

A Means to an End: Gunboats and Thomas Jefferson's Theory of Defense

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On 6 September 1807, President Thomas Jefferson wrote to his friend Thomas Paine that "Gun-boats are the only *water* defence which can be useful to us, and protect us from the ruinous folly of a navy."¹ It is this message and the gunboat program it represented that navalists and anti-Jeffersonians use to justify their claim that Jefferson was the standard-bearer of the antinavalist movement during the early national period. Jefferson was not, however, categorically opposed to the navy. During his administration, he accepted an important role for the sea forces, as illustrated by his ideas concerning gunboats and their function within the nation's defense system. His letter to Paine demonstrated his comprehension of the subject. He prescribed gunboats as the most practical defense the nation could possess, especially in light of British naval victories at Copenhagen and Trafalgar. Defense was Jefferson's major concern, and the gunboat program was the means to justify that end.²

Jeffersonian gunboats were not large, heavily armed seagoing vessels. Generally forty to eighty feet long fifteen- to twenty-feet across the beam and four to seven feet in the hold, they were usually armed with one or two, long 24- or 32-pound cannon, and assorted smaller guns. They were one- or two-masted, shallow-draft vessels designed to maneuver and fight in coastal waters, and considered defensive rather than offensive craft.³ Because of their limited sailing abilities, they have become the focus of the "white-water" versus "blue-water" controversy as well as the navalist-antinavalist debate of the Jeffersonian period.⁴

It is true that gunboats were primarily defensive weapons unlikely to become involved in

provocative incidents on the open seas. But, more precisely, they were a calculated defensive measure and were not intended to be the nation's only protection. Harold and Margaret Sprout, along with other historians, charge that the gunboats "repudiated the idea of maintaining a navy."⁵ But an investigation of Jefferson's defense theory reveals that he preferred a balanced, pluralistic force consisting of ships-of-the-line, frigates, smaller vessels including gunboats, floating, stationary, and moving batteries, as well as coastal fortifications, all working in unison to ensure the nation's security.⁶

Although Jefferson wrote isolated statements about the country's defense throughout his lifetime, the most complete exposition of his defense theory was his "Special Message on Gun-Boats," presented to the Senate and House on 10 February 1807. He reported that the nation's defense should be based on a combination of land batteries, moveable artillery, floating batteries, and gunboats.⁷ This message, coming near the end of his second term, did not truly do justice to his defense doctrine. All implements called for in this report were solely defensive, as it provided no reference to a sea-going navy. Through his years in office, Jefferson carefully avoided such statements. He was a consummate politician and realistic statesman who understood, especially after the *Chesapeake* incident of June 1807, that the construction of a sea-going navy had diplomatic, as well as domestic, ramifications.⁸

Jefferson's message to Congress did not reflect his true ideas concerning security. He preferred a more complete defensive arrangement

but, as always, his naval and military policy was determined by circumstance, or more simply, a calculated reaction to world events.⁹ Throughout Jefferson's administration, war with Spain, Britain, or France, seemed imminent, which made national defense a paramount concern. Passive military preparation included the construction of gunboats which provided security to a country that, despite the actions of other nations, was unprepared to build a blue-water navy.¹⁰

Jefferson's system, formulated piecemeal over many years, attempted to create a balanced defense for security. It included not only a navy of sea-going ships and gunboats, but also a system of coastal and harbor fortifications stretching from Maine to Louisiana. Jefferson was not the only one to recognize the need for defending the nation's seaports. Congress had first authorized a system of simple and inexpensive earthwork forts in March 1794. By contemporary European standards, these works were simple, weak, and they quickly fell into disrepair after 1800. Other attempts to complete works at locations of primary importance followed, but the building appropriations were always negligible. Not until November 1807 did the country embark on another major program of fortress construction; these works, consisting of open batteries, masonry-faced earth forts, and all-masonry forts, did much to prepare the country for the ensuing War of 1812.¹¹

While the construction materials may have differed, each fort reflected a similar idea — to protect the larger harbors from "more serious attacks as they may be exposed to."¹² Secretary of War Henry Dearborn realized that harbor forts protected the port from serious attacks but could not prevent an enemy from landing.¹³ Not even the fortress at New York, which Jefferson claimed mounted 438 guns and was "adequate to the resistance of any fleet which will ever be entrusted across the Atlantic," would be sufficient. The President concurred with Dearborn's observations and remarked that fortifications could become "bridles for an enemy to put into our mouths," especially if they embodied the country's sole defense.¹⁴

To supplement the system of fortifications,

Jefferson wanted "land batteries, furnished with heavy cannon and mortars." Although he did not believe these would prevent enemy vessels from entering a harbor, they would do much to prevent a port town from being damaged. Stationary land batteries prevented a vessel from passing a fort without tacking under some guns, be it the fort's or the battery's.¹⁵ John Shaw, naval commander of the New Orleans flotilla, 1806-1808 and 1810-1814, recognized the importance of a fixed land battery for the protection of Mobile Harbor on the Gulf of Mexico. He argued that fifteen cannons on Mobile Point working in cooperation with gunboats would provide "the best mode of defense that can be devised, against maritime invasion."¹⁶ Working as a part of the overall system, stationary land batteries limited an enemy's approach and provided a more defensible position.

