



# British Cruisers: Two World Wars and After

*Norman Friedman*

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Format: Kindle eBook

### Kurzbeschreibung

For most of the twentieth century Britain possessed both the world's largest merchant fleet and its most extensive overseas territories. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Royal Navy always showed a particular interest in the cruiser – a multi-purpose warship needed in large numbers to defend trade routes and police the empire. Above all other types, the cruiser's competing demands of quality and quantity placed a heavy burden on designers, and for most of the inter-war years Britain sought to square this circle through international treaties restricting both size and numbers. In the process she virtually invented the heavy cruiser and inspired the large 6in-armed cruiser, neither of which, ironically, served her best interests. For the first time this book seeks to comprehend the full policy background, from which a different and entirely original picture emerges of British cruiser development.

After the war the cruiser's role was reconsidered and the final chapters of the book cover modernisations, the plans for missile-armed ships and the convoluted process that turned the 'through-deck cruiser' into the Invincible class light carriers. With detailed appendices of ship data, and illustrated in depth with photos and A D Baker's specially commissioned plans, *British Cruisers* truly matches the lofty standards set by Friedman's previous books on British destroyers. *Pressestimmen*

This latest work from Norman Friedman is in many respects a sequel to the same author's two books on British destroyers, and those who purchased the latter books will know what to expect. In determining the focus and structure of the book the author has made a number of important decisions. The starting point for his descriptions of the development of each of the ships covered is the material held in the various British archives: Admiralty reports, Ships' Covers and Constructors' Workbooks. The line drawings are uniformly of a very high standard and although the photographs are excellent the inclusion of images taken later in the ship's career tends to interrupt the design narrative. However, many readers will find this a strength, and there is no doubting the depth of Dr Friedman's research. The quantity (and quality) of the illustrations is particularly impressive, and the production values of the book are everything one has come to expect from the publisher. (Warships - Naval Books of the Year) It presents amazingly detailed information on the design and construction of each class of vessels. The author identifies how the need for cruisers sprang from the protection of British trade across its large empire and even larger spheres of economic and political influence. There is a wealth of information on how the naval treaties of the 1920s and 1930s were a constraint to design. There is a detailed account of early attempts to integrate aviation in the form of a catapult for a fixed wing float-plane or seaplane. This was abandoned in the 1940s and replaced during the 1950s with one or more rotating wing or STOL/VTOL aircraft. In the last section, nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems emerge to threaten the cruiser's survival. Because the major British shipbuilder, Vickers, had a yard in Spain and major shipbuilders competed for contracts worldwide, Friedman also opens a window on international naval history. The author uses a close integration of text, photographs and drawings to transmit masses of technical and visual information. The layouts introducing each chapter are stunning, high resolution two-page spreads. For readers used to deciphering censored images, they are a revelation. There are also additional half-page plans, which are finely detailed. - *The Northern Mariner*

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