

**Volume 5**

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**PT Boats - Mighty Mites of WW II - II**

**Lead: During World War II, pound for pound the PT Boat was the most heavily armed ship in the U.S. Navy.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Patrol Torpedo boats, or as they were known, PT boats were often the first line of offense for the Allies in the dark early days of World War II in the southwest Pacific. They were powerful, swift and sleek, packing a punch out of all proportion to their size. A PT squadron extracted General Douglas MacArthur from**

**beleaguered Corregidor Island in the spring of 1942, and before larger ships were present in sufficient numbers they harried Japanese shipping and naval units. Like search and destroy missions in Vietnam, each night, squadrons of PT boats would head out to sea and audaciously attack anything that moved.**

**Life on the PT Boats was pretty spartan. Enlisted crew slept in tiny racks up front in the fo'c's'le. The diet was monotony itself - canned everything occasionally punctuated by the always blessed arrival of ice cream. The boats were typically stationed forward of the main base areas on the bright edge of contact with the enemy. By the time movies, canteens and**

**laundry facilities showed up the PTs were long gone.**

**Theirs was dangerous work often calling for close combat with well-armed opponents. By 1943, their navy had been so decimated that the Japanese were forced to supply island troops with barges that ran down the coastline at night. PT Boat captains would hide in the shallows under the cover of the shoreline and pounce with deadly surprise.**

**Small and often unheralded, the PT boats nevertheless played an indispensable role in the Allied victory in the Pacific during World War II.**

**At the University of Richmond, this  
is Dan Roberts.**

**Resources**

**Keresey, Dick. "Farthest Forward," *American Heritage*  
(July-August 1998): 60-73.**

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