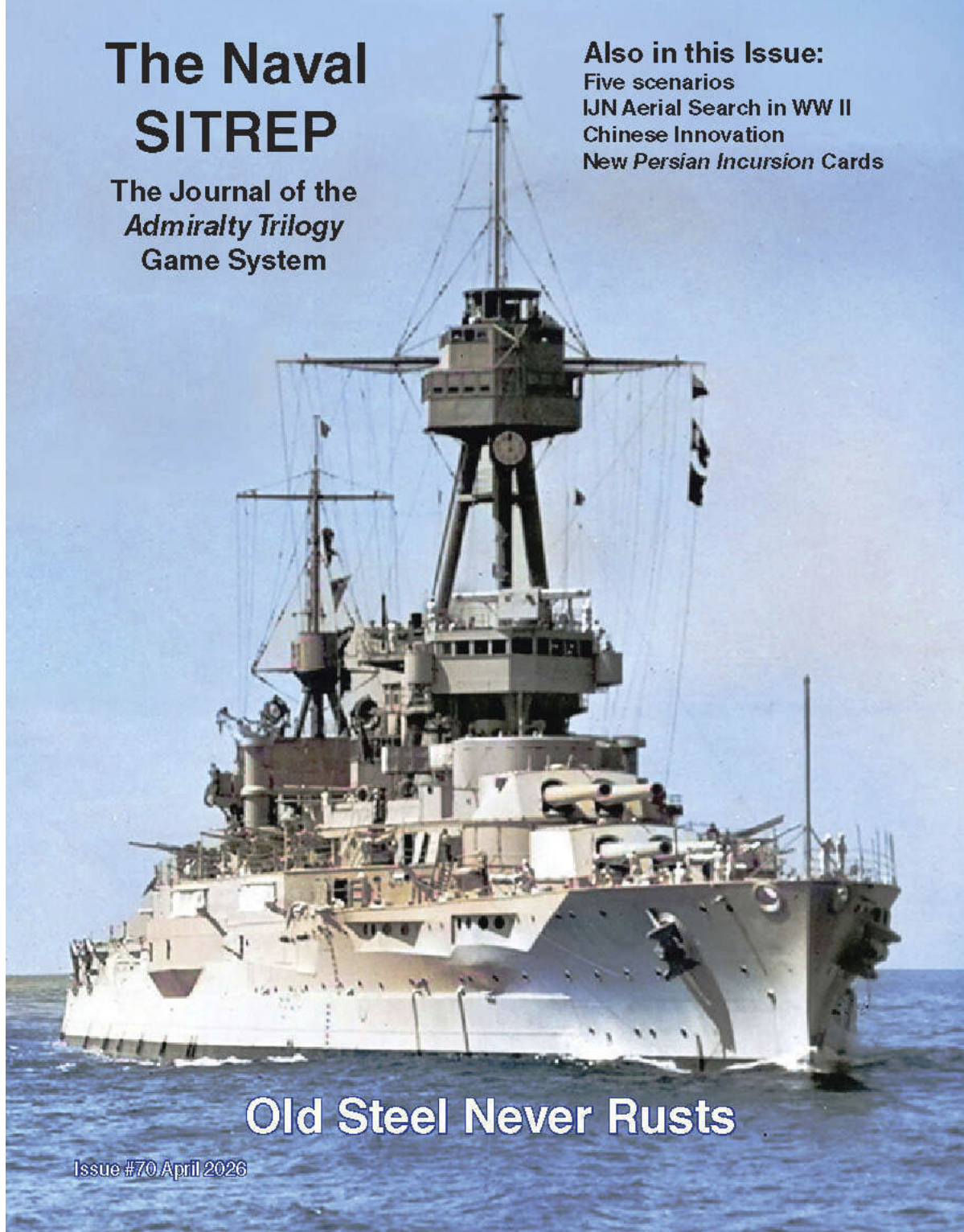


# The Naval SITREP

The Journal of the  
*Admiralty Trilogy*  
Game System

## Also in this Issue:

Five scenarios  
IJN Aerial Search in WW II  
Chinese Innovation  
*New Persian Incursion Cards*



## Old Steel Never Rusts

Issue #70, April 2026

## Book Review: *How Carriers Fought*

*How Carriers Fought*, by Lars Celander, Casemate Publishers, 2018, 296 pp, \$32.75

In the introduction, the author explains that his interest in WW II naval history included not only “what, why” and “when” but also “how?” That is, the actual mechanics of carrier operations. Given his background in physics and as a systems engineer, it’s understandable, and to our benefit.

