

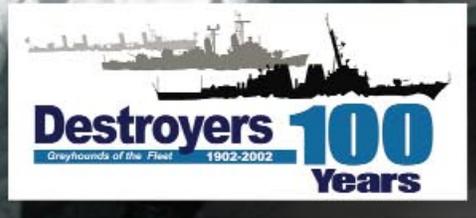
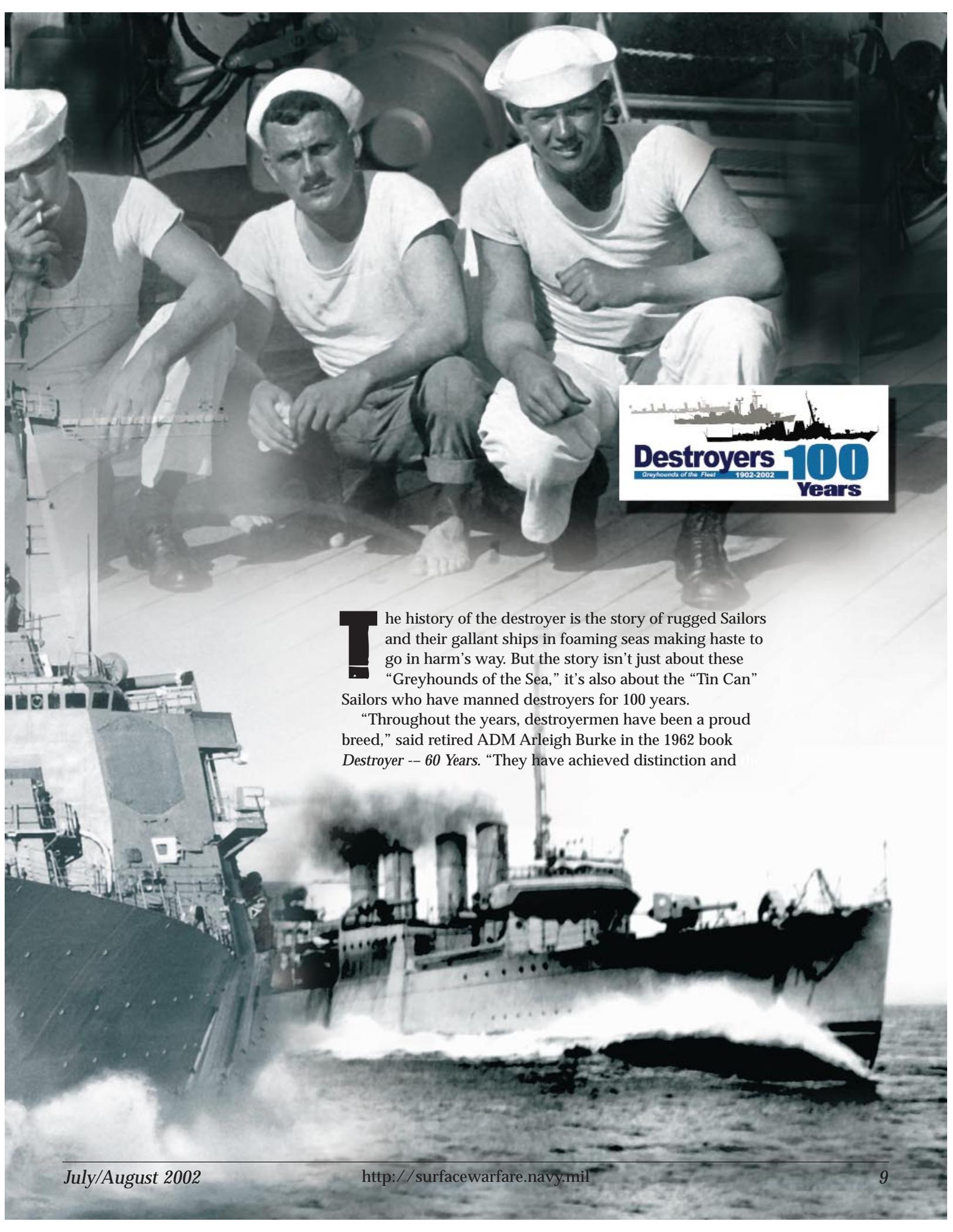
FOCUS

