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## Mountbatten

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beyond simple visual or radar search and holddown: localization techniques using sonobuoys, searchlights, and even a successful MAD barrier across the Gibraltar Strait.

With equally thorough documentation, Creed wraps up other navies' PBY operations, and concludes with stories of her postwar exploits as explorer, firefighter, air/sea rescuer and even luxury air yacht.

This reviewer wants to commend Messimer and Creed for the monumental tasks both have accomplished so well with these fine histories. After three years' immersion in the similar task of writing a history of the P2(V) Neptune (and nothing yet in print), I have more than a passing sympathy for the size of the job. Doing the research is fun, but later when you dig out from under the huge pile of miscellany, what now do you include in the book? What do you leave out? Or for that matter, for whom are you writing? Hoary bearded naval historians? World War II buffs? Airplane nuts? The chaps who flew her? Lollipops for recruiters' bait? Nobody said it would be easy—and it isn't.

STEPHEN P. REINERTSEN  
Captain, U.S. Naval Reserve (Ret.)

Ziegler, Philip. *Mountbatten*. New York: Knopf, 1985. 784pp. \$24.95

Philip Ziegler's official and authorized study of Mountbatten is a brilliant biography. Beautifully written, Ziegler quickly engrosses the reader with a fascinating life. It is a mar-

velous portrait which demonstrates all the strengths and attractions of biography as an art form. "Most people," Ziegler believes, "will feel this biography provides a generally favourable portrait of its subject, but it is far from hagiography."

There can be no doubt of that. On Mountbatten's command of H.M.S. *Kelly*, Ziegler comments, "if a destroyer could leave skid-marks, *Kelly* would have disfigured every sea in which she sailed. Mountbatten was impetuous. He pushed his ship fast for little reason except his love of speed . . . Above all, he lacked that mysterious quality of 'sea sense,' the ability to ensure that one's ship is in the right place at the right time. Mountbatten was as good a captain as most and better than many of his contemporaries, but among all his peers who have expressed an opinion the unanimous feeling is that, by the highest standard, he was no better than second rate."

No great captain, yet he was a legendary leader! He became one of the three Supreme Allied Commanders in World War II, and a quarter of a million Americans served under him. He was the last Viceroy of British India, and the first Governor-General of an independent India. First Sea Lord at the time of the Suez crisis, he went on to lead the battle for a massive reorganization of Britain's defense bureaucracy as Chief of the Defence Staff. Finally, he was advisor, matchmaker and honored guest among the royal families of Britain, Sweden, Greece and Spain. Mountbatten's family tree,

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printed as endpapers to this volume, emphasizes his royal connections as little else can, but the irony of this book, and of Mountbatten's life, is that he was a man of great professional ability whatever the hindrances of royal connections and aristocratic manners in a modern navy. Mountbatten overcame them through professional competence, rising to the top through his own skill and determination, as well as his connections. He was loved, even adored, by his admirers and by many who served under him; and he was despised, even hated, by his rivals and his superiors. His wealth, his connections, his tastes, his interests were all unusual—and certainly beyond the scope of the average naval officer—but despite the attractions of so entirely different a world, Mountbatten remained intensely devoted to the navy as a profession. His professional views and opinions, however, were not those of an aristocrat. He fought to democratize the officer corps, and to make the navy a more efficient service within the context of the Ministry of Defence.

After 700 pages of reading, one feels that he has a clear appreciation of a man whose life, at times, blended into the general flow of history, particularly in World War II, in India, and in Whitehall, but we come to know him as a man, not an abstraction. He was brilliant and successful, ambitious, hard-working and knowledgeable, but he was also impetuous, egotistical, vain, intemperate, and sometimes, unwise. On reflection, one must appreciate the

very thin line which separates spectacular failure and meteoric success in those who are ambitious to be among the great.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF  
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Gleaves, Albert. *The Admiral: Memoirs of Albert Gleaves, USN*. Pasadena, Calif.: Hope Publishing House, 1985. 286pp. \$9.95

This autobiography of a senior officer in World War I brings into print a significant addition to recorded U.S. naval history, half a century after the author's death. It covers the period from 1873 when our aging wood-iron fleet stood 12th among navies, to 1922 when a great building program would soon make our Navy first in firepower.

Albert Gleaves, from Nashville, Tennessee, entered the Naval Academy at the age of 15, graduating in 1877. After the Academy, Gleaves' career followed the pattern of the times, with duty in the Mediterranean, the Far East and at home. At first the ships in which he served were wooden-hulled sailing ships with auxiliary steam. In 1889 he joined the first ship of the "new Navy," the steel gunboat *Dolphin*, when he was ordered to the cruiser *Boston* and in her sailed around Cape Horn to duty off Chile and in the Hawaiian Islands. In one of his few War College tales, he tells of the grounding of the new second-class battleship *Texas* on Goat Island, with the College students lined up by