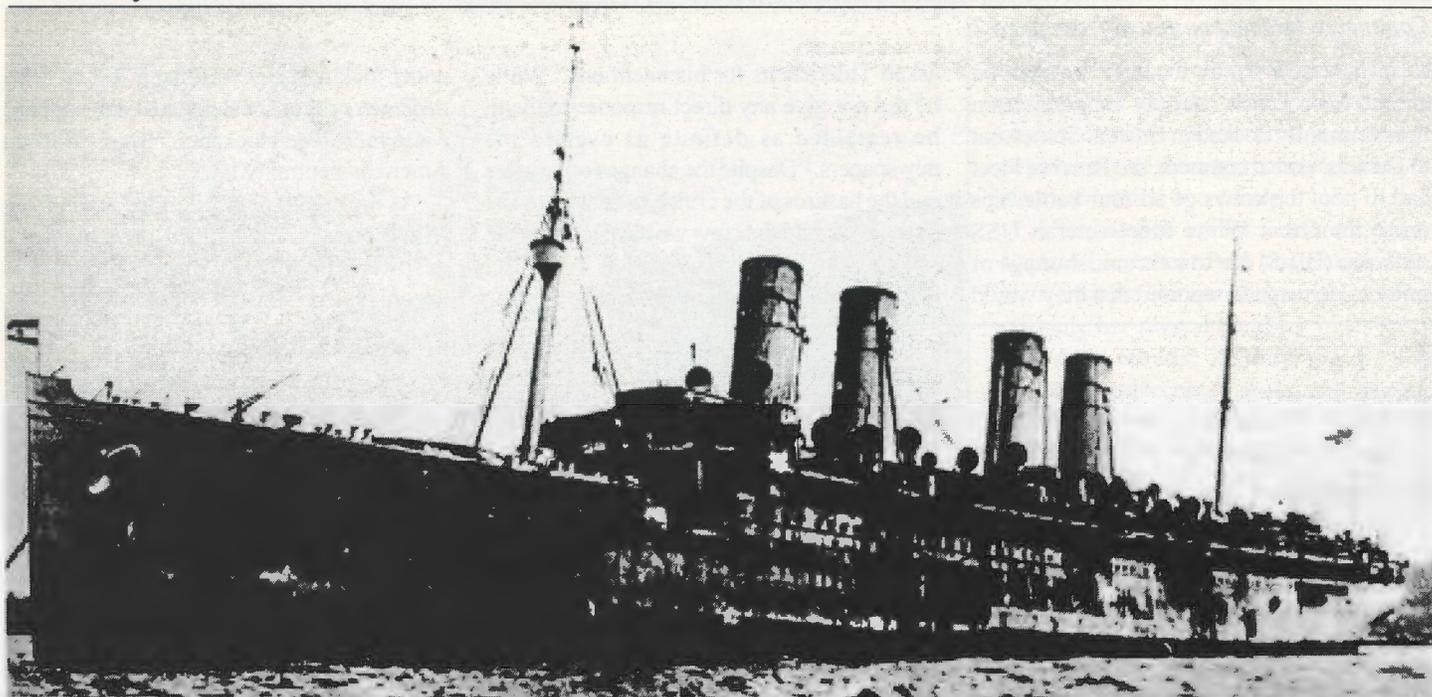
Australia in September 1914 where she joined up with fellow German auxiliary cruiser *Cormoran*. Both ships quickly discovered a major problem with using civilian cruise liners as commerce raiders. While they had excellent speed and sea keeping qualities, cruise liners consumed an enormous amount of coal. Normally they would have returned to China to refuel, but Japanese and British forces had laid siege to the German colonies.

Thierichens decided to head east into the Pacific. He lucked out as he found and joined up with Adm. Graf Spee's East Asia squadron where he was able to recoal. After he refueled, *Friedrich* separated from Spee's cruiser squadron and headed towards Cape Horn. He stopped off at mysterious Easter Island where he dropped off survivors from merchants his crew had sunk. While at Easter Island, *Friedrich* refueled again using coal taken from her victims. The ship continued to the coast of Chile where she found and sank five more ships. News of the raider's activity caught the attention of a joint Anglo-Franco cruiser squadron patrolling

six British and French cruisers, followed him. With his ship's boilers on the verge of bursting, his coal and fresh water supply short, and health conditions aboard the ship deteriorating quickly, Thierichens decided to head for the United States. He took his ship into Hampton Roads and dropped anchor off of Newport News on March 10, 1915.

Friedrich's arrival not only caused a panic among the local population, but among British sailors working on the docks of Newport News. Several British freighters were loading up horses for the French army when some of them spotted *Friedrich* and her German naval ensign rounding the Chesapeake & Ohio coal piers. A stampede ensued as sailors rushed to get to their ships. Their officers regained control of the situation when they reminded their crew that they were in a neutral port.

Once *Friedrich* dropped anchor, her captain asked Newport News Shipbuilding *Commerce raiders continued on page 7*



The Navy got to relax after taking care of Prinz Friedrich. Then a week later, the *Virginian-Pilot* took this photograph and announced that the battered and bruised auxiliary cruiser *Kronprinz Wilhelm* just dropped anchor in Hampton Roads. Before the war, the ship was the pride of the German passenger steam fleet and made runs between Germany and the United States. (April 11, 1915 photograph from the *Virginian-Pilot*)

Commerce raiders continued from page 6

to begin repairs to his vessel. The shipyard agreed and took her into one of her dry-docks. The port call in Hampton Roads was the crew's first since leaving Tsing Tsau, China in September. The *Virginian-Pilot* described the ship as "sea-scarred and rusty" with "thickgrown seaweed on her sides nearly a foot long and with grim rifles forward, amidships and aft." Thierichsen admitted to reporters that his ship was "unseaworthy at the present time." Inspectors from the shipyard looked over the vessel and said it would take at least three weeks to repair it.

Friedrich's arrival in Hampton Roads set off alarm bells in Washington as the State Department knew that Allied governments would either demand that the German raider be denied a chance to commence repairs or that the United States permanently impound her. U.S. officials became further concerned when they received the news that one of *Friedrich's* victims was an American ship, a three masted schooner named *William P. Frye*. While *Frye's* crew was unharmed, President Wilson still condemned the attack on the neutral vessel and publicly demanded that the German government pay reparations. Thierichsen scoffed at this notion as he claimed *Frye* had English cargo.