100

FAST SHIPS IN HARM'S WAY

years of "tin cans"

By JOC Bill Johnson-Miles
Managing Editor



The history of the destroyer is the story of rugged Sailors and their gallant ships in foaming seas making haste to go in harm's way. But the story isn't just about these "Greyhounds of the Sea," it's also about the "Tin Can" Sailors who have manned destroyers for 100 years.

"Throughout the years, destroyermen have been a proud breed," said retired ADM Arleigh Burke in the 1962 book *Destroyer -- 60 Years*. "They have achieved distinction and



▲ CAPT Arleigh Burke, commander of Destroyer Squadron 23, aboard USS *Charles Ausburne* (DD 570) during World War II as painted by Albert Murry. (Naval Historical Center/USN)

respect of their fellow Sailors through their performance and their ability to do anything asked of them. No task has been too difficult for them to tackle. They have plunged into each new requirement with the zest of an arduous and dedicated advocate. Through a combination of such advocacy, enthusiasm, hard work, and ability, destroyer men have carried on the tradition of seafaring men that has been a characteristic of Americans since the inception of this great nation.”

Burke, who passed away in 1996, is a former Chief of Naval Operations, but he is probably better known as the commodore of the “Little Beavers,” the eight ships of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 23 which “fought their tails off” in the Solomons campaign during World War II.

In November 1943, from the bridge of his flagship USS *Charles Ausburne* (DD 570), Burke led several successful attacks against many Japanese warships. During that one

month, the ships of DESRON 23 sank one enemy cruiser, nine destroyers, one submarine and several small vessels, and shot down 30 planes. For nine months, they battled their way up the Solomons, leaving a trail of destruction.

It’s achievements like this that fill the U.S. Navy’s destroyer history books, a history that began in 1902 with the commissioning of 11 torpedo boat destroyers. The first of these ships to be commissioned was USS *Decatur* (Torpedo-Boat Destroyer No. 5) on May 19, but the honor of being the first American destroyer is usually given to USS *Bainbridge* (Torpedo-Boat Destroyer No. 1), which the Navy commissioned Nov. 24. By the end of 1911, there were 36 destroyers in the fleet, and by World War I, there would be many more.

Within a month after the U.S. entered World War I, six destroyers rushed from Boston to Queenstown, Ireland, to help the British stop the German U-boats (submarines). They arrived May 4, 1917, and immediately, VADM Sir Lewis Bayly of the Royal Navy, thinking the Americans may need days or even weeks in which to train or perhaps put their ships through overhaul, asked the dreaded question, “How soon will you be ready to go out on patrol?”

The commander of the U.S. destroyers, CDR J.K. Taussig, gave the historic reply, “We are ready now, sir!”

The six destroyers immediately went on patrol, and before the war ended, the U.S. destroyer force in European waters expanded to 80 ships. They did an outstanding job, tangling with U-boats in 250 actions while only losing one destroyer, USS *Jacob Jones* (DD 61) and 64 members of the ship’s crew. Destroyers also guarded the transatlantic crossings of two million men, without the loss of a single life or a single transport ship.

The next world war resulted in the loss of many more destroyers, 71 according to the 1996 book *Blood on the Sea* by Robert Parkin. But the Navy lost more than just ships, as Tin Can crew members made up a good portion of the 37,000 American Sailors who gave the ultimate sacrifice during World War II.

