

Reserve was supposed to be training for was downgraded in favor of augmentation. Before 1970, Reserve units had never been issued appropriate equipment due to the lack of both finances and interest on the part of the regulars. The Coast Guard did not want to make Reserve units into

entities that could truly mobilize.

In 1992 the Coast Guard further downgraded its port security readiness by downsizing Reserve personnel. This continued until the shock of 9/11. Now the port security mission has become a priority for the regulars though not for the Reserve. Instead, the Reserve's mission of integration remains the focus as exemplified by the Coast Guard's refusal to create Reserve Marine Safety and Security Teams (MSSTs). Ensign Lanz clearly demonstrates the root cause of the boat crew training problem: trying to have Reservists serve two distinct and different missions.

The solutions to the current training di-

lemma offered by Ensign Lanz, while helpful and innovative, will not solve the basic conflicting priorities within the Coast Guard Reserve, nor will they help senior Reservists achieve leadership experience. As for the Naval Reserve, the situation will become much worse when the Navy destroys its reserve military units in order to achieve "cost effective" reserve augmentation by individuals into the regular Navy. The loss of military units will be very traumatic for Naval Reservists as they face their own readiness challenges in much larger bodies of water.

"A Gunboat Navy for the 21st Century"

(See E. Kimura, pp. 44-46, July 2005 Proceedings)

Craig Hooper—Mr. Kimura did a good job of dressing his big ship advocacy in the historical record. However, a closer look at history suggests that cheap and maneuverable smaller craft can, when well led, serve effectively as strategic instruments of sea power.

In the Baltic Sea, during the 18th century Russo-Sweden conflict, Russia defied convention by deploying shallow-draft oar-driven galleys to wage a successful littoral campaign along the coast of Finland. The "superior" Swedish Navy, overweighted toward conventional deep-draft ships, could do little as Russian forces seized the port of Helsinki and other facilities necessary for sustaining Swedish naval operations in the Gulf of Finland. In the summer of 1714, unsupported Russian galleys trapped and seized a division of larger Swedish ships at the Battle of Gangut (or Hango), clearing the way for uncontested Russian littoral operations throughout the entire upper Baltic.

The war-burdened Swedish government lacked the financial resources to build a balanced fleet. Ultimately, Russia's lit-

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toral success translated into blue water dominance of the Gulf of Bothnia and the seizure of the strategically important Åland Islands.

A century later, during the War of 1812, British military planners focused on their fleet of large ships-of-the-line. Subsequently, they overlooked the strategic importance of the Great Lakes—a small ship, “brown water” theater—and the British failure to construct a viable naval deterrent on the lakes gave America an opening to seize control of the crucial northern frontier.

Naval competitors are learning the correct lessons from America’s experience with Jeffersonian-era gunboats, and using small ship commands as a means to introduce the more audacious aspects of American naval leadership to their officer corps. The new Chinese fleet of high-speed catamarans and the small “patrol boat” navies of Southeast Asia serve as both strategic assets and as incubators, grooming a cadre of sophisticated military leaders for future blue water operations.

History has a nasty habit of repeating itself. If successful small ship projects are smothered to protect gold-plated conventional vessels, America risks ceding local blue-water superiority to adroit lit-

toral forces surrounding the vital—and increasingly contested— island nations of Southeast Asia and the South Pacific.

America needs a truly balanced fleet. Sea control is critical, but in the immediate future, American national security strategy rests on America’s ability to influence events through the innovative application of littoral power. In the post 9/11 world, bigger is not always better—just as conflict isn’t always settled by gunfire.

“RAF Proposes Nimrod Modification”

(See N. Friedman, pp. 88-89, August 2005 *Proceedings*)

Dr. Andrew Dorman, Senior Lecturer, King’s College London—Norman Friedman’s column on the proposed equipping of Nimrod aircraft with a variant of the Storm Shadow missile incorrectly identifies this as a threat to the proposed acquisition of two new aircraft carriers by the United Kingdom.

The proposal, if accepted, might actually facilitate the acquisition of these ships because the idea is not an alternative to aircraft carriers but rather a cheaper alternative to the acquisition of the next generation of strategic deterrent, the ballistic missile submarine. If an air-

based deterrent costs less, it would free resources for other areas of defense, such as the acquisition of new carriers. The issue of whether and/or how to replace Britain’s existing Trident force poses the greatest threat to the Royal Navy’s carrier force, not the modification of a few Nimrod aircraft. Past rivalries may still exist but they should not be overstated. Within the modern Ministry of Defence, the most valid criteria is effect.

“Hard to Believe”

(See N. Friedman, pp. 120-122, May 2005 *Proceedings*)

Commander William E. Brooks, Jr., U.S. Naval Reserve (Retired)—Your magazine noted on the decommissioning of the USS *Vincennes* (CG-49) that the name will be “forever” associated with the shoot-down of the Iranian Airbus.

Does that mean the name *Vincennes* no longer will be connected to the first ship of the U.S. Navy to circumnavigate the globe as flagship of the Great Exploring Expedition; the ship which proved Antarctica is a continent; the ship which brought back a collection of artifacts and plants which led directly to creation of the Smithsonian Institution and the U.S. Botanic Garden; the ship which provided

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