For locations that did not warrant a fixed battery or a fort, Jefferson advocated the use of "moveable artillery" consisting of "heavy cannon on traveling carriages." He argued that cannon and mortars could quickly be moved to the bank of a river or beach to frustrate an enemy's landing or to drive a vessel back to sea. In addition, these weapons could be lent to seaport towns and militia trained in their use, thus perpetuating the militia tradition while lessening defense costs for the federal government.¹⁷ Moreover, they could serve in conjunction with harbor forts and stationary batteries to create a virtually invincible position.

"Floating batteries" comprised another integral part of Jefferson's maritime defense. Cannon on floating batteries, he argued, stationed to prevent enemy vessels from penetrating a harbor or to drive them out once they had entered, could create difficulties for an attacker. Jefferson believed that cannon, mortars, rockets or "whatever else could . . . destroy a ship," blocked the approach to a harbor and forced the enemy to sacrifice valuable resources to remove the obstacle before assaulting their target.¹⁸ In turn, this limited the resources the enemy could bring to bear on the port.

Other statements illustrate that Jefferson's theory of defense did not exclude a sea-going

navy. He believed sea-going vessels were required to harass and demoralize the enemy before they assaulted the land defense. "Brigs and schooners," he wrote, should "be free to cruise," especially "in time of war," because they could serve as a disruptive factor.¹⁹ Frigates were also an important feature of the nation's sailing force. "The wooden walls of Themistocles" were necessary for the country's protection, and not to be supplanted by gunboats. Rather, sea-going ships would complement coastal vessels.²⁰ In 1806, Jefferson even believed that "building some ships of the line" should "not to be lost sight of." For, as he understood, "a [sea-going] squadron properly composed" was necessary "to prevent the blockading [of] our ports."²¹ But he acknowledged that construction of larger vessels depended on congressional approval rather than any action he alone could take. This became apparent early in 1806 when congress overwhelmingly defeated legislation for building capital vessels.²² An anti-navy congress, rather than Jefferson, was responsible for the sea-going navy's setback.²³

The notion of brigs, schooners, frigates, ships-of-the-line, and gunboats working in unison with Jefferson's harbor defenses challenges the common assertion that he wanted to eliminate the navy. In fact, as early as 1785, Jefferson supported the navy and hoped that "our first attention . . . will be to the beginning of a naval force of some sort."²⁴ Navies did not "endanger our freedom, nor occasion bloodshed," he professed, but were a guard against foreign incursions.²⁵ His policy was to have "such a naval force as may protect our coasts and harbors from . . . depredations."²⁶ As such, Jefferson did not want to replace the "blue water" fleet with "white water" gunboats, but rather integrate all into a defensive system predicated on national security rather than exclusive emphasis on offensive potential or defending America's national honor in far-away ports. Gunboats fit nicely into this scheme. "In fact," as Craig Symonds claims in *Navalists and Antinavalists* "coastal defense was always the complete *raison d'être* for the gunboats."²⁷

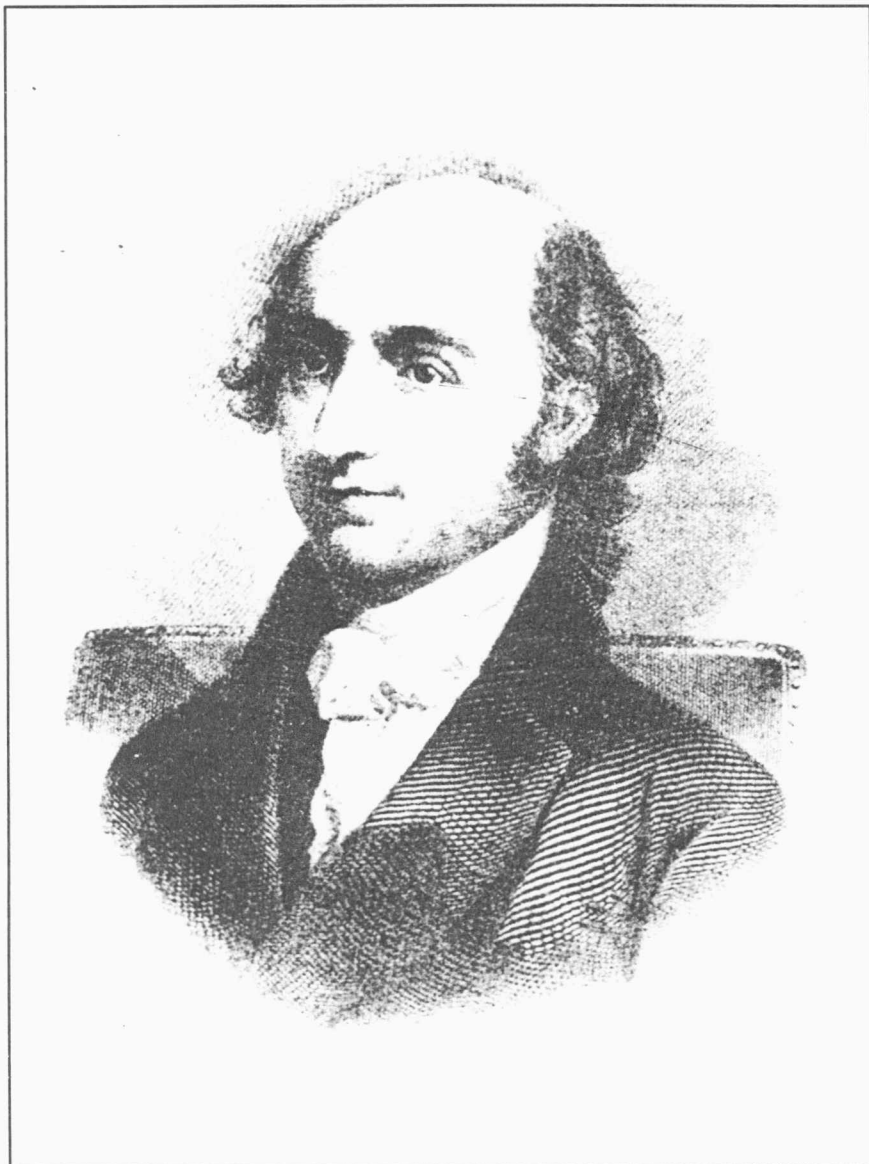
Jefferson desired a modest blue-water force to complement gunboats, coastal fortifications, and

