



Forgotten Fleet: The Mothball Navy

Daniel Madsen

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A pictorial history of the U.S. Navy's mothball fleet, this handsome book takes a rare look at the so-called fleet behind the fleet, from the end of World War II to the present. Through photographs of the ships and shipyards where they were laid up and brief ship histories, it tells the story of how these ships were paid off and preserved, how some were reactivated, and how most left the reserve fleet to be broken up. Additional photos of the ships in action remind readers that forgotten though they were while in mothballs, many made their marks on history.

Year after year the warships lay quiet and lifeless, like boarded up old houses once full of activity that had outlived their usefulness. The row upon row of mostly now-anonymous vessels, hatches sealed shut, offer a bleak contrast to the drama of their wartime operations. You can almost hear the wind whistling through the masts and superstructures stripped of radars. Below decks there is only the sound of the dehumidifiers, removing moisture from the air, retarding the buildup of rust and deterioration. Berthing areas, repair shops and radio rooms have been frozen in time, looking exactly as they did when sealed decades before. Among them are such well-known ships as the *Enterprise* and the *Midway*, as well as little-known ones like the *Fall River*, and some that were laid up almost as soon as they were completed, like the *Oregon City*. Here too are the frigates and nuclear submarines of a later age. These are the ships of the forgotten fleet, built for war but resting at peace in coastal parking lots on both sides of the country, their story told for the first time.

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