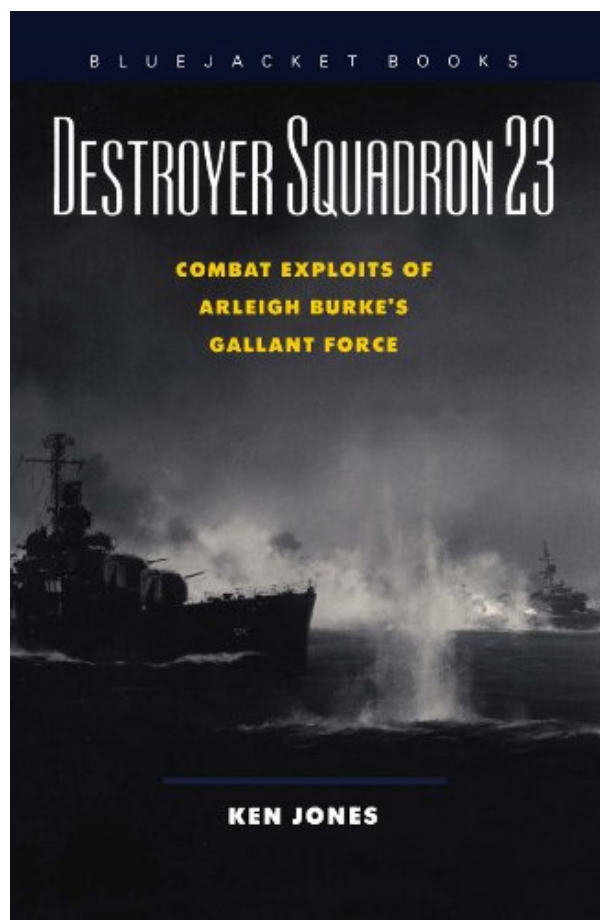


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History has recorded many instances in which the right man was present at the right time to further a just cause and bring credit to his nation at a critical moment. This book tells the story of such a man and such a time. Commodore Arleigh Burke provided the fire of leadership that fused a squadron of destroyers into a superb combat organization - the gallant squadron of this book - a real fighting outfit with that vital combat ingredient we know as "fighting spirit". Fighting spirit, like leadership, is difficult if not well-nigh impossible to describe - yet that spirit is brought to life in these pages. Here is a narrative that captures the elusive and mysterious combination of human qualities that add up to inspiration, because here is a story of action, human action, and reaction, in the heat of battle.

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Called one of the most inspiring stories to come out of World War II when first published in 1959, this epic account of Arleigh Burke's legendary Destroyer Squadron 23 is much more than a story of ships and their tactical deployment. It is a story of men in action--some four thousand of them--and how they lived and fought as a magnificent combat team.

Ken Jones not only records their heroic deeds but helps explain what prompted those deeds, including the leadership qualities that fired the men into action. In doing so he brings to life the outfit's fighting spirit--that mysterious combination of qualities inspired by great leaders that wins battles--and the man who led them. Commodore Arleigh Burke was the right man at the right place at the right time; his leadership fused the squadron into a superb combat organization.

This book offers a vivid account of the fighting in the South Pacific during one of the most crucial periods of the war. In authentic, minute-by-minute detail drawn from once-secret documents, Jones describes the battles of Tassafaronga, Savo Island, Empress Augusta Bay, and Cape St. George. But the focus throughout is on the men as they meet the test of battle with a common bravery as staunch as any in the Navy's annals. No squadron in any navy is said to have won more battle honors in less time than the Fighting Twenty-third.

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DESRON 23

By B. F. Stout

This volume provides an excellent review of an historic changes in surface warfare, and an extended bio of the leader who brought these new tactics into successful being. Admiral Burke was a dynamic leader who did not bend to tradition, if the situation didn't call for it. He molded many new-to-battle and very young sailors into the best "tin-can" unit in WWII. Ken Jones recognized that one does not accomplish that team feat without officers and non-commissioned officers of talent and trust. He therefore brought out the leadership background of many in his book. Jones archives the most successful destroyer actions of WWII in the South Pacific, and shows how the team worked. It is a fitting tribute to the entire squadron and its leaders. I am prejudiced here, because one of the mini-bios is about my father. I learned more about his actions in WWII than I did while he was still with me.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Fine History of some of US Navy's Finest Hours

By K. Templeton

This book fired my imagination when I read it as a young boy, having saved up my allowance to buy it from the Naval Institute Press. The Fletcher class DDs were, in my opinion, the finest (and most beautiful) warships ever built for the US Navy, and the night-time surface action in the Solomons its finest hour as a fighting force. I say this because the terms of combat were essentially equal. In both the European and Pacific theatres, the American victory in the second world war is often attributed to our industrial capacity rather than the fighting qualities of our services. Someone, I think, put it that we did not so much defeat the axis as bury them under a mountain of consumer goods. But throughout the war, and especially in the Pacific, there were times when the odds were even or the United States was essentially the underdog. That was the case in the Solomons. I live in San Francisco, and on a bluff overlooking the Pacific, there stands a little monument which includes part of the bridge structure of the USS San Francisco, holed by heavy caliber shells when, with a scratch force of cruisers, the US Navy took on two Japanese battleships and stopped them from destroying Henderson field on Guadalcanal and thus forcing the Marines to evacuate the island. At the beginning of the Solomons campaign, the IJN were better than we were. Better ships, more of them, and better weapons, especially the "long lance" torpedo, which had twice the range and power of ours. Jones book is a story, not only of Arleigh Burke and the men and ships he commanded, but it is that story set within the larger story of how, in savage nighttime fighting, the men and ships of the US Navy, under inspired leadership of men like Halsey and Burke, came from behind to first equal and then dominate a powerful, courageous and determined enemy, man to man and ship to ship, on essentially equal terms. An interesting and instructive aspect of the book is how it focuses on the characters of the individual destroyer captains in Burke's squadron. The book is written in an engaging style, but it is of course a very dated one. There is frankly still a little bit of wartime stereotyping, if not quite racism, in describing the Japanese opponent. But that in itself takes us closer to understanding the mentality of the times in which these events occurred.

7 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Good Book!

By A Customer

This book covers that part of admiral Burke's career when he served in destroyers in a fairly interesting fashion. The author spends a lot of time developing the characters of Burke's destroyer captains, and the descriptions of the actions are somewhat overblown. Otherwise, an ok read.

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