Most of those Sailors and ships were lost to suicidal plane attacks called *kamikazes*. During the U.S. invasion of Okinawa in 1945, 150 destroyers and destroyer escorts (DEs) stationed themselves in a vast ring around the island, a picket line to protect Americans from the attacking Japanese air strength. On April 6, "the full mad hurricane force of the 'divine wind' broke over the destroyer ring like flame and rock bursting from the crater of an erupting volcano," said CAPT William Schofield, author of *Destroyers -- 60 Years*.

By the time the United States finished taking the island in late June,

the inferno of Japanese *kamikazes*, mines, submarines and shellfire sent 13 DDs and two DEs to the bottom of the sea and damaged 118 others, including USS *Kidd* (DD 661). A member of the crew, Joseph Mahoney, remembered the *kamikaze* attack.

"It is probably the most eerie and unnerving form of warfare mankind has ever inflicted on itself," Mahoney told the Louisiana Naval War Memorial in Baton Rouge, where *Kidd* now sits as a memorial ship. "...You hear droning from the loud-speaker, 'Air attack is imminent,' and then, 'Bogies sighted 35 miles north and closing.' Next, the waiting and the thinking, 'Thirty-five miles is a long way off. Don't kid yourself; it's only minutes away — perhaps the last minutes of your life. I'm not ready, too much I haven't done yet.' ... 'Target sighted, position four o'clock low on water. Prepare to fire. Mark!' Then explosions! Fire! Deafening noise! Acrid odors! Commands screamed! 'How long can this go on? I can't breathe!

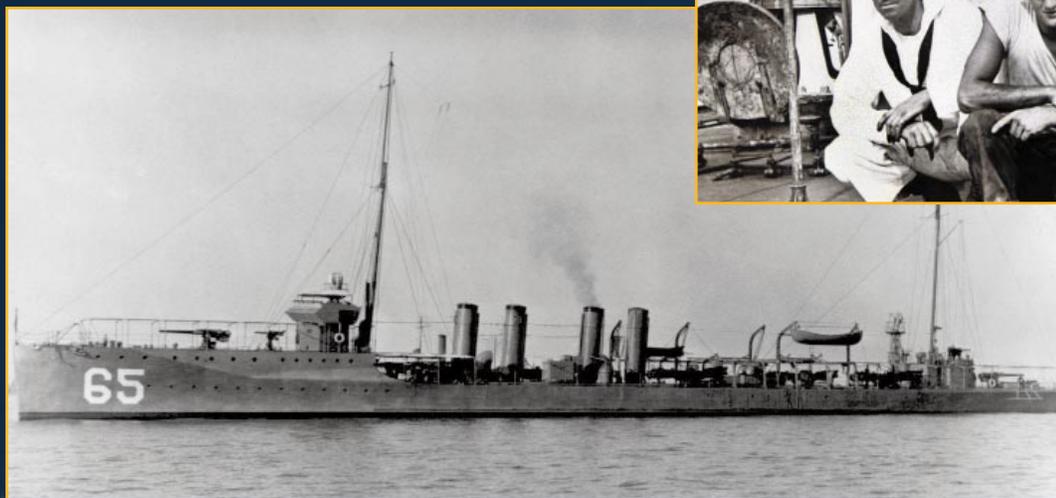
Teeth hurt from grinding; fingers ache from gripping!' And then it is over — for this time. 'Ah, I am alive; I am untouched. This is not me; I am not here. This is not happening to me!'"

The destroyers did hold their line under these attacks of incredible fury, protecting U.S. Marines and Soldiers on Okinawa. At the high cost of men and ships, they came through with glory. Destroyer victories in the Pacific during World War II greatly outnumbered the losses, but the victories didn't come easy for the Sailors manning those ships.

"We have been up at GQ [general quarters] six nights out of the past week," wrote Donald Vick in his diary on Oct. 3, 1943. "The only sleep I get is about three or four hours in the day."

