



Sweet Pea at War: A History of USS Portland (CA-33)

William Thomas Generous

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Few ships in American history have had as illustrious a history as the heavy cruiser USS Portland (CA-33), affectionately known by her crew as "Sweet Pea". With the destruction of most of the US battleship fleet at Pearl Harbor, cruisers such as Sweet Pea carried the biggest guns the Navy possessed for nearly a year after the start of World War II. This volume describes in harrowing detail how Portland and her sisters protected the precious carriers and held the line against overwhelming Japanese naval strength. Portland was instrumental in the dramatic American victories at the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Battle of Midway, and the naval battle of Guadalcanal - conflicts that historians regard as turning points in the Pacific war. Portland was the only cruiser ever to fight twice in night battles against enemy battleships, winning both times, and her skilled crew kept her from being hit during innumerable attacks by kamikazes. She rescued nearly 3000 sailors from sunken ships, some of them while she herself was badly damaged. Only a colossal hurricane ended her career, but she sailed home from that too. Based on extensive research in official documents and interviews with members of the ship's crew, "Sweet Pea at War" recounts the history of US Portland, from launching to scrapping, arguing that she deserves to be remembered as one of the most important ships in US naval history.

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