



A Navy Curtiss SOC Seagull biplane flies over Wotje Atoll during the attack on the Japanese airfield at that location. The SOC was directing gunfire from the USS *Salt Lake City* (CV-25) and USS *Northampton* (CA-26) and fighters from USS *Enterprise* (CV-6) on 1 February 1942. The burning facilities are an ammunition dump and two fuel dumps.

**W**ith the US Navy's battle fleet still recovering from the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, it was left to the "supporting" fleet to take the war to the enemy. Not one battleship engaged in any of these early, but extremely important, Pacific raids. There were instead a combination of carrier attacks and naval bombardments. Carriers began to show their beyond-the-horizon capabilities and cruisers provided the biggest guns available for smashing enemy islands installations. Through the course of these actions, the USA was on the attack for the first time in the Pacific War. While the victories were not momentous and the losses were light, the raids represented the first steps in the rise of the carrier as



USS *Salt Lake City* fires her eight-inch guns while blasting Wotje Atoll. Note the SOC floatplane in the foreground. With the Navy's battleships out of action, the 8-inch guns of the cruisers did an admirable job in destroying Japanese shore installations.

# AWAKING THE ***SLEEPING GIANT***

NAVY RAIDS ON JAPANESE TARGETS DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THE PACIFIC WAR

BY LEE REMINGTON

One of the more famous early war photos was of a Douglas TBD-1 Devastator from the USS *Enterprise* over Wake Island on 24 February 1942. Note fires burning in the lower center. Wilkes Island is in the center and the western end of Wake Island is in bottom center. Peale Island is at the right.