Vick, a radioman third class aboard Burke's *Charles Ausburne*, manned one of the 20mm anti-aircraft guns during GQ. On Nov. 4, he wrote: "We got two near bomb hits that threw shrapnel on our fantail

▼ This "flushdeck four piper," USS *Davis* (Destroyer No. 65), arrived in Queenstown, Ireland, May 4, 1917, along with five other destroyers to help Britain stop German U-boats during World War I. When the British asked the U.S. commander how long it would be before they would be ready to fight, the commander historically replied, "We are ready now, sir!" (NavSource/National Archives)



▲ Nine World War I "Tin Can" Sailors pose aboard their destroyer. (Brian Wolff/National Archives)



◀ “Tin Can” Sailors watch as USS *Dunlap* (DD 384) fires a torpedo July 3, 1942. (National Archives)



▶ USS *Buchanan* (DD 484) rides alongside USS *Wasp* (CV 7) to refuel, while en route to the Guadalcanal-Tulagi invasion area in August 1942. (National Archives/USN)

and dented the bulkheads. Two full nights of murderous hell with no sleep, very little food, but who gives a damn, eight men were hit on our fantail.”

Vick passed away in 1998. His daughter, Nancy Faulk, shared her feelings about her father and those he served with.

“I feel proud,” said Faulk. “I feel humble. I feel astonished by what they did and how they did it. I feel thankful for the freedom they secured.”

Not only did destroyers fight for freedom in the Pacific, they also made a difference in the Atlantic, especially during D-Day on June 6, 1944. Late morning found the U.S. Army pinned down on Omaha beach with more than 1,000 casualties. Seeing this, Navy destroyers moved in close to the beach. Dodging return fire, and sometimes scraping bottom, these ships blasted one German position after another and enabled the American soldiers to move inland.

In testament to these Navy destroyers, Army Maj. Gen. L.T. Gerow, the U.S. commander on Omaha Beach, sent a message to the

operation’s commander, Gen. Omar Bradley, stating, “Thank God for the United States Navy.”

There’s hardly any comparison between World War II and the Korean War for the U.S. Navy and its destroyers. In the entire conflict, the Navy lost only five ships, none of them destroyers. Coastal gunfire and mines did damage 73 ships, including 48 DDs and DEs, mostly minor damage in gunfire duels with shore batteries.

While handling these types of threats, destroyers carried out critical missions during the Korean War. They assisted in minesweeping operations, shore bombardment actions, amphibious landings and evacuations. They screened carriers and rescued downed Navy pilots. And they demolished countless shore targets, including gun emplacements, tank columns, troop concentrations, bridges, highways, railroads and trains. Destroyers also did a lot of the same kind of work during the Vietnam War.

“We spent most of our time in the Tonkin Gulf at Yankee Station and all along the Vietnam coast north of Da

Nang,” said Rick Broadhead, a former USS *Bausell* (DD 845) fire control technician. “Our missions included shelling enemy positions, plane guard duty with the carriers and rescue ship station far to the north in the Tonkin Gulf. Our days and nights were spent interdicting coastal shipping and destroying enemy supply vessels. Our northern operations included refueling *Sea King* ‘choppers’ sent on rescue missions for downed pilots in the vicinity of Hanoi and disrupting VC [Viet Cong] supply routes to the south. Most patrols involved well over 30 days on station non-stop, and this ‘Greyhound of the fleet’ had some holes put in her by hostile gunfire.”

Edwin Finney also served in the Vietnam War, as an officer aboard USS *Waldron* (DD 699) from 1967 to 1969. He’s not the first destroyerman in his family; his father commanded USS *Harlan R. Dickson* (DD 708) from 1951 to 1953.