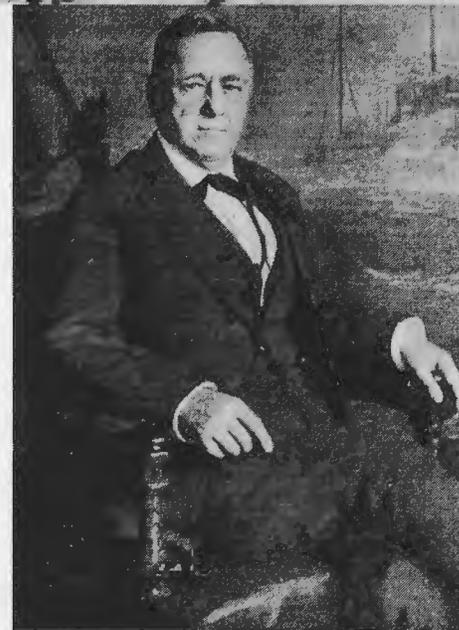
The crisis was elevated a notch when the Allied cruiser squadron caught up with the German vessel and set up a blockade off the

Virginia Capes. Local papers added to the hysteria by publishing "intercepted" Allied wireless messages. These messages said they would try to sink the German vessel at all costs.

American authorities outwardly tried to act as brave as they could. They reminded both sides that any fighting would have to be done outside American territorial waters. However, there was little to back up the bold statements. The few local forces present amounted to coast defense units at Ft. Monroe, two Coast Guard cutters, and the unfinished giant battleship *Pennsylvania* (BB-38).

The crisis became a political hot potato for Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels. The Secretary's critics had publicly attacked the ex-newspaper publisher's policies since the day he took office in 1912. The crisis in Hampton Roads only gave them more ammunition as they claimed the Navy was not prepared to handle the situation. It brewed speculation that the Germans would try to make the situation more complicated by arming their other steamers already in other American ports.

One might wonder where the U.S. Atlantic Fleet was during this crisis. For the Navy Secretary, the situation could not have come at a worse time. The entire U.S. Atlantic Fleet had left Hampton Roads in January for Guantanamo Bay and was currently



The crisis in Hampton Roads could not have come at a worse time for Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels. Already under fire for his lack of Naval expertise, there were no Naval ships ready to offer immediate assistance to the situation developing in Hampton Roads. (HRNM photograph of an official Navy painting)

commencing winter exercises. The Navy did not expect them back in Hampton Roads until April.

Daniels responded to his critics by ordering four older battleships out of the Navy's Reserve Fleet in Philadelphia to mobilize and steam for Hampton Roads. Additionally, he also ordered a general mobilization of all available ships at East Coast ports to ensure American neutrality was upheld. The Spanish-American War veteran USS

Commerce raiders continued on page 8

Commerce raiders continued from page 7

Brooklyn (ACR-3), for example, was put on alert to keep watch over six German steam liners currently docked in Boston. Somewhat to Daniels' embarrassment, the Reserve Fleet had to pool the crews of all four battleships on to the Great White Fleet-veteran USS *Alabama* (BB-8) due to a chronic shortage of sailors. Her captain reported that they would



Secretary Daniels instructed that all four battleships of the Navy's Reserve Fleet steam from Philadelphia to Hampton Roads to act as a peacekeeping force. Due to a chronic sailor shortage, the four battleships had to pool their crews on to USS *Alabama* (BB-8) which arrived in the region in late March. (HRNM photo)

not get underway for another two weeks.

Thierichens was quite smug about the whole turn of events. He told local papers that he planned to break out of Hampton Roads with the assistance of the battlecruiser SMS *Von Der Tan* and a U-boat nearby once his ship was repaired and refueled. For Thierichens, this was wishful thinking as *Von Der Tan* was still in Germany and later fought at the Battle of Jutland.

As for the officers and crews of the ships sunk by *Friedrich*, the reaction differed from officers and the enlisted personnel. The officers were quite appreciative of how well they were treated by Capt. Thierichens. The sailors however told newspaper reporters that the Germans forced them to eat spoiled food, drink salty water, provided no heat in colder climates, and denied them fresh air while in the Tropics. They did later admit that the German sailors were working under the same conditions as they were living.

On March 15, Thierichens revised his repair request to Newport News Shipbuilding. Instead of the putting his ship into dry-dock for three weeks, he asked the shipyard only for spare parts for his ship's boilers and other machines. He would have his crew do the necessary repairs instead. The shipyard granted his request, removed the vessel from the dry-dock, and placed her alongside one of the yard's piers. U.S. Custom authorities

asked Thierichens for his intentions. While he did not give any direct response to them, he remained as definite as ever to the newspapers. "Despite the changes of weather and the hazards of the cruise, we have not lost a single life and the crew we have today is the same to a man as that which left Tsing Tau many months ago and ready to take another chance," he commented to the *Virginian-Pilot*.

While British and French rotated their ships off the Virginia Capes and maintained their blockade, events in Hampton Roads got back to normal. *Friedrich's* crew began repairs to the hull and the ship's machinery for a week and caused little commotion. The Navy began to get a better handle on the situation when *Alabama* finally arrived in Hampton Roads on March 20. Welcome reinforcements in the form of six submarines arrived from their base in Connecticut soon after *Alabama's* arrival. They took station off the coast of Ft. Wool and in the Chesapeake Bay.

Troops from Ft. Monroe and sailors from the Navy Yard were placed on a 24-hour guard of *Friedrich* to ensure that no intruders would disturb the Germans. This included newspaper reporters. There was at least one incident where sailors spotted a photographer trying to snap a shot for the *Virginian-Pilot*. The sailors roughed the photographer up a bit, seized his camera, pulled out the plate, and threw it into the river.

Among foreign circles, the Navy was not winning any friends either. In an attempt to keep things under control, Navy and Customs officials instructed that no foreign ships could leave Hampton Roads and any ships coming in had to stop and be boarded. Any ship found violating the rules would be fired on. Twenty-five British ships, most loaded with horses and supplies for the French army, were held up, much to the annoyance of the British consulate and local exporters.

The consulate's attempts to remedy the situation only met with frustration. Local merchants took their case up with Virginia's congressional delegation, but with little effect. One of the reasons the British ships were kept

under lock and key was that a few of them had been caught sneaking coal and supplies out to the Allied blockade. This act violated American neutrality laws.

As the month of April rolled around, the Allied cruisers maintained their blockade despite several gale force rain storms. Speculation on whether or not *Friedrich* was going to make a dash to freedom continued to circulate. Newspaper articles frequently prepped their readers for the possible battle by publishing every rumor heard and with information like water depths of the Chesapeake Bay and ship statistics.

