

Ken W. Sayers. *US Navy Patrol Vessels, a History and Directory from World War I to Today*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Books, www.mcfarlandbooks.com, 2021. 557 pp., illustrations, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. US \$55.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4766-7650-0. (E-book available.)

The purpose of the work is to tell the story of patrol craft in American service: to bring proper recognition to them and their crews and to dispel the perception of patrol craft as “homogeneous, colorless and unimpressive ships.” Patrol vessels are diverse: “At one end of the spectrum, some of these vessels were no bigger than 31 feet in length and eight tons in displacement, while at the other end some were over 300 feet long and 2,400 tons displacement” (11). The focus is to be on the individual vessel and the provenance of every hull is to be accounted for in each stage of its existence.

The bulk of the book is a directory arranged by category or official designation in US Navy service with historical notes on major classes and important vessels. *Jane’s Fighting Ships 1944/5*, describes the system for classification succinctly: “Every vessel on the Navy List is given a distinctive serial number, prefaced by initials denoting the category to which she belongs” (439). Categories are arranged alphabetically from PACV (Patrol Air Cushion Vehicle) and PBR (Patrol Boat River) through to SC (Submarine Chaser).

Each chapter presents information on the development and service of the major classes within the category. Under the heading “Roster,” each vessel is listed with its variety of names and notes on provenance throughout its lifetime. Coverage also includes vessels in civilian and foreign naval service before and after service in the USN and final disposition. “Specifications” includes basic information on dimensions, propulsion, and armament of important vessels. Detailed accounts of notable vessels are presented in a section of frequently personal histories headed “Selected Summary Histories.” It is through the stories of vessels like USS *Panay* and USS *Intensity* that the major events and currents of history are viewed.

In most cases, important categories or vessel types have a chapter devoted to them, within which succeeding classes are arranged chronologically. Gunboats and submarine-chasers merit more than a single chapter. The gunboats category, PG, is subdivided into separate chapters: “Prewar,” “World War II,” “Tempress-Class,” which includes Canadian-built modified Flower class corvettes. In many places the relationship between the US Coast Guard and the US Navy is touched upon but never described. As an example, the exploits of vessels like the cutter *Campbell* deserve mention at least.

In addition, there are chapters on “River Gunboats” and, curiously, “Nineteenth Century Gunboats,” some of which began as sailing vessels, predating use of USN-assigned categories. The Submarine Chaser category

shows the classification system under strain to include Second World War submarine chasers and Patrol Coastal ships of the modern Cyclone class, as does the use of SC for First World War submarine chasers.

There are good to excellent photographs all credited to US Navy. A glossary of terms and abbreviations, a bibliography, and an index help the reader navigate the book. In order to accommodate the huge detail related to provenance of individual vessels, the author uses a notation system employing a range of codes, for example, [ex] signifies "Built in US shipyard specifically for export to a foreign navy" and [tf], "Transferred, lent or sold to a foreign navy". That the bibliography lists US sources only would not seem a problem with such an avowedly American work, but it would certainly would have benefitted from reference to international sources.

The difficulties of classification in the burgeoning field of small craft development become more pronounced travelling forward in time with rapidly advancing technologies for propulsion, armament, and specialization in roles. Notation is more complex, for example, PCC (Patrol Control Craft) and PCE (Control Escort) and PCER (Patrol Rescue Escorts). The re-awakening of American interest in littoral and riverine warfare in recent times has produced a luxuriant growth of patrol vessels. The chapter "Patrol Potpourri" includes a range of real and planned experimental small craft but also large, modern vessels like the 1,038-ton *Badr* class of four ships built for Saudi Arabia and four 960-ton vessels designated PFMM (Multi Mission Patrol Frigate) for Thailand. The bulk of mass-produced vessels built in modern times have been exported to allies, while single boat classes are usually for experimental or developmental purposes. PY (Patrol Yacht) is an entire category of one-of-kind vessels, some quite exotic, taken over from civilian service in an emergency.

The author succeeds in producing a focus on the vessel as an entity which has an existence of its own and demonstrating that successful vessels can have a life measured in decades performing a variety of roles. Two chapters, "US Patrol Vessels Built for Foreign Navies" and "Patrol Vessel Transfers", add a lens through which US political alliances can be seen operating through history up to today. Transfers also include corvettes and frigates built in Canada and subsequently transferred to the US as part of "reverse Lend-Lease" during the Second World War. The readership is thereby widened from students of naval affairs to include libraries and information centres that service academic and other populations interested in world politics, foreign affairs and diplomacy. The inclusion of vessels that ended their careers before the First World War, including the chapter on nineteenth-century gunboats and Spanish vessels captured during the Spanish-American War of 1898 demonstrates the author's attachment to patrol craft but detracts from the aim as stated in the title.

A fuller discussion of the definition of patrol craft would be useful.

*Jane's Fighting Ships 1960-61*, claiming to be based on "official sources", includes categories DE and DER, Escort Ship (Destroyer Escort) and Radar Picket Escort Ship (Destroyer Escort Radar). (301) While ships of the DE category were mass produced with run-of-the-mill characteristics; by contrast, DER would be presumably include ships like USS *Liberty* and *Pueblo* and interesting modern equivalents. By excluding DE-related ships, the author misses a big piece of the story of the Anglo-American relationship during the Second World War in terms of tonnage and large numbers of relatively large ships. The effectiveness of the common naval strategy was based on a degree of interconnectedness among Canadian, US and British shipyards producing a high degree of cooperation in building and transferring escort vessels among members of the Allies. This story is only told in a fragmentary way in this largely American-centric account, which misses the value of that effort and lessons for the future. In that sense, the book is isolationist and regressive. Inclusion of DE class would also have produced better coverage of Allied co-operation, which was the real story of war at sea in the late-twentieth century and which has lessons for the future.

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Hrovje Spajic. *Schnellbootwaffe, Adolf Hitler's Guerrilla War at Sea: S-Boote 1939-45*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Images of War. Pen and Sword, [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk), distributed by Casemate, 2021. 184 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, glossary, bibliography, index. UK £14.99, US \$22.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-39909-175-6.

In *Schnellbootwaffe*, Hrovje Spajic explores the activities of the small boats used by the German Navy in the Second World War, largely in images, beginning with their precursors during the First World War. He follows this with the evolution of doctrine and application between the wars and then focuses on a detailed study of the organization and activities of S-Boats after 1939. A revolutionary design concept in the 1930s, the *schnellboote* (fast boat) was developed for a type of maritime guerilla warfare. Spajic also covers the reactions and countermeasures taken by the American and British navies against their hit-and-run tactics and how this affected encounters between small craft during the Second World War. He concludes with S-Boat attempts to interfere with Operation Overlord, as well as with merchant shipping, as the bases these boats used were gradually cut off and seized.

The introduction establishes a solid base from which to examine the Kriegsmarine's successful use of small torpedo and gunboats in this sphere,