



Big Gun Battles: Warship Duels of the Second World War

Robert. C. Stern

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The outcome of much of the naval war in World War II was decided by the torpedo or the aerial bomb, making the submarine and aircraft carrier, the new arbiters of naval conflict. Despite this, there were a surprising number of ship-to-ship engagements involving the big guns of battleships and cruisers. Big Gun Battles recounts some of the most important, technically interesting, or obscure of these gunfire duels. Covering all theatres of the naval war, the battles selected demonstrate the changing face of surface warfare under the influence of rapidly improving fire-control systems, radar, and other sensors. By 1945 big ships could open fire at great ranges with a high probability of hitting with the first salvo. This was the pinnacle of gunnery excellence, but also heralded the end of naval gunnery as a major factor in sea warfare. Facing such deadly accuracy, navies looked to longer-ranged, smarter, weapons like surface-skimming missiles and homing torpedoes.



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