Finally, on April 4, the State Department told *Friedrich* she had until April 6 at 4 a.m. to leave Hampton Roads. But it was still not clear whether or not the Germans would take advantage of the situation. They had passed up several opportunities to leave, particularly when the weather was bad or during moonless nights. Nonetheless, on April 6, the *Ledger-Star* reported that it looked like *Friedrich* was about to leave port and the showdown was about to begin.

It soon became clear that Thierichens and *Friedrich* were not going to make a great dash to freedom. The German captain was well aware that his ship was in no condition to sail and that his potential opponents were too strong. His talk about a battlecruiser and a U-boat coming to save him was nothing more than delusory thinking.

"I inform you I intend to intern SMS *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*. The relief I expected appeared not to arrive in time so the number and force of enemy cruisers guarding the entrance to the bay makes to me impossible the dash for the open sea with any hope of success," a depressed Thierichens wrote, in broken English, to the Collector of Customs for Hampton Roads and Rear Adm. Helm, commandant of the Naval Shipyard and the senior officer in the region.

U.S. Customs officials impounded the ship on April 7. The Customs Service in turn handed the ship and her crew over to the Navy who took them both down to the Naval Shipyard.

There were still a few loose ends to tie up. The German government agreed to compensate Capt. Kiehne for the loss of *William P. Frye* as an interpretation of the treaty of friendship signed between the United States and Prussia during the American Revolution. Local papers suggested a

Commerce raiders continued on page 9



When sailors and civilian workers at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard began their overhaul of Prinz Friedrich in April, 1917, they cleaned out what was called "Dutch Junk." Several dozen beer kegs, many of them empty, were found in the hold of the German cruiser. (April 20, 1917 Naval Historical Center photo)

Commerce raiders continued from page 8 different reason. It came to light that Kiehne collaborated with the Germans by helping them navigate the South Atlantic and helped them to evade the Allied cruisers. He also advised them to steam for Hampton Roads for repairs.

With the crisis over, Customs officials cleared the way for the resumption of shipping traffic. No more than a few hours after the ban was lifted, 15 of the 25 British merchants trapped by the crisis left for Europe. Battleships, cruisers, and destroyers of the Atlantic Fleet returned home from Cuba the same day. Five thousand liberty hungry sailors, joined by the German sailors who were let out on restricted liberty, packed downtown Norfolk. Everything in the region began to return to normal.

Or so it seemed.

Unknown to all of the *Friedrich* participants, another German auxiliary cruiser was off the coast of the United States and had been listening to much of the wireless traffic coming out of Hampton Roads. Like *Friedrich*, the 24,900-ton SMS *Kronprinz Wilhelm* had been at sea since the fall of 1914. She was the pride of the Norddeutscher Lloyd company, the same company that operated *Friedrich*, and made passenger runs between Germany and the United States. In 1902, she won the "blue ribband" for traveling across the Atlantic in record time. The 23-knot, four-stack steamer was one of the largest

of her kind in the world and the largest in the German merchant marine.

At the outbreak of war, she received orders to leave New York and rendezvous with the cruiser SMS *Karlsruhe* off the coast of Bermuda. Armament, supplies, and extra officers and sailors transferred to the cruise liner. No more than an hour after the two ships completed their transfer, three British cruisers, HMS *Bristol*, *Suffolk*, and *Berwick*, spotted and engaged *Karlsruhe*. While *Karlsruhe* held them off, *Wilhelm* turned

"I inform you I intend to intern SMS Prinz Eitel Friedrich. The relief I expected appeared not to arrive in time so the number and force of enemy cruisers guarding the entrance to the bay makes to me impossible the dash for the open sea with any hope of success."

south at flank speed and escaped. *Karlsruhe* fled the scene too after she damaged *Bristol*.

Safely away, *Wilhelm's* crew began their raiding in the North Atlantic and then steamed south into the South Atlantic. They captured and sank 15 British and French merchant ships before heading back north. Like *Friedrich*, *Wilhelm's* officers depended on captured coal to sustain their ship's hungry 16 boilers until a supply ship could reach them. As a result, the ex-cruise liner's music room had two big

holes knocked out of it to make way for coal chutes. *Wilhelm's* crew then used the chutes as a way of quickly transferring coal from captured ships. Extra coal was dumped anywhere there was room including first class cabins and open decks.

After being at sea for a record 255 days, Captain-Lieutenant Paul Thierfelder waited in vain for the German steamer *Odenwald* to resupply her several hundred miles east of Hampton Roads. Among the wireless messages intercepted from the *Friedrich* incident, one announced *Friedrich's* internment. A second announced that the Allied warships were going to lift their blockade of the Virginia Capes.

With only 12 hours of coal left, fresh water at a premium, and with many of his crew suffering from the lethal nutritional disease beri-beri, Thierfelder decided to act. Beri-beri (pronounced beree-beree) is a non-contagious disease that causes the victim's nervous system to stop functioning due to a lack of the vitamin Thiamin. The absence of fresh vegetables and the consumption of improperly cleaned rice were the primary reasons for the disease's presence.

Wilhelm approached the Capes at night and with no running lights. Wireless operators kept a close watch on any Allied message traffic. Through this means of intelligence gathering, *Wilhelm's* operators determined that there were still at least three British and one French cruiser in the area, but that they were at least 15 miles apart from each other. One of *Wilhelm's* officers later reported that they steamed so close to one of

-Capt. Thierichens' surrender letter

the cruisers that they could hear the Allied wireless machine at work. The stealth approach worked and the next morning *Wilhelm* anchored safely off Newport News, right next to the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

The Germans held a news conference very shortly after they arrived. The 33-year old captain was even more defiant and brash than Capt. Thierichens. "We got in without being seen by the enemy and we can get out the
Commerce raiders continued on page 14

Academy on the James: The Confederate Naval School

by R. Thomas Campbell

Reviewed by Maj. Angela Kay Manion

When the Civil War began, the Confederate States Navy had to rely on midshipmen who had resigned their appointments to the U.S. Naval Academy for its junior officer corps. As Confederate midshipmen, these young men were not given the chance to continue their studies in a classroom. Rather they were sent to the four corners of the Confederacy to help run the newly established fleet. As a result, the midshipmen did their best to finish their studies while on station as time permitted.

It was not until 1863 that Southern midshipmen received formal instruction. In July of that year, Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory successfully lobbied for the establishment of an academy. He appointed the well-traveled and experienced Lt. William Howard

States Navy series and a history of CSS *Hunley*.

