

Inferno: The Epic Life and Death Struggle of the USS Franklin in World War II

Joseph A. Springer



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Known throughout the fleet as "Big Ben," the USS *Franklin* was christened for the legacy of the four prior U.S. Navy ships named after Benjamin Franklin. The *Franklin* was one of twenty-four Essex-class fast carriers built during World War II, forming the backbone of the U.S. Navy's war against Japan.

On March 19, 1945, during a planned aircraft launch against Honshu, the Japanese mainland, the Franklin was struck with a 250kg bomb from an enemy aircraft, setting off a chain reaction of exploding ordnance and aviation fuel.

The aircraft carrier, now on fire, listing heavily to starboard, and with over one thousand casualties, appeared to be mortally wounded. *Inferno* tells the heroic tale of the efforts that saved "Big Ben." It is a tremendous story of endurance and seamanship told in harrowing detail in the survivors' own words. *Inferno* makes for gripping reading.

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