**Taranto 1940: The Fleet Air Arm’s precursor to Pearl Harbor**
Osprey Campaign series No. 288 (2015)
By Angus Konstam; illustrated by Peter Dennis

**Contents:**
Introduction
Chronology
Origins of the Campaign
Opposing Commanders
Opposing Forces
Planning
The Operation
Aftermath
Taranto Today

**Colour Plates:**
Launch of the First Wave from HMS Illustrious
Attack of the First Wave on the Battleship Anchorage at Taranto
Attack of the Second Wave from the Battleship Littorio
Plus 2 battle schematic maps and 7 maps

**Comments:**
This book is standard fare for the series, so no surprises in terms of structure. The book is nicely written and very clear; you will have no trouble at all following the narrative.
Several things struck me: the raid on Taranto (a carrier-borne air raid on a heavily defended Italian naval harbour, crowded with most of the Italian fleet) was part of a much larger operation involving almost all of the British Mediterranean fleet and several convoys. I had only ever thought of it as a stand-alone mission. I was also surprised at the scale—only 20 planes were involved in the attack. Also surprising was the lack of casualties—only two planes lost, despite really intense AA fire (why this should be is explained in the text). Also interesting was the strike rate of torpedoes launched from the air at Taranto 5/11 scored a hit against stationary targets. Bombs by contrast were a dead loss. Compare this to an attack two months later on HMS Illustrious by 63 German planes where only 5 hits were scored against a moving target that’s less than 10% as opposed to the 50% strike rate at Taranto.

So, there’s plenty of food for thought in this book—effectiveness of torpedo runs against stationary/moving targets, effectiveness of AA fire and comparative effectiveness of torpedoes and bombs.

—Paul Le Long
TARANTO 1940
The Fleet Air Arm's precursor to Pearl Harbor

ANGUS KONSTAM  ILLUSTRATED BY PETER DENNIS