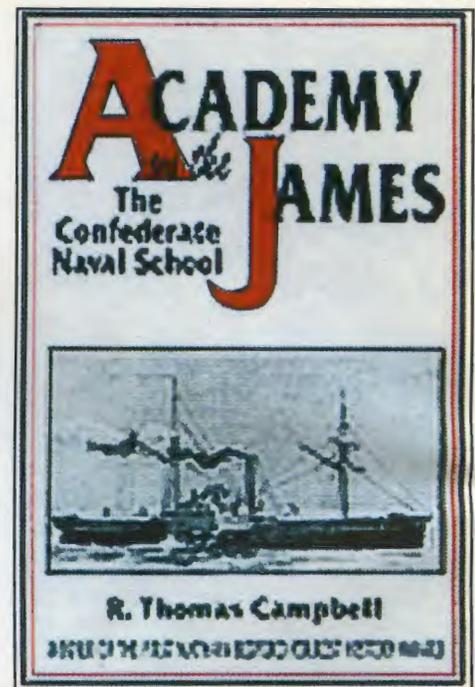
Mr. Campbell pays particular attention to detailing the school ship CSS *Patrick Henry*. Anyone who is a student of naval history will appreciate his attention to small details. He lists in an orderly fashion the expenditures made to modify *Patrick Henry* for service.

His attention to *Patrick Henry* is just one example of his thoroughness. The entire book is full of journal entries and excerpts from personal diaries from many of the midshipmen and officers who were assigned to the school. It is this one aspect that made the book lag in places at times. The author relied too heavily at times on these passages to carry the book forward. However it did give a very clear picture of what life was like. Each midshipman was required by the school to keep a personal journal of his daily activities. This does give a unique tone to the book.

The most remarkable thing about this book is the absolutely wonderful appendix section attached as the last chapter. In fact the appendix of primary documents is longer than the actual history of the academy. It is here that the avid Naval archivist can find a wealth of information laid out in a clear and concise manor. Appointments, assignments, regulations, merit roles, and other facts are easily accessed. The book also includes several photographs of the midshipmen and their instructors.

As a result, this book is not for the casual history buff or Civil War enthusiast. Be prepared to spend some time with it. Mr. Campbell's attention to detail leads to a rather dry syntax. It reads more like a high school history textbook rather than a formal history. High school textbooks tend to present the reader with straight, uninterpreted facts rather than present a thesis.

However, this is an excellent research/resource book available on the Confederate States Navy. This book would be useful for professional historians and teachers



R. Thomas Campbell. *Academy on the James: The Confederate Naval School*. Spittensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1998. 296 pages, appendix. ISBN 1-57249-130-2. \$39.95.

Parker as the academy's first superintendent. Parker recalled his experiences in his well-known memoir *Recollections of a Naval Officer*. Howard used the Richmond-based paddle steamer CSS *Patrick Henry* as his schoolhouse.

R. Thomas Campbell's book *The Academy on the James: The Confederate Naval School* details the birth, life and subsequent death of this short-lived entity. This short work profiles in detail the staff officers, cadets and other pertinent individuals who founded this important part of Confederate naval history.

The author's enthusiasm for his subject is without question. Along with this work he has published several other histories of the Confederate States Navy including his four volume *Exploits of the Confederate*

trying to locate certain hard-to-find facts. It would be especially useful to living history interpreters, who are always looking for every "down to the last button" detail, while working on a Confederate naval officer character. 

Maj. Manion is currently an intelligence officer in the U.S. Army Reserves and is a former instructor for the University of Louisville's ROTC program.



The Fighting Commodores: The Convoy Commanders in the Second World War

by Alan Burn

Reviewed by Alex Macensky

It is rare that a satisfying reason can be given for publishing an unfinished or confusing manuscript. Having said that, it was dismaying to find a note from the publisher at the front of this book. The note states that the author was medically incapacitated after submitting his first draft of the work. We the reading public are urged to ignore the rough edges of the book and focus on the core of the text.

If a core story existed to focus on, perhaps allowances could be made. But any responsible publisher would have refrained from printing this text as it stands. The various sections of the book do not connect well with one another. Much extraneous material needs to be cut, and more relevant bits inserted. The Naval Institute Press made

Alan Burn. *The Fighting Commodores: The Convoy Commanders in the Second World War*. Annapolis: Naval Insitutue. 1999. 256 pages, illustrations, appendix. ISBN 1-55750-283-8. \$34.95.

no detectable effort to edit or bolster the work. The results are unfortunate.

In brief, the text covers a variety of subjects related to the Atlantic convoy war from 1939-1943. The title of the book, *The Fighting Commodores*, would suggest that the book talks about the British convoy commanders. During World War II, the British called upon several merchant captains, many of whom had retired before the war began, to be in charge of the merchant ships in a convoy. Working with the escort commanders, their job was critical to the success of a

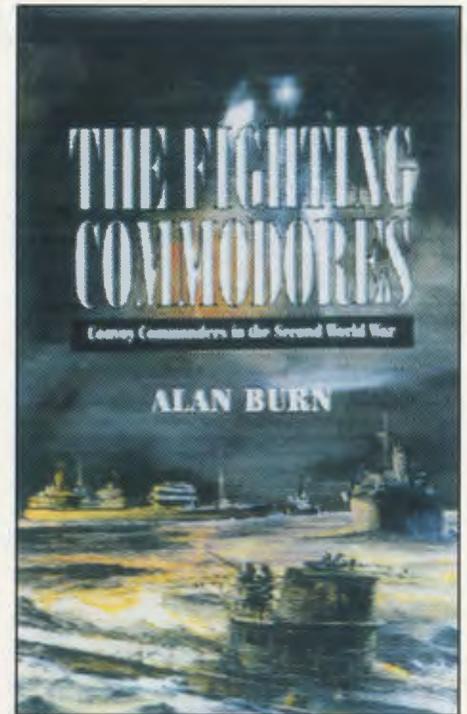
trans-Atlantic convoy run.

The nature of the British Merchant Marine is discussed in a nostalgic fashion; the author's criticisms of its failings are tempered by fondness for the service. Several eventful convoys are given a full chapter's treatment. While several of these accounts are interesting, each one reads like a stand alone article. A variety of other subtopics are thrown in throughout the book, ranging from a singularly uninformative biography of one of the commodores, to liberty ships, to the Arctic convoy war.

While many interesting topics are touched on throughout the work, there is no unifying theme running through the book. Some chapters are totally unconnected to one another; their placement is seemingly random. Again, it must be said in all fairness that a good deal of the responsibility for the work's shortcomings lays with the editors and publisher. Simple sloppiness allowed such errors as a mislabeled convoy photo (PQ-17, not -18) in the center section and endnotes that cites no sources go on for two pages. All of this adds up to a frustrating and jarring read.

