

the Allied response to them, and the limitations they faced. It also covers the British attempts to counter the threat to shipping and trade. Spajic examines the construction and equipment of the various classes of S-Boat, paying particular attention to their use in missions like minelaying, a topic not often explored on its own. The end result is a good, entry-level book for readers unfamiliar with the topic and looking for an accessible place to start exploring. Students familiar with the subject might not find it as useful. While presenting a large quantity of research in a relatively short, well-illustrated volume, the compact format does not allow for a deeper exploration of specific events or technical matters that some readers might find useful.

This is the author's first work in English, which may explain some of the flaws and inconsistencies present. Though competently written and informative, the book would have benefitted from further editing before publication. The inconsistent use of both metric and imperial measurements leads to a degree of confusion for the reader, especially without the presence of a conversion table. The author makes no distinction between short, long, or metric tons, and, in at least one location, he fails to properly convert between pounds and kilograms. Distance measurements also seem to switch between metric and imperial, sometimes using meters and kilometers and other times, feet and miles. Conversion tables would have reduced the need for mental math. A more complete glossary would have also clarified the author's use of unexplained acronyms and abbreviations. Though there is an index, the author does not use footnotes, or endnotes, making further research more difficult. Finally, though it may be the result of a lack of accessible source material, the selected bibliography consists of less than a dozen sources and none of them are original documents. This further limits the value of the work for those seeking additional sources.

Despite its shortcomings, *Schnellbootwaffe: Adolf Hitler's Guerrilla War at Sea S-Boote 1939-1945* provides new readers with a useful starting point for exploring the activities of German torpedo boats during the Second World War. Serious researchers will need to look elsewhere. In comparing the role of these small, fast boats in the German Navy with that of the Allies and other forces at the time, the author sheds light on a lesser-known aspect of naval warfare during the period.

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Mark Stille. *The United States Navy in World War II: From Pearl Harbor to Okinawa*. New York, NY: Osprey Publishing, www.bloomsbury.com, 2021. 304 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography. US \$35, CDN \$48, hardback; ISBN 978-1-147284-804-8.

Mark Stille, a retired USN Commander, has written a useful summary of America's naval war with a focus on the warships involved. The emphasis is overwhelmingly on "America's war against Japan" rather than the "two ocean war" that was in fact fought by the USN, aligning with the common perception in the United States that Japan was the main enemy notwithstanding the acceptance of the "Germany first" strategy agreed to with its allies. That war was overwhelmingly a naval war from the perspective of the Americans (Japan's war in China does not come into play with this maritime account) and, as Stille's narrative makes clear, was won by America's vast economic and material resources for which Japan had no answer.

Stille's book is organized into nine chapters plus an introduction. The first addresses US naval strategy and tactics during the Second World War, the second examines USN operations, and the last is an assessment as to the effectiveness of the USN throughout the conflict. The bulk of the book in the remaining six chapters explores the individual ship types that made up the USN: battleships, carriers, cruisers (heavy and light), destroyers, and submarines. As is common with Osprey Publishing in general, the illustrations, diagrams, and photographs are lavishly provided and to a very high quality.

The introduction sets the scene for the United States in terms of noting the armed neutrality period just ahead of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that drew the country into the maelstrom of the Second World War. The tit-for-tat period in the Atlantic where German U-boats and USN destroyers engaged in an undeclared war is useful to recall, as it largely explains Hitler's "inexplicable" act of folly in declaring war on the US after Pearl Harbor, thereby simplifying the US President Roosevelt's geopolitical difficulty with entering the European war. The introduction also touches on the interwar treaties and naval limitation agreements that constrained navalism and promoted disarmament. These restrictions had a material effect on USN preparations for war as it did for the RN and the other belligerents. The passage of the Two-Ocean Navy Act in July 1941 was a key milestone in unleashing America's latent material superiority, with the ships authorised under that act providing the instruments of victory over Japan and, to a lesser extent, Germany.

