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Small Craft Navies

George Galdorisi

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supported all on board the *Barb* through dark, fearsome moments. With this support, confidence grew until there was no room for either self-doubt or despair.

Thorough research into U.S., Japanese, and Chinese records makes *Thunder Below* accurate and complete. It also reflects the desire to "do it right the first time" that was a hallmark of the *Barb*. As one sailor put it, "We try to do our jobs all the way." How better to achieve success than to take this approach?

This story gives interesting insights into how the *Barb* was run. We are told why crewmen who had been Boy Scouts were given added consideration when choosing a team for a specially hazardous mission. Also, fresh new meaning to the tradition of "splice the mainbrace" is provided.

For those who wish to learn while reading for enjoyment, this book is a must.

JACOB V. HEIMARK
Captain, U.S. Navy, Ret.
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

Chant, Christopher. *Small Craft Navies*. New York: Sterling Pub., 1992. 160pp. \$29.95

Small Craft Navies is a unique and interesting reference work that fulfills two separate and distinct functions. In its first section it provides a lively and entertaining look at the development of fast patrol boats and fast attack craft, beginning with what is generally recognized as the world's first attack craft,

the Royal Navy torpedo launch *Lightning*, which entered service in 1876. The second half provides a comprehensive technical directory of more than one hundred designs of fast patrol boats and fast attack craft, as well as illustrations of almost all the boats and craft featured.

Part One begins by making the important distinction between fast patrol boats and fast attack craft. The former are generally fitted with only light armament (such as machine guns, or cannon of less than 40mm) and minimal sensor and fire control suites. The latter are usually of higher speeds and possess much heavier, longer-range armament that can include antiship missiles, guns of up to 76mm, antiship torpedoes, and anti-submarine warfare weapons. The author faithfully retains this distinction throughout the book.

Part One moves quickly through the early years of patrol and attack craft and mostly discusses the post-World War II era. It ties together the development both of these craft and the weapons they carried (particularly the antiship missiles) that have made these vessels so formidable. Where appropriate, this section speaks to the effectiveness of the craft and weapons of various navies, offering information usually seen only in detailed accounts of battles or campaigns.

The author also attempts to define the rationale determining which boats or craft each navy operates. For example, he notes that China is the world's largest operator of fast combat craft

and explains how this is a natural outgrowth of both the geography of the Chinese coastline and the types of threats that the National People's Liberation Army-Navy might typically have to deal with. The author also presents information of a more generalized nature explaining many of the factors that go into a nation's decision to purchase and operate these boats and craft.

Part Two of this book presents an excellent technical directory. Rather than organize the patrol boats and attack craft by country, the author has arranged them alphabetically by type or class, starting with the Turkish AB class and ending with the Polish *Wisla* class. Within each class, the craft are further broken down by nation so that the reader can get an immediate sense of how many of the type exist worldwide and then how many exist in each particular navy. Because of this organization, *Small Craft Navies* is a particularly useful reference book. For example, this arrangement enables us to learn that the Soviet Osa I and Osa II classes comprise over three hundred craft owned by a total of twenty-two nations. A review of this section also reveals that the People's Republic of China is a major exporter of attack craft, with four major classes—the Hainan, Huchuan, Shanghai, and Shantou—exported to a wide variety of nations. The Shanghai class alone is featured in thirteen navies.

Overall, *Small Craft Navies* is a lively and interesting book. Although its subject matter would initially appear

to be highly specialized and of rather narrow appeal, its importance is apparent as all navies move into an era of littoral warfare so well articulated, for the U.S. Navy case, in ". . . From the Sea." As these craft increase in numbers and importance, so too will the value of this already useful book.

GEORGE GALDORISI
 Captain, U.S. Navy
 USS *Cleveland* (LPD 7)

Kelly, Orr. *Brave Men, Dark Waters: The Untold Story of the Navy SEALs*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1992. 288pp. \$22.95

Pity the Navy Seals. Despite a half century's heroic service as the Navy's frogmen, they've failed to garner the spoils of their Army brethren: a hit song, a John Wayne movie, and a green beret ostentatiously sanctioned by the president of the United States.

They do have Bob Kerry, the former Seal whose Medal of Honor was his main calling card as a presidential aspirant. Unfortunately, what the general public knows about the Seals otherwise is hardly flattering: a botched jump that left four dead off Grenada; a calamitous assault on a Panamanian airfield that left another four dead and nine wounded; the awkward arrival in Somalia, where grease-faced Seals crawled out of dark surf into the bright lights of television crews. Their reputation was not helped by the best-selling memoir of former Seal commander Richard Marcinko, *Rogue Warrior*.