



Building the Mosquito Fleet: The US Navy's First Torpedo Boats

Richard V. Simpson

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In 1877, the U.S. Navy purchased the fast steam yacht Stiletto from the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company of Bristol, Rhode Island, for "automobile" torpedo experiments in Narragansett Bay. The submarine service was in its infancy, and interest in the self-propelled torpedo as an undersea weapon flourished. Herreshoff's fast, steam-powered boats were the first of the delivery platforms accepted by the U.S. Navy Department for experiments at the Newport Naval Torpedo Station and service during the Spanish-American War. Dating from the Civil War, the torpedo station on Goat Island in Newport Harbor was the first torpedo armory in the United States, specializing in research, development, and manufacture.

Building the Mosquito Fleet: The U.S. Navy's First Torpedo Boats traces the important and often dramatic history of the involvement between the U.S. Navy and the Herreshoff brothers' marine yards over a period of more than thirty years. It is a story of enterprise, naval development, and marine manufacturing during a time of experimentation and evolution. Included are dramatic stories of the men who built and tested these dangerous new vessels. This fascinating volume preserves under one cover a concise history of the torpedo boats built by the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company. It describes design and construction innovations introduced by the Herreshoffs and traces the events that led the major navies of the world to take notice of the Herreshoffs' work.

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