

1997

## Heroes in Dungarees: The Story of the American Merchant Marine in World II

Andrew E. Gibson

John Bunker

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### Recommended Citation

Gibson, Andrew E. and Bunker, John (1997) "Heroes in Dungarees: The Story of the American Merchant Marine in World II," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 50 : No. 4 , Article 27.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol50/iss4/27>

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actions and motives but at placing the man in context of his time. Like so many of his generation, the young Galland was absorbed in aviation, and he survived two crashes (one nearly fatal) to fly in the Condor Legion during the Spanish Civil War. There he excelled in close air support, as he did early in World War II.

However, Galland the dedicated hunter yearned for fighters; indeed, the German term is *Jäger*. Combat success over France and Britain soon brought him to command of an Me-109 wing, Jagdgeschwader 26, which he led until his promotion to general in late 1941. At that time he was credited with ninety-four kills.

However, despite his exceptional combat success and love of the hunt, Adolf Galland was no war lover. He lost seven uncles in the First World War and two of his three brothers in the Second. With Germany burning down around him, his aircrews fought a losing battle against appalling odds, sustaining losses as high as 40 percent in aircraft and 25 percent in pilots per month. Yet morale held, as it did in the U-boat arm despite overall losses of 78 percent; there was no mutiny as in 1918. The difference was leadership—the exceptional variety represented by Adolf Galland and Karl Dönitz.

Galland's final mission, on 25 April 1945, was eventful. Flying an Me-262 jet, he scored his 104th victory, then was shot down and wounded for the third time. Following a yearlong interrogation by Allied debriefers, Galland went to Argentina to continue in aviation. He was only thirty-four years old.

Dolfo Galland developed a global following in the flying fraternity, one that included many former enemies. Baker aptly describes the former *jagdflieger's* postwar relationships and boldly explores the man's personal attitudes toward the horrors of the Nazi regime. Essentially, Galland and his contemporaries became ultimate pragmatists, trying to stem thousand-bomber raids that destroyed German cities while millions perished in concentration camps.

Aside from the enduring respect of his former opponents, Dolfo Galland leaves an even greater legacy. Confronted with the chilling wrath of Adolf Hitler and Hermann Goering, the general of the fighters stood by his aviators, defending them from vilification as incompetents and cowards. In doing so he risked his life to preserve his self-respect: Goering had condemned him to death, but Hitler intervened and sent him off to die in combat.

The contrast between the behavior of a Luftwaffe general who literally put his life on the line to protect subordinates against unwarranted political pressures, and some contemporary leaders who seem not to know what "loyalty down" requires, is appalling. For that reason alone, this excellent biography should be required reading at war colleges everywhere.

BARRETT TILLMAN  
Athena, Oregon

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Bunker, John. *Heroes in Dungarees: The Story of the American Merchant Marine in World War II*. Annapolis,

Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995.  
369pp. \$32.95

John Bunker's *Heroes in Dugarees* is a complete and well documented study of the American merchant marine during World War II. While Bunker provides the necessary facts to establish the importance of the essential supply lines provided by these ships, one is compelled to read this book as his tribute to his shipmates, and the many others like them, with whom he served from 1942 to 1945. His focus is on the courage, bravery, and ingenuity displayed by these men in a brutal war. The author, after his wartime service, went on to a distinguished career as a journalist, writing for the *Christian Science Monitor* and *San Diego Tribune*.

The longest continual battle of World War II, the Battle of the Atlantic, is today a dim memory. For almost six years German submarines and surface raiders attacked the merchant ships and their escorts that constituted the lifeline the Nazis were determined to destroy. Because each attack involved a relatively small number of ships, they rarely caught the public's attention. Only when the casualty lists are totaled is the magnitude of the battle realized. Until the Marines suffered their huge losses in the battles of Saipan and Tinian, no branch of the armed services sustained a higher percentage of casualties than the merchant mariners.

The merchant seamen who went down with their ships were civilians whose service was voluntary. As such, they are largely unsung and forgotten. It is Bunker's intention with this book that their contribution to the war effort receive proper recognition. For the

reader who is not familiar with this aspect of the war, Bunker's book is an important contribution. The author serves the reader well with his vivid, well researched descriptions in clear concise prose, using primary sources from the War Shipping Administration files, the National Archives, the Historical Division of the Navy Department, and numerous interviews with survivors.

Bunker's opening chapter describes the early days after America's entry in December 1941, when unarmed and unescorted merchant ships sailing along the U.S. Atlantic coast were easy targets for the German submarine commanders. Although the British had developed reasonably effective means for protecting merchant shipping over the previous two years, these seem to have been largely ignored when war came to the Americans. By August 1942, the Germans had sunk 383 Allied ships in the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and off the East Coast, areas under U.S. Navy protection. Winston Churchill later wrote, "In six months U-boats ravaged American waters almost uncontrolled and in fact almost brought us to the disaster of an indefinite prolongation of the war."

Prime targets for the Germans were tankers loaded with highly volatile fuel oil. The author graphically describes the attacks and fiery deaths that awaited their crews. Even aboard ships carrying less combustible cargoes, when the engine room was hit the scalding steam from a ruptured boiler meant no escape for the "black gang." In spite of the continuous slaughter, however, the

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ships kept sailing, and none was delayed by lack of crew.

Bunker examines in detail each theater. He recounts incredible feats of endurance during winter in the North Atlantic. He describes the Murmansk convoys and other efforts, often bordering on the suicidal, to supply the Soviets. One convoy, PQ 17, attracted attention because of an erroneous report that German battleships were preparing to break out into the Atlantic. Escort ships abandoned the convoy to challenge them. The merchant ships were reasonably well armed, and their naval and merchant gun crews gave a good account of themselves in what proved to be a highly uneven contest against bombing, strafing, and U-boat attacks. Of the original thirty-three ships that left Iceland, however, only ten got through. In addition to the loss of ships and crew, a hundred thousand tons of vitally needed war material was sent to the bottom of the sea.

Bunker's description of Japanese submarine attacks in the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean, where ships generally sailed unescorted, is particularly disturbing. The Germans were usually content to sink ships, and on occasion they offered help to the men in lifeboats. However, the Japanese seemed determined to leave no survivors. The author provides details of instances where surfaced Japanese submarines deliberately attempted to ram lifeboats and sprayed the occupants with machine-gun fire.

Throughout the war those who survived the destruction of their ship generally returned to the sea as soon as they were able. By the end of the war, thousands of Allied merchant ships were

delivering material that made victory possible. Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz praised their contribution, writing, "Our requirements were numbered in the millions of barrels of fuel to be transported thousands of miles to the scene of fleet operations. Our success in keeping the fleet properly fueled was dependent upon the delivery by these commercial ships. Not once did they fail."

In the nuclear age it is improbable that another war approaching the duration and scope of World War II will ever occur, but we still have to be prepared to support American forces overseas under hostile conditions. The need for crews like those described in Bunker's book, willing to venture into troubled waters, is bound to arise someday in the future.

ANDREW E. GIBSON  
Short Hills, New Jersey

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Kaufmann, J.E., and H.W. Kaufmann. *The Sleeping Giant: American Armed Forces between the Wars*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996. 216pp. \$55

The authors, a husband-and-wife team who in addition to teaching at the university level have combined to write on the early phases of World War II, make two significant points about the importance of the years 1919-1939 to the victory eventually achieved in 1945. Their first is that this important era has been neglected as an entity in the military literature. Although offhandedly referred to in biographies of World War II leaders or buried in opening