

both technical details and humanizing elements at the same time. For those interested in German inter-service operations or the Luftwaffe's maritime aircraft, equipment, and their operations, this work is a welcome addition to current scholarship.

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Robin L. Rielly. *American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II: A History of LCI and LCS(L) Ships in the Pacific*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc. www.mcfarlandbooks.com, 2013. vii+398 pp., illustrations, notes, index, appendices. US \$45.00, paper; ISBN 978-0-7864-7422-6.

Robin L. Rielly gives a definitive history of an often-forgotten class of naval vessels in his 2013 book, *American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II*. The exhaustively researched book is an authoritative account of the vessels from their inception to "the last gunboat" which was turned into a museum in 2010. Rielly's work is both well researched and eminently readable. Read in parts or from start to finish, it will broaden the understanding of amateur and professional historians alike.

Rielly's story of what terms "LCI gunboats" begins in 1943—already years into the war. He notes that even though the boats debuted in the North Africa landings they did not really come into their own until they were used in the Pacific theatre where he focuses his work. After the early battles in the Solomon Islands, and the bloody assault on Tarawa the Navy realized that amphibious assaults needed to be supported by far more firepower during the landing itself. Early LCI gunboats were conversions of other landing craft modified by the addition of guns—usually 20 mm and 40 mm—with extra machine

guns and many were converted in forward areas. But later versions carried 4.5" and then 5" rockets and mortars as more and more firepower was requested and new designs were put into production or converted from other boats. In the designations "LC" meant "Landing Craft" and the last letter usually designated the type of weapon carried (R) for rockets, (M) for mortars, and (G) for the heavy gunboats produced by the end of the war that carried a mix of rockets and guns.

Over the course of the war, the gunboats progressively increased their armament. Late war versions carried one 3" gun, two twin 40 mm guns, four 20 mm guns, rocket launchers that could salvo fire 120 rockets and as many as six .50-calibre machine guns—all on a ship that carried no more than 70 officers and men. This made the gunboats easily the most heavily armed ships of the war, man for man and ton for ton. One seaman put it "we were so cramped on deck side you could not go more than six feet from a gun... even the flag man had a machine gun attached to his flag bag."

One of the most interesting sections of *American Amphibious Gunboats* is the section on crew life. The gunboats were some of the smallest vessels able to make open water transits. Despite their small size—the largest were only 159 feet long and only 23 feet wide—they transited across the Pacific all the way to Okinawa and beyond. Rielly does not mince words here, telling the reader simply "Flat bottom boats are not comfortable in a seaway." An understatement if there ever was one. Life aboard was cramped and uncomfortable.

Rielly chronicles the mundane part of crew life. Life was "Spartan" and uncomfortable. Crews loved ice cream and breakfast always caused problems because gunboats never had more than one toaster and the coffee was always

terrible. Rielly also talks briefly about race on the gunboats. African-American sailors were only allowed to serve as a Steward's Mate, cooking and cleaning up after the officers, jobs deemed beneath other sailors aboard.

The gunboats were also dangerous—because they were heavily armed and considered expendable in defense of larger ships they were often used as picket ships or in more risky missions. The casualty rate of the gunboats was significantly higher than the theater average and in some operations nearly double. And the Ad hoc, almost Mad Max-esque nature of their construction meant that some were lost at sea because of design problems and other has a rocket misfire rate of over ten percent.

After introducing the gunboats, Rielly gives a broken, chronological history of their involvement in major combat operations in the Pacific. The breaks are intentional; Rielly makes clear in the introduction that he intends to focus on a few representative examples—among them the Central Pacific Campaign, the retaking the Philippines, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Otherwise, the action would be both repetitive and overwhelming. If the reader does want to dive deeper into other Pacific operations Rielly includes reference and sources in his notes that would jump-start any research.

The book is illustrated with hundreds of photographs that bring the gunboats to life. Almost every version and conversion of the gunboats are pictured along with combat shots, training shot and snapshots of daily life. Maps (both original and some created for the book) help the reader understand the action and clarify the operations. The book is so well illustrated, in fact, that a reader could be forgiven for wishing it were printed in a larger format and hardbound. As it is, the book is a paperback and larger than standard size,

but not so large as to be a display book.

In *American Amphibious Gunboats in World War II* Rielly has made a valuable and complete addition to the naval and amphibious history of the Second World War in the Pacific. His book should be of interest to casual and professional historians as well as military practitioners. The gunboats he chronicles do not exist in the force structure of modern navies—anyone who would seriously consider amphibious assault against a dug-in enemy would do well to understand the contributions these boats made in the Pacific.

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Raymond A. Rogers. *Rough and Plenty: A Memorial*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, www.wlu-press.wlu.ca, 2020. 332 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography. CDN \$24.99, paper; ISBN 978-1-77112-436-2. (E-book available.)

In the summer of 1985, the Nova Scotia fishing community of Little Harbour came together to celebrate the launch of the fishing vessel *Laura Elizabeth*. Such gatherings had occurred countless times before, in Little Harbour and across Atlantic Canada, but as offshore dragnets decimated stocks and undermined the inshore fishery, the sight of a newly-built boat had become increasingly rare. The struggle of inshore fishers to maintain their historic livelihoods in the face of industrial overfishing is the subject of *Rough and Plenty: A Memorial*, a passionate autoethnography written by the *Laura Elizabeth's* owner, Raymond A. Rogers, and published as part of Wilfrid Laurier University Press's Life Writing series.

Rogers, who grew up in Manitoba, decided to settle in Shelburne County's