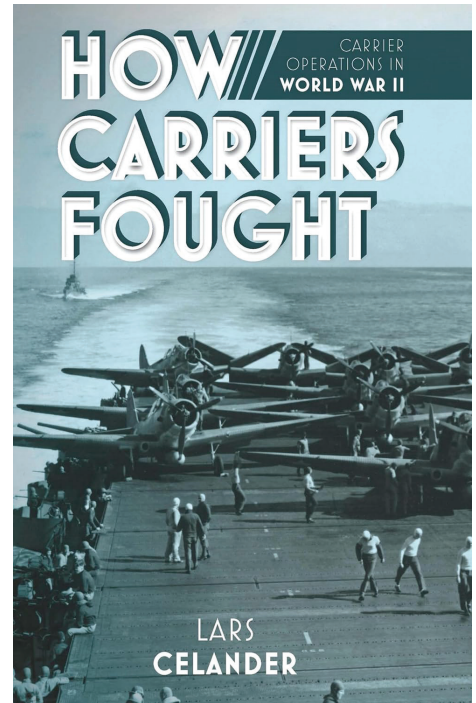
The author has researched how aircraft carriers, a complex and quickly maturing weapons system during WW II, worked. How they moved planes, organized a deckload for a strike, stored spares and maintained the embarked aircraft. Some of the random subtopics include homing beacons, flight-deck tractors, visual scouting, and dozens of other nuts-and-bolts facts out of the aircraft carrier’s owner’s manual.

This takes up the first part of the book. The second part summarizes each carrier battle in WW II, mostly in the Pacific, but also including Operation Pedestal in the Mediterranean. Each summary is closely focused on the role that carriers played – how they were handled, for good or bad, and their effects on the course of the battle.

The third part explores combat modeling of carrier warfare. These are not complete simulations, but rather simpler cause-and-effect models. While he does explore their applicability to WW II, he does not try to generalize or draw any conclusions from the models.

In general, the book is clearly written and is very easy to read. Even someone familiar with WW II carrier battles will find their understanding deepened. Recommended.

*Larry Bond*



## Book Review: *Russia's Military Aviation Industry*

*Russia's Military Aviation Industry*, by Piotr Butowski, Harpia Publishing, 2025, 137 pp, digital only, €97.

I served in the infantry, but I always had my eyes on aviation. I’ve been following Russian military aviation since the Soviet days, so when Butowski’s book came out, it went straight to the top of the pile. He is a Polish journalist who has covered the Russian defence industry for decades, and he delivers a densely packed reference work: 113 photographs, 16 tables, and 10 graphs across 137 pages.

This is structured industry analysis, not narrative history, but it never feels like a phone book. The first chapter takes the reader on something of an industrial tour of Russia, mapping the factories, design bureaux, and production sites across the aviation sector. Each entry comes with a bit of history and a who’s who that gives real flesh to what could have been a dry directory. For me, the most valuable insight here was understanding how current wartime production still relies heavily on Soviet-era industrial infrastructure: not a streamlined modern system, but a messy, surprisingly resilient network. Every chapter opens with a selection of key points, a simple touch that helps keep the reader on track throughout.

The second chapter, on pre-2022 production, ties the industry’s ups and downs to oil prices, a link I hadn’t fully appreciated before. Chapter three, on the transition to a wartime economy, is only six pages long but tells you everything you need to know about the paradigm shift: 2024 military expenditure tripled compared to 2021, with repairs and spare parts prioritized over new production. Butowski also notes that from this point on, Russian companies stopped publishing figures even for civilian aircraft, making public-source analysis increasingly difficult. His work in the later chapters, piecing together production estimates from financial statements, official releases, and open-source intelligence, is all the more impressive for it. The chapters assessing Su-57, Su-34, and Ka-52 production volumes are particularly illuminating.

Chapters four and five, on actual wartime production and emerging long-term problems, were the real meat on the bones for me. If you’re already following Russian airpower and need to anchor the daily stream of contract announcements, accident reports, and plant closures in an accurate picture of who builds what, where, and for whom, this is where the book pays for itself.

This is one of Harpia’s first all-digital titles. I’ll admit I miss the feel of their signature glossy paper in my hands, but the digital format honestly fits better into my daily research habits. CTRL+F alone justifies the trade-off. At €97 for a specialised reference on a fast-moving, information-restricted topic, it’s not cheap, but it earns its price as a working tool rather than a one-time read. Warmly recommended.

*Claude Janssen*