other defensive works because he understood that war, as the "greatest scourge of mankind," could never be eliminated. Moreover, national leaders must bolster a country's defense to preserve the freedom and security of its citizens.²⁸ Jefferson wrote that his government's "policy and purpose is to provide for defense by all those means to which our resources are competent."²⁹

The perceived economic benefits of building gunboats instead of a blue-water navy strongly appealed to Jefferson, Republican congressmen, and a country with meager resources. This was especially true because Republicans believed reducing the national debt to be an integral part of the country's survival. Jefferson considered the republic's survival "as depending, in an eminent degree, on the extinguishment of the public debt." In other words, he wanted to reduce the national debt because of his personal situation, as well as his observations in debt-ridden Virginia. He also realized Britain's financial problems had produced the American Revolution, and similar troubles in France had spawned the French Revolution.³⁰

Should America not settle her financial problems, Jefferson feared the country would be "committed to the English career of debt, corruption and rottenness, closing with revolution."³¹ This concerned him, because he understood that revolutions produced "a host of admirals, generals and other officers," who sapped the country's resources or overthrew its government.³² Even after the wars or revolutions end, the expenditures continue, he said, prompting Congressman Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina to proclaim, "the war of killing prepares the way for a war of taxes, which never ends."³³ Jefferson knew his gunboat program did not stop the war of taxes, but he believed it lessened the drain on the nation's resources, and that strongly appealed to Republicans.

Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin concurred with Jefferson's assessments and regarded the navy as the prime candidate for budgetary cuts. Gallatin argued that the navy was unnecessary because "the bravery of the mass of the people" would repel any enemy. During the last year of John Adams's presidency, naval expenditures totaled almost \$3.5 million, due primarily to an undeclared naval war with France. Gallatin



Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin. Engraving from the portrait by Gilbert Stuart, 1803. Reproduced from the frontispiece of Henry Adam's *Life of Albert Gallatin* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1879).

proposed to apportion less than \$2 million to the army and navy together, and in 1802 the navy received only \$946,213.24. Both Jefferson and Gallatin opposed a navy that "by its own expenses and the eternal wars in which it will implicate us, will grind us with public burthens, and sink us under them." The country could, Jefferson believed, make large savings by reducing the navy and without sacrificing national security.³⁴

While gunboats were built for defensive reasons, they also had economic qualities that

strongly appealed to Jefferson. Building gunboats was economical, while building a navy was inherently expensive. Jefferson could ill-afford additional debt, especially since Republicans had inherited an \$82,000,000 deficit or "moral canker."³⁵ The cost of building gunboats, originally estimated at about \$5,000 each, was an extremely attractive figure when compared to the frigate *Constitution* which cost \$302,718.84, or even the brig *Syren* which cost \$32,521.77.³⁶ In time, Jefferson learned gunboats armed with two cannons cost \$12,000, whereas those carrying one cost \$9,000. But by the time this discovery became apparent, the perceived short-term fiscal advantages of the diminutive craft blinded Republican congressmen.³⁷

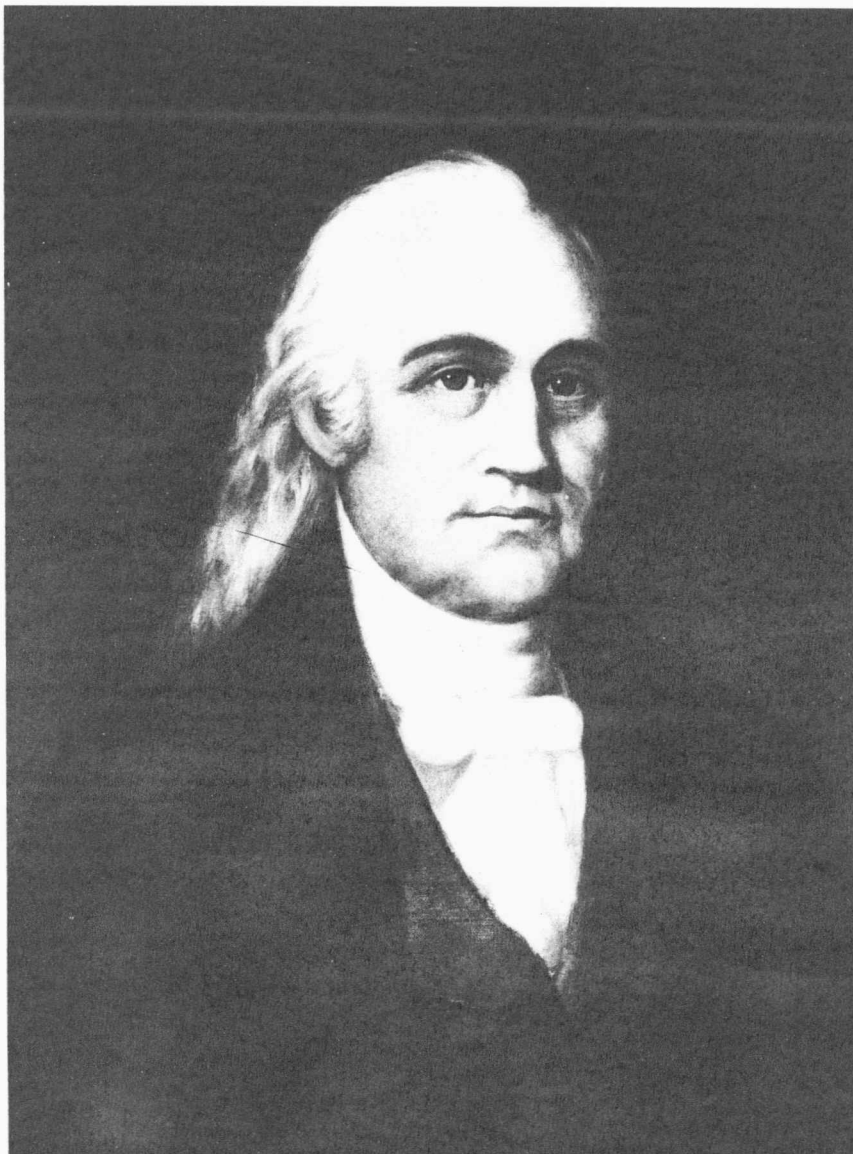
Gunboats, according to Jefferson, had many other attractive economic advantages. Navies, admittedly, were not only expensive to construct but even more costly to maintain. He repeated this belief to John Adams later in life, "a navy is a very expensive engine A nation who could count on

