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Battleships and Battle-Cruisers, 1884-1984: A Bibliography and Chronology

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Smith, Myron J., Jr. *Battleships and Battle-Cruisers, 1884-1984: A Bibliography and Chronology*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1985. 750pp. \$150

Myron Smith's excellent bibliographical works on the U.S. Navy have always been remarkably valuable works, but the publisher has taken such accolades too literally and priced this valuable work beyond the reach of all but the most determined and well-heeled research library. This is a great shame for this volume would have been very useful to many a ship buff and penniless scholar devoted to naval history. In fact, the volume is so useful that I would not hesitate to recommend it to any naval historian working on the last 100 years.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first is a bibliographical listing of 5,442 items and the second is a chronology listing all the important dates relating to the history of battleships and battle cruisers.

The bibliographical section is divided into four subsections: Reference works, including biographies and manuscript guides; general and technical studies which range from gunnery to camouflage painting; individual vessels arranged by country; and, finally, more than 200 pages of references to institutional and operational history, arranged by nations and major operations. This first part is well served by two indexes, one by author, and another by ships' names and battles.

The second part is a chronology which follows the development and

deployment of the all-big-gun capital ship from the launching of the H.M.S. *Colossus* in 1882 to the recommissioning of the U.S.S. *Iowa* in 1984. The chronology is indexed by ships' names with reference to the dates in the chronology.

Despite its bulk, Smith honestly admits that the guide is not definitive. "Nevertheless, what we offer covers virtually all factors surrounding the great vessels (political, economic, technical, and operational) published between 1884 and 1984. As a reference tool, the guide will permit its user to determine quickly what kinds of material are available and help him to establish a basis for further research." One can hardly ask for more, when the compiler has attempted to comb the literature in 10 languages—English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Japanese, Swedish, Czech and Polish. There is little point in quibbling over one's favorite obscure reference which might be missing or carping that a small number of references do not indicate that they are reprints of another citation. A specialist on any particular ship, action, or period may well be able to add a few more citations, but few if any will have the general breadth of information reflected here. This bibliography is a remarkably useful tool which can provide clues to sources far wider in scope than its title suggests.

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