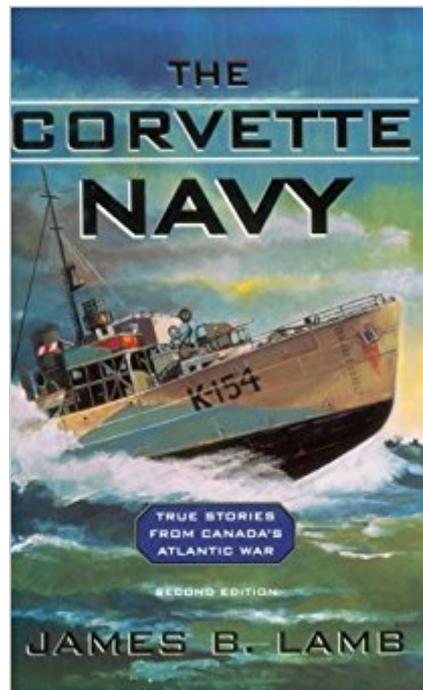


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The Corvette Navy: True Stories From Canada's Atlantic War



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In every war, a few men gain an everlasting reputation by standing brave and firm against immense odds -- from the time of the Spartans at Thermopylea to the US Marines at Khe Sahn -- and the story of the men who manned the corvettes of the Royal Canadian Navy is one such legend. James B. Lamb was one of those men, and he has written a superb story about 'The Corvette Navy' of Canada which helped fight the U-boats to a stand-still in World War II. Corvettes were rugged little ships, about 200 feet in length and only 1,200 tons, based on the design of Antarctic whaling ships. Almost 300 were built, the largest number of any one class of warships ever built. England's Royal Navy named them for flowers; which meant the proud Teutonic U104 was sunk by HMS Rhododendron, and U147 was sunk by HMS Periwinkle, and U605 was captured by HMS Poppy. It was truly "flower power" in action. Canadians named their corvettes after towns, and let crews design the coat-of-arms for each ship. Five aces were chosen for HMCS Baddeck (bad deck -- get it?); a crowned lady falling on her backside in a puddle of water became the crest for HMCS Wetaskiwin (Wet-ass-Queen). Lamb, one of the top newspaper editors in Canada during his career, includes the courage, duty, sacrifice, terror and, thankfully -- the humor that war can provide. Lamb lived that experience, as commander of HMCS Minas and later HMCS Camrose. His book is a first hand account. The winter North Atlantic, where Canadian corvettes took convoys to and from England, is one of the grimmest bodies of water on earth. Fall into the sea, and you lose consciousness within five minutes and freeze to death within 15 minutes.

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