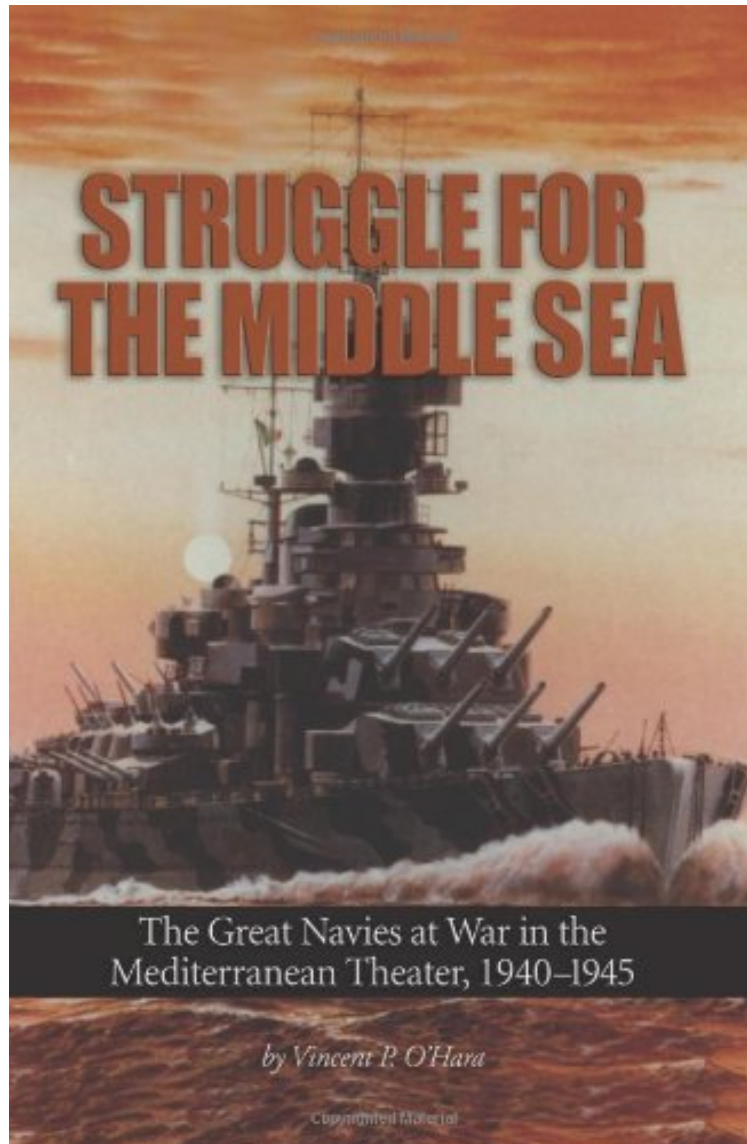


(Free and download) Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean Theater, 1940-1945

Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean Theater, 1940-1945

Vincent P. O'Hara

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Vincent P. O'Hara : Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean Theater, 1940-1945 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean Theater, 1940-1945:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *Balanced Account of WWII Naval operations in the Mediterranean* By Demosthenes Struggles for the Middle Sea is a carefully researched, and very thorough, analysis of Italian naval activity in WWII. Perhaps not surprisingly, it is also a fairly thorough analysis of the conduct of the Royal Navy in the Med. When looked at, bit by bit, day by day, engagement by engagement, the handling of the Royal Navy in the Med in WWII does not come off very well. Indeed, one of the themes of this book, unstated by the author, might have been: "How could the Royal Navy have squandered so many resources?" Over and over, the Royal Navy is overconfident, over aggressive, and overly prone to taking bad risks, and loses ship after ship for really doubtful gains. This is where the Royal Navy was bled white. The author says not a word of criticism of the conduct of the Royal Navy, yet the facts speak for themselves. 59 of 61 people found the following review helpful. *Handy Reference on WW2 Naval War in the Med* By Brandon Musler *STRUGGLE FOR THE MIDDLE SEA* is primarily a reference work focusing on surface naval actions in the Med during WW2. It covers the entire war and all the major powers including Britain, France, Germany and the US but best documents those actions which impacted Italy's maritime war (and so the period from 6/40 to 9/43 is of most interest.) To some extent this work is meant as an antidote for Anglo-centric (and German) accounts of the naval war in the Med which focus on Italy's failure to win, or even participate in, a decisive surface action in the Nelsonian tradition. O'Hara's thesis is that Italy ground out the naval war of attrition that was best suited to its war aims and limited capabilities. In the Central Med the Regia Marina generally succeeded in achieving its goal of sea control. The author's view is that while the Royal Navy was certainly successful in winning "sea control victories," strategically speaking it simply had its feet set wrong. His key point is summarized on page 259: "With regard to Italy's mercantile war ... 98 percent of the men and 90 percent of the material that set forth from Italian ports for Libya, Tunisia, of the Balkans arrived safely." Those who enjoy naval games and simulations will find a lot to like here regardless of whether they agree with O'Hara's overall thesis. By his definition Italian warships (from minesweepers on up to battleships,) participated in 34 of the 55 major surface actions fought in the Mediterranean (including the Red Sea,) during the 5 years of WW2. The accounts of all 55 battles includes an order of battle table listing the ships (by type,) formations, and commanders involved. And, as befits a work with a tactical focus, there are lots of maps and tactical illustrations (27 to be exact,) to help place the operations in perspective. Of course the fights sparked off by Allied attempts to run convoys through to Malta are included but, again, O'Hara's framework ALSO shows the many battles that were fought over Italian convoys etc... This book strikes me as a perfect complement for Greene and Massignani's *THE NAVAL WAR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN 1940-1943* or (so I'm told,) De Belot's *THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN 1939-1945*. The reason I say this is that things like grand strategy, economics, diplomacy, Taranto, special forces and the submarine war are mentioned in perspective but given very little direct focus or analysis in this work. Therefore it shouldn't be your first book on the Med. Overall, however, I think this will be a worthwhile addition to almost anybody's WW2 naval library; most particularly if you are looking for a detailed accounting of tactical surface actions fought by escorts, destroyers and cruisers of the Italian Navy. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. maybe it was *Mare Nostrum* after all By Charles from Redondo Beach This is an excellent story of an overlooked war. I hadn't realized how much the Italian Navy did during World War II. Until I read the book, I never knew the Italian Navy sailed with the Allies after the surrender. I must have been blinded by the Royal Navy bias that seems to populate many histories.

The Mediterranean Sea is the maritime crossroads where Europe, Asia and Africa meet. It was the most intensely contested body of water in World War II. More major naval actions were fought in the Mediterranean than in the Atlantic or Pacific. Its waters witnessed carrier strikes, battle-line shootouts, cruiser-destroyer engagements, convoy attacks, coastal actions, amphibious assaults, and bitter submarine campaigns. Despite the importance of the Mediterranean war, however, its recent literature is remarkably sparse and largely one-sided. *The Struggle for the Middle Sea* is a fresh study of the Mediterranean naval war. It analyses the actions and performances of each of the five major navies, the British, Italian, French, German, and American within a chronological, operational narrative of the entire five year campaign, and examines, without partisanship, the national imperatives that drove much of the action. *The Struggle for the Middle Sea* sidesteps the myths that haunt this campaign, like Great Britain enjoyed a moral advantage over Italy, or the French were German puppets, or the North African campaign contributed to the eventual Allied victory. The book documents how the British Royal Navy, despite brilliant victories, was bled white in a campaign with questionable strategic goals; how Italy followed its own coherent naval strategy, much to the frustration of its German ally; how the Marine Nationale was the strength of the independent French state and how it fought the Allies--and rejected the Axis--to maintain that independence. Finally, while the book concentrates on the 1940 to 1943 period, it also covers Germany's improvised and remarkably successful fighting withdrawal at sea from 1943-1945.

