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Editorial

Focusing on the Process of Doing History

Gary E. Weir, for the Editors

In a recent conversation with a print-journal editor for whom I have immense respect I explained in greater detail than appears on our submissions page the perspective taken by the IJNH on naval historical scholarship and the role this journal wishes to play in the process of doing history. It pleased me that this colleague quickly pledged his complete support for the IJNH, suggesting that our journals complemented one another rather well. However, at the same time he suggested that our readers might benefit from further discussion of the IJNH's intent. I decided that his suggestion might provide the best possible starting point for this latest issue.

The IJNH is interested in promoting and examining the process of doing naval history. While we peer-review in a very traditional way every article that appears in this journal, the editors encourage the submission of ideas, exposition, and historical analysis still in the process of revision and thought. This is why we refuse to hold copyright to an author's contribution. The editors of the IJNH fully expect and encourage the journal's reviewers and many readers to provide constructive reaction and feedback to the scholars who contribute to our pages. If the author then further refines the piece and takes it to a print journal, we find that encouraging. We have helped a scholar to the next step in his or her analysis and that is, in part, our purpose. If the process leads an author to develop a new piece that pursues a possible productive tangent, we would welcome the opportunity to publish the new effort, encouraging our readers to link the original composition and the more recent, next step. We would also welcome the chance to republish the earlier article if the author has taken it to another level with the help of reviewers and colleagues.

For the IJNH, the process of doing history is never finished, and the benefit for us lies in the evolution of ideas. We do not want to own any scholarship. Rather, we wish to promote, to encourage, and to watch that scholarship evolve. In this manner we are treated to many stages in the process of doing history as it occurs in an historian's work over time, regardless of where that work may appear.

The IJNH's editors appeal to all of our visitors, readers, and contributors to become part of the process. Professional volunteers purposely designed the IJNH as a free scholarly vehicle with a global reach as part of a concerted strategy to focus on and encourage the process of doing naval history.

In this issue of the IJNH, we have republished, with permission, a very important article penned by Professor John Hattendorf and published in the Naval War College Review appealing for greater professional investment in history by the U.S. Navy. For many naval professionals, history, drawing on the past, does not play an immediately significant role for the "warfighter" and is often overlooked as a source of seasoned wisdom in daily decisions and in long-term efforts to educate. Professor Hattendorf calls for greater material and intellectual investment in an historical product that can and will pay great professional dividends both in the Pentagon and in harm's way at sea.

We have also published a panel, complete with commentary, on American naval Cold War research and development. In these papers you will find not only the beginning of some stimulating history, but also a substantial research and development source collection that is virtually unknown to many scholars in the field.

I encourage scholars to submit their work for our August issue and all of you to review both the critical "privacy issue" quandary faced by Professor Rust and others as well as our announcements of professional significance. Please join us in promoting the process of doing naval history!



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