

in great part recruited from the merchant vessels, the colonies fitted out privateers of their own, aided in many instances by private citizens, and there can be no doubt that our success in the war could not have been accomplished except by the co-operation of these daring navigators. They kept the army supplied with arms, ammunition, and clothing captured from the enemy, and many a time when the spirit of our troops was at the lowest ebb, some bold naval exploit served to revive their courage. Most of the battles fought by the Americans were fought with implements captured from the British vessels. The principal things the Continental Army lacked were guns, ammunition, clothes, and money. In order to pamper the soldiers with luxuries of this sort it was necessary to capture them from the enemy. So Commodore Hopkins sailed away in his fleet in February, 1776, to the Bahama Islands, and in March took New Providence and secured a hundred cannon and some valuable stores. On his return with the spoils, after taking two vessels, the commodore retired from the service. In 1776 the *Mellish* was captured with ten thousand British uniforms. It is needless to say that these were very welcome to our impoverished army."

In 1776 the American Navy had twenty-five vessels, carrying four hundred and twenty-two guns, to oppose the British fleet of seventy-eight, mounting 2078 guns. But, with the aid of privateers owned by individuals or the colonies, they captured eight hundred British merchantmen. During the eight years' war the American loss in gunboats was twenty-four, while the British was one hundred and two ships of war. At the close of the war three gunboats were left, and they were promptly disposed of, in order to rid the country of any semblance of