twelve or fifteen years of peace would gain by burning its navy and building a new one in time."³⁸ In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson had professed that the annual maintenance costs for the British Navy were \$1,280 per gun, or more than \$2,304,000 for the entire fleet.³⁹ Utilizing gunboats lessened the amount necessary for maintenance because the vessels could be taken out of commission and placed under small sheds when not in use.⁴⁰ Likewise, repairs also could be made more economically because deep-

water shipbuilding facilities were unnecessary.

Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith confirmed Jefferson's ideas about the economical attributes of gunboats when he reported that *Constitution's* annual upkeep was \$113,618.25 and the *Syren's* \$41,880.20, whereas the cost of a two-cannon gunboat's was but \$11,039.46.⁴¹ While it was true that a gunboat's annual expense was exorbitant on a per-gun average, those costs were reduced to \$2,147 per year when the vessel was taken out of commission.⁴² Since the country needed only a limited number of vessels for service during peacetime, the annual costs for the entire gunboat fleet could be reduced to less than the cost of maintaining one frigate.⁴³

Additionally, Jefferson planned for the gunboats to be manned by a naval militia, which would spring to arms at the appearance of enemy sails.⁴⁴ Using the militia, Jefferson visualized three scenarios for gunboats. The first was when the country was at peace. Under these conditions only six or eight vessels were necessary while the rest were placed in ordinary, incurring expenses only for the sheds to protect them and sentinels to ensure that no mischievous damage occurred.⁴⁵ The second situation presupposed the wars in Europe continued. If so, Jefferson believed the country needed about twenty-five vessels afloat, but with only enough men to navigate and care for them. The last situation anticipated the United States would be at war. In this case, the number of gunboats needed depended on the "character" of the war itself; regardless, they should be fully manned and ready



Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith. Portrait by U. D. Tenney. Photo courtesy of the Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC.

for action.⁴⁶ Using these simple criteria, Jefferson expected that the annual expenditures for the navy could be considerably reduced.

The defensive and economic attributes of the gunboats were impossible for Republicans to ignore. But there were other advantages that were not so obvious. Gunboats had political considerations that also made them attractive. Because they were small vessels, their construction did not require deep-water shipyards or a large pool of trained labor. Instead, they could be built on any river or beach where a supervisor could be pro-

cured and materials amassed.⁴⁷ This appealed to the predominantly Republican South and West, which had few shipbuilding facilities and limited skilled labor.

Ship construction traditionally occurred in the maritime region of the Northeast, where building facilities already existed. Not requiring large shipyards, gunboats would be contracted for in many areas of the country, thus becoming a powerful piece of political patronage for the Republican party.⁴⁸ Ultimately, the Jefferson administration distributed no less than forty-five different gunboat contracts to eleven states and the District of Columbia, which helped perpetuate the Republican idea of government for the people, rather than the Federalist government for the elite.⁴⁹

