

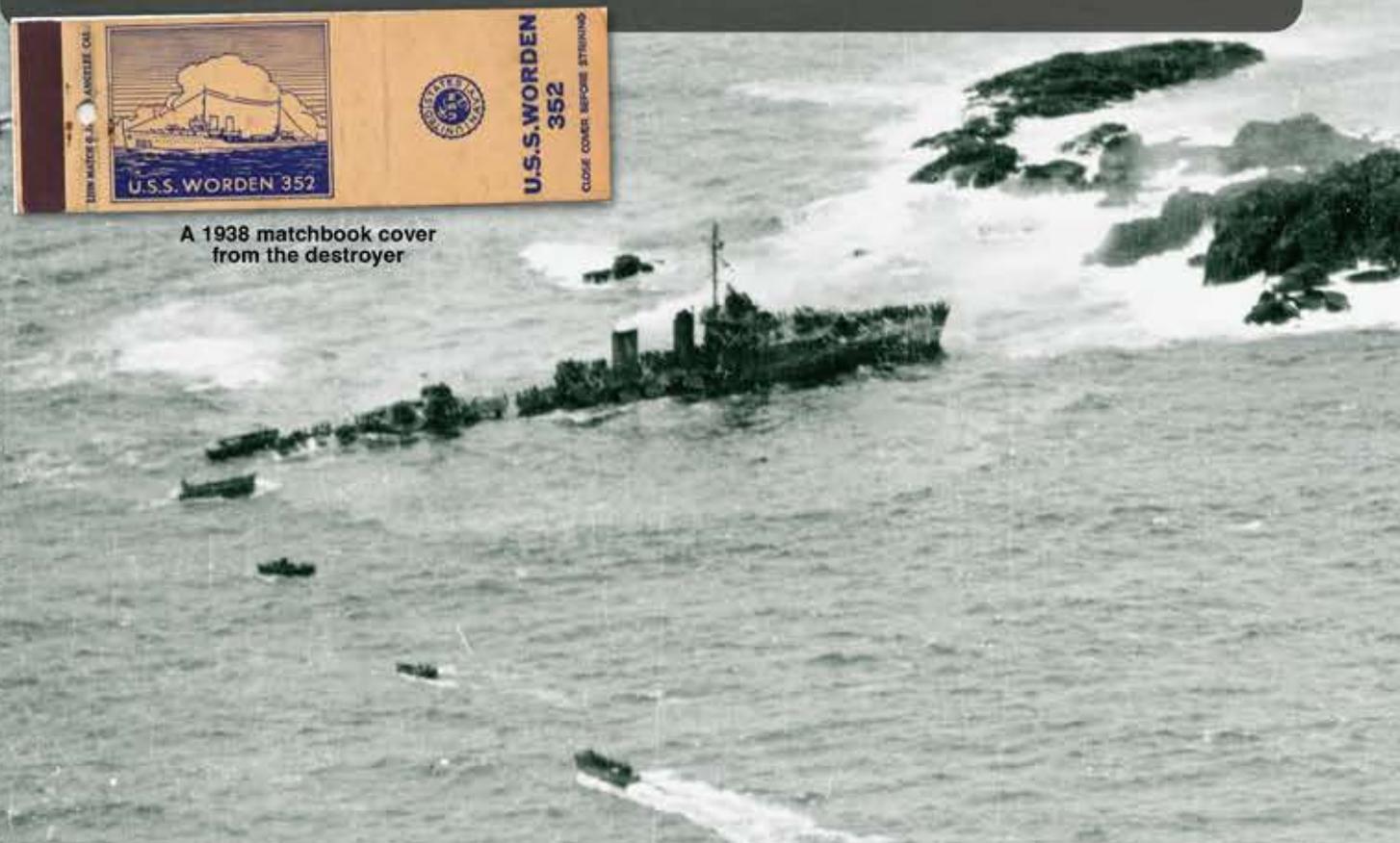
THIRTEEN-MONTH WAR OF USS WORDEN

PRESENT DURING THE JAPANESE SNEAK ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR, THE USS WORDEN (DD-352) WOULD MEET ITS END DURING FIGHTING AT THE "ROOF OF THE WORLD"

BY ADAM STANTON



A 1938 matchbook cover from the destroyer



went into the Washington Navy Yard where her main guns were disassembled and upgraded. Tensions around the world were building and after a time at Norfolk, she again headed to the West Coast with a stop at Guantanamo Bay and another transit of the Panama Canal, finally arriving at Puget Sound Navy Yard on 3 August 1935.

After a refit at Puget Sound, *Worden* would set sail for San Diego, which would be her base for the next four years. As a unit of Destroyer Squadrons, Scouting Force, the ship undertook valuable duty as a training vessel for the Fleet Sound School in San Diego. Maneuvers took her as far afield as Seward, Alaska, and Callao, Peru. She also participated in regularly scheduled Fleet problems and battle tactics with combined forces of the Fleet in the Caribbean Sea and in the Hawaiian Islands.

One of the highlights of that time period took place during September 1937 when *Worden* — in company

with *Hull* (DD-350) and the aircraft carrier *USS Ranger* — proceeded to Callao, Peru, in a visit that not only showed the flag but coincided with the Inter-American Technical Aviation Conference held in Lima. This was at a time when American aviation companies were attempting to sell military aircraft to Latin American nations in order to stop German and Italian



USS *Worden* was named for John Lorimer Worden. Born in 1818, he would go on to have a long and distinguished US Navy career and would be the commander of the USS *Monitor* during the historic confrontation at Hampton Roads.



The destroyer in Puget Sound. Note the open-backed gun turrets. As built, other armament included eight 21-inch torpedo tubes and four .50-caliber machine guns.

Commander William G. Pogue and the crew of the USS *Worden* (DD-352) immediately knew they were in bad trouble as the hellish screech of metal against razor-sharp rocks filled the hull of the *Farragut*-class destroyer. On 12 December 1942, the *Worden* was rushing to bolster American forces in the contested Aleutian Islands —

and this was after having survived the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor and the Battle of Midway. In just over a year, the destroyer had covered lots of ocean and participated in some important fighting yet it was to meet an ignominious death at the "roof of the world."

Built at the Puget Sound Navy Yard, the USS *Worden* was

commissioned on 15 January 1935 and headed out on 1 April for her shakedown cruise that took her down the Pacific coast to Costa Rica. On 6 May, she transited the Panama Canal and steamed north to Washington, DC, to pick up Navy and political brass for a cruise down the Potomac River to visit Mount Vernon.

After this symbolic trip, she

The doomed USS *Worden* after hitting rocks in Constantine Harbor on 12 January 1943 during the occupation of Amchitka. USS *Dewey* (DD-349) is standing by in the right foreground while smaller boats rescue crewmembers of the destroyer. Note the sailors in the water and how the destroyer is rapidly settling. *Farragut*-class destroyers were considered unstable in heavy weather and in tight turns. This was compounded by war-time modifications that made them even more top-heavy and this is why all extra weight (such as the ship's bell) was removed.