The two chapters on USN strategies and tactics and on naval operations are useful guides as to America's conduct of the war against Japan. Stille notes the early mindset of USN senior leadership that, unsurprisingly, was not always up to the strain of modern war and often lacked the imagination and insight necessary to conduct successful operations against Japan. War, however, is a stern teacher and very quickly the peacetime cobwebs and preconceptions were shaken off and the USN got down to business. Admiral Yamamoto's declaration prior to the breakout of the war that he would have it all his way for six months but after that was unlikely proved all too true. After Midway

in June 1942, Japan was consistently on its back foot and was increasingly on the defensive and reactive to American initiatives. This is not to underestimate the difficulties the USN faced after Midway, which Stille summarizes well. Indeed, at one point later in 1942, the USN was down to one operational carrier, the USS *Enterprise*. Thereafter, however, the material potential of the United States was evident and, notwithstanding the bitter battles that followed, by early 1943 the outcome was not in doubt.

Stille's summary of the campaigns and battles is well done with the only caveat being the limited discussion on the other ocean of the "two ocean war." There is barely a mention of the Royal Navy side of that conflict, let alone any mention of any Royal Canadian Navy's role in the Atlantic. The conclusion to the book with its assessment as to the USN role and effectiveness is by and large fair. Nevertheless, assigning the overall outcome of the war to the US Navy is perhaps too much. While the destruction of Japan was essentially an American affair with limited and unnecessary (and unwelcome) assistance from Britain, the defeat of Germany was at the hands of the Red Army with no more than "useful" assistance from the Western Allies, the most important component of which was supplies. These, to be sure, were largely supplied by sea, but the greater role in that regard was via the Royal Navy.

The chapters on the warship types are to the normal very high standard of the Osprey Publishing series. The reliance on earlier Osprey booklets on these vessel classes is noted in the publishing details at the front of the book and, if one has a complete collection of these, one likely does not need this compilation. That noted, it is an extremely useful compendium to have at hand in one place. Production standards are high, with numerous ship diagrams and contemporary photographs, accompanied by tables of basic performance data as well as dates of construction and final disposition. One is struck by the sheer scale of the USN as represented in these tables and the achievement of the American shipbuilding industry during the war. Major warships, as well as vast numbers of destroyers, untold quantities of landing craft, assault vessels, and auxiliary ships were churned out at an astonishing pace. All were essential for the conduct of the war by the Western Allies in both theatres – Europe and Pacific. The quality of most of the designs and construction standards were second to none.

Stille has delivered a fine book that is a good introduction to America's maritime war as well as a top-notch discussion on warship types that fought that war. It is not an academic work per se, lacking the apparatus of notes and providing but a slender bibliography, albeit one that can certainly be explored for additional detail. It is also light on providing context with allies such as Great Britain and Commonwealth forces such as Canada, and skims over the

European Theatre in general. Notwithstanding these caveats, I unhesitatingly recommend it.

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Mark Stille, illustrated by Paul Wright. *US Navy Frigates of the Cold War*. New Vanguard #297. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.com, 2020. 48 pp., illustrations, index. UK £11.99, US \$19.95, CDN \$25.99, paper; ISBN 978-14728-4051-6.

When students, scholars, and naval professionals think of the ships of the Cold War, their minds often turn toward the capital ships of the navies of the world. The development of the Nimitz class “supercarriers” or the eventual mothballing of the Iowa class battleships might surface first for an American. Russians may think of the development of the Typhoon class ballistic missile submarines or the unique design of the Kiev class aircraft cruisers. British readers might think of the Invincibles, the French of the Clemenceaus. Focusing on the biggest and most expensive ships in the fleets of the world is not uncommon, and it still tends to dominate discussions of fleet design in the twenty-first century. Mark Stille’s short guide to the frigates that the US Navy deployed during the Cold War offers another view, reminding us that small ships bring balance and depth to fleets. Masterfully illustrated with photography and art by Paul Wright, *US Navy Frigates of the Cold War* offers an introduction and reference for students and professionals alike when considering the smaller ships of the American Cold War navy.

Across the decades of the Cold War, small combatants in the US Navy were focused on the Soviet submarine threat. Starting with the destroyer escorts which dominated the small ship fleet of the post-war years, Stille traces how the anti-submarine and convoy missions drove design and constructions of American frigates, as well as how they were armed and equipped. Tracing from those initial DE’s, through the seven classes of frigates constructed across the decades between the end of the Second World War and the dawn of the post-Soviet era, the book offers good summaries of each class. These brief descriptions include the considerations driving their design and how the introduction of new sensors and weapons shifted construction and size.

All seven classes demonstrate the design tensions that small combatants have had, dating back even to the age of sail. On the one hand, navies want their small combatants to be survivable and have the latest weapons and technology, on the other hand, they want to design them for mass production and build them