

HEARTS OF STEEL

The Warship Paintings of Paul Wright

Paul Wright

'If any single event can be said to have changed anyone's life then a hot July day in 1959 certainly changed mine. The event was a school trip to Portsmouth Naval Dockyard arranged for us ten-year-old schoolboys... we visited HMS Victory in the morning and then we were escorted to a motor launch for a tour of the dockyard. Our launch rounded the bend and there before us like a block of white flats set on an azure mirror-like sea lay HMS Vanguard, the last and largest British battleship, the sheer size and grace of her simply took my breath away...'

So writes the artist Paul Wright in his introduction to this superb book of his paintings of warships. Inspired as a boy, he embarked upon a career as a painter and illustrator maintaining his passion for the steel-hulled warships that dominated the oceans of the world for over a century. His meticulous paintings of famous warships of the 20th-21st century capture the grace, strength and sheer brutal power of these massive vessels. The paintings included in *Hearts of Steel* represent the leading battleships, carriers, cruisers, destroyers, frigates and submarines of the Royal Navy, the US Navy, the Imperial Japanese Navy, the Imperial German Navy, the Kriegsmarine, the Italian Navy and the French Navy.

Each painting is accompanied by a brief history of the ship, the purpose for which she was built and her consequent career at sea. The artist also describes the technique used in his paintings, the importance of understanding the architecture of the vessel, and the need to create drama with the sea and sky as background.

Anyone who has a passion for naval ships, or who appreciates the masterly skill required to capture such vessels in paint, will love this beautiful book.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Wright, born in 1947, studied at the Farnham School of Art in the 1960s, since when he has been a full-time and highly successful maritime painter and illustrator. His work is represented in the Permanent Collection Royal Navy Museum, Portsmouth, and in private collections throughout the world.

In 1997 he was commissioned by the officers and men of HMS *Chatham* during their duty as headquarters ship for the hand over of Hong Kong to China to paint a portrait of their ship and HMV *Britannia* during the events of that week. In 2000 his work for the Patrick O'Brian novels was exhibited by the Jinishian Gallery of Connecticut at the New York Yacht Club and the 5th Avenue Club. More recently Paul has completed two large murals for the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, and carried out mural paintings for the new Cunard superliner *Queen Mary II*. He has regularly exhibited at the Royal Society of Marine Artists in London.

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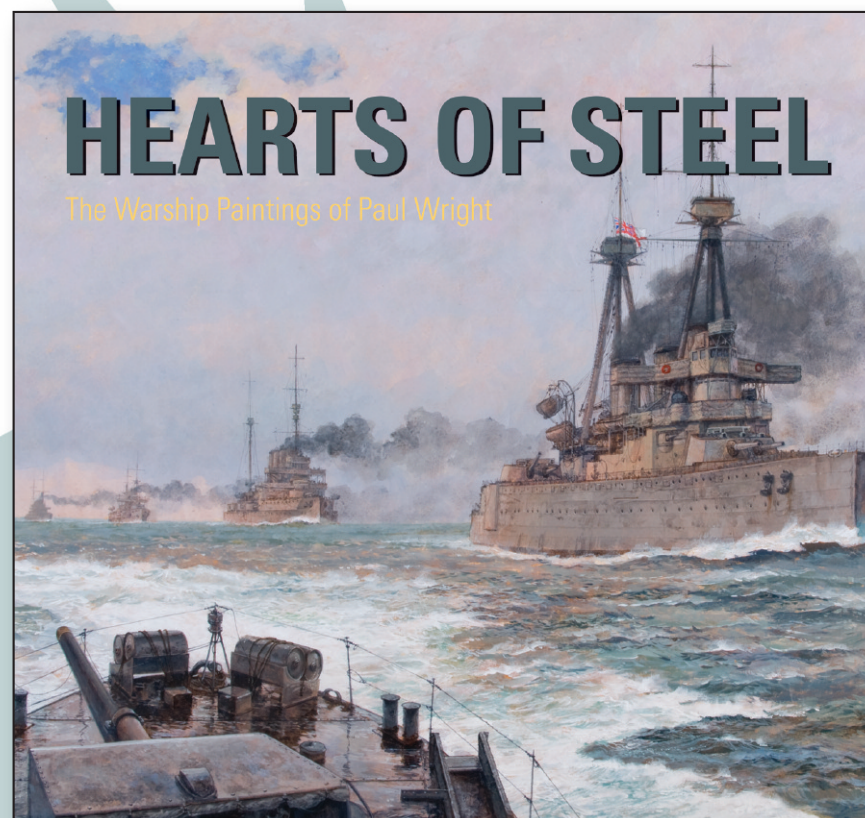
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HEARTS OF STEEL



Against the setting sun, HMS Good Hope turns to face the German East Asia Squadron off the coast of Coronel. (Collection of Dan S. Somekh)



K.M. Bismarck, oil on canvas, 29 x 31 inches

H.M.S. LONDON 1902 British Battleship
Sister ships: Bulwark, Venerable, Queen, Prince of Wales.

Displacement	33,000 tons
Length	430 ft
Speed	20 knots
Complement	810
Guns	4 - 12", 12 - 6", 16 - 10pds
Torpedoes	4 - 18" tubes
Armor	12" belt, 10" turret

H.M.S. London was among the largest class of battleships built for the Royal Navy. They were part a radical design of battleships by the Chief of Naval Construction, Sir William White, in the late Victorian era. With the early 'Maurin' design, the turrets were mounted side-by-side but the bulk of the class had four turrets in the main battery position, otherwise this layout design allowed for continuous improvement and upgrading when new advances in armament, armor and engineering came on stream.

In all 27 battleships of this class design were constructed into the Royal Navy, but with the coming of H.M.S. Prinsess Alice in 1904, with her all big gun design and her high speed turbine propulsion, all of the William White 'spec' design battleships were rendered obsolete at a stroke. This large class of warships were based first in the line of ships with the Great Fleet but were used in the dangerous waters around the Falklands when three of them were lost to torpedoes and mines. However, H.M.S. London survived to be reconstructed as a large mine force carrying 50 mines. She was finally scrapped in 1920.

In 1912 when the ten year old battleship was beginning to show her age, H.M.S. London participated in an experiment into the future of naval warfare, the 'tombing' which the ship was underway of a colony together from a range over the forward part of the ship. Nobody who took part in these experiments could have known that the very theory proved vital for the battleships of the mighty aerial armada that would, within 25 years, sweep across the seas and doom the battleship forever.

H.M.S. London taking on steam, acrylic on paper, 16.5 x 24 inches



H.M.S. London taking on steam, acrylic on paper, 16.5 x 24 inches



U.S.S. Johnston defends Taffy 3 from the Japanese fleet at Leyte Gulf (Collection of Dan S. Somekh)



I.J.N. Yamato, acrylic on paper, 18 x 25 inches

Example of a double-page spread.