The real shame here is that the book never really gets around to telling us much about the supposed main topic: the fighting commodores themselves.

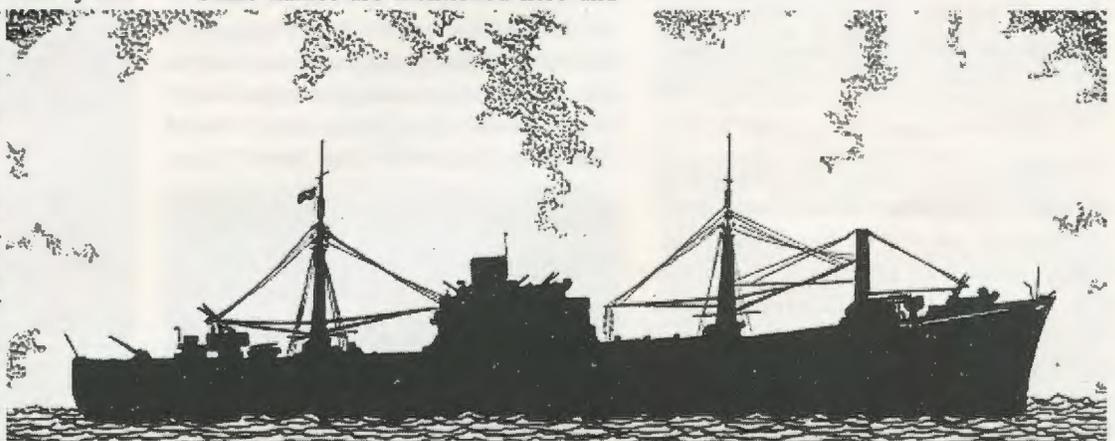
Some names are mentioned here and



there, but no compelling stories about these people or their war ever really materialize. There is already a great deal of fine literature out there about the convoys, British and otherwise.

Beyond the lack of editing, the book could only really have distinguished itself by providing an interesting personal angle about one or more of the men who won this close fought battle. The failure to fulfill the basic premise of the book is the biggest disappointment here. 

Alex Macensky works for the Naval Historical Foundation's research services in Washington, D.C.



Jumping on the Millennium Bandwagon

With the year 2000 approaching fast, newspapers and popular magazines have been teaching the masses 2000 years of world and American history with retrospects on the millennium. These articles are every historians' dream come true as it is making history seem interesting and, heaven forbid, IMPORTANT. So, in this spirit, the Sage is going to jump on the retrospect bandwagon and ride it all the way to Doomsday. Specifically, the Sage is going



The Museum Sage

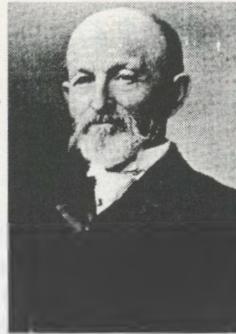
to look at the history of the U.S. Navy and break it down into categories and lists. Knowing full well that there will be disagreements, the Sage invites his readers to submit their own entries. These will be published in the Sage's Fall 1999 column.

Most important personalities

I. Rear Adm. Alfred Thayer Mahan-Far better or for worse, no American officer has had such an immediate and lasting impact on world military affairs as Mahan. His writings and teachings influenced leaders world-wide about the need for a large, blue-water navy.

II. William Henry Cramp-The importance of American capitalists and their employees are routinely ignored by Naval historians. Cramp was a third generation shipbuilder and owner of the Philadelphia-based shipyard Cramp & Sons. He led the movement in the 1880's for private shipyards to take over Navy construction contracts at a time when American military

shipbuilding was falling far behind the world pace. Cramp is just one of many American industrialists who built up an economy capable of sustaining a large, ocean-going fleet.



William Henry Cramp

III. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Wells-Known as "Father Neptune," this Connecticut Democrat served with great distinction as the head of the Navy during the Civil War. He is most well known for banning the grog ration. He is least well known for his advocacy of rebuilding Naval installations (such as Gosport) in the South during Reconstruction in order to encourage Southerners to accept reunification.

IV. President Theodore Roosevelt-If Mahan came up with the theory, Roosevelt put it into practice. His tireless pursuit of a large American fleet set the stage for the Navy for many generations to come.

V. Rear Adm. William Moffett-Eugene Ely may have started Naval aviation with his flight, but Adm. Moffett sustained it. This pre-World War II flag officer was the Navy's biggest advocate for aircraft carrier construction and Naval airpower development.

VI. Secretary of the Navy John Lehman-During the defense spending increases in the 1980's, Secretary Lehman oversaw and advocated for one of the largest peacetime build-ups the Navy has ever witnessed. He also advocated a more aggressive, and very controversial, naval war strategy should World War III occur with the Soviet Union.

Most important institutional changes

I. Reintegration of the Navy-President Truman signed the resolution integrating the American Armed Forces in the late 1940's. The Navy had been integrated

during the Age of Sail and the Age of Steam. It was only during the latter days of the Age of Steel and World War I, that the Navy segregated the service. Truman's resolution reversed this 50-year practice.

II. No More Grog-Secretary Wells ended the traditional grog ration to all enlisted personnel in 1862. Alcohol ceases to be a primary motivational factor for sailors.

III. Founding of the U.S. Naval Academy-After much debate within the ranks, the beginning of the Naval Academy marked a change in how the Navy trained its officers. Before the Academy, much of the training was done aboard ship.

IV. Flogging abolished-Like today, the 19th century had its fair share of critics who claimed the Navy was punishing its sailors too harshly. The abolition of flogging marked the beginning of the "kinder, gentler" movement within the Navy.

V. Mixed gender crews on combat ships-Starting with the aircraft carrier USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN-69), the Navy places female officers and sailors aboard combat ships for the first time in its history. With the exception of submarines, this is now common place throughout the fleet.

Greatest heroes

I. Commodore Stephen Decatur-The finest Naval officer ever to serve, without exception. He racked up an impressive Naval resume during his short life. No other person can surpass his command abilities, intelligence, and honor.

II. Commodore John Paul Jones-this Scotsman has inspired the imagination of many a Naval officer through his actions during the American Revolution. It is unfortunate that he did not get to serve in the U.S. Navy as he went to serve in the Russian navy and died at a relatively young age.

