

THE FIRST GEARING CLASS DESTROYER –

The first Gearing Class commissioned was: **USS FRANK KNOX DD- 742**. This year is the 75th Anniversary of the Gearing class destroyers. There is more to the story below. The **first seven** Gearing class destroyers launched were:

1. USS FRANK KNOX DD-742 commissioned 12-11-1944. Builder Bath IW (Iron Works) Maine
2. USS SUTHERLAND DD-743 commissioned 12-22-1944. Bath IW Maine
3. USS CHEVALIER DD-805 commissioned 01-09-1945. Bath IW Maine
4. USS HIGBEE DD- 806 commissioned 01-27-1945. Bath IW Maine
5. USS HAWKINS DD- 873 commissioned 02-10-1945. Builder Continental Steel Orange, Texas
6. USS BRENNER DD-807 commissioned 02-13-1945. Bath IW Maine
7. USS PERKINS DD- 877 commissioned 04-04-1945. Builder Continental Steel Orange, Texas

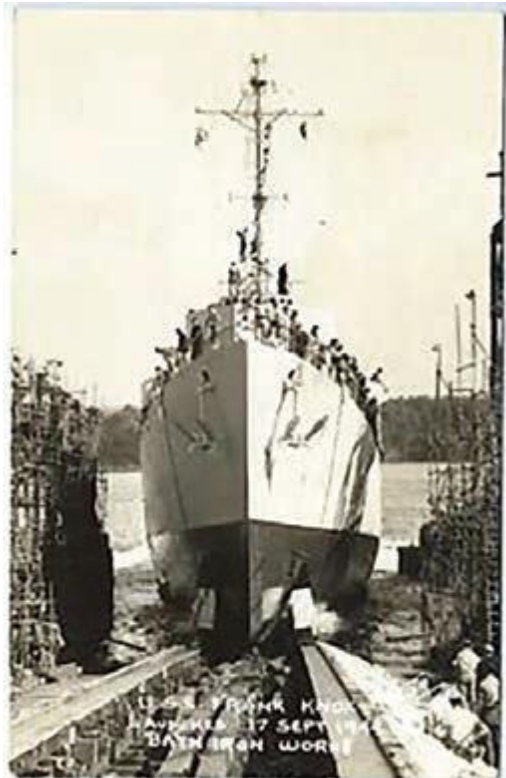
And the USS GEARING DD-710? GEARING was launched 02-18-1945 and commissioned 06-08-1945, too late to make it to the Pacific for a contribution to WWII. The builder was Federal Steel of New Jersey. In anticipation of the invasion of Japan, modifications were ordered to eleven of the first twelve GEARING class ships as follows: remove the forward torpedo tubes and replace with a tripod mast mounting an advanced radar antenna and equipment to track anticipated swarms of inbound enemy aircraft. The modifications took place at Boston Naval Shipyard starting in January 1945.

Three of the GEARING class were present in Tokyo Bay for the surrender of the Japan, USS FRANK KNOX, USS SUTHERLAND and USS PERKINS. Nine sailors from the FRANK KNOX were transported to the nearby USS MISSOURI BB-63 for the surrender ceremonies. Among those present were RD-1 Al Smith, TM-1 Gerald Harms, and seven others. Can you imagine being on the USS MISSOURI for the ceremonies? I'm going to try to identify the names of the other seven. It's rumored that only "right-arm rates" were selected (this is also subject to verification).

So, what about the USS BLUE DD- 744, USS BENHAM DD-796 and USS CUSHING DD- 797? They were in Tokyo Bay for the surrender. **You might win a bar bet or two with the following information.** USS BLUE was launched as a Sumner class destroyer. USS BENHAM and USS CUSHING were launched as Fletcher class destroyers; BENHAM was built in San Francisco by Bethlehem Steel and CUSHING was built on the east coast, Bethlehem Steel Mariners, Staten Is. NY .Both were

commissioned December and January 1944 respectively. The BLUE was built in Bethlehem's Mariners Point shipyard Staten IS. NY and commissioned late March 1944.

Converted GEARING class destroyers remained DD's until a fleet-wide change created the designation DDR in 1948 according to information sent by William Madden our latest Life Member. Thanks Bill!! FRANK KNOX and other converted ships remained DDRs until 01-01-1969 when they reverted to DD designation.



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