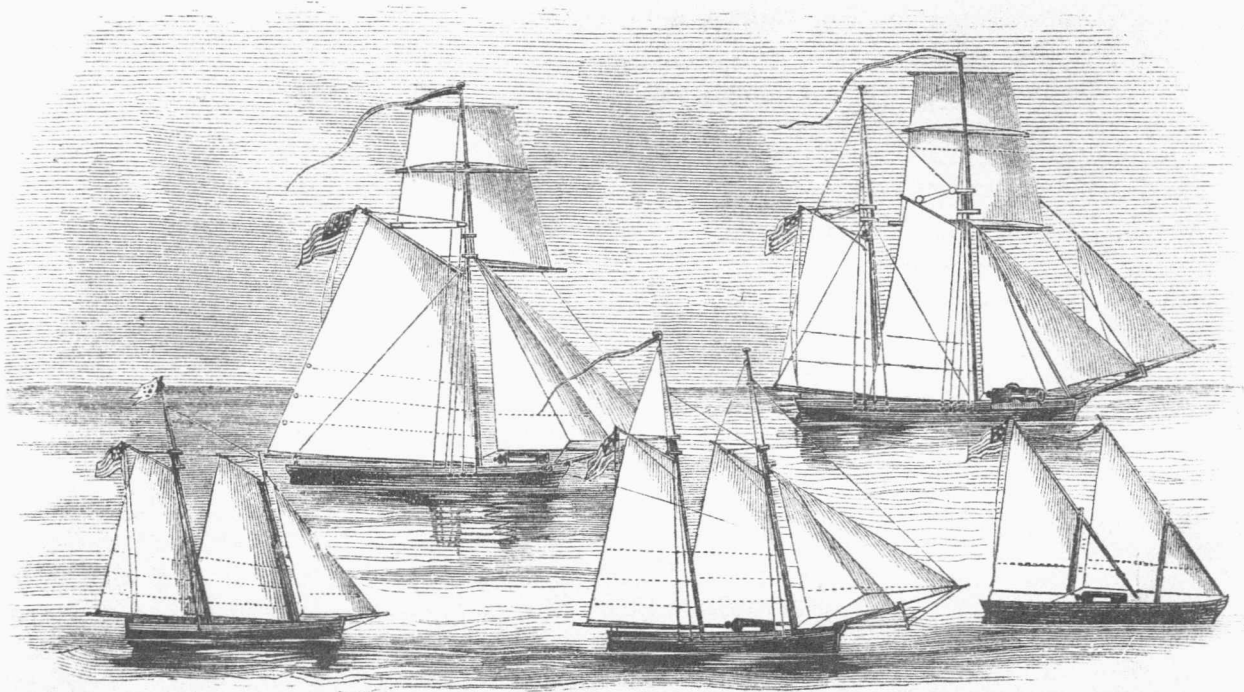
Another reason Jefferson supported gunboats was because he remembered some of the reasons his dry dock proposal had failed. In the fall of 1802, Jefferson supported the construction of a dry dock aimed at mothballing up to twelve of the nation's frigates. He concluded that this project would eliminate costly naval expenditures by economically preserving the vessels under cover. But when Congress debated the issue, members charged that Jefferson wanted to eliminate any future naval appropriations and contracts while concentrating the navy in one location, under the watchful eye of the government.⁵⁰ These suggestions struck fear in the pro-navy faction and threatened their commercial livelihood. Gunboats, however, should have theoretically ameliorated those fears. Built at various locations, their construction ensured the Northeast a share of future ship-building appropriations, rather than the "feast or famine" that went along with big ship contracts. The administration could also distribute the vessels to any location where there was a perceived threat. This countered the charge that the navy would be concentrated at one location.

Because many gunboats could be constructed for the price of a single frigate, the money expended for the small craft served double duty. For example, a \$300,000 frigate could only be at one place at a given time, and then only operate from deep-water ports. This left many areas unde-

fended. For the same amount expended on a frigate, numerous gunboats could be built and distributed to several locations, providing perceived security to many areas at once. Additionally, gunboats were not restricted to deep-water ports, but were even "serviceable to the headwaters of nearly all rivers."⁵¹ This provided each locale, regardless of importance, with its own defense and helped further the idea of equality, because each threatened region warranted some protection. In this respect, gunboats calmed fears concerning possible attacks and, although they were not frigates or ships-of-the-line, their ability to make a presence offered a strong argument for Jefferson's overall defense program.

Another advantage was that gunboats were not limited solely to defensive operations; they could serve in an offensive or preventive capacity. In August 1808, Jefferson professed that gunboats could strike "the shore in an instant," to seize land from Spain "as a reprisal for spoliations." Furthermore, Jefferson declared they could be used against pirates and smugglers, and their shallow-draft construction made them ideal for that purpose. These lawless adventurers evaded larger ships by slipping across shoals where they could not be followed. Gunboats could continue the chase and confront those vessels carrying on illegal activities. As such, Jefferson comprehended they would keep the "West India pirates in order" as well as limit the activities of privateers in coastal waters.⁵²

Once Congress passed the Non-Intercourse Act, the Embargo Law, and the Non-Importation Act, the gunboats' principal duties included enforcing revenue laws and suppressing "illicit trade" or smuggling.⁵³ They were also employed to prevent other nations from violating American neutrality. Gunboats, working in conjunction with revenue cutters, were essential in efforts to uphold the country's anti-trade manifestos.⁵⁴ While frigates and ships-of-the-line attempted these duties, because their draft prohibited them from coming near shore and their locations were usually advertised, they had limited success. The ease with which violators could avoid larger ships provided an additional rationale for the gunboats' existence.



GUN-BOATS.

Gunboats such as these depicted in Benson J. Lossing's *Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1869) were a primary component of Jefferson's defense system. Photo courtesy of the Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC.

The gunboat's size and design allowed the vessels to serve in various capacities. Their shallow-draft provided mobility and accessibility unmatched by larger ships, which made them ideal for coastal and riverine service, especially in the Gulf region. They could operate virtually at all times because they were supposed to be equipped with both sail and oars. This meant lack of wind did not hinder their movement. In contrast, larger vessels were forced to retire until favorable winds prevailed.