III. Cmdr. William Cushing-Kicked out of the Naval Academy for his pranks, this young officer knew no fear during the

Sage continues his speech on page 13

Sage continues from page 12

American Civil War. Whether it be covert operations or leading sailors against Ft. Fisher, Cushing was willing to take on any task.

IV. The ship's company of CSS Hunley-The Sage can not recall any other time in the history of world naval affairs where a group of men volunteered to man a ship that had already sunk twice.

V. Rear Adm. William F. Stockdale-The Sage's father remarked one time that his greatest disappointment with Generation Xers is that we think that FOX is only a television network that turns out prime time soap operas and not one of the greatest movie studios of all time. The Sage would like to add that his greatest disappointment



Rear Adm. William F. Stockdale

is that Generation Xers only know Adm. Stockdale as a vice-presidential candidate who ran with Ross Perot and not as one of the most heroic men of the Vietnam War.

Adm. Stockdale was a Navy pilot during the war who was shot down and captured. He has been awarded the Medal of Honor for being the leader of the American POWs held in Hanoi and for his refusal to cooperate with his captors despite several beatings and torture sessions.

in 1959) and how many combat actions it has been involved in.

III. Every U.S. submarine in World War II-The American underwater fleet scored just as impressive a record against Japan as the Germans scored against the Allies. They sank 1,153 ships (ships over 500 tons) while losing only 60 boats. That's a kill-to-loss ratio of a little over 19-to-1. In 1940, Japan imported a little over 22 million tons of raw materials. In 1945, they imported just 2.7 million. In comparison, the Germans claimed 3,500 sinkings (the British claim 2,452), but lost 699 boats to enemy action. That's a kill-to-loss ration of between 3.5 and 5-to-1.

IV. USS England (DE-536)-This small warship achieved a record unsurpassed by any American ship. During a 12 day period in World War II, *England* sank six Japanese submarines. This remarkable run led Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Ernest King to remark "There will always be an England in the U.S. Navy."

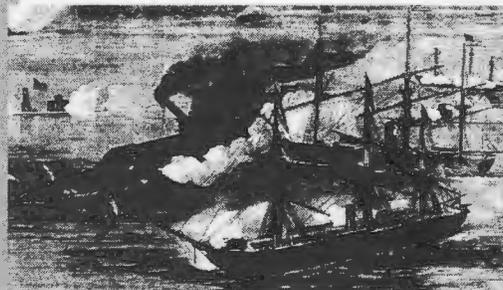
V. USS Hartford and CSS Virginia-With the understanding that the Sage must be balanced, he chose one ship from each side of the American Civil War. *Hartford* was Adm. Farragut's flagship and although it was outclassed by more advanced ironclads and steam sloops, *Hartford* engaged in several pitched battles and always seemed to come out unscathed. As for the Confederate representative, the Sage chooses *CSS Virginia*. Her design was rather simple, but very innovative and produced immediate results.

last for over 120 years.

III. Battle of the Atlantic-Unlike every other battle the Navy has fought, the Battle of the Atlantic was one long drawn out series of engagements between escorts and German U-boats. To call it a battle is a misnomer. It was a campaign, much like the invasion of Western Europe in 1944 or the 1943 Kursk offensive on the Eastern Front. The vast majority of England's materials and a small, but significant amount of the Soviet Union's war material came from the West across the Atlantic. It was one of the most important campaigns of the European Theater.

IV. Constitution vs. Guerriere-This War of 1812 engagement was the first major victory of an American warship over a British warship. The victory ignited a previously skeptical American public's enthusiasm for the new U.S. Navy and shocked the British public that one of their vessels just went down to defeat to a country that was supposed to have a second-rate navy.

V. Gulf of Tonkin incidents-Never has such a small battle had such a huge impact. The battle is composed of two separate engagements. The first engagement



USS Hartford in combat with CSS Tennessee at Mobile Bay, 1864

Most famed ships

I. USS Constitution (IX-21)-The Navy's unsinkable and unbeatable ship. Right from the start, this vessel was blessed as it could do little wrong.

II. USS Enterprise (CV-6 and CVN-65). Built as a New Deal public works project, the first *Enterprise* was reported to be sunk at least six times by the Japanese. Her planes destroyed many enemy ships and airplanes. The current *Enterprise* is characterized by being the first carrier to use nuclear power. It also remarkable how long it has been in service (commissioned

Most important battles

I. Pearl Harbor-No other engagement has so shook an entire generation. Not only did it officially bring the United States into World War II, but it has also been used as a harsh lesson, and reminder, on military readiness in the years following the war.

II. Battle of Hampton Roads-The two days of fighting in Hampton Roads forever changed the way the world looked at how to build warships. While the age of iron warships would quickly be overtaken by steel shortly after the Civil War, the concept of an armored warship with turrets would

occurred when several North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked the destroyer *USS Maddox* (DD-731) which was conducting an intelligence gathering operation in the Gulf of Tonkin. With assistance from *USS Ticonderoga's* (CV-13) F-8 Crusaders, one torpedo boat was sunk and another damaged.

Maddox continued her patrols and was later reinforced by the destroyer *USS Turner Joy* (DD-951). A second "attack" occurred soon after *Turner Joy* arrived. Attack is put in quotations, because it is of great debate whether or not the Vietnamese

The Sage continues on page 16

Commerce raiders continued from page 9

same way," he announced.

His executive officer, Lt. Warneke, had less kind words for the reporters. Warneke held learned through intercepted wireless messages why *Odenwald* failed to show up on time. American authorities had held up *Odenwald* in Puerto Rico for no particular reason. "It was the worse thing America could have done. You simply held that ship up in Puerto Rico until the British ships could come and try to catch us," he angrily remarked.

Unknown to him at the time, a second supply ship, the German steamer *Macedonia*, was within visual range of *Wilhelm*, but was captured by two British cruisers. The sight of the two cruisers caused *Wilhelm* to flee the scene before the identity of the steamer could be determined.

U.S. authorities geared up again for a possible showdown. In Washington, the State Department asked the German ambassador for *Wilhelm's* intentions. American diplomats informed both the ambassador and Capt. Thierfelder that the Germans had 24-hours to leave unless repairs were needed. The ambassador dispatched his naval attaché to Newport News to consult with Thierfelder. Even though 110 of his sailors suffered from beri-beri, the ship's boilers were lined with sea salt, and the Allied cruisers had returned, Thierfelder continued to insist that his ship would sail again.

