



DESTROYER'S STORY

THE HOT AND COLD WARS OF USS CARPENTER (DD-825)

BY TIMOTHY J. FRANCIS

Donald Marshall Carpenter, born in Hopbottom, Pennsylvania, on 6 March 1894, attended grade schools in Scranton and high school in McKeesport, and was appointed a midshipman from the 30th District of Pennsylvania on 11 July 1912. Graduating from the US Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on 2 June 1916, "Doc" Carpenter reported to his first ship, *Wyoming* (Battleship No. 32) on 17 June. He was commissioned ensign on 5 July 1916.

During his World War I service in *Wyoming*, Carpenter received temporary promotions to lieutenant (junior grade) (3 October 1917) and lieutenant (6

February 1918); permanent promotions to those ranks followed, on 12 March 1920 and 31 March 1921, respectively. Detached from *Wyoming* on 16 May 1921, Carpenter reported to Mare Island Navy Yard, Vallejo, California, five days later, and over the ensuing months, helped fit out the new battleship *California* (BB-44).

Detached from *California* on 8 May 1922, Carpenter was slated to join *Nevada* (BB-36) before her departure for the Atlantic coast, but received authorization to proceed to Pensacola, Florida, via commercial transportation, at his own expense, "for temporary duty under instruction in heavier-than-

aircraft." Opting for flight training over continued service in battleships, Carpenter, authorized a month's delay in transit, reported to NAS Pensacola on 19 June 1922.

Upon completion of flight training, Carpenter was detached from NAS Pensacola on 3 April 1923; he also married Clara Moreno the same day (a union that ultimately produced two sons). He reported for duty with Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet, on 27 April 1923, and remained with that aeronautical organization until assigned temporary duty with Aircraft Squadrons, Scouting Fleet; he served with that unit until 20 May 1925.

Commissioned lieutenant commander on 5 February 1927 while at Pensacola, Carpenter joined *Stoddert* (DD-302) on 23 June 1928 upon that destroyer's return from operations with the Battle Fleet in Hawaiian waters, and served as her executive officer until 20 September 1929. Ordered to *Langley* (CV-1), he reported for duty the following day, and served in that aircraft carrier until 30 June 1930.

Assuming command on 30 June 1930 of Scouting Squadron (VS) 3B, Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet, which operated in the air group assigned to the aircraft carrier *Lexington* (CV-2), he remained in that billet through his squadron's being assigned to Carrier Divisions, US Fleet, on 25 October 1930. Leaving VS-3B on 25 April 1931, Carpenter became executive officer of Fleet Air Base (FAB), Coco Solo, Canal Zone, on 26 May 1931, a billet he filled for almost two years, until relieved on 19 July 1933 to assume the post of operations officer for Aircraft Squadrons, Coco Solo.

During the late summer of 1933, Carpenter commanded the ferry flight of the first division of Patrol Squadron (VP) 5F from NAS Norfolk, Virginia to FAB Coco Solo. Carpenter flew 5-P-2, one of six Consolidated P2Y-1 flying boats that departed Norfolk midway through the first dog watch on 7 September 1933 (accompanied personally during the initial stages of the flight by R/Adm. Ernest J. King, Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, in a Vought SU-1 biplane) and reached its destination, a little over halfway through the second dog watch the next day, having covered the 1788 nautical miles in a total elapsed time of 25 hours and 29 minutes. In the longest non-stop formation seaplane flight in history, the six flying boats battled headwinds for almost the entire aerial voyage, at one point encountering a heavy squall with velocity approaching 50 knots.

Detached from FAB Coco Solo on 15 May 1934, Carpenter reported on board seaplane tender *Wright* (AV-1) three days later, and became her navigator on 30 May 1934. He carried out those duties until hospitalized at the US Naval Hospital, San Diego, California, on 20



Jacket patch for USS *Carpenter*.

November 1934. Released the following spring, he served at NAS San Diego from 11 April to 3 September 1935 before he became Inspector of Naval Aircraft, San Diego, on the latter date. Detached on 10 July 1936 to the Naval Training Station, San Diego, he was relieved of all active duty and placed on the retired list on 1 October 1936. Carpenter died of lobar pneumonia at the US Naval Hospital, San Diego, on 4 April 1940.

On 18 June 1945, Mrs. Edward S. Shaw, sister of Carpenter's widow Clara, wrote to Adm. King, then Commander in Chief, US Fleet (who had commanded *Lexington* when Carpenter had commanded VS-3B) suggesting that a ship be named for the late leader of VP-5F's historic flight in 1933, citing the "sincere respect" her brother-in-law had felt for King. "I sincerely hope you will not consider me presumptuous," she wrote, "but if you could lend your approval to such an honor for 'Doc' as



The destroyer was named for Donald Carpenter who had a distinguished career aboard ships and in the air. we all knew him, I would appreciate it very much."

"Please do this if you can," King wrote to the Chief of Naval Personnel, who recommended the name assignment on 10 July 1945; consequently, on 14 July 1945, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal assigned the name Carpenter to DD-825. In writing to Secretary Forrestal upon being informed of the naming of the ship, Carpenter's widow wrote on 9 August 1945 of her "deep appreciation of the honor bestowed on my two sons and me in the naming of this ship for my late husband and I hope her record will be one of which to be proud..."

Carpenter (DD-825) was laid down on 30 July 1945 at Consolidated Shipbuilding Company, Orange, Texas;



The destroyer when she was designated as DDE-825.

Magnificent view of USS *Carpenter* at speed.