



received contracts for 69 of these ships in 1942; ultimately, 96 were built, 21 of which were transferred to the Royal Navy. They were laid down as gunboats (PG) and later redesignated frigates (PF) — the frequently used term *patrol frigate* is erroneous, based on the mistaken assumption that each letter in the

designation must stand for a word.

Actually, PF simply indicated that frigates were vessels of the patrol type, as opposed to the DEs, which, built to naval standards and most carrying torpedo tubes, were destroyer type ships. The frigate program was plagued by delays; only 12 had been completed before the end of 1943, by which time more than 200 DEs were in commission and the Allies were winning the Battle of the Atlantic. Thus, the Coast Guard was made re-

sponsible for manning 75 of the no longer essential frigates. Only two Canadian-built River-class vessels had Navy crews.

After the frigates were completed, their entry into service was often delayed by alignment problems with their triple-expansion reciprocating engines. Some had their main engines rebuilt after failing trials or during post-shakedown availability.

THE FIRST FRIGATES

The California-built frigates were ready first. Eighteen of them reported to the 7th Fleet in the Southwest Pacific in 1944, where they were joined by four of their Great Lakes sisters.

For the remainder of the year, they escorted convoys, made anti-submarine patrols, and occasionally provided fire support for American and Australian troops advancing westward along the northern coast of New Guinea and landing on islands offshore.

The USSs *Bisbee* and *Gallup* put rangers ashore on islands in



Above: Coast Guard Seaman 1/c Joseph Seppi died while manning a 40mm gun director aboard the USS *Mangos* in 1944.

Above right: The wardroom aboard the USS LSI-782 becomes a clinic for an emergency appendectomy in 1945.