

may have faded from the frontal lobes of much of the public, yet crude oil tankers remain the work horse of liquid energy globally. After all, if it can't be driven, piped, sent by train or plane, then chances are the energy we use was delivered on a crude oil supertanker chronicled in this book.

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Mark Stille. *USN Submarine vis IJN Antisubmarine Escort*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.bloomsbury.com, 2022. 80 pp., illustrations, bibliography. US \$22.00, CDN \$30.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47284-305-0.

This booklet is one of an apparently popular series with the general public regarding combat between two opposing entities. The range is wide, with some topics very much “what if” and others, such as this, an historical struggle that fits in well with more comprehensive accounts of the topic in question. Here we have an examination of the United States Navy submarine force against the Japanese navy's (IJN) anti-submarine escorts or destroyer force. The author, Mark Stille, is a retired commander, USN, with a number of Osprey Publishing titles to his credit, many of like vein to this one.

The superficial understanding of the Pacific War tends to be one of aircraft carriers and island invasions, a naval war in which the combatants rarely saw each other and fought at long range with aircraft. Often overlooked is the devastating, unrestricted submarine campaign conducted by the USN against Japanese shipping, against which the IJN was ill-prepared. Indeed, so successful was the American campaign against the seaborne trade on which Japan's economy depended, that it had virtually ceased by the early months of 1945 and hence, the territories seized from the imperial powers (US, Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands) so swiftly and easily in late 1941 and early 1942 were rendered valueless.

The booklet is organized into a first section that explores the development and employment of submarines and escorts as conceived by the two nations prior to and during the war. With this foundation in place, separate sections then examine the strategic environment in which the campaign was fought, a relatively lengthy section as to the technical specifications of the various classes of vessel used by both sides, a short review of the personnel and their training on both sides, a thumbnail sketch of the American campaign against shipping and the ineffective Japanese countermeasures, and a conclusion.

The production quality of the booklet is very high, with a large number of photographs as well as diagrams and illustrations of the various classes of vessels involved. Every effort has been made to be even-handed in this approach, which succeeds quite well in that regard. Accompanying the illustrations are

tables of typical data, such as performance parameters, weapons and dates of construction and similar aspects of relevance and interest.

This is absolutely not an academic book, but it can serve as a rough and ready sketch of the American submarine war against Japan. Its small bibliography can at least initiate the exploration of more comprehensive accounts, but it only represents a start. The analysis provided is high level and is fine as far as it goes but is limited with little nuance. Its merits include brevity and can serve as a quick introduction and overview to the subject. The booklet is also well produced as is typical of Osprey Publications and will find a ready audience attracted to such offerings.

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Mark Stille. *Leyte Gulf 1944 (2): Surigao Strait and Cape Engaño*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2022. 96 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. US \$24.00, CDN \$32.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-47284-285-5.

The October 1944 showdown between the United States (USN) and Imperial Japanese (IJN) navies in and around Leyte Gulf enjoys the distinction of being the largest naval battle in human history. The scale of it was so vast that, in writing about it for Osprey's Campaign series, Mark Stille needed two volumes to cover properly its various aspects. Whereas the first volume focused on the attempt by the warships of IJN's First Diversion Strike Force to sink the American amphibious forces stationed off of the eastern coast of the Philippine island of Leyte, the volume under review addresses the destruction of the Second Diversion Strike Force in Surigao Strait and the annihilation of the remnants of the IJN's carrier arm at Cape Engaño.

Both battles reflected the complex nature of the IJN's plan. Known as Operation *Sho-I*, it was an attempt to defend the Philippines from invasion with a single massive effort by the Combined Fleet. Though crippled by the lack of aircraft and experienced pilots, Japan's aircraft carriers were key to the plan, as they were deployed as a lure for the numerically superior American forces. Once William Halsey's Third Fleet was drawn away from the amphibious forces, the First and Second Diversion Strike Forces would converge on Leyte Gulf to destroy them. Stille is highly critical of the plan, noting that by the time the Japanese fleet was scheduled to arrive, the American troops would already have been landed on Leyte, leaving only empty ships to sink. Even if it had achieved that result, the Japanese would then have been trapped between the USN's Third and Seventh fleets and faced almost certain destruction. In this respect, the operation was more about creating "a glorious opportunity