“I certainly feel proud to have been a destroyerman and be a ‘card carrying member’ of Tin Can Sailors,” said Finney, who works in the photographic section of the Naval



▲ The crew of USS *Hopper* (DDG 70) celebrates the 100th anniversary of the U.S. destroyer while supporting Operation *Enduring Freedom* in the Arabian Gulf. (AW2 Moore/USN)

Historical Center in Washington, D.C. “I think this came about quite naturally, growing up in a Navy family with my father, my uncle Earl and my grandfather all having been surface line officers.... It may sound silly, but in high school, I kept an eight by 10 black and white glossy photo of DD 708 steaming at high speed with ‘a bone in her teeth’ taped up in my locker. I got what I wanted — service in an old but good destroyer!”

Old and new destroyers have been in a number of actions since the Vietnam War. In the 80’s, four destroyers took out a pair of Iranian command and control platforms in the Arabian Gulf after Iran attacked a reflagged Kuwait supertanker. During Operation *Desert Storm*, they launched *Tomahawk* land-attack cruise missiles into Iraq, and destroyers did the same into Yugoslavia and Afghanistan in more recent actions.

Today, Tin Can Sailors search merchant ships for military contraband, help to enforce the “no fly” zone over Iraq, evacuate American citizens from dangerous situations abroad and provide humanitarian aid to nations that have endured natural disasters. Also today, Tin Can Sailors are both male and female.

“Growing up, I heard a lot about Tin Can Sailors from my dad who was a World War II Sailor,” said BMCS(SW) Juanita Rozar of USS *Bulkeley* (DDG 84). “When I first came in the Navy in 1981, I was told by the ‘salty old boatswain’s mates’ there was no way women would ever be allowed to sail [aboard] destroyers.”

In 1995, the Navy opened up destroyers to women, and the day after the message came out, Rozar asked her detailer for a billet. The Navy put her into the “Women at Sea” program, and she became one of the first women to serve aboard a destroyer.

“I checked aboard USS *Barry* (DDG 52) on April 5, 1996,” stated Rozar. “It’s one of the proudest days of my career. The second proudest day was the commissioning of *Bulkeley*.... Both ships have been the highlight of my career, and both carry my fondest memories....”

Bulkeley is one of 54 destroyers currently in the Navy’s active fleet, much less than its high of 377 Tin Cans in 1945. More than 1,000 destroyers have sailed the world’s oceans and seas in the vessel’s century-long history.

“It is important to remember the history of the destroyer because of all

the long days, blood, sweat and tears spent on the work horse of the fleet,” said LTJG Dwight Davis of USS *Hopper* (DDG 70). “Many destroyers have been spent defending the Constitution of the United States, and especially on the 100th anniversary of the destroyer, we should take time to remember the dedicated service of the ship and even more, the crews who served on them.”

“Earning the title ‘destroyerman’ is accompanied with a long history of strength and stability as the name itself sounds,” said FC2(SW) Kenneth Ryan of USS *O’Brien* (DD 975). “The opportunity to be directly associated with this history is an honor.... Destroyers have engraved their signatures in history books and continue to be an ever-present asset in creating history. Remembering their toll in history is important, but I feel equal or more impressive feats are still yet to come.”

“Destroyermen have established enviable records of achievement,” stated Burke. “And they are still steaming toward unknown horizons where developments of the future wait for discovery.”  



By John Albrighton
Director, Surface Warfare public affairs

Destroyers commemorate 100 years of service

Throughout their first 100 years, U.S. Navy destroyers established a proud record of service participating in every major military conflict of the past century and currently serving in the war on terrorism.

Celebrations commemorating the destroyer centennial began in January and will continue through the remainder of the year. From balls and reunions to the issuance of a commemorative coin and the production of a special centennial flag, the centennial celebrations continue to honor destroyers, past and present, and the Sailors who served aboard them.

The Surface Navy Association (SNA) began the centennial celebration with the presentation of the destroyer centennial flag to the leaders of the Navy's surface fleet, VADM Timothy LaFleur, Commander, Naval Surface Forces; RADM Jay Foley, Commander, Naval Surface Force, Atlantic (SURFLANT); and RADM Phil Balisle, Director,



▲ RADM Jay Foley (left), Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, presents a framed destroyer centennial flag to Destroyermen's Ball guest speaker VADM J. Cutler Dawson, Commander, U.S. Second Fleet. (SURFLANT public affairs/USN)

Surface Warfare, at the association's annual convention in January. The red, white and blue flag depicts three distinct classes of destroyers.

