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## Flush Decks and Four Pipes

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attack. They operated in the stormy North Atlantic on the icy Murmansk run, and in the Mediterranean.

*Allied Escort Carriers of World War Two* chronicles these events in human level detail. Carrier aircraft losses, particularly in the northern latitudes, are grimly impressive. Caused not so much by enemy action as by the elements and the small deck, today these operations would be branded by the press as inhuman and unacceptable. Nevertheless, the British carried on.

The book contains numerous photographs, line drawings of the various CVE classes and a series of excellent aircraft profiles by J.M. Goulding. The last were undoubtedly originally in color and would have been more effective if pulled together in a few color pages.

The last third of the book deals with activities in the Indian and Pacific oceans, where, in general, the CVEs played support roles to the main British and U.S. fleets during the closing year of the war. The highlight is the battle between six CVEs and a Japanese task force led by the *Yamato*, the world's mightiest battleship. At the last minute the Japanese unexpectedly turned away after sinking just one of the six. As in the Atlantic, in the Pacific far more CVE aircraft were lost to operational problems than to enemy action.

There are errors, of course. Two pictures, for example, were miscaptioned, and the author cannot agree with himself on how to spell the *Liscome Bay's* name. These, however,

are minor. The book, overall, with eleven appendices and a bibliography is invaluable for what it does.

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Alden, John D. *Flush Decks and Four Pipes*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1965. Revised printing, 1989. 112pp. \$29.95

Hague, Arnold. *The Towns*. Kendal, England: World Ship Society, 1988. 92pp. \$12

*Flush Decks and Four Pipes* is a general history of the design, construction, peacetime use, and wartime service of the American flush-deck destroyers of the *Caldwell*, *Wickes*, and *Clemson* classes. A total of 273 flush-deckers were built between 1917 and 1922. The *Manley* was the first to commission on 15 October 1917, and the last was the *Decatur* on 9 August 1922. The last surviving flush-decker was not discarded by her owner, a banana company, until 1955. The flush-deck destroyers were built with a heavy gun and torpedo armament for fighting fleet actions. No antisubmarine weapons were installed in the ships as built, but depth charge racks and Y-guns were added to the few ships that were finished in time to serve during the First World War.

The first edition of *Flush Decks and Four Pipes* had a soft cover and an unusual format with two spines, but the revised printing has a hard cover and conventional single-spine format. No changes were made to the

original text but a preface and a full page of addenda have been added. The addenda clear up some minor errors in the original edition and answer several questions about the flush-deckers that have accumulated since the first publication.

About half of the book is a statistical summary with twelve lists of tabulated information about the ships: the main table lists all 273 by hull number with the dates of first commissioning, final decommissioning, and final disposition; flush-deckers converted to roles such as Light Minelayer (DM), Seaplane Tender (AVP), later AVD), High-Speed Minesweeper (DMS), High Speed Transport (APD), Miscellaneous Auxiliary (AG), Unclassified (IX), and Water Barge (YW); flush-deckers that served with the Coast Guard; the fifty ships transferred to Britain, listed by their "Town" numbers and names, cross-indexed to their former United States name and hull number; unit citations and commendations awarded to flush-deckers during World War II; a cross index of names to hull numbers, including the British "Towns"; and a cross-index of Russian names to former British and U.S. Navy names. General specifications are given for one flush-decker, the *Wickes* (DD-75).

The selection of photographs covers the entire life span of these ships. They are shown not only in all their variations but also at work in the multitude of tasks they performed, peace and war, including service by several as banana boats. A

centerspread photograph used in the original edition was left out of the reprinted edition. A full page with only its caption was left in. There is one inboard profile drawing of a flush-decker.

*The Towns* is a history, with text and tabular lists, of the fifty flush-deck destroyers transferred from the United States to Great Britain under the destroyers-for-bases agreement of 1940. The body of the work is devoted to the service history of each of the fifty destroyers. Three flush-deckers of the *Caldwell* class (two of them three-funnelled ships), twenty-seven *Wickes* class and twenty *Clemson* class were transferred at Halifax, Nova Scotia from September through December 1940. The flush-deckers in British service were given town names common to both the United States and Britain. Six of the destroyers were commissioned in the Canadian Navy and named after border rivers common to both Canada and the United States.

The British inspected the flush-deckers at Halifax. Hulls and main machinery appeared to be in good condition, but their boilers, auxiliaries, piping and wiring were not. Many needed immediate repairs before they could make the voyage to England, and others that had started across the Atlantic had to return to Halifax for repairs. Closer inspections were made as the ships were dry-docked in Great Britain where it was revealed that the most serious problem was rust and corrosion of their hulls. For example, loose, corroded rivets led to saltwa-

ter leakage, which contaminated fuel that in turn caused boiler damage. These defects, caused by years of neglect or wear, delayed the entry into combat of some flush-deckers.

The Towns were prepared for service and adapted for antisubmarine warfare through a series of scheduled refits. As a class they became operational early in 1941. They were used on escort duty on the east coast of England, in the North Atlantic and as antisubmarine escorts to the 1st Minelaying Squadron. Some were manned by Dutch, Polish or Norwegian crews. After 1943, most were employed only on training duties or were inactivated. Nine were loaned to the Soviet Union in 1944; one of these, the *Dyatelnyi*, ex-HMS *Churchill*, ex-USS *Herndon* (DD-198), was the last war loss of the class. The rest were returned to Britain in the years 1949-1952 and scrapped.

All the flush-deckers transferred to Britain are pictured, except the *St. Marys*, ex-USS *Doran*, ex-USS *Bagley* (DD-185) for which no authenticated photograph could be found. A foldout plan, with some details left out, shows the internal arrangement of the destroyers on transfer in 1940.

Together, these books offer an almost complete history of the flush-deckers. *Flush Decks and Four Pipes* offers a lively narrative description of the peacetime and wartime activities of the flush-deckers as a class, but Alden makes little mention of the poor material condition of those transferred to Britain. *The Towns* offers a look at the problems

of adapting fifty worn-out or neglected destroyers for service in a war for which they were unsuited, but in which they served gallantly.

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Lambi, Ivo Nikolai. *The Navy and German Power Politics 1862-1914*. Winchester, Mass.: Unwin Hyman, Inc., 1984. 438pp. \$65

Ivo Lambi describes in detail the German plans for naval operations from 1862 to 1914 against France and Russia, and later against Great Britain and the United States as well. He also provides considerable information on the German naval construction programs of the period.

The fascinating details of naval operations planning dominate Lambi's narrative. Unfortunately, the author's explanations provide an inadequate strategic background. He has also allowed minor errors in technical points and nautical terminology to slip by. Had he provided a detailed bibliography, that would have been useful.

Still, this book probably stands by itself in the English language in the sheer detail of its scope and coverage. Several articles by Paul M. Kennedy, Jonathan Steinberg, and Holger Herwig, and Herwig's book, *The Politics of Frustration, the United States in German Naval Planning 1889-1941*, contain this same level of detail, but only for isolated periods.

Lambi's book has had very little exposure and has seen few reviews.