

Wellness for the Wounded | Sub Building Is a Team Effort

# PROCEEDINGS

U.S. NAVAL INSTITUTE | The Independent Forum of the Sea Services

**War of 1812**  
**Folklore vs. Fact**

**Standing**  
**Offshore**  
**in Asia**

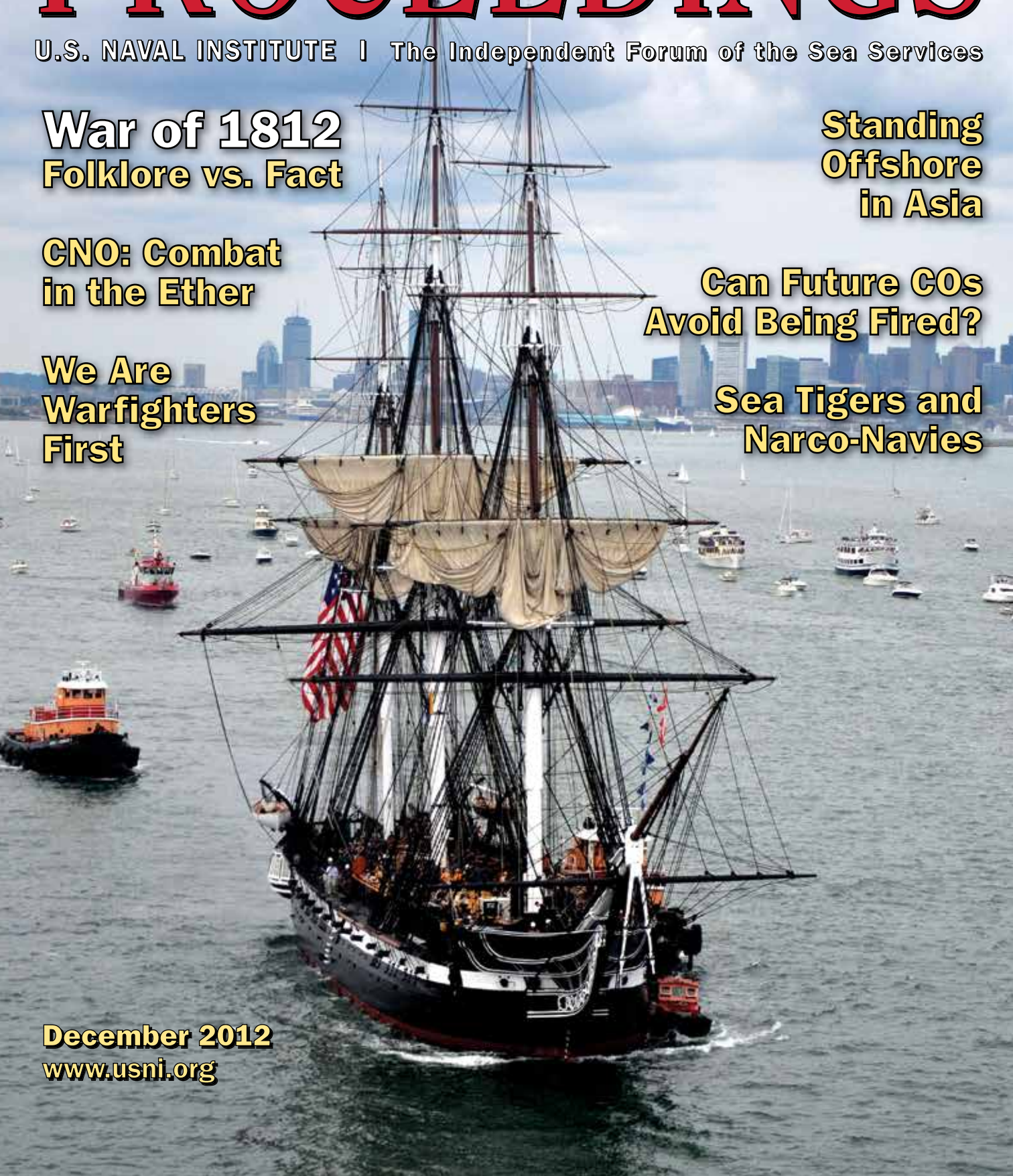
**CNO: Combat**  
**in the Ether**

**Can Future COs**  
**Avoid Being Fired?**

**We Are**  
**Warfighters**  
**First**

**Sea Tigers and**  
**Narco-Navies**

**December 2012**  
**www.usni.org**

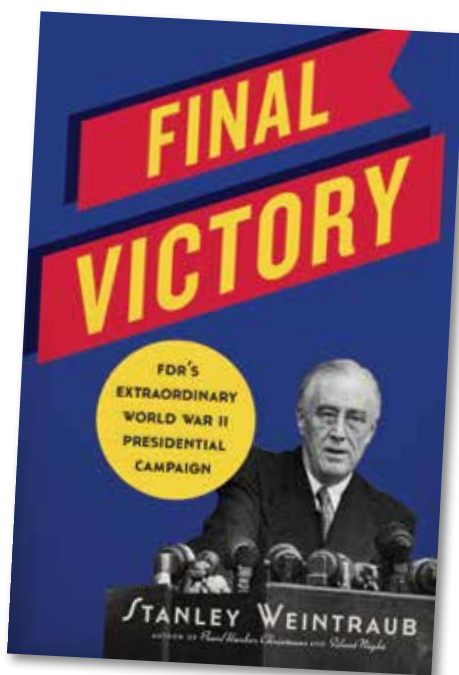


suffering from the effects of extreme hypertension and congestive heart failure. Long confined to seated positions by his continuing struggle with polio, the President had lost weight in recent months, and photographs of this period reveal a man with gaunt, haggard features. Yet FDR was a fighter, and he was determined to seek a fourth term as President of the United States. Broadcasting from his presidential train in San Diego to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago after he was nominated for a fourth term, Roosevelt remarked that as a “good soldier” he would comply with the delegates’ overwhelming request that he run again.

Stanley Weintraub’s *Final Victory* relates the fascinating story of FDR’s last campaign for office. The author, a professor emeritus of arts and humanities at Penn State, has written more than 40 books covering a variety of subjects, including both English literature and American history. Weintraub now returns to the Roosevelt White House that he last investigated in his 2011 book *Pearl Harbor Christmas: A World at War, December 1941*.

While the Democratic Party’s nomination was a foregone conclusion, the decision of whom to select as his running mate was an altogether different matter, as the author makes clear in the book’s very interesting second chapter. Henry Wallace, Roosevelt’s third-term VP, was a staunch member of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. However, his political liabilities with the increasingly vocal conservative Democrats of the Old South made FDR, always the pragmatist, unwilling to lend strong support for his candidacy this fourth time out.

Unable to come down strongly for any particular candidate, the President eventually was persuaded by suggestions from party leaders to pick Harry S. Truman, the senator from Missouri who had been heading the wartime Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. The so-called Truman Committee sought to assure that the country’s defense contracts were being carried out at acceptable costs. Weintraub notes that Truman, who had no interest in being vice president, had written his daughter, Margaret, in July, “1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is a nice address but I’d rather not move in through the back door.” Nonetheless, he was eventually persuaded to allow his



name to be offered up. And on the final ballot, he won with 1,031 delegates to Henry Wallace’s eventual 66.