The "great desideratum in building gunboats, [was] to prepare them well for fighting."⁵⁵ They were "for home defense," whereas "ships [were] for distant expeditions."⁵⁶ The President admitted that gunboats were "proposed merely for defensive operations," and for that reason they were ridiculed by those "who wished for engines of offense."⁵⁷ A gunboat had limited offensive potential. Many maintained that the most gunboats could do, whether working alone or in groups, was to be an "annoyance."⁵⁸ They could not scour

the open seas waiting for their prey, for on the open seas *they* were prey. As long as they protected the coast, gunboats escaped the possibilities of potential conflicts. If the gunboats worked within the confines of Jefferson's passive coastal defensive system, they were, he wrote, "the humble, the ridiculed, but the formidable gunboats . . ." which ultimately made our harbors "*hors d'insulte.*" [beyond attack]⁵⁹

Gunboats did have their drawbacks. They did not provide young men with the chance to learn seamanship, a naval environment for training professional officers, or the opportunity to gain a naval "mentality."⁶⁰ Some felt the craft provided little nautical experience or believed they produced derelict seamen. Others disliked the vessels because of the difficulty they experienced in recruiting seamen. Gunboats generally did not provide the opportunity for glory or prize money that larger ships offered.

Their size and seaworthiness fostered other complaints. Henry Adams characterized the gun-

boats as "not wide enough to lie straight in, with the certainty of oversetting or running ashore or being sunk, in case of bad weather or hostile attack."⁶¹ Furthermore, a gunboat's efficiency decreased in direct proportion to how far she sailed into the open seas and when at sea the vessels generally had to stow her guns to maintain seaworthiness.⁶² In fact, a gunboat under Stephen Decatur's command capsized in a brisk wind and sank in only six fathoms of water. This prompted him to ask a fellow captain, "what would be the real national loss if all gunboats were sunk in a 100 fathoms of water."⁶³ Obviously gunboats could not adequately handle rough waters and would never be decisive on the open seas. On the other hand, Jefferson had not intended such. He proposed them for defensive purposes, which made any additional service they rendered an added benefit.⁶⁴

There are valid reasons to condemn Jefferson's gunboat program as it developed, and it can be viewed as a failure in light of the President's original conception of how the vessels should be integrated into the nation's defense. On another level, the craft did not inspire confidence from either their commanders and crews or from the people. Most ridiculed them and placed little emphasis on their capabilities. But just as Jefferson's gunboats are viewed with contempt today, so is his theory of defense. Few accept what Jefferson wanted to accomplish with the gunboats. He did not intend them to be a replacement for a sea-going navy, but rather an adjunct to the regular fleet within a multi-faceted defense system. This is difficult to understand, because the United States has since become a world maritime power. Moreover, the country has not been invaded since the War of 1812 and few Americans have feared territorial encroachment by other nations. But in Jefferson's age, Napoleon Bona-

parte's armies marched through European countries much like Hitler's did over a century later. In each case, although the Atlantic Ocean provided defense for the United States, it did not ensure absolute security. Jefferson simply wanted to provide security for his countrymen in what he believed the best possible way, a strong defense.

It should be remembered that Thomas Jefferson is, according to historian Merrill Peterson, "one of those men about whom the last word can never be said . . . he demands continual restudy and reevaluation."⁶⁵ Just as Jefferson's life demands reevaluation, so do his views on gunboats and defense. His naval defense theory cannot be condensed into a black-and-white dichotomy between sea-going vessels and gunboats. Such an assertion is groundless, as evidenced by Albert Gallatin's statement that "federal papers" were trying to spread the idea that gunboats were "intended as a substitute to the navy."⁶⁶ Gunboats were not a substitute to the sea-going navy, but rather one part of a sophisticated defense system predicated on national security. For better or worse, Jefferson stressed defensive security, and gunboats provided a means to that end.



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Notes

1. Jefferson to Thomas Paine, 6 September 1807, Jefferson MSS., Library of Congress (hereafter LC).
2. Gene A. Smith, "The Ruinous Folly of a Navy: A History of the Jeffersonian Gunboat Program,"