"Its design reflects the lineage of destroyers from *Bainbridge* to *Burke*," said Balisle. "Its colors symbolize the freedom for which destroyer Sailors have given their

lives, and sometimes their ships, over a century of conflicts. This flag will serve as a symbol of destroyer history while commemorating the sacrifices past."

Balls commemorating and celebrating the destroyer centennial are occurring throughout the fleet. On May 18 in Newport, R.I., the Surface



▼ YN1(AW) Mark Krizovski of Naval Surface Warfare Center Headquarters checks out the Destroyer Centennial display at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C. (JOSN James Zike/USN)



Warfare Officers' School (SWOS) held a ball with ADM Vernon Clark, Chief of Naval Operations, as the guest speaker. SWOS kicked off their year of destroyer events aboard the historic USS **Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.** (DD 850), with a wreath-laying ceremony in January.

The Newport chapter of the SNA also co-sponsored a Destroyer Centennial 5K Run, and Rhode Island declared Nov. 24 "Destroyermen's Day" to honor the commissioning of **Bainbridge**, the lead ship in the inaugural class of U.S. destroyers.

Two weekends after the SWOS ball in Rhode Island, Foley hosted the SURFLANT Destroyermen's Ball in Norfolk, Va., on May 31.

"Tonight, we honor the men and women who have served in destroyers in decades past, or on watch now and serving our nation at the tip of the spear to defend our right and our

ability to gather at functions like this every night across this great nation," said Foley at the ball.

SURFLANT also sponsored a bronze coin designed in honor of the centennial. The coin features silhouettes of the destroyers **Bainbridge** and **Burke** along with the phrase "100 Years of Excellence at Sea" and one of the destroyers' earliest nicknames "Greyhounds of the Fleet."

Destroyer Squadron 31 in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, also honored these "Greyhounds" with a destroyer ball May 31. They hosted this celebration at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel overlooking the blue waters of the Pacific.

In April, the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., unveiled an exhibit honoring the destroyer centennial in conjunction with its annual Blessing of the Fleet ceremony. This yearlong exhibit is comprised of large wall panels

adorned with a chronology of destroyers, ship photos and illustrations depicting destroyer history.

Fort Lauderdale, Fla., also commemorated destroyer history when it welcomed a number of the Atlantic Fleet's destroyers during its Fleet Week celebration April 29 to May 5. The celebration included a Destroyer Centennial Gala, which honored destroyers past and present with a video presentation and a display of destroyer ship models loaned by the Naval Sea Systems Command.

The Naval Order of the United States is examining the historical significance and impact of the destroyer during its annual congress this October in Houston.

One of the Navy's newest destroyers, the pre-commissioning unit **McCampbell** (DDG 85), will commemorate the destroyer centennial during its August commissioning ceremony in San Francisco, Calif.

A number of destroyer veterans' associations are also planning to commemorate the centennial as part of their 2002 reunions. More details on these events can be found through the Tin Can Sailors Association website at www.destroyers.org.

Additional information about these events and general details about the Navy's destroyer centennial can be found at the Destroyer Centennial website: <http://surfacewarfare.navy.mil/destroyercentennial>.

(JO1 Paul Taylor, SURFLANT public affairs, contributed to this article.)





By JO1(SW) Jason Thompson
6th Fleet public affairs

Destroyers fill void

Destroyer Sailors who recently deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea can take pride knowing they upheld a century of gallant history and tradition with the huge success of their recent deployments.

When the global war on terrorism began in September, the men and women serving aboard USS *Hayler* (DD 997), USS *Ross* (DDG 71) and USS *Ramage* (DDG 61) distinguished themselves by shouldering almost the entire operational workload in

the Mediterranean for the majority of their six months away from home.

