The Principles of Navigation

The Nautical Institute launches new edition

Safe navigation at sea is dependent on good training, sound practice and long experience – and no organisation is better placed to draw on those qualities than the UK’s Royal Navy. The Nautical Institute is proud, therefore, to publish the 11th edition of The Admiralty Manual of Navigation, Volume 1: The Principles of Navigation*. This was reported by NI on 28 March.

This latest edition has been updated for the electronic era of navigation, so this edition is the first to be digital by design and assumes that the reader’s vessel will be navigated using an IMO type-approved ECDIS.

Nevertheless, the basic principles are the same as those of a century ago: ensuring the safe conduct of a ship across the oceans. In his Foreword to the 11th edition, the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, points out: ‘the fundamental skills of the professional navigator remain unchanged, no matter the medium on which a fix is plotted.’

The volume is encyclopaedic in its coverage, providing authoritative guidance on everything from map projections, geodesy, charts, and ocean and coastal navigation techniques to plane and spherical trigonometry. Navigation aids such as radar, GPS and echo-sounders are explained, and the book emphasises the need for the OOW or Navigating Officer to use all available information when navigating. Traditional techniques such as manual fixing and use of paper charts are not forgotten; confidence in using them could be vital should satellite systems be unavailable.

The Principles of Navigation is therefore an indispensable reference that contains everything the 21st century navigator needs in order to plan a passage from berth to berth. The guidance and techniques described are as applicable to oceangoing merchant ships as to naval vessels, and are conveyed in a clear and accessible style. The author, Alastair Harris, a third-generation submariner, was Navigating Officer in HMS Trafalgar and HMS Talent and more recently authored Volume 2 of The Admiralty Manual of Navigation: Astro-Navigation, the 11th edition of which was published by The Nautical Institute last year (2018).

Concluding his Foreword, Sir Philip summed up: ‘The ability to conduct your ship from one place to another, arriving at the time and space specified, safely, remains the principal task of the navigator, and safety at sea is everyone’s business. Yet all who live and work on the world’s oceans know this is rarely
straightforward. To assist mariners across the world in this vitally important task, the Royal Navy is pleased to share our centuries of accumulated experience, captured in these pages and published jointly with The Nautical Institute. I commend this publication to you all.’

To purchase a copy of The Principles of Navigation readers are invited to visit: http://www.nautinst.org/pubs

The Standard Price is £145; during April 2019 only it is £87.

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About The Nautical Institute
The Nautical Institute is an international representative body for maritime professionals involved in the control of seagoing ships. It provides a wide range of services to enhance the professional standing and knowledge of members, who are drawn from all sectors of the maritime world. Founded in 1972, the Institute has over 40 branches worldwide and some 7,000 members in more than 120 countries.