

John Wukovits. *Tin Can Titans: The Heroic Men and Ships of World War II's Most Decorated Navy Destroyer Squadron.* Boston: Da Capo Press, 2017. Maps. 352 pp. \$11.99, e-book, ISBN 978-0-306-82431-9.



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Tin Can Titans by John Wukovitz offers readers a glance at the distinguished history of Destroyer Squadron 21, or Desron 21, mainly their campaign in the Philippines. The naval battles that raged around the Philippines were some of the bloodiest of the Pacific War. They were also some of the most important. During the Pacific War, control of every inch of land and ocean in the area was significant to each side's war effort. The ability to land Allied troops on multiple islands in the chain halted the advancement of the imperial Japanese troops. The efforts of these ships kept the supply lines open for the American troops in the region.

The ships of Desron 21 were the driving force behind the Japanese being driven back toward the home island. Ships like the *USS Fletcher* and the famed *USS O'Bannon* ferried troops and supplies to the island, hunted enemy submarines, and attacked any Japanese ships that got too close. Edging out the Japanese also allowed the American troops to have yet another foothold in the Pa-

cific and one island closer in preparation to possibly invade the Japanese homeland.

Much of the current historiography on naval battles of the Pacific in the mass market, not in the academic community, is on the carrier or air battles of the Pacific War. The glamour of fighter pilots and dive bombers draws people's attention. *Tin Can Titans* highlights the men of the battle line who went into the line of fire to take out enemy ships and protect the glamorous floating targets.

Much of the information used in *Tin Can Titans* is from interviews with the men on the ships of the destroyer squadron. The author interviewed ten survivors from five different destroyers. Wukovitz also uses a lot of significant primary documents, such as war diaries and after-action reports, and references news articles and other books. The book is geared for mass consumption instead of the academic community. It does not break any new ground in the current histori-

ography surrounding naval tactics in the Pacific during World War II.

Wukovitz earned his bachelor's degree in history from Notre Dame and his master's degree in American history from Michigan State University. Beyond *Tin Can Titans*, Wukovitz has written numerous scholarly articles for different publications, including the magazine *WWII History*. He also has worked as a consultant on multiple television productions. Most of Wukovitz's published work and research has been on the US Navy's role in the Pacific War.

Tin Can Titans offers a good mixture of the human aspect of war by discussing the men who served on the ships. For example, Wukovitz talks about *O'Bannon's* captain Donald John MacDonald giving his sailors pep talks over the intercom system right before a long night on the "Slot." MacDonald also used the ship's intercom system to keep men informed. The book also gives details about the actual naval battles. However, it leaves readers wanting more. While it gives a brief overview of what these ships were doing, at only 241 pages, the book does not provide in-depth, precise details of battles but rather only brief descriptions of every battle. The upside is that Wukovitz highlights how the men involved actually felt during the time of battle, descriptions that almost make the reader feel like they are on the ship when the shells were splashing in the ocean around them.

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