



A select group of 11 U.S. Naval officers were chosen to overcome cultural barriers, conflicting political ideologies, and complex language barriers to train over 300 elite Soviet airmen to fly what arguably remains the largest and deadliest amphibious warplane ever made in America — the PBN-Nomad.

According to official documents, 185 of these giant aircraft were made in Philadelphia, and ferried to the tiny port city of Elizabeth City, North Carolina (population 12,000), where the Navy officers trained the Soviets to fly and maintain the aircraft. After training, joint crews delivered the aircraft to the North Atlantic and Pacific Theaters where they ran hundreds of Soviet seek-and-destroy missions against German and Japanese submarines without the loss of a single plane.

“Roosevelt visited Elizabeth City before Pearl Harbor, so he knew the huge Coast Guard base could service war needs,” said Crisci. “But, once he passed, Truman’s disrespect for all things Soviet became abundantly clear. As the war nearly concluded, Vice Admiral Patrick Bellinger recommended each Naval officer for a Medal of Honor. His recommendation included written words of praise from the senior Soviet command. Unfortunately, Truman simply ignored the request and the mission. He had no interest in letting Congress, the Senate or the public know about a mission with the Soviets in America. And so, Project Zebra was lost in time, until now.”

*Project Zebra. Stalin and Roosevelt’s Top-Secret Mission to Train 300 Soviet Airmen in America* (Orca Publishing USA, \$32.95, hardcover, 354 pp and 200+ photographs) is the first ever book about the mission, the town’s supportive relationship, and the lifetime friendships the Soviet and American Zebras would cultivate through the Cold War and beyond.

Two respected Washington DC cross-cultural organizations, the Eurasia Center Worldwide and the American-Russian Cultural Foundation, call the book, “a lesson for future generations” and “an unknown heroic memoir in US-Soviet relations that serves as a historic signpost for future generations.”

*Manhattan-born M.G. Crisci (mgcrisci.com) is the author of ten books based on true stories or real events in the genres of fiction, nonfiction, drama, and romance. His most recent book, The Salad Oil King. An American Tale of Greed Gone Mad (Orca Publishing USA), has been hailed by critics as an “American crime classic spun by a master story-teller.” Recently, Crisci, a 22-time selectee to Who’s Who in the World, received the Albert Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award for his business, literary, and cultural contributions (<http://bit.ly/2uO0nB4>).*