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Sailor-Scholar: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, 1871-1946

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in ethics are few, and philosophy professors with appropriate military experience are scarce. Junior officers, even with the best scholarly credentials are not likely to hold this group's interest, nor are civilian professors who cannot identify with specific issues in military ethics."

Even though the authors suggest no solution to the difficulty, the fact that they admit that the problem exists is a valuable corrective to those who believe that courses in military ethics can be laid on like courses in "behavioral science" by those who (to paraphrase Aristotle) are not fitted by nature, by habit, or by education to teach them. In this connection, I'm thinking particularly of men like William Sloan Coffin, who for some peculiar reason is mentioned favorably on page 51.

Hunt, Barry D. *Sailor-Scholar. Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, 1871-1946*. Canada: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1982. 259pp. \$12

This book is not a biography, though it seems to be offered as such. At the same time it is not easy to say what it is. It deals with four themes, no one of which is fully developed, but treated in an interlocking way that makes it hard for the reader to catch what the thrust of the book really is.

The four themes are: (1) Richmond, the highly competent naval officer, rising to flag rank; (2) Richmond, the critical gad-fly—not of the Royal Navy—but of the Admiralty and its handling of the Navy; (3) Richmond, the reformer of naval officer education, and (4) Richmond, the serious naval historian and able theorist of naval power and its uses.

Somewhere among readers with naval interest there are bound to be audiences for each of these themes taken separately, but it is unlikely that there will be a general audience for this book. Yet, readers with single interests will miss something if they do not at least skim it.

A quotation sets the tone: "The ethics of military professionalism can never fully accommodate the fundamentally subversive tendencies of the academic mind." What is the situation when both

qualities are fully developed in the same man? The possibility is rare; but when it does occur the result is likely to be awkward. Richmond, entering the Navy at a very early age, was thoroughly well-grounded as a professional officer, and never ceased to be one. He was quickly recognized and a potential career was marked out for him by his superiors. At a critical point, however, he chose a different line: he refused an important appointment because he wanted to avoid "an exclusive concern with the technical and routine side of the naval profession as might get him into a rut." The alternative, as he pursued it, was an interest in naval history, in problems of naval strategy and tactics, and sooner or later in naval education to ensure that such matters received systematic study.

At the same time, since he was a trained professional, there was nothing remote or abstract about these interests. They were always to be applied to real and current problems of naval policy and its relation to national interests. This got him into a pattern of consistent pressure for the reform of Admiralty organization and direction of naval operations.

The Admiralty, under Sir John Fisher, was already adjusting to technological advances, but to Richmond (who had been a Fisher protégé) and to a group of naval Young Turks who thought of their

efforts as "the revolt of the intellectuals," this adjustment had been at the expense of corresponding advances "in the non-technical areas of naval responsibility." A new magazine *The Naval Review*, started in 1912 was their means for countering "an obsession with material and lack of interest in the manner of its use." Technological change demanded a fundamental rethinking of basic naval doctrine.

Present-day naval reformers could learn here a great deal about the practical techniques of trying to change a long-established institution with a set of traditional attitudes, as well as the career risks of employing these techniques in an assured and aggressive manner.

It was inevitable that Richmond would soon come to regard officer education as a channel by which young blood and fresh ideas could be released into the system. It was equally inevitable that a need was felt to develop a solid theoretical base to which specific demands for change could be logically referred. So, Richmond the educator, Richmond the strategic analyst, and Richmond the "extremely competent executive officer," became a coherent and recognized personality; one who was always around with something to say about the problems of the Royal Navy. As such, he was respected by, resisted by, and at times even feared by, the naval establishment.

Accordingly, while he rose in rank, he had no normal career as a sea-going officer. Yet, he was given appointments relevant to his particular interests—most significantly after the first world war to organize and direct the Imperial Defense College. This pattern of limited encouragement and frequent opposition led ultimately to his being forced into early retirement when publicly and deliberately he ran counter to Admiralty policy in connection with the London

Naval Conference of 1929. He landed on his feet, however, as a public figure. He was appointed Harmsworth Professor of History at Cambridge University, and later Master of Downing College, in which posts he was free to devote himself to his interests, including the improvement of naval thinking and Admiralty policy.