In his second news conference, Thierfelder slammed his fist on his desk and announced "We must get out! The fact that ships might

"We must get out! The fact that ships might sink us, that has no fear for us! Who am I? I am as nothing, nil. These men are nil [unless] we can do anything to help our country!"-Kronprinz Wilhelm's commanding officer Captain-Lieutenant Paul Thierfelder

sink us, that has no fear for us! Who am I? I am as nothing, nil. These men are nil [unless] we can do anything to help our country!" He claimed that his ship, however, would need at least three weeks of repairs.

While *Wilhelm's* arrival was not exactly a pleasant situation, it was much easier for American authorities to handle than when *Friedrich* arrived. Keeping the Allied cruiser force and the Germans apart was not a problem as the entire Atlantic Fleet was present. Additionally, since the *Friedrich* crisis, Secretary Daniels and his counterparts at the Treasury and State Departments had

handed down a series of directives and guidelines on what Naval and Customs officers should do when a belligerent ship arrived in an American port.

The guidelines led to a series of official inspections of *Wilhelm*, led by Atlantic Fleet



Greetings from "Eitel Wilhelm," VA. With little else to do, the crews of the two German cruisers received scrap materials from the Norfolk Naval Shipyard and built their own village. (Post cards courtesy of Harrell Forrest)

commander Adm. Beatty, to determine if Capt. Thierfelder's repair claims were true. Beatty's inspection team found several inches of water in *Wilhelm's* hold and evidence that at least one British shell from the Bermuda cruiser battle had struck *Wilhelm's* port side. After looking at *Wilhelm's* boiler tubes, they confirmed Thierfelder's claims and endorsed his timetable of three weeks. The report cleared the way for Newport News Shipbuilding to take the ship into their largest dry-dock for repairs. However, Collector of Customs Hamilton warned Thierfelder to either commit to repairs and leave Hampton

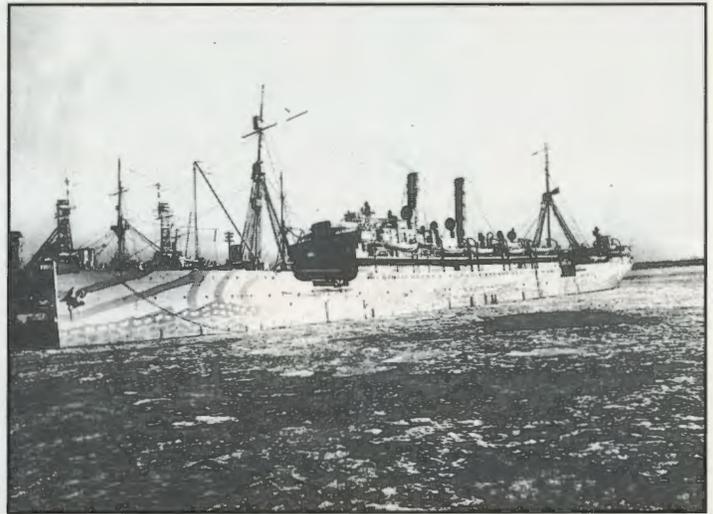
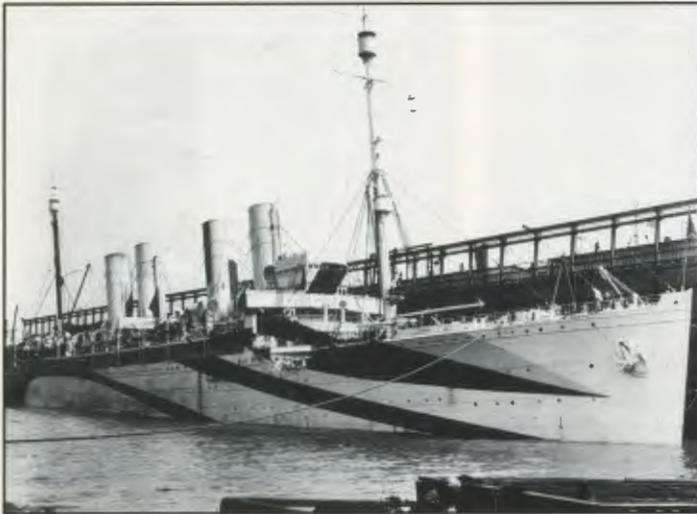
Roads or accept internment for the duration of the war by the end of the week.

Despite Thierfelder's public defiance-he held three more news conferences after the fist-pounding interview- the German captain had reasons to be concerned. Adm. Beatty's inspection team reported that the number of beri-beri cases was increasing at an alarming rate. Thirty-four more cases were reported since the German ship arrived.

This report deeply discouraged the German captain who cared very much for his crew. "You newspapers have said I was a smart fellow. Not I myself, but my crew-my men and my officers-every one of them, they are the heroes," he commented to the papers.

With great reluctance, Thierfelder changed his mind and decided to turn his ship over to American authorities. He cited the number of beri-beri cases as the primary reason for his decision. The arrival of Britain's fastest

Commerce raiders continued on page 15



What started out as a 40,000-ton headache in 1915, became a 40,000-ton gift from the Germans in 1917. Both ships are shown while they were operating under the American flag. USS Von Steuben (ex-SMS Kronprinz Wilhelm) is shown at left and USS De Kalb (ex-SMS Prinz Eitel Friedrich) is shown at right. (Naval Historical Center photos)

Commerce raiders continued from page 14

cruiser off the Virginia Capes, HMS *Glasgow*, might have also helped make up his mind. On April 28, a U.S. Navy crew boarded *Kronprinz Wilhelm* and took her down to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for interment. The crisis of the German raiders was over.

The German sailors were allowed to stay with their ships while the vessels were tied up to the piers. With little else to do, the industrious sailors asked for and received scrap metal and other materials from the Naval Yard. They then constructed a typical German village next to their ships. The village was complete with a telegraph office, a police station, and a chapel. Named "Eitel Wilhelm," the village became a tourist attraction for the locals.

The Navy eventually moved both ships from the Norfolk Naval Shipyard up to the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. When the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, U.S. Custom's officials announced to the Germans that their ships were now prizes of war and their crews prisoners-of-war. The Navy ordered the Germans to take down the village and to enter a POW camp.

Workers in Philadelphia immediately set out to refurbish the cruisers as the Navy desperately needed them. When war was declared, the Navy and Congress discovered several deficiencies in the Atlantic Fleet's composition.

Among the more publicized problems was the lack of destroyers. But an equally serious problem was the lack of transport vessels. For all of the spending on battleships and building the Navy in the image of Alfred Mahan's

grand vision, the Navy had exactly two troop transports. This left the Navy and the Army scrambling to find means of transportation for the Army's newly formed American Expeditionary Force (AEF) bound for the trenches in France.

