

## Italian Battleships of World War II (New Vanguard)

Mark Stille

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#1186817 in Books Osprey Publishing UK 2011-08-23 2011-08-23 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.76 x .19 x 7.231, .35 #File Name: 184908380048 pages Osprey Publishing UK | File size: 51.Mb

**Mark Stille : Italian Battleships of World War II (New Vanguard)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Italian Battleships of World War II (New Vanguard):

25 of 26 people found the following review helpful. Decent effort, but several negatives By Raphael A. Riccio Stille should be commended for addressing a subject too often minimized or given short shrift. He seems to have covered the technical side of the subject well, with many details on armament, armor thicknesses, speed, displacements, etc. However, although he breaks away from the old stereotypes of the poor performance of the Italian Navy, or Regia Marina, during WW II, it seems to me that he overcompensates by characterizing Regia Marina actions "aggressive", when in fact, although the Italians did exhibit generally good seamanship, overall the naval high command and senior officers at sea were overly cautious and missed several opportunities for decisive engagements with the British. To be sure, the Italians suffered from many problems, including poor air-naval cooperation and lack of radar, but results

achieved by the battleships were somewhat disappointing, especially in light of the fact that the Littorio class were well up to contemporary standards for ships of the type. As I read through the book, a number of errors, small and large, detracted from the overall quality and accuracy. To mention a few: beginning with the artwork on the cover itself, I am certain that the red and white recognition stripe scheme on Roma is incorrectly depicted; other references (in Italian) show four each alternating red and white stripes rather than six as depicted, and, as far as I have been able to determine from Italian sources, Roma never had the stripes on her quarterdeck, but only on the bow. The arrangement of the stripes is also incorrect, as the foremost should be red, not white. With respect to gun designation, as another reviewer has noted, it was annoying to see the 90mm AA guns referred to as 3.5 inch guns; I can accept referring to the 381mm main armament as 15 inch for the sake of English language readers, but calling a 90mm AA gun 3.5 inch would be like referring to the German 88 (or 8.8 cm) in inches, which would be sacrilegious. Another source of some annoyance is reference to the Littorio class ships as the Vittorio Veneto class; the Italians designated the class as the Littorio class - both ships were laid down the same day, and although Veneto was launched a few weeks before Littorio, Littorio was completed first and handed over to the Regia Marina first. A very minor point, in the box on page 18, the builder for Caio Duilio is listed as Cant di Stabia; perhaps Stille meant to refer to Cantieri di Stabia (Stabia Shipyards), but the commonly accepted Italian designation for the yard is Castellamare di Stabia. Finally, there is some doubt in my mind as to the provenance of many of the photographs in the book; although many are credited to the Naval History and Heritage Command, they look suspiciously like photographs from Italian naval archives or private collections, rather than US Navy photos. For the price, the book presents a fairly good basic introduction to WW II Italian battleships, but the reader should be aware that some errors do exist.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Very good overview of a relatively uncommon topic

By WryGuy2 "Italian Battleships of World War II", by Mark Stille, and illustrated by Paul Wright, is a short (48 pages) overview of the Italian battleships of the Regia Marina that served during World War II. The book, part of Osprey Publishing's New Vanguard series, describes the development of the Italian battleships (several of which dated from World War I and others from the 1930's). This includes providing data and analysis on weapons, armor, and powerplants, covers the differences between the "families" of battleships the Italians built, discusses their strengths and weaknesses relative to their missions and likely enemies, and covers their use during World War II. Probably close to half of the book is taken up by excellent photographs and illustrations.

One of the problems I have with the New Vanguard series is it's brevity ... 48 pages doesn't give a lot of room to cover the necessary topics, especially when you factor in the copious (but worthwhile) pictures and illustrations, table of content, index, bibliography, and so on. Mr Stiles, though, does an admirable (pun intended :-)) job of covering the material, giving good coverage of each Italian battleship, both from a technical point of view and in terms of it's service life and useage. About 2/3rds of the book cover the tech specs and development, while 1/3rd covers the battlehsip's operational use during the war. However, I would have liked the book to have been 20-40 pages longer. This isn't the author's fault, as Osprey dictates the page count for the series, but I suspect he had to trim out a great deal of useful info, particularly on the operational side.

In spite of the limited page count, I think the author succeeds in providing a very good overview of these warships. A lot of our perceptions of the poor performance of the Regia Marina in World War II was formed by wartime propaganda (and subsequently repeated in histories after the war.) Mr Stiles attempts to dispel a few myths, both on the Italian Navy's capabilities and on it's performance. He states that the Regia Marina was better prepared for war than it's sister services, and operationally, more aggressive. However, because of deficiencies in Italian equipment and training, and overly restrict rules of engagement (the fleet could only engage if it had a distinct superiority in ships over the British), the Italian Navy often performed poorly tactically.

I enjoyed this book and would recommend it to people wanting to know more about the Italian war at sea in the Mediterranean in general and Italian battleships in particular. Unless you're a naval expert from this time period, there's a a lot to learn here. Four stars.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... the italians did not posses adequate radar systems is pretty amazing that they decide to engage ine of the ...

By L. A Mantilla I was eager to understand the role of the Italian navy in the mediterranean given the fact that the italians did not posses adequate radar systems is pretty amazing that they decide to engage ine of the most powerful navies in the world at that time

Often overlooked as a naval power of WWII, Italy's Regia Marina was, upon the declaration of war against France, the fourth largest navy in the world. Despite its numbers, the Italian fleet was made up of largely obsolete vessels, none being equipped with radar, and had a reputation for having inadequately-trained crews. Added to these drawbacks, the Italian commanders did not enjoy the discretion of command at sea that their counterparts in the service of other nations did, being directed closely by the Supermarina (Italian Naval Headquarters). Despite these obstacles, and the heavy losses inflicted upon the fleet by the Royal Navy while in harbour at Taranto, the battleships of the Italian Navy enjoyed a good reputation for being well-designed, and served with courage and determination at Punto Stilo/Calabria, Sirte, Cape Spartivento, and Cape Matapan. Mark Stille details, with the aid of many stunning photographs, including several from the Italian Navy's own archives, the battleships of one of the forgotten navies of WWII.

"...an excellent primer for those interested in learning about Italian battleships of World War Two." -Luke R. Bucci,

IPMS/USA "The seven battleships of the Regia Marina that served in World War II enjoyed reputations superior to the Italian fleet as a whole ... This well-illustrated monograph gives the reader a thorough technical and operational look at the ships." - Richard D. Burgess, *Seapower* (December 2011)

About the Author Mark E. Stille (Commander, United States Navy, retired) received his BA in history from the University of Maryland and also holds an MA from the Naval War College. He has worked in the intelligence community for 30 years including tours on the faculty of the Naval War College, on the Joint Staff and on US Navy ships. He is currently a senior analyst working in the Washington DC area. He is the author of numerous Osprey titles, focusing on naval history in the Pacific. He is also the author of several wargames.