



Visio Series

TEAM VISIO **WARSHIPS**

A Visual and Interactive Atlas
of History, Wrecks, and Icons of the Sea

intra

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WARSHIPS

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of History, Wrecks, and Icons of the Sea**

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Introduction

For centuries, the sea has been one of the great frontiers of human history. A commercial route, a stage for exploration, a channel for exchange and conquest, but also a battlefield where the fate of nations was decided amid rolling waves, cannon smoke, and the clash of steel. In every era, warships have embodied the highest expression of technology, military strategy, and human ingenuity. They are not merely armed means of transportation, but instruments of power, national symbols, and at times even cultural icons.

This volume brings together (in order of launch year) a selection of naval vessels that shaped the twentieth century and beyond, each with its own history, strategic role, and often a fate as tragic as it is emblematic. From battleships to aircraft carriers, from cruisers to submarines, the book includes vessels that, at different moments in history, represented the pinnacle of military innovation and maritime power projection.

The aim is not to compile an exhaustive catalog of modern naval history, but to offer a carefully curated journey that combines historical rigor with a clear, accessible narrative. The focus is not only on the technical characteristics of each ship, but also on the context in which it operated, the events that defined its service life, and the legacy that continues to inspire interest and remembrance today.

The selection spans continents and oceans, featuring British, American, Japanese, Italian, German, French, and other navies, in order to provide an international and comparative perspective. Some of these ships have survived and can now be visited as floating museums; others rest on the seafloor, silent witnesses in underwater landscapes that divers and remotely operated vehicles have brought back into view.

Through the pages of this book, readers can follow an ideal journey through time and space, supported by historical and contemporary photographs, maps, and QR codes that allow precise localization of preservation sites or sinking locations. In this way, digital technology becomes a bridge between eras, enabling a transition from black-and-white photographs of a distant past to real-time views of the ship—or its wreck—transforming historical memory into a direct and personal experience.

READING NOTES

To enrich the reading experience and make it more immersive, the book includes QR codes that provide immediate access to external digital content. A QR code is a two-dimensional barcode that, when scanned with the camera of a smartphone, tablet, or computer, automatically opens a link.

Specifically, for each entry you will find several main QR codes::



Google Maps



Google Earth



YouTube

Below each QR code, only the logo of the corresponding platform is shown, ensuring a clean, quick, and visually organized experience.

To use this feature correctly:

1. Open your device's camera and frame the QR code.
2. If your device supports automatic QR scanning, a clickable link will appear.
3. Alternatively, you can use a free QR code reader app, easily available from digital app stores.

PART I.

The Dawn of the Giants and the Fire of the Great War (1900–1918)

This section documents the crucial transitional period that marked the abandonment of nineteenth-century naval concepts and the rise of new, revolutionary design philosophies. The ships of this era were the prototypes of the future titans of the seas, defining the technologies and tactics that would dominate the global conflicts to come.

Battleship IJN Mikasa (1900)

At the dawn of the twentieth century, while the great Western powers were competing for supremacy at sea, the Japanese Empire was decisively embarking on its path toward global power status. The ship that best embodies this historic transition is undoubtedly the battleship IJN Mikasa, a symbol of Japan's military modernization and the undisputed protagonist of the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). Today, Mikasa is the only surviving pre-dreadnought battleship in the world and is preserved as a museum ship in Yokosuka, overlooking Tokyo Bay—one of the most fascinating naval monuments on the planet.

Launched on November 8, 1900, at the Vickers shipyards in Barrow-in-Furness, United Kingdom, Mikasa was commissioned as part of a massive Japanese naval expansion strategy inspired by the British model. Designed according to pre-dreadnought standards, the ship combined heavy armament in twin turrets at the bow and stern with secondary artillery along the sides, extensive Harvey steel armor, and steam propulsion distributed over two propellers. Mikasa represented the technological peak of turn-of-the-century battle fleets: powerful, stable, well protected, and ideally suited for classic short-range naval engagements.

It was at the Battle of Tsushima, on May 27, 1905, that Mikasa became legend. Serving as the flagship of the Japanese Combined Fleet under Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō, Mikasa led the decisive clash against the Russian Baltic Fleet, which had arrived exhausted after an 18,000-mile intercontinental voyage. Japanese tactics—based on speed, concentrated firepower, and superior maneuverability—proved devastating. Within hours, the Russian fleet was annihilated, and Mikasa herself took an active role in the sinking or capture of numerous enemy vessels. It was the triumph of the Japanese navy and the beginning of a new geopolitical order in Asia.

The Battle of Tsushima marked the first time in modern history that an Asian power defeated a European power in a large-scale conflict, and Mikasa immediately became its living symbol. Yet the ship's fate was also shaped by tragedy: just weeks after the end of the war, on September 11, 1905, a devastating internal explosion aboard the ship (possibly caused by unstable ammunition) sank Mikasa in the harbor of Sasebo and killed more than 250 crew members. The battleship was nonetheless salvaged, restored, and returned to service in 1906.

After a long operational career, the ship was gradually relegated to coastal defense and training duties and was officially decommissioned in 1923. The signing of the Washington Naval Treaty, which imposed strict limits on battle fleets, marked the end of her life as a combat unit. Thanks to the intervention of naval authorities and historians, however, Mikasa was spared from scrapping. In 1926 she was converted into a permanent museum ship, dry-docked at the Yokosuka naval port.

Mikasa also underwent a second major restoration: during the American occupation of Japan after World War II, the ship was neglected and fell into severe disrepair. Only in the 1950s, with the support of U.S. admirals such as Chester Nimitz, did conservation efforts begin that restored Mikasa to her original splendor. Today, visiting Mikasa is a journey through time: from her artillery to her teak decks, from crew quarters to the command bridge, every detail tells the story of life aboard a battleship at the dawn of the “short century.”

In her silent anchorage at Yokosuka, Mikasa is not merely a museum, but a living testament to an era in which naval power defined the world order and Japan, entering the ranks of the great powers, prepared for a century of global prominence. Measuring 131 meters in length and displacing more than 15,000 tons, the ship represents a perfect synthesis of tradition and innovation, imperial ambition and technological mastery. Her survival to the present day makes her a unique case worldwide—a naval monument linking the age of sail to the age of missiles, continuing to tell—through steel, wood, and memory—the stories of those who sailed the seas to change the course of history.



Mikasa, 1905

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Mikasa, today – Photo: 2017, Monado /Wikimedia



Mikasa, today – Photo: 2021, Wikimedia

Name	IJN Mikasa
Type	Pre-dreadnought battleship (Mikasa class)
Country	Japan
Launch Year	1900
Shipyard	Vickers, Barrow-in-Furness, United Kingdom
Displacement	15,140 tons (full load)
Dimensions	Length 131.7 m, Beam 23.2 m, Draft 8.2 m
Propulsion	2 triple-expansion steam engines, 25 Belleville boilers, 2 propellers; 15,000 hp
Max speed	18 knots (33 km/h)
Range	9,000 nautical miles at 10 knots
Armament	4 × 305 mm guns, 14 × 152 mm guns, 20 × 76 mm guns, 4 × 47 mm guns, 4 torpedo tubes
Armor	Belt: 229 mm, Turrets: 254 mm, Deck: 76 mm
Crew	830
Current status	Museum ship since 1926



82-19 Inaokacho,
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0003, Japan



35°17'06"N 139°40'27"E



IJN Mikasa
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