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Angus Konstam. *Warships in the Baltic Campaign 1918-20: The Royal Navy takes on the Bolsheviks*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2022. 48 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. UK £11.99, US \$19.00, CDN \$25.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47285-166-6.

This work is the 305th volume in Osprey Publishing's New Vanguard Series and author Angus Konstam's 83rd contribution to the Osprey catalog in which Konstam seeks to offer a concise examination of the Royal Navy's participation in the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War's Baltic theater. This is done in a manner similar to the Osprey Campaign series, examining the background of the conflict, a summation of the campaign itself, and an overview of the British and Soviet warships involved. Period paintings and photographs are used to depict the various commanders and warships, backed up with modern ship profile and digital image renderings. The work does not have a traditional analytic conclusion but offers a further reading style bibliography and a quick reference index at the end.

The first half of the work is largely a chronological study, following the background of the collapse of the Eastern Front, the Soviet push into the ancient Estonian and Latvian states, and the resultant naval aide from the Royal Navy. It then flows into a discussion of the campaign itself, with a discussion of both major naval actions and land actions which directly or indirectly affected the actions of the Royal Navy. Examples of the latter include the actions of still operational German military units fighting in the Baltic region and attempts to relieve targets besieged by Soviet ground forces via bombardment. Operation RK, a daring strike on the Soviet naval base at Kronstadt by British Coastal Motor Boats, is given suitably detailed coverage, with the resultant hesitancy of the Soviets from carrying out sorties from the base reminiscent of the German High Seas Fleet after Jutland just a few years before.

This timeline approach then shifts to examinations of the Soviet and British fleets present in the Baltic. While this does result in the retreading of some earlier information from the background and campaign sections due to the discussion of vessels' service history, it does provide more detail into the conditions of the warships involved, the support facilities, and, in the case of the Soviets, the perceptions of their British opponents on the eve of hostilities. Profiles are provided for ten of the warships involved, offering digital reconstructions of their wartime appearances in a way not achievable

with period black and white photographs. A table is provided for the Soviet vessels noting the home ports of the vessels operating from Kronstadt and Petrograd, while no comparable chart is present for the British.

In terms of possible improvements, a few come to mind. One of the full color illustrations mistakenly describes the image as “Clash between British and German Destroyers,” despite the subject matter and text description making it clear that the warships were Soviet (14). The outboard profile renderings, while detailed, lack a scale to illustrate the size difference of the vessels. For example, the dreadnought *Petropavlosk* and cruiser *Oleg* are rendered as the same size on a shared page, with nothing to note that the former was 154 feet longer (27). The layout itself also feels to be slightly inverted, with the campaign covered first before the discussion of the two fleets. Given the fact that the British and Soviet fleets are integral to the campaign itself, it would help with the work’s flow if these vessels were discussed first, or if the text was integrated into the campaign narrative. This would reduce some repetition and prevent the jumping around of the work’s chronology. The accounting of the raid on Kronstadt could also be improved with the inclusion of a map of the strike detailing the locations of Soviet vessels and the routes taken by the British CMBs. As it stands, a small aerial photograph and the one rendering are present to offer visual representations of the raid’s target and enactment, so any expansion would further highlight the significance of the attack. Also, some form of discussion regarding the Royal Navy Mutiny of 1919 that occurred as a result of ships being ordered to the Baltic would be appreciated, as it would reflect more of the average sailors’ mindset at the time. Finally, a table of technical information on the major ships involved would be appreciated, so as to better compare the size, crew compliments, armaments, and other features of the combatants via a quickly referenceable means.

All in all, *Warships in the Baltic Campaign* serves as a solid introductory overview to the conflict between British and Soviet forces operating in the waters off Estonia, Latvia, and Russia in the chaotic days following the 1918 Armistice. Konstam provides an accounting of the major naval players and actions within the confines of a New Vanguard pattern Osprey book, with illustrations and images to allow for better visualization of the forces involved. While the work could be aided via expansion or possible conversion into a volume of the Campaign series, it is a fine exploratory work for those wishing to learn more about the Baltic Campaign, early Soviet naval operations, and the Royal Navy’s fight against Bolshevik forces during an often-overlooked period in world history.

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