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The Sea Raiders

E. KEBLE CHATTERTON

THE SEA RAIDERS



Synopsis

“No more risky enterprise day after day, week after week, can be conceived than that of hovering about on the sea-lanes, usually within wireless range of the British cruisers; and the narrow escapes, the coincidences, the exciting moments rival breathless fiction.” In this gripping narrative, Chatterton describes the journey of German-American liners across the world’s marine highways, through rough waters to Pacific islands and tropical climates followed by treacherous winds and snow-capped mountains. He includes rare first-hand accounts and information from the British Admiralty Archives, providing unrivalled descriptions of one of the greatest and most controversial Naval adventures.

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Customer Reviews

Nice book, a lot of information about the German raiders in WW I, including several logistic details not usually present in other books, as coaling problems, victualing, overcrowding of prisoners.... In all, a most enjoyable book.

I thought this was an enlightening read. I knew very little about the Q-ships from the First World War except that they were a thing, or were once upon a time. I'd read a few articles, but Chatterton takes

you into the heart of the action of these freighters turned into predators to lure unsuspecting U-boats into their gun range. All while trying to convince the sub skipper that the ship is a defenseless, easy target. The hows of doing that were fascinating, especially as the war progressed and submarine commanders got more suspicious, using defensive tactics and their deck guns to pound away at the enemy. For the Q-ship skipper it meant pretending to be what you appeared to be, even while the sub is pounding away killing and wounding crew members. Give yourself away too quick and the sub merely surfaces. Wait too long and your ship is fatally damaged. But in order to sink the enemy he has to find that sweet spot between those two possibilities by luring the Germans close enough to open fire and inflict enough damage to sink the sub or make it unable to dive. This book has loads of details about the ships and the men who fought in them in a most deadly game of cat-and-mouse against German submarines. In places I found the writing dry -- no pun intended -- but it definitely was worth wading through for the action of these brave men whose exploits are all but forgotten in our Age of Willful and Prideful Idiocy.

This book opened up a whole new episode of the First World War for me. Previously, I was only dimly aware of sea raiding carried out by the Germans. It truly was a global war as German raiding was done in the Pacific and Indian Oceans as well as the Atlantic. Chatterton himself was an officer in the British navy. He had access to official documents as well as the accounts of fellow naval officers in compiling the events of this book. He is a good story teller which makes this a book hard to put down. For me this book never lagged.

Excellent subject matter, full of interesting facts and history. However, I found it somewhat difficult to follow and had some difficulty with the British style of prose, that normally I enjoy. I recommend this book to any WWI or naval buff.

One of the very few books on German raiders in WW I. Published in 1932 - something that could be noted in the book info - but well researched also from various Allied and German sources and full of details beyond the battles. Sometimes a slightly old-fashioned language but and style, but nothing that makes it less enjoyable to read. The book makes you appreciate things like the logistical problems of ships in those days (a lot of coal needed), the difficulty of finding raiders in a time of no radar, no long-range aircraft, and the still important part sailing ships playing then. The author speaks from experience at sea and in war (he served in the Royal Navy, including in Q ships). Lots of heroes, but no attempt in making war heroic - several times commented that it is a waste of lives.

And published in 1932 still with the hope that the Great War will be the last big one. Only negative comments: could have done with some good maps (but alternatively one can just have a good atlas handy), and some slightly irritating typos (all decimals seem to get lost in the electronic version - 4.7 inch becomes 47 inch). Recommended for anyone interested in WW I or warfare at sea in general - I'd say it is almost a must. Certainly for the Kindle bargain price.

Excellent historical writing style that captures the imagination of the reader. Accurate in naval terminology without being boring. A good story that makes the reader realise how primitive communications were during that period.

It seems that German sea raiders had more of psychological effect on the British than actual damage to its maritime activities. The raiders were more concerned with replenishing coal supplies than destroying enemy shipping. This is probably due to operating far away from Germany. This is a fairly dry read. Even the sea actions are described in almost monotone.

I don't have a lot to say about this book. I'm not sure what I was expecting but I don't think this was it. The book was informative and opened my eyes to an aspect of war that I had not appreciated. But, as it became more and more repetitive about ships that had been sunk, I lost interest. If you're interested in a chronological recounting of ships sunk by other ships, not necessarily warships per se, then this book may be for you.

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