



Battleship Musashi: The Making and Sinking of the Worlds Biggest Battleship

By Akira Yoshimura

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Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the man who planned the attack on Pearl Harbor, said that the three great follies of the world were the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids, and the battleship Musashi. Yamamoto understood that sheer size and firepower would not be decisive factors in the battle for naval supremacy in the Pacific.

The Musashi was massive-uptight it would have approached the size of the Chrysler Building. Outfitted with eighteen-inch armor plating and nine eighteen-inch guns, the largest ever mounted on a warship, the Musashi was considered by its creators to be invincible and unsinkable. Yet during its two years of active duty with the Combined Fleet, it never fired a single shot against another ship. It was sunk, as Yamamoto had predicted, by torpedoes and bombs.

Akira Yoshimura's dramatic reconstruction of the birth of the Musashi portrays a nation preparing for total war. Under these extreme conditions, courage, genius, and integrity coexisted with brutality, folly, and paranoia. During the more than four years it took to build and outfit it, shipyard engineers and their Navy mentors were faced with seemingly insurmountable technical problems and plagued by natural calamities and the constant fear of espionage. The solutions they found to each successive crisis were sometimes brilliant, sometimes absurd. *Battleship Musashi* is a tribute to the men who achieved this engineering marvel and a testament to the excesses of bureaucratic militarism.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Japan's leading non-fiction writer on military and naval subjects, AKIRA YOSHIMURA was born in Tokyo in 1927. His published works in Japanese include a best-selling account of the construction and wartime role of the Zero fighter.

The ship shown on the jacket is the battleship Yamato, which was identical in size and design to the Musashi. Such was the secrecy of the Musashi project that no clear photograph of the ship survived the war. (Courtesy of Shizuo Fukui)

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