THE COMPLETE YACHT SECURITY HANDBOOK FOR SKIPPERS AND CREW – Fritze von Berswordt. Published in hard covers by Adlard Coles [www. adlardcoles.com] at £30. 192 237mm x 162mm pages in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-4729-5167-0

Adlard Coles claim that this book is the 'indispensable security handbook for all yacht owners, cruisers and crews'. With the word complete in the title I expected even before opening the covers that it would provide comprehensive coverage of every aspect of this important subject. By the time I finished reading it was very clear to me that Fritze von Berswordt had met this remit. The *Handbook* is based on thorough research which has been carefully analysed, and the results of this analysis are presented in four parts.

Part 1 deals with the threat posed by piracy and criminal attacks, basing his analysis on having researched attacks against more than 250 cruising yachts between 2011 and 2017. For me the most interesting aspect of his analysis in this section was whether crews should resist or submit when faced with attacks by criminals or pirates. His researches show that what he describes as 'resistance with initiative' often succeeded in foiling criminal attacks. That said, he notes that the ability to seize the initiative in these circumstances needs to be based on thorough preparation and training. Much of the remaining contents of the *Handbook* are based on this important premise.

Part 2 deals with risk assessment. In this section he classifies cruising destinations against four threat levels, with Level 4 posing the highest threat of piracy and criminal attack and Level 1 the least. The Level 4 category includes countries such as Somalia and Nigeria, and his clear advice to cruisers is to steer well clear of areas falling within this category. Levels 1 and 2 cover Europe, North America, Australasia and other stable parts of the world such as Japan and Singapore. The level which will be of most interest to cruisers, particularly those engaged in planning or undertaking a circumnavigation, is Level 3, as many interesting cruising destinations in the Caribbean and Indian and Pacific oceans fall into this category.

Part 3 deals with preparation of vessel, equipment and crew, and provides a comprehensive assessment of the security equipment available. Finally, Part 4 covers the strategies required to avoid and/or deflect criminal attacks – what Fritze describes as 'security in action'.

With my background as a career infantry officer with combat experience, as well as being a recent circumnavigator, I consider his advice with regard to the controversial topic of whether to carry firearms on board to be both sound and sensible. He correctly flags up the disadvantages in terms of the significant additional bureaucracy encountered when clearing in and out, the need for ongoing training and shooting practice, and the difficulty of obtaining ammunition overseas. That said, it would be very helpful in the next edition to have an appendix listing those countries in the Level 3 category which do not allow firearms to be kept on board when cruising in their waters, in order to better assist the risk assessment process. In my view, if you follow Fritze's advice to avoid Level 4 areas the significant additional bureaucratic hassle of carrying firearms on board needs to be weighed very carefully against the deterrent effect they provide against potential threats in waters where you are allowed to do so. I also found his coverage of the option of using transport by freighter to circumvent

dangerous areas to be somewhat dismissive and cursory – it is now a popular choice for moving yachts from the Far East to the Mediterranean.

These are minor quibbles, however. Fritze von Berswordt has dealt with this important subject in a clear, logical and comprehensive manner. At £30 it represents good value for money and, were I to embark on another circumnavigation, I would certainly have it on my bookshelf. If you follow the advice in this *Handbook* it should keep you and your yacht safe, secure and out of harm's way.

JSL