

## Book Reviews

**Przemyslaw Budzbon, Jan Radziemski, and Marek Twardowski. *Warships of the Soviet Fleets, 1939-1945. Volume II: Escorts and Smaller Fighting Ships*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, [www.seaforthpublishing.com](http://www.seaforthpublishing.com), 2022. 304 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. UK £45.00, hardback; ISBN 978-1-39902-277-4.**

This work is the second entry in a multipart tabulation of all known Soviet warships from the era of the Second World War, including civilian conversions and Lend-Lease vessels. This particular volume addresses escorts and smaller warships, with Volume I having covered major combatant vessels and the succeeding Volume III focusing on auxiliary craft. Less a traditional book and more an extremely detailed database, this compendium by Budzbon, Radziemski and Twardowski offers researchers and readers a comprehensive English-language source on the myriad array of often-forgotten vessels that were fielded by the Soviet Union during the war years. Surviving period photographs placed throughout the work, alongside new outboard profile and top-down renderings, help expand the information's effectiveness, with a quick-reference index at the end to aid in location of individual ships.

As stated earlier, this is not a traditional scholarly work, so it begins without preamble or analysis. Instead, two key maps are printed on the work's endpapers illustrating the main Soviet naval bases and shipyards and an extensive alphabetical acronym guide provides both the Romanized Russian words and English translations. From here, the authors delve into the eleven warship categories discussed in the work, continuing from Volume I by having the first section, "Escort Ships," labeled as section 11. Each section is further divided into subsections such as Soviet-built vessels, civilian conversions, Lend-Lease ships, and war prizes, with each class entry largely following the same layout. The layout begins with a statement of the name of the class or converted vessel, along with any relevant Soviet Project Numbers. Basic data

*The Northern Mariner / Le marin du nord* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2024), 279-319

on displacement, dimensions, machinery, armament, and crew complement are then provided, followed by a tabulation chart of all relevant vessels with their name, builder, yard number, fleet assignment, key dates, and fate. In the case of smaller vessels or civilian conversions, this is often reduced to name or number, commissioning date, fleet assignment, and remarks, with similar variance for Lend-Lease ships and war prizes. Depending on factors like size, class, and service, these tables may then be augmented with reference images and profile renderings to increase visual understanding. For the large escort ships, a textual breakdown of ship-type history, wartime modifications, and brief ship histories are provided. Smaller but equally important vessels, such as submarine hunters, receive a simpler text entry, while the smallest and most obscure watercraft must rely on the "Remarks" section of their data tables to provide additional information.

For the "Smaller Fighting Ships," the level of detail applied by the authors is impressive, as they cover a wide assortment of ship types that are commonly overlooked in wider narratives of naval and riverine warfare. These include floating artillery batteries, anti-aircraft ships, net vessels, and landing craft, with designs as small as landing tenders (motorboats that are sometimes akin to the Higgins craft produced in the United States). These uniquely Soviet designs can then be compared to the larger American LCIs and LCTs to understand the Soviet's general lack of vital amphibious landing vessels and the resulting effects on their forces, a fact further highlighted by the work's last two photographs, which illustrates some of the countless civilian sail and rowboats impressed into service for this task (p. 296).

In terms of possible improvements, few come to mind. An expansion of the textual information provided for some of the smaller vessel types would be appreciated, although it is understandable that there may be minimal sources available on the subject. Similarly, a brief introductory analysis for each section touching on Soviet doctrine regarding the discussed ship types would further aid in the work's effectiveness by providing context for the numbers, deployments, and general fates. Finally, given that some images mention Soviet camouflage and paint patterns in their captions, it might be informative to have an appendix or future volume address the standard painting conventions of these ships with colorized versions of the outboard profile renderings created for this work. These are, of course, merely suggestions for how to expand upon an already solid work, and their absence is by no means a detraction.

All in all, *Warships of the Soviet Fleets 1939-1945 Volume II* is an excellent resource for those interested in researching the lesser-known vessels of the Soviet Navy during the Second World War years. Budzbon, Radziemski and Twardowski have done an impressive amount of research into a variety of small, sometimes obscure, craft. They have presented their technical and

service information in an easy-to-access English-language source, furthering the historiography of the subject, and expanding access to data that is otherwise difficult to find. Combined with the other two volumes in this series, *Warships of the Soviet Fleets* is a fine technical database for those studying the various naval assets deployed both on the Eastern Front and in the final days of the war in the Pacific Theater.

Charles Ross Patterson II  
Metairie, Louisiana

**Theodore Corbett. *A Maritime History of the American Revolutionary War: An Atlantic-wide Conflict Over Independence and Empire*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword Maritime, [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk), 2023. 224 pp., illustrations, maps, index, etc. UK £25.00, US \$34.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39904-041-9.**

The American Navy during the Revolution was not very effective as a fighting force, but it did its job by existing. In contrast to Britain, a lack of naval infrastructure and industry, as well as martial tradition and discipline, hampered the nascent nation's ability to effectively contest the seas. Theodore Corbett's monograph *A Maritime History of the American Revolutionary War* provides thirty-four short chapters divided among ten chronological and thematic sections that present a cogent, although cursory, representation of the maritime conflict along the shores of North America and beyond.

The first two thematic groupings are a worthwhile comparison and contrast of general naval and maritime development of the two antagonists, the American Colonies and Britain. After reading of the deep disparity between the British naval experience, traditions and capacity, versus the vastly underdeveloped state of American shipbuilding and their lack of naval experience, one would not be surprised by the comment of Samuel Chase of Maryland, who thought that forming a Continental navy to fight the most powerful maritime force of the day was "The maddest idea in the world."

While a blue-water navy was being considered and developed by the colonial government, there were other maritime concerns. Not all British North American colonies, such as Quebec, were eager to split from their mother county. Part 3 of the text relates the contest for the control of Lake Champlain that necessitated the development of lacustrine navies for both belligerents. The next two parts are again a great contrast between the British and American strategies during the war. With overwhelming superiority, the British enacted a blockade on North America that was at times effective