

S. 7. 4. WAR, SAFETY MEASURES AND DEFENSES, 19TH-21ST CENTURIES

**Chair: Chris Perry**

(Royal Canadian Navy Historian)

## *The British Navy and the Problems of Peace, 1815-20*

EVAN WILSON (John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research)

### **Abstract**

Britain's naval supremacy in 1815 provided the foundation for its "victorious century." However, the actual state of the Royal Navy in the immediate postwar period was dire: problems with manning, logistics, leadership, and most of all the physical state of the fleet undermined Britain's ability to project power. Compounding these issues was a domestic political environment in which the public tolerance for naval spending was exhausted while the debt incurred by the war was the highest in British history. Britain eventually emerged from a difficult period of demobilization mostly unchallenged, because no other power was sufficiently strong to counter it. Nevertheless, there were significant threats in the period after 1815, and this paper explains why Britain was unable to respond to them effectively.

### **Biography**

Evan Wilson is an assistant professor in the John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research. In 2018, he won the Sir Julian Corbett Prize in Modern Naval History. His first monograph examined British naval officers in the late-eighteenth century, and his current project follows soldiers and sailors home after the Napoleonic Wars. He is the editor of four books and has published articles in a number of journals, including the *English Historical Review* and the *Naval War College Review*. Before coming to Newport, he was the Caird Senior Research Fellow at the National Maritime Museum (UK) and the Associate Director of International Security Studies at Yale University. He holds degrees from Yale, Cambridge and Oxford.

## *The evolution of Norwegian maritime safety regulations 1850 – early 1900s – motives, formation and response*

PER KRISTIAN SEBAK (Bergen Maritime Museum/Museum Vest)

### **Abstract**

The period 1850 to 1914 saw major transitions in Norwegian shipping. In the beginning of the period, the sailing-ship fleet grew to become among the four largest fleets in the world. At the same time, the steamship was steadily introduced; at first primarily for mail and passengers and by the turn of the century heavily involved in mainly worldwide tramp shipping. However, safety regulations concerning the quality of the ships as well as for the well-being of the passengers and crew largely did not keep up.

Nevertheless, the period from 1850s to 1914 saw much of the foundation for Norwegian maritime safety regulations. This was a slow process facing many obstacles and did not fully materialise before the Norwegian Maritime Safety Act and the government agency of the Maritime Marine Division (Sjøfartskontoret) was introduced in 1903 to regulate all Norwegian shipping. Using mainly parliamentary reports, newspapers and company archives, the paper will focus on how these maritime regulations came about, the motives behind them, who and what prevented safety regulations from being enacted, how the shipping companies responded and the challenges of implementation. The regulations will also be put in a wider international context.

The paper is part of an ongoing project by the author dealing with safety at sea during the period 1850s to ca. 2000.

### **Keywords**

Safety, shipping disasters, shipping-companies, maritime policies

### **Biography**

Per Kristian Sebak is the director of the Bergen Maritime Museum in Norway. He defended his PhD at the University of Bergen in 2012. His thesis compared the three Scandinavian transatlantic passenger lines and their role in relation to transatlantic migration during the period 1890s–1930, including migration policies. He has published several books and articles concerning maritime history (particularly transatlantic), Jewish migration history and the Holocaust.

## *Submarine Cables. New and old uses.*

### *New and old threats*

AUGUSTO SALGADO (Portuguese Navy Research Centre (CINAV) and University of Lisbon History Center (ULCH))

#### **Abstract**

Since the 19th Century, that submarine cables make part of our daily life, even if we are not aware of them. Even on the age of satellites, and with costs as a significant concern, most of the information nowadays, including the World Wide Web, still goes through them.

In case of war or tension, they are one of the most important targets to be attacked. Disruption of submarine cables occurred numerous times during World War I, and several times in Portuguese waters.

In this paper, we will look at those situations, mainly those that occurred in Portuguese waters, by either side of the contenders, pointing some fewer known events, and clarifying others.

We will also look at the importance of submarine cables nowadays, as quite recently, a Soviet naval vessel stationed itself over a submarine cables hub, and alarm bells started to ring all over the Western World. As can be easily understood, a disruption on those cables could lead to immense chaos. Someone in Russia must have been reading WWI Naval History, but not in the Western Navies.

#### **Keywords**

Submarine cables, naval warfare, U-Boats, communications disruption

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#### **Biography**

Captain Augusto Salgado was born in 1965 and graduated from the Portuguese Naval Academy in 1988. He has a PhD in Maritime History by the Faculdade de Letras, in Lisbon, since 2009. He teaches Naval History in the Escola Naval (Portuguese Naval Academy), in the Master's and PhD courses of Maritime History, a member of the Academia de Marinha and of the Portuguese Military History Commission. His field of study is the Portuguese Naval History, mainly sixteen century onward and has published several books on this subject, plus several papers. He is also a keen underwater archaeologist enthusiast since 1996 and underwater photographer for over 30 years. Currently he is the co-coordinator of the project "The U-35 operations in the Algarve (1917)" that won the National Archaeology Society (UK) award "Adopt a Wreck Award 2015" and coordinator of a History and Archeology of Contemporary Conflicts Research Program (HistArc), at CINAV.