



USS Ranger: The Navy's First Flattop from Keel to Mast, 1934-1946

Robert J. Cressman

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The USS *Ranger* (CV-4) was the U.S. Navy's first aircraft carrier to be built assuch from the keel up. The RANGER helped maintain the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration's Good Neighbor Policy, served as a platform for the development of new methods for the operation of carriers and carrier aircraft, continued the Navy's work in cold-weather flight operations, pioneered director-controlled antiaircraft fire, and trained many naval aviators. During World War II, the *Ranger* occupied center stage in Operation Torch (against the Vichy French positions in North Africa in 1942) and Operation Leader (against German shipping in 1943), which was the Navy's only carrier operation above the Arctic Circle during the war. In both instances, the ship's air group faced the requirement to hit legitimate military targets while minimizing civilian casualties, a problem the United States would confront again in later conflicts. Robert J. Cressman's emphasis on the human element in both peace and war reinforces his observation that carriers, like people, have multifaceted personalities, represented by not only the ship and its company but also the air group for which it serves as a home.

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