Weintraub also offers an interesting account of the political campaigning of FDR’s Republican opponent, Thomas E. Dewey. The governor of New York and former hard-charging district attorney for Manhattan, Dewey was 20 years the President’s junior. But for all his youth and vigor, the immaculately dressed Republican nominee lacked Roosevelt’s warmth and humor on the campaign trail. Weintraub comments at one point that Dewey avoided shaking hands at public gatherings and “remained unsmiling, even at press conferences.”

Despite the demands of campaigning, FDR could not ignore his wartime responsibilities as commander-in-chief. In the book’s fourth chapter, Weintraub provides a brief account of his trip to Pearl Harbor in the latter half of July 1944, on board the cruiser USS *Baltimore* (CA-68), to take part in a Pacific war strategy meeting with Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas commander; and General Douglas MacArthur, the Southwest Pacific Area commander. During this detailed meeting, Nimitz explained to the President how the Navy hoped to move forward with its planned operations in the central Pacific that were moving ever closer to Japan’s home islands. MacArthur expounded on his plans to begin taking back the Philippines from the Japanese army by staging a landing there within three months.

In the book’s final chapters, Weintraub provides a varied account of both candidates’ hectic politicking during the campaign’s remaining weeks. In late October, while FDR hurriedly appeared in Philadelphia and then Chicago, Dewey spoke in Buffalo. In the end, despite a fairly close popular vote, Roosevelt was elected to a fourth term. *Final Victory* furnishes the reader with an informative look at the history of this wartime presidential campaign. It also serves as a reminder that however much some things in U.S. politics seem to change, others remain the same.

---

Dr. Barlow, a historian at the Naval History and Heritage Command, is the author of *Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950* (Naval Historical Center, 1994) and *From Hot War to Cold: The U.S. Navy and National Security Affairs, 1945-1955* (Stanford University Press, 2009).

### ***One Marine’s War: A Combat Interpreter’s Quest for Humanity in the Pacific***

Gerald A. Meehl. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012. 288 pp. Illus. Map. Notes. Bibliog. Index. \$34.95.

**Reviewed by Robert Fahs**

In *One Marine’s War*, Gerald A. Meehl tells the story of Robert Sheeks, a Japanese-language officer and World War II veteran who served with the 2d Marine Division in the Pacific. Sheeks’ experiences range from childhood under the Japanese occupation of Shanghai to Harvard and training at the U.S. Navy’s Japanese Language School, and then to island combat and postwar reconstruction in East Asia. Writing in the third person, Meehl derives the narrative from interviews with his subject, and to a lesser extent from reading archival sources preserved at the Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado.

