U.S. SMALL COMBATANTS

This volume, the fifth in Norman Friedman's critically acclaimed design history series, is the first book to address the full range of fast patrol and attack craft developed by the U.S. Navy since the turn of the century. Based on the navy's own documents, many of them recently declassified, it describes in rich detail the PT boats of World War II fame, the subschasers of both world wars and the postwar period, the coastal and riverine craft that fought the brown-water war in Vietnam, and modern hydrofoils, including the Pegasus (PHM) class.

The book is the first to provide details of numerous noncommissioned U.S. combatants, including the Swifts, Plasticats, ASPBs, Monitors, and CBBS of the Vietnam War, and as such will be an indispensable technical guide to the operational accounts of that war. It also includes the first descriptions ever published of a 1917 motor torpedo boat, the Steamer one-man torpedo boat, the PT designs of 1939 and 1950, and the river transport designed for Vietnam.

Friedman, a leading naval analyst and defense consultant, discusses general developmental trends here as well. He shows how the U.S. Navy, though much more a blue-water than a brown-water force, has nevertheless produced substantial numbers of inshore boats and weapons, with their development being driven by two main factors: the technology of high-speed craft and national strategy. He also traces foreign influence, particularly British, on U.S. small combatant design and construction.

Six appendices add valuable details to the text. One describes modern U.S. oceangoing and river gunboats and their operations, including the specialized Yangtze River craft. Another deals with the numerous small vessels the navy acquired during both world wars for use as patrol craft. Others treat crash boats and pickets, small combatants for export, and small-boat weapons, including guns and rocket launchers. A final appendix lists all commissioned U.S. small combatants, with their fates. Numerous tables, listing significant data on all the various types of craft, accompany the text for fast access to specific information.

A. D. Baker III, Alan Ravent, and Al Ross, all expert draftsmen and ship authorities, have contributed nearly one hundred scale line drawings to this work. Sketches of projects that never got beyond the design stage are provided as well. Two hundred photographs, many never before published, also are included.

Unarguably the most comprehensive reference available on the subject, this book will appeal to ship buffs and architects, naval historians, and all those who have served in small combatants.
About the Author:
Norman Friedman is one of this country’s leading authorities on navy ships and weapons. A defense consultant; on naval technological and strategic problems, he has addressed such issues as the tactics and intelligence requirements of over-the-horizon missile combat, the Soviet ability to react to U.S. naval innovations, U.S. mobilization potential, Soviet strategic vulnerability, the arms control implications of ballistic missile defence, and prospects for controlling nuclear proliferation.

This is Dr. Friedman’s twelfth book. The first four titles in this illustrated design history series include U.S. Destroyers, U.S. Aircraft Carriers, U.S. Cruisers, and U.S. Battleships. Among his other books are The Postwar Naval Revolution, Submarine Design and Development, Destroyer Weapons of World War II, and U.S. Naval Weapons. He is currently at work on a handbook of naval weapons and sensors to be published by the Naval Institute Press.

About the Illustrators:
A. D. Baker III has contributed drawings to all five of the books in this series and to several other books, including The American Steel Navy. He also writes extensively on naval subjects. He is the editor of the English-language edition of Combat Fleets of the World, a major reference on the world’s naval forces that is published biennially, and his articles frequently appear in the Naval Institute Proceedings and in Warship International. He was a member of the secretary of the navy’s advisory committee on naval history and belongs to the American Society of Naval Engineers.

Alan Raven has contributed ship drawings to many books, including two others in this series, U.S. Battleships and U.S. Cruisers. He is the author of Fletcher-Class Destroyers, the first volume in a warship design histories series published by the Naval Institute Press. His second book in the series, Essex-Class Carriers, will be available in 1988. Two books he coauthored on British warships also are Naval Institute publications. He is a highly respected ship modeler who specializes in building powered models.

At Ross is well known to ship buffs and modelmakers for his scale plans of small combatants and for his work with PT Boats, Inc., a museum and veterans association that published his first book, Early E/ICO PT Boats. His articles and drawings frequently appear in warship and ship modeling publications, and his book The Destroyer Escort England is part of the highly acclaimed anatomy of the ship series. He holds a Ph.D. in adult education.

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AN ILLUSTRATED DESIGN HISTORY

By Norman Friedman

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