

The Development of U.S. Destroyers in Relation to Naval Limitation Treaties between 1920-1940

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TOPIC

During the inter-war period of 1920-1940, naval limitation treaties were created for the purpose of restricting the growth of naval forces for the five most influential naval powers of the time: the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy. U.S. destroyers played a dynamic role in naval composition and were to be limited by certain provisions of these naval limitation treaties. This research paper will focus specifically on the development of U.S. destroyers in respect to the naval limitations placed on them. I will address the implications of these restrictions and how U.S. destroyer construction affected the U.S. Navy. The treaties in focus will be used as primary resources, with particular attention to the context of the dialogue. These treaties influenced many aspects of U.S. naval strength leading into WWII and the inquiry into destroyer production is one important aspect that needs further study.



LITERATURE REVIEW

The United States Navy has undergone many innovations and changes during its history as an institution to safeguard Americans from threats precipitated by foreign and domestic enemies. Developments in the structure of the U.S. Navy have been used to expand foreign policy and in the event of war have been used to protect the American homeland. The development of destroyers in relation to naval limitation treaties between 1920 and 1940 is particularly important in my research as I desire to know how and why the U.S. Navy was structured the way it was. What were the agreements that decided the construction of certain types of destroyers over other designs? How did foreign policy dictate how the navy decided construction programs? The primary sources of the naval limitation treaties themselves give great insight into the world perspective on destroyer production that the U.S. would follow for many years. The language of the naval treaties is important in relation to U.S. destroyer production because of the emphasis the U.S. gives towards certain provisions of the treaty over other stipulations. Primary source research allows me to formulate my own argument as I am able to see the precise requisites used by the United States at the time to justify shipbuilding construction.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology I use to conduct research for my topic includes a strong emphasis on primary resources. The numerous treaties created in the 1920s and 30s helped to regulate and restrict the construction of several types of ships in the modern navies of the world. The language of the treaties seems to be straightforward but can be interpreted with inductive reasoning as many provisions are vague and can be deciphered in different ways. The language of the treaties highlights political jostling of nations as they negotiate for respect and power with one another. Specific references to destroyer tonnage and restrictions are made in these treaties and provide a good foundation for how the ship construction would have been changed to fit these new limitations. After reviewing these primary resources, my next steps are finding what other authors and historians have written on the subject of naval limitations under the treaties and how they influenced ship construction, most especially destroyers.



PURPOSE AND HYPOTHESIS

The purpose of this project is to learn more about the development of U.S. destroyers with the creation of naval limitations treaties between the years 1920 and 1940. Were U.S. destroyers limited by these series of treaties? If so, how were destroyers limited in scope by these treaties? How did these treaties influence destroyer construction and influence hostilities leading to WWII?

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WORK CITED

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