Opening with “a peculiar incident” from the 1944 battle for Saipan, Meehl develops a more telling perspective than if he had started Sheeks’ story in childhood, as a more conventional journey-to-war testament would. For although Sheeks began the war with a personal animosity against the Japanese, by 1944 his role as translator involved him in dramatic efforts to save individual Japanese soldiers and civilians, even as the Ma-

ricanes perfected their skills in particularly brutal forms of engagement that emerged with the slow and costly American advance across the Pacific.

At Saipan, the presence of civilian populations complicated the determined Japanese defense of islands that had begun two years earlier at Guadalcanal. As Japanese soldiers slowly retreated from U.S. Marines landing on the coast, they continued to resist from the caves that were also inhabited by thousands of local Japanese, Korean, and Chamorro civilians.



The Japanese tried to prevent them from surrendering to the Americans.

Following a logic that might find support today in the *U.S. Army and Marine Corps Field Manual on Counterinsurgency* (first released as a government document in December 2006, FM 3-24 MCWP 3-33.5 under the direction of then-Lieutenant General David A. Petraeus), the role of language officers like young Bob Sheeks was to weaken resistance and protect the civilian population, by using megaphones and broadcasting equipment to talk enemy soldiers out of their subterranean redoubts and into surrendering.

Aside from showing how Sheeks developed compassion for the Japanese after hating them for atrocities he witnessed as a child, another important strength of the book is that the story also demonstrates the practical rationale and early precedent for U.S. tactics that have only recently become

part of mainstream counterinsurgency doctrine. Not only did Sheeks' efforts to suborn the enemy at first yield only limited results, but even when they did succeed, they remained little appreciated and poorly understood by his superiors in the field.

For example, at the battle for Tinian Sheeks built on his experience at Saipan to gain the surrender of a Japanese warrant officer, who then re-entered a cave seeking others to join him. Unfortunately, shot in the arm by his own troops, the officer barely made it back out alive. And when an American colonel in Sheeks' division interrogated the enemy officer, he also (typically) viewed him as a mere "traitor," dismissing the potential of turning recalcitrant enemies in the midst of combat.

Meehl's narrative becomes more frustrating when it turns to Sheeks' subsequent career. After completing a graduate degree in Chinese studies from Harvard in 1948, Sheeks quickly moved in government from serving as a Pentagon China analyst to becoming the U.S. Information Agency director and U.S. Embassy public affairs officer in Taiwan. In 1952 he switched to an ostensibly private role as the Malaya/Singapore field representative for an anticommunist nongovernmental organization, the Committee for a Free Asia (CFA).

In Kuala Lumpur with the CFA, Sheeks participated in the British-led defeat of Communists in Malaya, which remains perhaps the single-most effective counterinsurgency campaign since 1945. However, Meehl fails to illuminate Sheeks' transfers between government agencies, or to analyze how his wartime experiences might have benefitted the British counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya.

Indeed, scholars need to study more closely how the innovative roles of language officers and other nonconventional initiatives in World War II contributed to the extensive and poorly understood counterinsurgency operations that played a crucial role in U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War, especially in Asia. In the meantime, Meehl's presentation of Sheeks' story comes as a welcome contribution to the body of evidence in this field.

---

**Dr. Fahs is a visiting research fellow at the Center for Complex Operations of the National Defense University at Ft. McNair, and an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration, Adelphi, Maryland.**

## ***Those Who Have Borne the Battle: A History of America's Wars and Those Who Fought Them***

James Wright. New York: Public Affairs, 2012. 331 pp. Bibliog. Index. \$27.99.

**Reviewed by Michael S. Neiberg**

This book is more sympathetic than argumentative. It emerged from the desires of the author, a former Marine, history professor, and college president, to tell the story of American veterans. Having met with many former combatants in Iraq and Afghanistan, James Wright sought to understand their situation in its historical context, while explaining to readers the relationship between the nation's wars and the men and women who fight them.

Especially in an era when medical care for veterans is inconsistent and their suicide rates alarmingly high, the topic of these people and how the United States has cared for them is critical. Wright's approach is personal, with a great deal of first-person writing and harkening back to individual experience. Not for nothing does the book begin with Wright's recollection of what the military meant to those in his childhood hometown of Galena, Illinois. However, as a scholar he rejects much of the mythology Americans have created about their wars; Wright strives to see those conflicts as they really were.

Each chapter begins with a historical survey of a war or era of hostilities. The general outlines will be familiar to students of warfare, which the author makes no attempts to sanitize. This provides a framework within which to contextualize the veterans' role in the years that followed. His treatment of World War II is particularly relevant to this point, as Wright highlights the privileging of white males by virtue of the U.S. system developed to prosecute the war. Particularly galling is that German prisoners of war were invited to a performance by Lena Horne—whereas African-American soldiers were not. This also stands as an apt metaphor for many U.S. shortcomings during that period.

Wright sees the true watershed moment not in 1941–45, as do many historians, but in the Korean War that began in 1950. The United States could not even agree