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Reviews

Going Deep: John Philip Holland and the Invention of the Attack Submarine, by Lawrence Goldstone, Pegasus Books, New York, 2017, \$27.95

In *Going Deep* Goldstone traces the genesis of combat submersibles in the U.S. Navy. His narrative illuminates the implausible courage and determination required of early submariners during underwater tests. It also reveals the exceptional engineering challenges involved in developing a survivable *and* affordable submersible for military applications. Regarding the latter, Goldstone underscores the need for—and frequent lack of—funding for expensive prototype vehicles.

Of course, a necessary catalyst for all of the foregoing was an appreciation of the tactical and strategic potential of attack submarines among key U.S. politicians and naval officers. The principal players in the story are inventors John Holland and Simon Lake, the competitive men who spearheaded the early development of military submersibles.

Two powerful historical currents drove both men. The first was the changing concept of sea power as articulated by such naval strategists as American Alfred Thayer Mahan and Briton Julian Corbett. The second centered on the naval technological advancements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including armor plating, steel hulls, torpe-

does, mines, breechloading naval guns, revolving turrets, steam propulsion and wireless communication.

Among the more thought-provoking aspects of *Going Deep* is its focus on the role of government contracting—and associated corruption—in the early development of the submarine. Influence peddling, acrimonious congressional testimony, sex, bribery and manipulation of press accounts were all part of the story.

After describing the sordid events of one particular congressional investigation, in which New York Congressman Montague Lessler was unfairly implicated, Goldstone draws a penetrating conclusion concerning the early contracting process for submarines: “The biggest casualty of the Lessler hearings, however, was the American submarine.” That’s a message with continuing relevance.

—Joseph Callo