



The Battle of Leyte Gulf: The Last Fleet Action (Twentieth-Century Battles)

H. P. Willmott

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"The Battle of Leyte Gulf was an extremely unusual battle. It was unusual on five separate counts that are so obvious that they are usually missed. It was unusual in that it was a series of actions, not a single battle. It was unusual as a naval battle in that it was fought over five days; historically, naval battles have seldom spread themselves over more than one or two days. It was unusual in terms of its name. This battle involved a series of related actions subsequently grouped together under the name of just one of these engagements, but in fact none of the actions were fought inside Leyte Gulf.... More importantly, it was unusual in that it was a full-scale fleet action fought after the issue of victory and defeat at sea had been decided, and it was unusual in that it resulted in clear, overwhelming victory and defeat." —from Chapter One

The Battle of Leyte Gulf—October 22-28, 1944—was the greatest naval engagement in history. In fact the battle was four separate actions, none of which were fought in the Gulf itself, and the result was the destruction of Japanese naval power in the Pacific. This book is a detailed and comprehensive account of the fighting from both sides. It provides the context of the battle, most obviously in terms of Japanese calculations and the search for "a fitting place to die" and "the chance to bloom as flowers of death." Using Japanese material never previously noted in western accounts, H.P. Willmott provides new perspectives on the unfolding of the battle and very deliberately seeks to give readers a proper understanding of the importance of this battle for American naval operations in the following month. This careful interrogation of the accounts of "the last fleet action" is a significant contribution to military history.

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