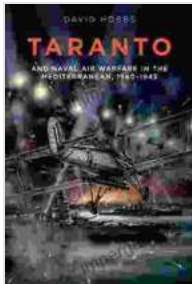


Taranto and Naval Air Warfare in the Mediterranean 1940-1945



Taranto: And Naval Air Warfare in the Mediterranean, 1940–1945 by Barrett Tillman

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Chapter 1: The Strategic Importance of Taranto

Taranto, located on the southern coast of Italy, was a major naval base for the Italian fleet. It was protected by a narrow entrance, making it difficult for enemy ships to enter. Taranto was also home to the Italian aircraft carrier Aquila, which gave the Italian fleet a significant advantage in airpower. As a result, Taranto was considered to be one of the most important naval bases in the Mediterranean.

The British Royal Navy recognized the strategic importance of Taranto and sought to neutralize the Italian fleet. In November 1940, the Royal Navy launched Operation Judgement, a daring raid on Taranto. The raid was a success, sinking three Italian battleships and crippling the Italian fleet.

Chapter 2: The British Raid on Taranto

The British raid on Taranto was one of the most successful naval attacks in history. The raid was planned by Admiral Andrew Cunningham, the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet. Cunningham assembled a force of two aircraft carriers, HMS Illustrious and HMS Formidable, and six battleships. The plan was for the aircraft carriers to launch a surprise attack on Taranto at night, while the battleships provided cover.

The raid was launched on the night of November 11, 1940. The British aircraft carriers approached Taranto undetected and launched their attack at 10:30 pm. The British aircraft were armed with torpedoes and bombs, and they quickly sank three Italian battleships: the Littorio, the Cavour, and the Duilio. The Italian aircraft carrier Aquila was also damaged in the attack.

Chapter 3: The Italian Response

The Italian fleet was devastated by the British raid on Taranto. The loss of three battleships and an aircraft carrier crippled the Italian fleet and gave the British Royal Navy a significant advantage in the Mediterranean. The Italian government was furious about the attack and demanded that the Royal Navy be punished.

In response to the British raid, the Italian fleet launched a number of attacks on British ships in the Mediterranean. However, these attacks were largely unsuccessful, and the Italian fleet was unable to regain its former strength. The British Royal Navy continued to dominate the Mediterranean for the rest of the war.

Chapter 4: The Battle of Cape Matapan

The Battle of Cape Matapan was a naval battle that took place in the Mediterranean Sea on March 28, 1941. The battle was fought between the British Royal Navy and the Italian fleet. The British fleet was led by Admiral Andrew Cunningham, while the Italian fleet was led by Admiral Angelo Iachino.

The Battle of Cape Matapan was a decisive victory for the British Royal Navy. The British fleet sank three Italian battleships, one cruiser, and two destroyers. The Italian fleet also lost over 2,000 sailors in the battle. The Battle of Cape Matapan effectively ended the Italian fleet's ability to operate in the Mediterranean Sea.

Chapter 5: Operation Vigorous

Operation Vigorous was a British naval operation that was launched in June 1942. The objective of the operation was to deliver supplies to the

besieged island of Malta. The operation was opposed by the Italian fleet, and a number of British ships were sunk or damaged in the fighting.

Operation Vigorous was a failure, and the British were unable to deliver the supplies to Malta. However, the operation did demonstrate that the British Royal Navy was still able to operate in the Mediterranean Sea despite the presence of the Italian fleet.

Chapter 6: Operation Pedestal

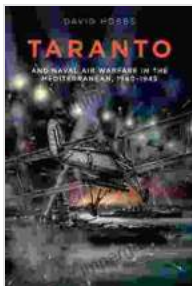
Operation Pedestal was a British naval operation that was launched in August 1942. The objective of the operation was to deliver supplies to the besieged island of Malta. The operation was opposed by the Italian fleet, and a number of British ships were sunk or damaged in the fighting. However, the operation was a success, and the British were able to deliver the supplies to Malta.

Operation Pedestal was a turning point in the Battle of the Mediterranean. The operation demonstrated that the British Royal Navy was able to operate in the Mediterranean Sea despite the presence of the Italian fleet. The operation also helped to ensure that the island of Malta remained in British hands.

Chapter 7: Operation Husky

Operation Husky was the Allied invasion of Sicily. The operation was launched in July 1943, and the Allies quickly overwhelmed the Italian forces on the island. The Allies then used Sicily as a base for the invasion of mainland Italy.

The Italian fleet played a minor role in the invasion of Sicily. The Italian fleet was unable to prevent the Allied landings, and



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