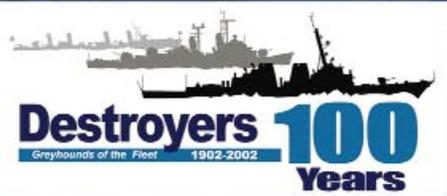
“Since 9-11, we’ve had a very reduced presence in 6th Fleet,” said CDR Carl Cramb, surface operations officer for Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, homeported in Gaeta, Italy. “The

▼ USS *Ramage* (DDG 61), operating in international waters in the Eastern Mediterranean, conducted a compliant maritime interception operation after intercepting a suspicious vessel approximately 26 nautical miles northeast of Cyprus. Compliant boarding operations are done in cooperation with the ship's master and crew and are designed to ensure the safety and welfare of legitimate merchant shipping. (6th Fleet/USN)



▼ USS *Hayler* (DD 997) and USS *Ross* (DDG 71) approach a suspicious vessel to conduct a compliant maritime interception operation in the international waters of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. (JOC Al Bloom/USN)





in Mediterranean

ships that would have been operating here in the Mediterranean were ordered to 5th Fleet to support Operation *Enduring Freedom*. That left only three destroyers behind to take care of all the day-to-day operational requirements in the Mediterranean.”

“What we saw out here with these three destroyers was a group of extremely competent Sailors who, when given a mission, went out to do it and did it well.”

— CDR Carl Cramb,
U.S. 6th Fleet

Reducing Naval forces to three main platforms not only represents a dramatic change, but an enormous challenge. The Global Naval Force

Presence Policy, which determines the number, makeup and duration of each theater’s “big-deck” presence (i.e. carrier battle groups and amphibious readiness groups), typically allocates a much larger proportion of assets for the 6th Fleet area of operation.

“Everything has fallen to three surface combatants,” said Cramb. “During that time frame, *Hayler*, *Ross* and *Ramage*, under the superb direction of Destroyer Squadron 28, carried a heavy load and did a great job.”

Cramb attributes the destroyers’ success in filling the vacuum of operational forces to the two factors that have allowed destroyers to serve with distinction for 100 years; the destroyer’s capability as a flexible, multitask platform and the dedication of highly-trained, motivated Sailors.

“The destroyer is a multiwarfare surface combatant that can do it all,” said Cramb. “But the key element that makes any ship successful is its crew. What we saw out here with these three destroyers was a group of extremely competent Sailors who, when given a mission, went out to do it and did it well. When you’ve got such a capable platform and such a capable group of young men and women pulling it all together — ships succeed.”

“We are a well-integrated team,” said CDR Mark Hellstern, *Hayler*’s



▲ Phone talker SN Xiomaria Garcia-Lopey keeps the USS *Hayler* (DD 997) bridge aware of boat deck operations while deployed in the Mediterranean Sea. (Blake Borsic/USAF)



▲ A Sailor aboard USS *Ross* (DDG 71) stands look-out during a recent maritime interception operation in the Eastern Mediterranean. (6th Fleet/USN)

► USS *Ross* (DDG 71) crew members prepare to launch a rigid-hull inflatable boat while operating in the Eastern Mediterranean. (6th Fleet/USN)



commanding officer. “I think that we are capable of doing just about any mission assigned to us.”

In addition to conducting multi-lateral and bilateral exercises, port visits and other activities to support 6th Fleet’s efforts to build cooperation with nations bordering the Mediterranean and Black Seas, the destroyers were tasked with planning and conducting maritime interception operations (MIOs).

According to Cramb, MIOs ensure the safety and welfare of legitimate merchant shipping and deny the Mediterranean to anyone who would use it for any activities associated with terrorism.

“The goal is to disrupt and degrade a terrorist organization’s

ability to utilize sea lanes as a method for transferring people, money or materials and deter them from doing it in the future,” said Cramb.