- (Ph.D. diss., Auburn University, 1991), 1-11.
3. Howard I. Chapelle, *History of the American Sailing Navy* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1949), 179-241.
 4. Craig Symonds, *Navalists and Antinavalists: The Naval Policy Debate in the United States, 1785-1827* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1980), 105-130; Julia H. Macleod, "Jefferson and the Navy: A Defense," *Huntington Library Quarterly* (1944-45)8:153-184.
 5. Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 60; Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Sea Power and its Relations to the War of 1812*, 2 vols. (1905; reprint ed., New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1969), 1:187-188, 296; Frederick C. Leiner, "The 'Whimsical Phyllosophic President' and His Gunboats," *The American Neptune* 43 (Fall, 1983): 266. Leiner claims that Jefferson's "neglect of the regular navy for an unfounded, untested gunboat system . . . came close to undoing his country."
 6. *Ibid.*, 245. He argues that Jefferson confused the means with the end and that mistake "can be studied as an example of the effect of individual human failing on national policy."
 7. Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats," to the Senate and House of Representatives, 10 February 1807, in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 20 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature, Inc., 1897), 1:407-409, (hereafter Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats").
 8. Dumas Malone claimed "Jefferson's opinion, especially after Trafalgar, that a strong seagoing navy would have been an utter waste was not as silly as certain later enthusiasts for seapower were to claim." Malone, *Jefferson the President: Second Term* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), xx, 496; Marshall Smelser exclaimed that "after Trafalgar, a lonely, microscopic American fleet would have been gold cast into the sea." Marshall Smelser, *The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 229. Jefferson realized that antinavalist Republicans would not approve the construction of a sea-going navy despite his pleas.
 9. Symonds, *Navalists and Antinavalists*, 109-110. Before Trafalgar, Jefferson sincerely entertained the idea of using the American navy to balance power in Europe but afterwards there was no hope for it. As Congressman Lemuel Sawyer proclaimed, "The time was now elapsed." *Annals of the Congress of the United States* (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1834-1856), 10th Congress, 1st session, 9 December 1807, 1089 (hereafter *Annals*).
 10. Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty; The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 90. Citing Dumas Malone, the authors remark that Jefferson was "ready to use force eventually if peaceful methods to meet the imperative needs of his country should fail."
 11. Emmanuel Raymond Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications of the United States*, 2nd ed. (Annapolis: Leeward Publications, 1979), 21-25. Lewis provides a basic description of the three types of fortifications, their differences and similarities on pages 25-31. Open batteries were small works in positions of secondary importance or near forts as supporting adjuncts. Masonry-faced forts utilized a combination of earth and an exterior scarp reinforced with masonry. All-masonry forts were granite-constructed, high-walled harbor defenses that implemented a casemated gun emplacement.
 12. Jefferson to Tadeusz Kosciuszko, 26 February 1810, Agnieszka Gliniczanka, and Jozef Paszkowski, ed., *Korespondencja; 1798-1817* (Wydawniczy: Panstwowy Instytut, 1976), 80.
 13. Arthur P. Wade, "Artillerists and Engineers: The Beginnings of American Seacoast Fortifications, 1794-1815," (Ph.D. diss., Kansas State University, 1977), 181-182.
 14. Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, 27 January 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC, quoted in Richard Alton Erney, *The Public Life of Henry Dearborn* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 155; Jefferson to Mr. Nicholson, 29 January 1805, Jefferson MSS., LC.
 15. Jefferson to DeWitt Clinton, 29 January 1805; Jefferson to Mr. Nicholson, 29 January 1805; Jefferson to Governor Lewis, 2 May 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC; Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats."
 16. John Shaw to General James Wilkinson, 9 May 1813, 4 June 1813, John Shaw Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Library of Congress (hereafter NHF-LC).
 17. Jefferson to Mr. Nicholson, 29 January 1805, Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, 27 January 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC; Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats."
 18. Jefferson to Mr. Nicholson, 29 January 1805, Jefferson MSS., LC; Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats," Jefferson to Governor Wilson C. Nicholas, 2 April 1816, Andrew A. Lipscomb and

- Albert Ellery Bergh, ed. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 vols. (Washington, DC: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), 14:446-447.
19. Jefferson to Secretary of the Navy, 19 June 1805, Jefferson MSS., LC.
 20. Jefferson to Robert Smith, 19 May 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC, quoted in Joseph G. Henrich, "The Triumph of Ideology: The Jeffersonians and the Navy, 1779-1807," (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1971), 360; B. L. Rayner, *Sketches of the Life, Writings, and Opinions of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: A. Francis and W. Boardman, 1832), 442.
 21. Jefferson to Jacob Crowninshield, 13 May 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC.
 22. *Annals*, 9th Congress, 1st Session, 23 December 1805, 302; 25 March 1806, 842-47.
 23. Macleod, "Jefferson and the Navy," 176; Rayner, *Sketches*, 422; Craig Symonds, "The Antinavalists: The Opponents of Naval Expansion in the Early National Period," *American Neptune* 39 (Winter 1979): 22-28.
 24. Jefferson to John Jay, 23 August 1785, cited in James Truslow Adams, ed., *Jeffersonian Principles* (Boston: Little Brown, 1928), 82-83.
 25. Jefferson to James Monroe, 11 August 1786, Julian P. Boyd, ed., *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 25 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), 10:225.
 26. J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, "The Pacifism of Thomas Jefferson," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 31 (Summer 1955): 615.
 27. Symonds, *Navalists and Antinavalists*, 109.
 28. Mary P. Adams, "Jefferson's Military Policy With Special Reference to the Frontier: 1805-1809" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1958), iii.
 29. Jefferson to Mr. Bowdoin, 10 August 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC.
 30. Jefferson to Albert Gallatin, 11 October 1809, Paul Leicester Ford, *The Writings of Jefferson*, 10 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), 9:264; Malone, *Jefferson the President: Second Term*, 494.
 31. Jefferson to Albert Gallatin, 11 October 1809, Ford, *The Writings of Jefferson*, 9:264.
 32. Walter Jones to William Brent, 18 January 1810, Walter Jones Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.
 33. Nathaniel Macon to Joseph H. Nicholson, 31 January 1806, Joseph H. Nicholson MSS., LC.
 34. Malone, *Jefferson the President: Second Term*, 494; Sprout and Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power*, 45, 54; Alexander Balinsky, "Albert Gallatin, Naval Foe," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 82 (July 1958): 300-301; Jefferson to the House of Representatives, 18 February 1806, Walter Lowrie and Walter S. Franklin, *The American State Papers*; Naval Affairs, March 3, 1789-March 5, 1825 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1834), 149 (hereafter ASP); Jefferson to Elbridge Gerry, 26 January 1799, Ford, *The Writings of Jefferson*, 7:328.
 35. Balinsky, "Albert Gallatin, Naval Foe," 293; "A Statistical Table for the United States of America, for a Succession of Years," October 1803, Jefferson MSS., LC. This table indicates that the country's expenditures rose from \$8,740,329 in 1796 to \$12,945,455 in 1801.
 36. Memo from Robert Smith to Jefferson, 22 November 1804, Jefferson MSS., LC. Rough estimate for construction of gunboat was between \$5,000 and \$6,000: Jefferson to the House of Representatives, 18 February 1806, ASP, 149; Robert Smith to Thomas Jefferson, 19 January 1803, Jefferson MSS., LC. Smith estimated that a 16-gun ship cost \$24,000.
 37. Paul Hamilton to Richard Cutts, 9 June 1809, ASP, 200.
 38. Jefferson to John Adams, 1 November 1822, cited in Leonard D. White, *The Jeffersonians* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 266.
 39. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1788), 188.
 40. Jefferson to Albert Gallatin, 9 February 1807, Albert Gallatin Papers, New York Historical Society.
 41. Robert Smith to Nathaniel Macon, 27 January 1806, ASP, 148; Thom M. Armstrong, *Politics, Diplomacy and Intrigue in the Early Republic: The Cabinet Career of Robert Smith, 1801-1811* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1991), 68. Armstrong charges that Smith's apparent support for the gunboat program was only a "seeming acquiescence . . . based on the belief that buildup of naval power in any area was preferable to doing nothing."
 42. Paul Hamilton to House of Representatives, 12 June 1809, ASP, 193; Jefferson's Fourth Annual Message, 8 November 1804, Richardson, *Messages of the Presidents*, 1:357-361. Jefferson wrote that the economical aspect of gunboats was from their maintenance and preservation when not in actual service. Robert Smith to Jefferson, 13 December 1804, Jefferson MSS., LC.
 43. Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats," Jefferson estimated that in times of peace only six