This still leaves the question of what were the foundations of Richmond's criticism and proposals. These are not fully dealt with in this book and it is not easy to see in what respects he was in a direct line from Mahan, Corbett, or other naval thinkers. The following, however, can be loosely pieced together.

When Richmond became a cadet, sail was still in use in the Royal Navy. He therefore grew up conscious of the impact of technological change upon the 19th-century structure of the Admiralty. He early concluded that "strategic doctrine was being warped by excessive reaction to technological imperatives without a complete understanding of what that doctrine should be or how the new weapons could be used to carry it out." This led to a situation in which "ideas were swamped by the idiot dead weight of the materialists and produced a fixed prejudice against anything that could be called staff work or theory." He never lost his sensitivity to change, but always argued for the hard work of responding by rational analysis and not by the automatic responses of tradition.

In this connection, historical analysis was an essential tool. The result would be a commonly understood national strategic doctrine, conforming with national interests, needs, and natural capacities. Next, education (not mere training) was the necessary tool for producing officers capable of dealing with the current flow of naval problems in the light of the requirements of such basic doctrine.

There is still a useful book to be written in which the whole structure of Richmond's thought is systematically studied. The present work is far from meeting this need and so does not do justice to Richmond's value. But, any student or staff member at a military college, by running through the present book, will see that the general issues to which Richmond addressed himself are still very much alive and still asking for resolution. Getting a feel for this may be the chief value of *Sailor-Scholar*.

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Philbin, Tobias R. *Admiral von Hipper, the Inconvenient Hero*. Amsterdam: Grüner, 1982. 229pp. \$24

Using a great number of German war diaries, official histories, letters, and private notes, an American historian, Tobias R. Philbin, gives a detailed and accurate account of the life and naval career of Admiral Franz von Hipper, though he never makes clear what it was that was "inconvenient" about Hipper.

Hipper served many years in large combatant ships and small and had a three-year tour as navigation officer of the Imperial Yacht *Hohenzollern*. He commanded both light and armored cruisers and in 1912 he was promoted to Rear Admiral. He became Deputy Flag Officer Scouting Forces, which consisted of hattle cruisers, armored cruisers, light cruisers, and torpedo-boats (in the US and British navies, the latter were called destroyers). The next year he became Flag Officer Scouting Forces. He was promoted to Vice Admiral in 1915 and to Admiral in 1918.

From November 1916 until the war's end I served as an officer of the watch and gunnery officer in the *B 110*, a destroyer in the Scouting Forces. Young

officers generally have a good idea of the qualities of their superiors. My impression from those two years under Hipper's command coincide closely with the results of Philbin's investigations.

The reverses suffered by the German Navy in the first five months of World War I were certainly the result of restrictive orders from Imperial Headquarters as well as the lack of initiative on the part of Admiral von Ingenohl, the Fleet CinC. On 28 August 1914, when our patrols off Heligoland were attacked by British forces, few of the German battle-ships at anchor in the Elbe Estuary could have put to sea at once. I, as a cadet, heard the rumble of distant gunfire, but my ship got no order to weigh anchor. Fleet Command was also responsible in October 1914 for sending four unescorted old torpedo-boats in full daylight along the Dutch islands to lay mines off the English coast. Long before dark British cruisers intercepted and sank them.

One of the greatest chances of the war was missed by Ingenohl on 16 December 1914. Hipper's battle cruisers were sent to bombard the English coastal towns of Hartlepool and Scarborough and the Battle Fleet was to be in readiness near the Dogger Bank. However, on the night before the bombardment there was a short encounter between German torpedo-boats and British destroyers. Ingenohl reversed course and went home without informing Hipper. That morning had he been where he should have been according to his own orders, he would have met six British battleships with his 14. This might have changed the whole course of the war. Hipper, aware that British battleships, and battle cruisers too, were at sea, grasped the situation correctly and succeeded in avoiding contact with these now superior British forces.

A comparison of Hipper's and Beatty's