"In essence, Mr. O'Hara has given us a straightforward account of the naval war in the Mediterranean and proved his point that the Italian navy functioned in a professional and courageous manner. It is a welcome and clarifying addition to the existing literature on the Mediterranean campaign." ?Sol Schindler, *The Washington Times* ".A remarkably

thorough narrative and analysis of a complicated topic. . . .The breadth and depth of the author's research is impressive. The text is thoroughly supported by endnotes and an excellent biography?a balanced assortment of published and unpublished official records of Italian, British, French, and German sources inspires confidence. The narrative, written in a clear, workman-like style, is supported by extensive graphics. . . .This book belongs in any respectable library of World War II naval scholarship. Readers already familiar with the subject almost certainly will find something new in its narrative and interpretations, and newcomers to the field will find it an excellent place to start.” ?Nautical Research Journal“Vince O’Hara has been a serious chronicler of the surface engagements of World War II and has now added the Mediterranean to the saga. The numerous surface actions in World War II still offer lessons for all of us in the 21st century. O’Hara’s goal of expanding our understanding with extensive research in four languages and being very readable has been achieved with the third in his series in *Struggle for the Middle Sea*.” ?Jack Greene, co-author of *Rommel’s North Africa Campaign: September 1940–November 1942*“Many previous histories of the war in the Mediterranean have been colored by an implicit acceptance of a well-established mythology. Vince O’Hara brings a fresh approach to the conflict in this theater by exploring the strategic objectives and the performance of the major combatants in a balanced way. His extension of the account to include the French and the Americans is to be commended.” ?John Jordan, editor, *Warship*“In a concise but comprehensive narrative, O’Hara deftly examines the strategies and expertly presents the campaigns of each of the major naval powers waged in the Middle Sea between 1940 and 1945. With a fresh perspective, he illustrates just how frustrating a naval theater the Mediterranean was for everyone, and yet how the respective navies largely met their objectives. As the author shows, littoral warfare in the Mediterranean was unexpectedly demanding, a lesson that still must be heeded today.” ?Karl Zingheim, Historian, USS Midway Museum“O’Hara steamrolls the chauvinism and ‘common knowledge’ that have obscured what actually happened in the Mediterranean, and gives his readers what they have come to expect?both sides of a gritty story.” ?Richard Worth, author of *Fleets of World War II*“A fresh and comprehensive examination of surface combat in the Mediterranean in World War II, *Struggle for the Middle Sea* offers detailed accounts of the actions of the five major navies including forgotten or neglected aspects such as the Royal Navy’s costly Aegean campaign and German efforts in the Adriatic, Aegean, and off the coast of Italy following the Italian armistice. O’Hara’s careful analysis also sheds new light on the successful maritime strategy and often credible performance of the Italian Navy. An insightful and important contribution to our understanding of the naval war in the Mediterranean.” ?Barbara Brooks Tomblin, author of *With Utmost Spirit: Allied Naval Operations in the Mediterranean, 1942–1945*From the Back Cover“A welcome and clarifying addition to the existing literature on the Mediterranean campaign.” ?The Washington Times“. . . .A remarkably thorough narrative and analysis of a complicated topic. . . .The breadth and depth of the author's research is impressive....This book belongs in any respectable library of World War II naval scholarship. Readers already familiar with the subject almost certainly will find something new in its narrative and interpretations, and newcomers to the field will find it an excellent place to start.” ?Nautical Research Journal“A new and stunningly important view of World War II...a fabulously readable and important book.” ?Defense Foreign Affairs Strategy Policy

The Mediterranean is the maritime crossroads where Europe, Asia, and Africa meet. More major naval actions were fought there than in the Atlantic or Pacific yet remarkably little has been written about the subject. This fresh study of the Mediterranean’s naval war analyzes the actions and performances of the five major navies?British, Italian, French, German, and American?during the entire five-year campaign and examines the national imperatives that drove each nation’s maritime strategy. *Struggle for the Middle Sea* provides a history of the entire campaign from all perspectives and covers Germany’s largely unknown?and remarkably successful?struggle to employ sea power in the Mediterranean after the Italian armistice. Vincent P. O’Hara is a naval historian and the author and editor of numerous books including *To Crown the Waves* and *On Seas Contested*. He holds a history degree from the University of California at Berkeley and lives in Chula Vista, CA.

About the AuthorVincent P. O’Hara is an independent scholar and the author of nine works including five published by the Naval Institute Press, most recently *Torch*. His articles have appeared in the *Naval War College*, *Warship*, *MHQ*, *Storia Militare*, and other periodicals and journals. He holds a history degree from the University of California, Berkeley.