Since Jan. 9 of this year, 6th Fleet units have conducted several compliant boardings of merchant vessels in the Mediterranean.

“We are ready to execute a MIO whenever the need arises,” said Hellstern, a Cleveland native who has served aboard two other destroyers during his Navy career. “While the focus of our mission hasn’t really changed, 9-11 has resulted in an increased emphasis on MIOs and force protection.”

“The training we conducted prior to 9-11 enabled us to very

quickly ramp up our level of awareness and security,” said FCC(SW) Craig Van Effen of Escanada, Mich., a *Hayler* crew member familiar with MIO procedures. “The exercises we performed with our destroyer squadron allowed us to execute our boardings flawlessly.”

Whether performing interception operations or any number of the more traditional activities of forward presence, the destroyer’s flexibility and capability to carry out a wide range of missions filled the void in the Mediterranean and has been the platform’s century-long hallmark. And that’s something destroyer Sailors can be mighty proud of.



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1. TO COMMODORE MURPHY AND THE DESRON 28 TEAM, AS YOU PREPARE FOR RTHP LET ME OFFER A PERSONAL WELL DONE FOR A SUPERB DEPLOYMENT. THE SHIPS OF DESRON 28 MET EVERY CHALLENGE AND COMMITMENT WITH UNMATCHED PROFESSIONALISM AND MAINTAINED THE HIGHEST STATE OF WAR FIGHTING READINESS, WHICH DIRECTLY REFLECTS THE LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING PROVIDED BY YOUR STAFF.
2. UNDER YOUR DIRECTION AS MARITIME INTERCEPTION COMMANDER FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN, BOARDINGS ON SEVEN SUSPECTED TERRORIST RELATED VESSELS WERE FLAWLESSLY PLANNED AND SAFELY EXECUTED. VALUABLE INTELLIGENCE REGARDING POTENTIAL TERRORIST RELATED MERCHANT SHIP OPERATIONS, INCLUDING THE DETECTION OF PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN SUSPICIOUS OPERATING PATTERNS WAS BUT ONE IMPORTANT RESULT OF THESE OPERATIONS. THE DESRON 28 TEAM'S EFFORTS SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED U.S. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND UNDERSTANDING OF SUSPECTED TERRORIST RELATED MERCHANT SHIP ACTIVITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. SERVING AS CTF 60, YOU CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED WARFIGHTING EXCELLENCE IN EVERY MISSION AREA DURING EXERCISES NATIONAL TRAINING CONTINUUM, NOBLE SHIRLEY, AND DOGFISH. YOUR SUPERB PERFORMANCE, AND THAT OF YOUR SHIPS, IN THESE EXERCISES SERVED TO STRENGTHEN MILITARY-TO-MILITARY TIES WITH MEDITERRANEAN ALLIES. AS LAUNCH AREA COORDINATOR IN EIGHT CAESAR SWORDETLAM EXERCISES YOU ENSURED STRIKE WARFARE MISSION READINESS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WAS HONED TO A KEEN EDGE.
3. EXEMPLARY CONDUCT ASHORE IN NUMEROUS HIGH VISIBILITY PORT VISITS THROUGHOUT THE MEDITERRANEAN DISTINGUISHED DESRON 28 SAILORS AS OUTSTANDING AMBASSADORS OF GOOD WILL. THESE VISITS ARE KEY TO FOSTERING POSITIVE RELATIONS BETWEEN HOST NATION CITIZENS AND AMERICAN SAILORS, AS WELL AS SUPPORTING IMPORTANT SIXTH FLEET ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES.
4. AS DESRON 28 SAILS HOME TO WELL-EARNED REUNIONS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, EACH OF YOU CAN BE PROUD OF YOUR MANY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN THIS VITAL PART OF THE WORLD.
5. WELL DONE. VADM SCOTT FRY SENDS.//

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