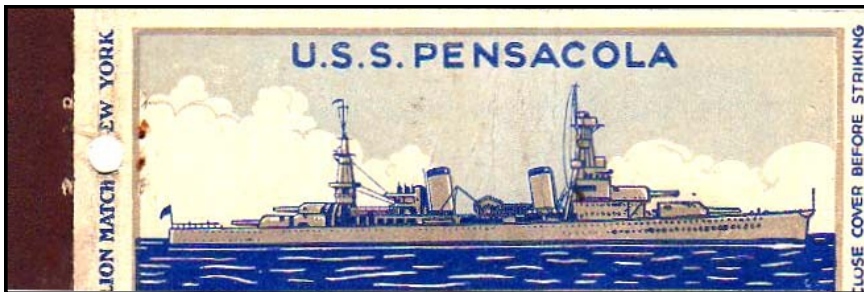
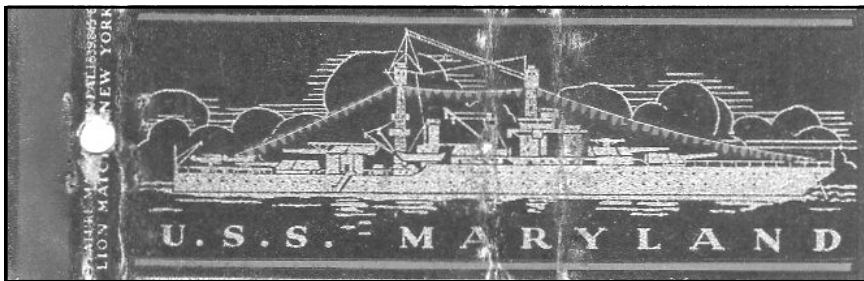
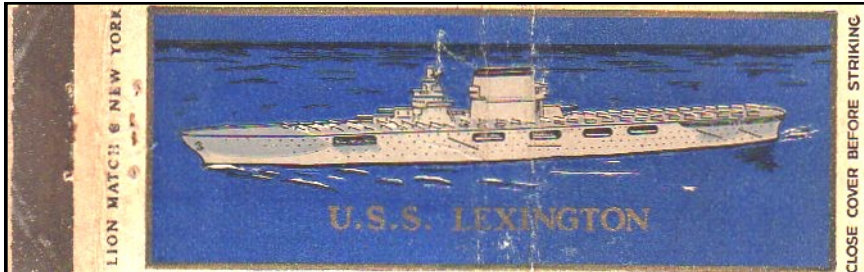


October 26, 1944

The Battle of Leyte Gulf, also known as the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea, was the largest naval battle in modern history. It was fought in the Pacific Theater of World War II, in the seas surrounding the Philippine island of Leyte from 23 October to 26 October 1944 between the Allies and the Empire of Japan. The Allies commenced the invasion of Leyte in order to cut off Japan from her Southeast Asia colonies, particularly the crucial oil supplies for the Imperial Japanese Navy.

The Japanese gathered all their remaining major naval forces in an attempt to repel the Allied troops, but failed to achieve their objective and also suffered heavy losses. The battle was the last major naval



Battle of Leyte Gulf

engagement of World War II, as the Imperial Japanese Navy never again sailed to battle in such large force, being deprived of their fuel, returning to Japan to sit inactive for the remainder of the war.

The "Battle" of Leyte Gulf was actually a campaign consisting of four interrelated battles: the Battle of the Sibuyan Sea, the Battle of Surigao Strait, the Battle of Cape Engaño and the Battle of Samar. Leyte Gulf also saw the first use of kamikaze aircraft. A kamikaze hit the Australian heavy cruiser HMAS *Australia* on 21 October, and organized suicide attacks by the "Special Attack Force" began on 25 October.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf, which finished the Japanese fleet as an organized fighting force, ended with 26 Japanese capital ships sunk in fierce fighting. [<http://www.wikipedia.com>]

Shown here are just a few of the larger US ships engaged in the epic campaign.

