

## Naval War College Review

---

Volume 33  
Number 5 *September-October*

Article 24

---

1980

# Whaley: The Story of HMS Excellent 1830-1980

John B. Hattendorf

John G. Wells

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

---

### Recommended Citation

Hattendorf, John B. and Wells, John G. (1980) "Whaley: The Story of HMS Excellent 1830-1980," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 33 : No. 5 , Article 24.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol33/iss5/24>

This Book Review 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](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

## 116 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

are apt—"Someone Had Blundered," "You'll Die in Singapore," "Sinister Twilight," "The Worst Disaster," "Too Little, Too Late," "The Chain of Disaster," etc. McIntyre tells a good story of the reason why these are apt.

J.K. HOLLOWAY  
Naval War College

Wells, John G., *Whaley: The Story of HMS Excellent 1830-1980*, Portsmouth, Hants, England: HMS Excellent, 1980. 247pp.

This short history of the Royal Navy's first gunnery school was written by a former Captain of HMS *Excellent* for the 150th anniversary of the school. It is a complete rewriting and updating of R.T. Young's *The House That Jack Built* (1955).

As a sesquicentennial history, it is very readable. The author traces the development of gunnery training from

1830 when the old 74-gun ship-of-the-line, HMS *Excellent*, became the home of the gunnery school. He discusses the development of Whale Island into a shore-based school and then follows its history through the 1970s when the function of Whale Island was changed from being a specialist school to a general naval training center. The story is told with verve and humor, spiced with delightful anecdotes, maps and photographs. The emphasis throughout is on the human drama cast with a backdrop of naval history.

Scholars of naval history will find the appendixes of documents and the lists of officers useful reference material.

This small volume is a worthy and most appropriate memento for those who have served on Whale Island and learned gunnery there.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF  
Naval War College

---

## RECENT BOOKS

### Selected Accessions of the Naval War College Library

Annotated by

**Kathleen Ashook, Doris Baginski and Mary Ann Varoutsos**

*Antarctica: No Single Country, No Single Sea.* New York: Mayflower Books, 1979. 175pp. \$27.50

Gorgeous photographs of the natural beauties of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean are so numerous and stunning that this could be enjoyed simply as a coffee table book, but there is also a substantial text that traces the history of political, commercial, and scientific explorations in this region. Maintaining that its resources belong to the whole world, the editors plead that Antarctica be safeguarded against exploitation by nations competing for its riches.

Balmforth, Edmund E. *A Chinese Military Strategist of the Warring States:*

*Sun Pin.* Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1979. 473pp. \$7.50

Since ancient times there had been legends in China about a brilliant strategist, Sun Pin, whose writings were lost, unlike those of another strategist, Sun Tzu, whose work became a classic. In 1972 ancient Chinese

Publications were received at the Naval War College and the College of the Holy Cross. Portions of texts written by both