

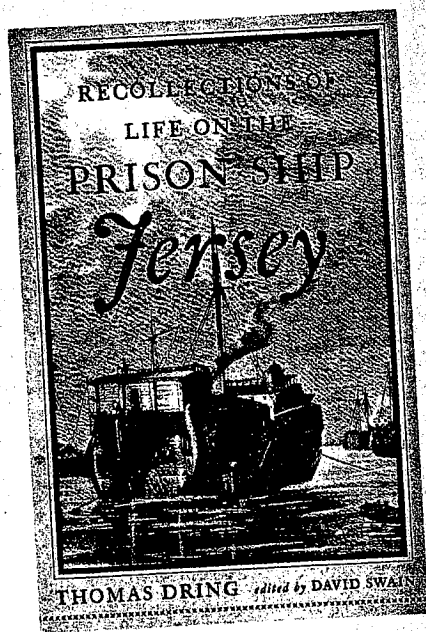
Book Reviews

Recollections of Life on the Prison Ship *Jersey*

Thomas Dring; edited by David Swain.
Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2010.
126 pp. Maps. Illus. Intro. Notes. Appen.
\$24.95.

Reviewed by Tim McGrath

Recently there has been a spate of books about American prisoners of war, including *Victory in Defeat* (Naval Institute Press, 2010), Gregory Urwin's narrative of Wake Island's captured defenders, and Laura Hillenbrand's best-seller, *Unbroken* (Random House, 2010), about U.S. Army Air Forces aviators taken captive. The plight of prisoners is not just compelling reading, but also tugs at our collective conscience. Their stories cause us to think, "There but for the grace of God," reminding us of patriotic and per-



sonal sacrifice, while prompting the question: Could we endure what they endured?

Now comes David Swain's masterful editing of the memoirs of Thomas Dring, an American sailor during the Revolutionary War. By 1782 Dring was an experienced tar with a record of service on board privateers. In 1779 he was captured—for the first time. After making a dramatic escape from the ironically named prison ship *Good Hope*, he accepted an officer's position on board another privateer, the *Chance* (no novelist

could get away with these names!) when he was captured again and sent to that most notorious of British prison ships, the *Jersey*, a former ship-of-the-line anchored in Wallabout Bay off Brooklyn, New York.

Dring's tale of his ordeal is frank and harrowing, beginning with his first night of confinement when he joined the "dismal throng" belowdecks, enduring the "suffocating heat" and inhaling the "deadly smell" while battling the vermin he calls "everlasting tormentors." His graphic description of inoculating himself the following morning in an effort to ward off the rampant smallpox on board ship captures all of his emotions: fear, desperation, and courage.

Dring recalls every detail of his imprisonment. He laments the "rank and putrid" rations but is grateful they were better than those for the "poor, half-starved Frenchmen" sharing their American allies' misfortunes. Prison life included stints on work parties that "washed down the deck and gangway"; dealing with the guards (Dring preferred the Hessians to their British and American-born Loyalist counterparts); the visits of "Dame Grant," whose supplies of fresh food fed those prisoners with the wherewithal to pay for them; hatred for the prisoners' commissary, whom the sailors derisively called "hell's tormentor." And there were burial details when, with shovels and hoes, prisoners were sent ashore to dig shallow graves for their dead compatriots wherever they found fresh earth among the countless trenches already holding the remains of earlier fatalities. Grim as this duty was, it was still shore leave; their work done, they returned to another night of horror belowdecks, interrupted by the sentinel's cry: "All's well."

But Dring's story also contains episodes of resiliency. Among the prisoners was a Virginian nicknamed "the Orator." In the absence of a minister for Sunday services, he ably filled the vacuum, exhorting the men to follow the "by-laws" former prisoners had instituted to "maintain order and decorum among us." Dring describes an escape attempt as foolhardy but helps his fellow inmates cut through four-inch-thick oak planks, using only jackknives. He revels in telling the reader how he successfully smuggled firewood aboard and of

the pleasures of a rare pipe to smoke. Most memorable is his account of how, on the Fourth of July, he joined his fellow patriots in placing 13 small "national flags . . . upon the booms" and singing "patriotic songs"—acts of defiance that provoked bloody retribution.

