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Developing the Naval Mind

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throughout the book, Lindsay offers his practical suggestions for deriving an overarching way to consider the strategic implications of information practice in military operations.

Overall, Lindsay's book is a welcome text for any student of IS and IT in this nontraditional organizational setting—the military. *Information Technology and Military Power* is a welcome contribution toward a better understanding of the theories and uses of IT within that military organizational context.

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Developing the Naval Mind, by Benjamin F. Armstrong and John Freymann. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2021. 248 pages. $24.95.

U.S. Naval Academy professors Benjamin F. Armstrong and John Freymann's *Developing the Naval Mind* is an ambitious handbook for inculcating not only knowledge of naval thought but also the skills necessary for lifelong engagement with the field. From the outset, Armstrong and Freymann argue that constant learning and discussion long have been integral to the American sea services, but need of them perhaps has never been greater than in today's ever-evolving world. Thus, they announce their intention to "provide resources to officers, Sailors, and Marines who desire to learn in the fleet" (pp. 3–4). While this reviewer is currently none of these things, recently they have embarked on their professional navalist journey. That is sufficient to state confidently that *Developing the Naval Mind* is among the finest available starting points for those

beginning their intellectual relationship with naval affairs, leadership, and strategic ideas. Not only do Armstrong and Freymann offer a tightly packaged introduction to some of the most essential modern naval thinkers; they also endeavor to teach readers *how* they can develop intellectually, by introducing concepts such as "how to read" and "how to publish"—the latter a worthwhile but seldom-considered effort aimed at empowering junior scholars, young professionals, and servicemembers themselves.

As a resource for emerging navalists, *Developing the Naval Mind* is divided helpfully into two sections: part 1, "The Seminar," and part 2, "The Readings." Part 1 dives into how readers ought to engage with scholarly material and debate, explaining how one should go about reading, writing, and critically engaging in discussions professionally. While articulating how to read may seem to some to be a trivial function, reading professionally and for academic purposes is indeed a skill that often needs to be taught; graduate students from civilian university programs in the social sciences or humanities will recognize this truth at once. Likewise, graybeards frequently take for granted access to the world of academic and professional writing, but the barrier to entry can be high. Armstrong and Freymann not only provide a guide to getting started (i.e., how to write); they also direct readers to quality venues where they can seek to join the literary debates of the day (i.e., where to write). In a mere seven pages of their appendix, the authors provide a publishing crash course for would-be authors not found in similar introductory texts, truly equipping readers to cross

the bridge that separates the casual observer from the professional thinker.

Occupying the lion's share of the work, "The Readings" comprises a "syllabus" whose listings are chosen from among the most essential naval thinkers' ideas as they were expressed in their most-noted articles in the U.S. Naval Institute publication *Proceedings* (save for those of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Charles C. Krulak). The origin of the readings is, in part, a demonstration of the authors' initial premise that constant learning and debate long has characterized the U.S. Navy, first by examining thinkers from across almost a century and a half in time but also through curating their syllabus primarily from the pages of *Proceedings,* which has remained at the heart of American naval thought since the institute's founding in 1874. The subjects of the articles, ranging from moral leadership to the Navy's raison d'être, provide an essential primer for understanding the dynamics of key naval issues and debates. Part 2, with entries from authors on both sides of the Atlantic, is further distinguished by its adherence to the learning framework developed in part 1, with Armstrong and Freymann guiding readers in how they can begin to engage critically with the ideas presented, by providing discussion questions to consider alongside each reading.

Of course, one could quibble with the selection of authors and pieces provided in part 2. Those well acquainted with naval strategy and war-fighting concepts readily may wonder: Why is this or that theorist not included? Perhaps the most notable absence is that of Julian S. Corbett. Yet to get lost in the sea of material that one *might* include detracts from the purpose that Armstrong and Freymann

define in their opening pages: "This book is about education and the naval profession, about the development of the naval mind and the creation of officers, Sailors, and Marines with wide interests and the ability to do more than simply comply with established procedures and checklists" (p. 2). Correspondingly, *Developing the Naval Mind* is not a maritime-strategy anthology along the lines of Craig, Gilbert, and Earle's *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1943). The readings that Armstrong and Freymann provide offer many lessons on the dynamics of leadership at the top and bottom, the need for institutional adaptations, changing fleet design, and, yes, some strategy.

Through their articulation of a succinct learning framework, their valuing of dialogue just as much as individual study and professional writing, and their provision of essays covering a wide variety of naval issues, Armstrong and Freymann have succeeded in putting together what ought to be the definitive starting point for those launching their careers in or intellectual engagement with naval affairs. While one might debate the finer points of the publishing venues suggested, the writing tips enumerated, or the authors' selection of readings, *Developing the Naval Mind* stands as an exceptional introduction to a field that often seems impenetrable to outsiders. Moreover, with easily accessible language and concision, Armstrong and Freymann go beyond simply "provid[ing] resources to officers, Sailors, and Marines who desire to learn in the fleet," because they do so for would-be civilian navalists as well.

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