

## **A Review of Allan L. Lawrence, Jr.'s**

### **Deadly PT Boat Patrols, A History: Task Group 50.1** **New Guinea 1942-43**

**-By-**

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This rather lengthy book, according to the author, who is the son of a crew member of *PT-113*, began life as a brief story about the Colt Model 1911 pistol which his father carried during World War II, and carried in a homemade leather gun belt made by his father.

The book gives the reader a detailed and seemingly well-researched overview of what the world was going through in the decade before and leading up to World War II. It was all very interesting, especially when one stops to consider that the author describes his father's life growing up, as member of the lifesaving service, a deputy police officer and a fireman and then, as a merchant seaman and to his enlistment in the Navy.

The author also describes to the reader how the USN acquired and converted a private yacht into the *USS Hilo*, one of the first PT boat Tenders. I found that to be interesting, inasmuch I was not aware of that ship's history.

Early in his naval career, the elder Lawrence was assigned to a type of vessel known as an Eagle Boat. This type of vessel was an anti-submarine vessel designed in the First World War. They were designed to be mass-produced like automobiles and their hulls did not have any curved lines to them. These ships were not that comfortable to go to sea on.

It was from this ship that the author's father was ordered to the PT Training Center at Melville, Rhode Island and as they say, the rest is history. Through his father's memories and other PT veterans' memories as well as his father's letters home, Lawrence deftly tells, in great detail, the history of what was known as Task Group 50.1.

This group consisted of boats from the original PT Squadron 2, which were sent to New Guinea, where they saw considerable action against the Japanese. Much of that history was told by the memories of the author's father and other PT veterans. For me, that made the book more compelling and more 'real' rather than the typical dry-history books.

The two things from the book which stayed with me long after reading this book was how the author describes how some PT boats, including his father's boat, the *PT-113*, transited the Cape Cod Canal from Melville, Rhode Island enroute to Martha's Vineyard.

Apparently, these boats caused some property damage to private property along the canal because no one on the boats knew if there was a speed limit in the canal. That must have been a sight to see. Once in port at Martha's Vineyard, in Edgartown Harbor, the *113* accidentally dropped two depth charges over the side.

If you want to know about a little known but important part of PT boat history, then look no further than this book. I highly recommend this book. The book is available soft cover at \$39.95. It will be available soon in a limited numbered edition hard bound at \$49.95. Both can be ordered directly from Mr. Lawrence at his email address of: [alawrencefm@comcast.net](mailto:alawrencefm@comcast.net).