With "our numbers daily increasing . . . and the great mortality among us," Dring and his fellow prisoners eventually petitioned General George Washington, asking—and expecting—his assistance in securing their release. And he remembers all too well how "the prisoners were all summoned upon the spar deck" to be read Washington's reply.

Writing this account 40 years after his ordeal, Dring explains he did not merely seek a personal catharsis, but sought to remind future generations of the sacrifices he and his fellow sailors made. Swain seamlessly complements Dring's text with an informative essay and well-researched notes, correcting any historical inaccuracies while providing pertinent information that adds to the narrative. With two degrees in history and a stint at the David Library of the American Revolution on his résumé, Swain compares the realities of life on the *Jersey* with the horrors of Andersonville prison during the Civil War.

In rescuing Thomas Dring's tale from obscurity, the editor reminds us yet again that heroic deeds take place not only during battle and deserve to be remembered.

Tim McGrath is a business executive, amateur sailor, contributor to *Naval History*, and author of the biography *John Barry: An American Hero in the Age of Sail* (Westholme Publishing, 2010).

War Shots: Norm Hatch and the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Cameramen of World War II

Charles Jones. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2011. 240 pp. Illus. Notes. Bib. Index. \$27.95.

Reviewed by Hal Buell

Much of our visual knowledge of the Pacific campaigns during World War II was photographed by Marine Corps photographers who faced the enemy with cameras instead of guns. Their films and

pictures remain a valued record of that defining period in world history.

The story of these intrepid cameramen is told in Charles Jones' new book, *War Shots*. Jones tells the tale through the career and insights of Norman Hatch, a pioneer in the world of modern-day Marine Corps photography who, with his fellow Leatherneck cameramen, helped record the story of the Pacific war.

Newsreels have a checkered past. Thomas Edison suffered no illusion that his invention of the motion-picture camera would make a fortune. Film stories would be the moneymaker, and so he and others chased news. Their first films were shown in burlesque houses and song-and-dance joints. Film stories sufficiently dramatic to capture that audience were difficult to find and tougher to shoot. The result was a mix of the fake and the real. Phony war scenes from the Spanish-American War and World War I, tabletop creations of disasters, and other visually graphic reports were frequent. As late as World War II, film made in the desert near Los Angeles substituted for the real thing when film from North Africa was lost.

It was in this atmosphere that Norman Hatch joined the U.S. Marines in 1939 and eventually became a Marine combat cameraman.

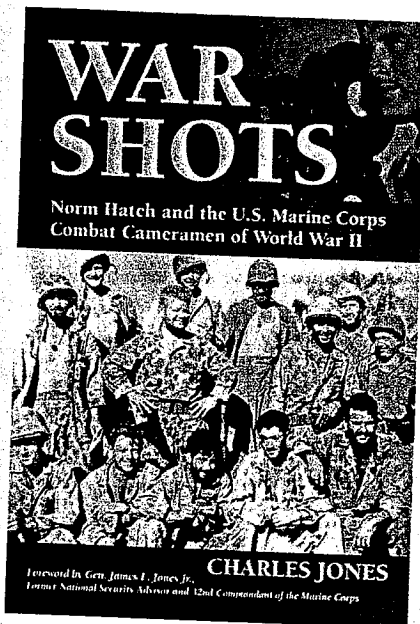
Jones' telling of Hatch's story follows two basic lines. First, the fierce milieu of combat photography and the skill and courage that cameramen, Hatch included, needed to create film stories on Pacific battlegrounds. And second, the logistics of film production and how a dedicated filmmaker defied the odds and bureaucratic red tape to organize a photo operation.