While cleaning out the ship, workers discovered several interesting items in the hold of *Friedrich*. Among them were several dozen kegs of German beer. The presence of so much alcohol might just explain both Theireichen's overly positive attitude about his chances of escape from Hampton Roads and his captured captains' positive opinion of their captivity. All of the remaining beer was dumped overboard, but enthusiastic sailors piled on all the empty kegs on the pier for a portrait.

The Philadelphia Naval Shipyard completed the overhaul on both ships within two months. On May 12, 1917, the U.S. Navy commissioned *Prinz Friedrich* as USS *De Kalb*. They named her after General Baron De Kalb, a Prussian general who served as an agent to and as a senior officer in the Continental Army. *Kronprinz Wilhelm* was commissioned on June 9 as USS *Von Steuben*. Von Steuben also was a Prussian military officer who served in the Continental Army and is most remembered for bringing Prussian military discipline to the American soldiers.

While both ships were transports, they kept their designation as "auxiliary cruisers." The Cruiser and Transport Division of the Atlantic Fleet placed both ships in the First Cruiser Squadron, Third Division, joining the cruisers USS *Columbia* (C-12) and USS *Minneapolis* (C-13). Armed with 15 guns and depth charge racks, both ships had outstanding careers

during the war.

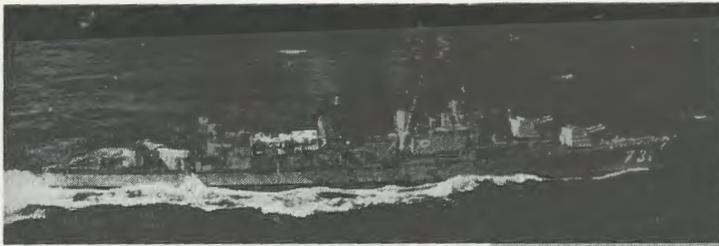
De Kalb left from New York under escort for France on June 14, 1917, carrying the first American soldiers of the AEF. Over the course of the war, *De Kalb* made 11 eastbound trips, out of both New York and Hampton Roads, to France carrying over 11,000 soldiers without incident.

Von Steuben had a significantly more busy tour under the American flag than *De Kalb*. Like *De Kalb*, *Von Steuben* made several successful trips to France. While returning back to the United States, she came across lifeboats with British sailors in them. While the American vessel approached the sailors, a submerged *U-151* lined *Von Steuben* up for an attack. A common U-boat tactic was to sink one merchant ship and then attack any future rescue ship.

While the American ship picked up the sailors, *U-151* pounced. *Von Steuben's* lookouts spotted a torpedo wake and the captain gave a frantic "full astern" order. The torpedo missed by only a few yards. *Von Steuben* counter-attacked with depth charges and succeeded in driving off the German submarine.

After several New York/Norfolk to Brest, France runs, *Von Steuben* was taken out of service a year after the war ended. *De Kalb* was taken out of service a couple of days earlier.

Both ships initially caused major headaches for Naval and civilian authorities due to their brash German commanders, their Allied hunters, and other diplomatic complications. But they were also a welcome gift and help fill a gap in an imbalanced World War I American Navy. 🚢



USS Maddox (DD-731) in the Gulf of Tonkin, 1964
The Sage continued from page 13

had any ships in the area in the first place.

Regardless of what really happened, the United States retaliated over the aggressive act by launching air strikes against North Vietnamese naval bases. President Lyndon Johnson and Senator Fulbright (D-AR) then introduced the "Gulf of Tonkin" resolution. The resolution gave Johnson a blank check to retaliate against any and all communist actions in Southeast Asia. It was a de facto declaration of war on North Vietnam.

Five people to study for the new millennium

I. Adm. Louis E. Denfeld-What would you do to defend your service? Adm. Louis E. Denfeld was Chief of Naval Operations during the Truman administration. Truman's Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson axed the somewhat controversial *United States* project, without so much as a word of input from the Secretary of the Navy or Adm. Denfeld. Johnson additionally threatened to take the Navy largely out of the aviation business altogether.



Adm. Louis E. Denfeld

Angered by this turn of events, Denfeld was joined by his assistants, Adm. Radford, Bogan, and Capt. Burke and took their complaints public.

Denfeld testified before Congress about the gross lack of support the Navy was getting from the administration.

This event is known as the "Revolt of the Admirals." This mass dissension succeeded in preserving the Navy's role in national defense as Congress later agreed to support projects like the *Forrestal*-class of supercarriers.

Johnson and Secretary of the Navy Francis P. Mathews, however, were not amused by the rebellion. They demanded, and received, Denfeld's resignation. According to one biography, everyone in the Pentagon, military and civilian alike, saluted Denfeld as he was walked out the building for the last time.

II. Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert-We have mentioned Secretary Stoddert in a previous edition of the *Museum Sage*. It was worth mentioning again that Stoddert was the first, and possibly finest, Secretary the department has ever had. At one point in the Quasi-War with France he suggested that the United States "burn its ships" and start over at a later date because some Naval officers in his mind were not working hard enough.

III. Commodore David Porter-Commodore Porter is an officer who defines honor. An outstanding Naval officer with excellent command abilities, Porter refused to tolerate anything less than commitment to one's

duty. His most well known tour at sea was with the epic raiding voyage of the frigate *Essex* during the War of 1812. He eventually resigned his commission in disgust when the Secretary of the Navy claimed he overreached his authority during a raid on a pirate camp in Florida.

IV. Commodore Winfield Scott Schley-The Sage likes flexible, creative thinkers. Schley was the second in command of the Naval forces around Cuba during the Spanish-American war. Schley had been taught by Farragut during the Civil War that while your superiors give you your orders, it is up to the officer in the field to decide how best to carry the order out. Some of Schley's "independent" decisions during the war got him into hot water later on with his fellow officers.

V. Gen. Winfield Scott-Yes, Scott is an Army officer, so why does he appear on this list? Because in this age of "joint warfare" and "littoral warfare," we need to find an officer who understood the meaning of combined operations.



Gen. Winfield Scott

Gen. Scott served in three major wars: War of 1812, Mexican War, and the American Civil War. He crafted, for example, the famed "Anaconda Strategy" in 1861, which led to the defeat of the South. He is one of the first Americans to truly understand this type of warfare.

In Our Next Issue....

☞ *Breaching the Westwall: Hampton Roads' World War II convoys to North Africa*

☞ *More Exciting News on the Museum's Plans for the Future*

☞ *Book Reviews: USS Essex and the Birth of the American Navy and Better Than Good: A Black Sailor's War, 1943-45.*