- or eight gunboats needed to be in service. Eight gunboats in service at \$11,039.46 per year is \$88,315.68, plus an estimated 192 gunboats in ordinary at \$2,147 per year is \$412,224, totaling \$500,539.68. The amount for the actual cruising force was less than the maintenance for one frigate and those in storage increased the costs to less than five frigates.
44. Gene A. Smith, "'For the Purposes of Defense'; Thomas Jefferson's Naval Militia," *American Neptune* 53 (Winter 1993): 30-38.
 45. Secretary of the Navy to John Beekman, 8 January 1805, "Gunboat Letters," RG 45:173, National Archives, Washington, DC.
 46. Jefferson to Mr. [Joseph] Nicholson, 29 January 1805, H.A. Washington, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 8 vols. (Washington, DC: Taylor and Maury, 1854), 4:568.
 47. Robert Smith to Jefferson, 27 March 1805, Jefferson MSS., LC.
 48. David Porter to Secretary of the Navy, 12 May 1808. *Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanders, 1804-1886*, RG 45, M147 National Archives, Washington, DC, (hereafter *Commanders Letters*).
 49. Ship's Contracts, RG 45:235 National Archives, Washington, DC; Register of Ships, RG 45:171, National Archives, Washington, DC.
 50. William Eustis's opposition was printed in the *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, 24 January 1803, *Annals*, 7th Congress, 2nd session, 19 January 1803, 406; Gene A. Smith, "'A Perfect State of Preservation;' Thomas Jefferson's Dry Dock Proposal," *Virginia Cavalcade* (Winter 1990) 39:118-128.
 51. David Porter to Secretary of the Navy, 30 April 1808. *Commanders Letters*.
 52. Jefferson to Robert Smith, 12 August 1808, Jefferson to James Madison 12 August 1808, Jefferson to Jacob Crowninshield, 21 July 1804, Jefferson MSS. LC; John Shaw to Paul Hamilton, 10 July 1812, John Shaw MSS., LC.
 53. Jefferson to Robert Smith, 14 February 1808, Robert Smith to Jefferson, 16 December 1808, Jefferson MSS., LC; David Porter to Secretary of the Navy, 19 September 1808; Porter to Secretary of the Navy, 26 June 1808, *Commanders Letters*.
 54. "Notes for Consideration, and for Instructions to armed vessels which may be sent out to protect commerce on our coasts," 4 July 1805, Jefferson MSS., LC.
 55. Secretary of the Navy to Alexander Murray, 29 January 1808, "Gunboat Letters," RG 45:173.
 56. Thomas Paine, "Of the Comparative Powers and Expense of Ships of War, Gun-Boats, and Fortifications," in Philip S. Foner, *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York: The Citadel Press, 1945), 1075.
 57. Jefferson, "Special Message on Gun-Boats": Jefferson to James Madison, 21 May 1813, Lipscomb and Bergh, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 13:233.
 58. Samuel Barron to Jefferson, 8 February 1807, ASP, 164.
 59. Jefferson to James Madison, 21 May 1813. Lipscomb and Bergh, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 13:234; Jefferson to Mr. Bowdoin, 10 July 1806, Jefferson MSS., LC.
 60. Christopher McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession: The Creation of the U.S. Naval Officer Corps, 1794-1815* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 156-157.
 61. Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891; reprint ed., New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1986), 1036.
 62. William S. Dudley and Michael J. Crawford, *The Naval War of 1812*, 2 vols. (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1985), 1:12n.
 63. Leiner, "The 'Whimsical Phylosophic President' and His Gunboats," 252.
 64. Spencer C. Tucker, *The Jeffersonian Gunboat Navy* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 177. Tucker argues that the gunboats served as "receiving vessels, tenders, hospital ships, lighters, and transports for men and supplies" in addition to their regular defense duties.
 65. Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), viii.
 66. Albert Gallatin to Jefferson, "Remarks on Jefferson's Fourth Annual Message," 29 October 1804. Ford, *The Writings of Jefferson*, 4:327; Theodore Roosevelt, *The Naval War of 1812*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1882; reprint, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987), 194, 397.



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