War Shots recounts in detail how Hatch, in the face of enemy fire, filmed rare scenes on Tarawa that showed U.S. Marines and the Japanese enemy in the same frames, and also captured the deadly toll of that horrific battle. His film, including footage by others, was edited into a documentary, *With the Marines at Tarawa*, which won an Academy Award. The documentary, along with earlier still pictures published by *Life* magazine of slain Americans on a beach in the Pacific, resulted in lifting World War II censorship banning photos of dead Americans. These and subsequent photos testified to the power of photography to revitalize an America growing impatient with the war's progress and resonate even today when the issue of banned photographs is discussed in the media.

Hatch later covered the Iwo Jima invasion and helped produce *To the Shores of Iwo Jima*, another inspir-

ing film shown in theaters. *War Shots* recounts in detail the story of the flag-raising and Hatch's testimony, which was critical in establishing the credibility of Joe Rosenthal's famous picture when it became involved in a controversy.

Jones' telling of the bureaucratic maze Hatch navigated to gather equipment, supplies, and work space is as fascinating as



his combat descriptions. He includes many anecdotes, from Hatch's search for equipment and supplies in Washington, D.C., and photo shops in Los Angeles to dealing with the military hierarchy to stories from the beaches of Tarawa and Iwo Jima and the shattered roadways of Nagasaki.

The author also describes postwar efforts by Marine brass to save the Corps from dissolution, including the role played by Hatch and his crew in creating *Bombs over Tokyo*. Marine generals used the film to convince the U.S. Congress to keep the Marine Corps alive. It is a story of severe interservice rivalry.

Throughout his filmmaking career Hatch instructed young Marines in the skills necessary for storytelling through film photography. He was steadfast in his principles of journalistic integrity.

"Don't get emotionally involved in the story, or you won't be able to tell the best story you can. If you do you lose perspective altogether," he wrote. It is guidance that is as relevant today as it was half a century ago.

Hal Buell was an AP photo editor for more than 40 years and for 25 years was head of the AP worldwide photo service. He worked on assignment in more than 35 countries. He is a lecturer, a television commentator on photography, and the author and editor of 15 books on news photography.

17th and 18th Century Ship Models from the Kriegstein Collection: Second Revised and Expanded Edition

Arnold and Henry Kriegstein. Florence, OR: Sea Watch Books, 2011. 256 pp. Illus. \$85.

Reviewed by Don Preul

If you enjoy studying exquisite works of art in the form of 17th- and 18th-century ship models, then this unprecedented look at Arnold and Henry Kriegstein's private collection of British Admiralty models is a must-have. The first edition of the same title, published in 2007, sold out quickly. After three years the Kriegsteins continued to acquire models and other rare artifacts and added them to their magnificent collection. The Kriegsteins, with Bob Friedman of Sea Watch Books, decided to revise and expand that edition and add these precious models and artifacts to the new book. This version includes 34 additional pages, the photos have been re-edited and the text updated, and five new chapters of models have been added. All of the detailed photographs were taken by the authors and are simply incredible.

The book begins with a foreword from Simon Stephens, curator of ship models at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London. He writes that "These 'time capsules' can reveal details of construction of the full size ship and the model, as well as working marks and notes from the makers themselves. Also, the presence of a variety of fixtures and fittings such as bilge pumps, capstans, guns, and the layout and decoration of the cabins, gives us an intriguing glimpse into life below decks." The Kriegstein's book inspires awe for the beautiful contemporary models of ships from a period when warships were works of art.

Each model is given its own chapter. From the smallest ships ("A Ship's Boat Circa 1750"), to the largest ("The Royal James 1st rate of 1671"), these models are exquisitely detailed, including the gilded carving of the royal arms of Charles II beneath the taffrail on the *Royal James* and the painting of the lacquered decoration in a chinoiserie style that adorns the model of the *Lion* of 1738. The numerous lines used in the rigging of the masts and yards leave one wondering how the artist handcrafted this complicated web of ropes and blocks. The lion that was the standard figurehead on all but the largest British warships until the 1740s appears fierce and noble on some of the Kriegstein models and more docile on