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Potomac Fever: A Memoir of Politics and Public Service

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something requiring the provision of justice, good government, and all that is necessary to secure human security.

It will come as little surprise that the majority of essays in this estimable and thought-provoking volume display little sympathy for such “new wars” views. Change has occurred, but the new wars/old wars argument is between strawmen who do not exist, or if they did, who survived only for a time and need to be examined in historical context. “The wars waged at the start of the twenty-first century were still predominantly the products of national, religious and ethnic identity; their aims remained governance and state formation. Paradoxically, however, they have been seen as wars of a new variety, principally because we have mistaken the character of individual wars for war’s normative nature.” “New wars” often turn out to be “old wars” coming back to fool us all over again.

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Middendorf, J. William, II. *Potomac Fever: A Memoir of Politics and Public Service*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2011. 213pp. \$29.95

Among horses, Potomac fever is a potentially fatal gastrointestinal disease, but in the world of American governmental officials it has an entirely different meaning—although it too can be a fatal disease. In this case, J. William Middendorf II refers to the impetus that led him to leave a successful career as an investment banker on Wall Street for Washington, D.C., to become treasurer of the Republican Party, 1964–68; then

ambassador to the Netherlands, 1969–73; Under Secretary and then Secretary of the Navy, 1973–77; permanent representative to the Organization of American States, 1981–85; U.S. representative to the European Union, 1985–87; and finally the chairman of the White House Task Force on Project Economic Justice, 1985–87. In addition, Middendorf has been a board member of the Heritage Foundation and of the Defense Forum Foundation, as well as playing continuing key roles as an active supporter of the Navy League, the Naval Order of the United States, and many other naval-related activities.

The history of the U.S. Navy’s civilian administration and its political dimension is a relatively overlooked subject when compared to its operational history. Moreover, it is rare that a Secretary of the Navy writes his memoirs, but when he does they provide invaluable information, insight, and perspective. Only a very few of Middendorf’s predecessors have published their memoirs, generally figures who served during key periods, such as John D. Long of the William McKinley administration and John Lehman of the Ronald Reagan administration. Middendorf’s service as both under secretary and secretary linked the last year of Richard Nixon’s administration with the entire Gerald Ford administration and provides valuable insights from that period. The published works of the two Chiefs of Naval Operations who served under Middendorf—Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, who served his final months under him and published his memoir *On Watch* (1976), and Admiral James L. Holloway III, who published his memoir under the title *Aircraft Carriers at War* (2007)—are significantly complemented by this book, which

provides a valuable firsthand account that historians will continue to use to understand these years.

To take the volume as a whole, Middendorf's purpose in writing his book is quite different from that of other memoir writers. He clearly tells his own story, not in self-justification, but rather as a series of lessons learned for anyone who might have similar ambitions for public service. Thus, his tone and focus, are modest and even self-deprecating, while the book tends toward a broad narrative punctuated by well told and illustrative stories rather than detailed relations of particular issues.

A descendant of Captain William Stone of the Continental Navy, who had brought the Navy its first warships named *Wasp* and *Hornet*, Middendorf has a personal naval experience that goes back to his undergraduate days at Harvard. In the first of his chapters on his period as secretary, he relates his first meeting with Admiral Zumwalt, while still ambassador to the Netherlands. Middendorf clearly supported and encouraged Zumwalt's initiatives in support of larger roles for women officers. Among his achievements as secretary, Middendorf counts as first the acquisition of the *Ohio*-class submarine with its Trident missile, followed closely by the Aegis cruiser shipbuilding program. Clearly, the greatest pleasure he had as secretary came in employing his knowledge of and interest in naval history, as he presided over the Navy's contribution to the celebration of the bicentennial of the United States in 1976.

Throughout, Middendorf has kept in mind that his is a cautionary tale for those who might be exposed to Potomac fever and be led to follow a similar path. In his conclusion the eighty-six-year-old

notes that "the path through life is a checklist of things that you don't have to do again. Life is all about seeking equilibrium, the rarest of human conditions. It's about moving forward without going over the cliff, finding success without losing our way, smelling the roses without getting stung by the bees."

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Brown, David K., and George Moore. *Rebuilding the Royal Navy: Warship Design since 1945*. London: Seaforth, 2012. 208pp. \$30

This title is the fourth and final in the authors' best-selling technical series, which covers the development and design of the Royal Navy's iron and steel warships since HMS *Warrior* in the 1850s. The volume under review, a reprint of its first edition of 2003, covers the awkward and challenging half-century since the end of the Second World War. This was not an easy time for warship designers, particularly in Europe; they had first to deal with stringent postwar austerity measures that dramatically curtailed their aspirations, and later with the advent of guided-weapon technology, which completely altered the rationale behind the established classes of warships. Nowhere was this more obvious than for the cruiser classes, which had been so much of a war-fighting staple for the Royal Navy following the reductions in the battle fleet as a result of the naval treaties of the twenties and thirties.

The authors' focus has been to present the whole story in terms of the designs covered, giving equal prominence to conceptual designs that often never saw