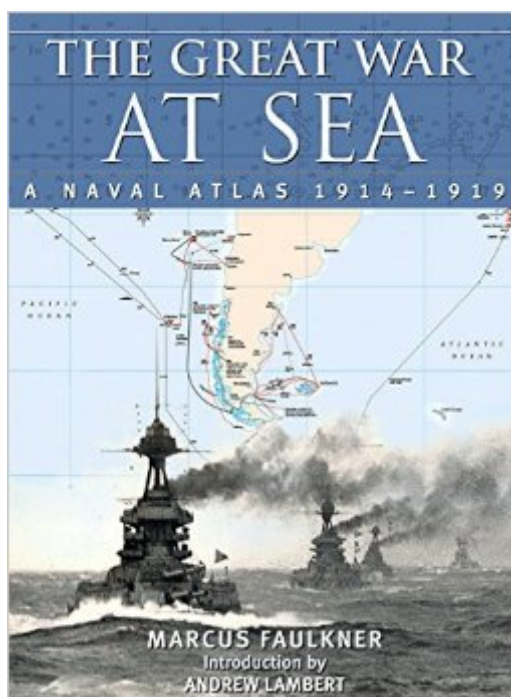


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# The Great War At Sea: A Naval Atlas, 1914-1919



## Synopsis

In the vast literature about World War I there has never been a naval atlas that depicts graphically the complexities of the war at sea, and puts in context the huge significance of the naval contribution to the defeat of Germany. With more than 125 beautifully designed maps and charts, *The Great War At Sea* is the only atlas to present all of World War I's great sea battles as well as the smaller operations, convoys, skirmishes, and sinkings. The atlas looks at the many scarcely covered, historically significant events at sea which impacted the land war. This book gives a new and exciting presentation to things such as, the impact of the United States Navy in Europe, operations in the Baltic and northern Russia, and Japanese naval contributions in the Middle East.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Disclosure: I purchased this book from the publisher, not . *The Great War at Sea* is immensely detailed and useful but it has some significant issues. First problem: Sloppy editing and proof reading. Okay, every book has errors but I opened the atlas for the first time, turned to the preface and read that Britain declared war on Germany in 1915. Within a minute I was on page 3 and on the table of the Navies of the Great Powers I saw that Russia was credited with having ten dreadnoughts in service on the outbreak of war in 1914 (it didn't have any). Such immediately seen and easily avoided errors are like poison. Production values. Full color, large format, glossy paper. All this is great. However, turn to that first map on page 3, a two page spread of *Sea Power on the Eve of War*. The book's gutter consumes all of Norway and western

Sweden, much of central Europe and a generous swath of Africa. This is a problem with all maps printed across two facing pages. The design uses three colors: dark peach for the Entente forces, pale peach for neutrals and deep dung brown for the Central Powers. These colors are ugly, particularly the brown. The colors used for neutral and Entente territory are too similar. Terrain is not necessary on maps depicting naval warfare, but there are occasions where it would have been visually pleasing, and also would have added to the content (the maps dealing with the Dardanelles or the Bosphorus, or the Mesopotamian Campaign for example). The maps themselves. All maps have latitude and longitude and scales in nautical miles and kilometers. This is good. Some have tremendous detail. For example, the atlas has the best one map presentation of the 28 August 1914 Battle of Heligoland Bight I have ever seen. I appreciate how much work went into doing this. Tracks usually have times indicated. All good. The most important consideration, however, is accuracy. The author says that at least three sources were used for each map. I did a close examination of the Dogger Bank map. It shows the entire action across two pages (in this case hardly anything is lost in the gutter). The tracks and times almost exactly mirror the chart from the British Staff Monograph vol. 3. This is fine for the British but not so fine for the Germans. The British version shows the German fleet heading southeast making an eight point turn to port at 0814 and an eight point turn to starboard at 0821. The German chart taken from Groos, Nordsee shows the fleet heading northwest and executing a sixteen point turn at 0817. That's a big difference and I assume that the German map shows the German movements better. Groos is in the bibliography so I don't know what happened there. The geographic coverage is good. There are overview maps for the Adriatic, Baltic and Black seas and two detailed Adriatic maps. The Red Sea makes it in and I appreciated the two post war maps. The North Sea has the greatest coverage as is to be expected, given the absence of Russian, French, Italian, and Austro-Hungarian sources. Pavlovich's Russian or Sokol's Austro-Hungarian volumes; or La Marina italiana have a lot of interesting maps that might have replaced maps of relatively minor incidents like the page 44 chart on the sinking of HMS Formidable or the page 34 map of the November 1914 bombardment of the outer Dardanelles forts. This brings up another point: the book has a distinct British bias. For example, the map on page 28 says "Austrian cruiser Zenta sunk off Antivari by the Anglo-French fleet." Calling a fleet with twelve French battleships, six French and two British cruisers, forty French and two British destroyers, "Anglo-French" may be true in one sense but it distorts reality. The introduction mentions Winston Churchill at least nine times. There is no mention of Austria-Hungary, Italy, or Russia. So, four stars. I have given this review a critical slant but there is much to like here and I'm sure I'll be using the atlas a lot. In the end, that's

the ultimate test.

Not only is this WW I war at sea atlas an excellent historical tool; it's a beautiful book to boot. It is a great "partner" to Faulkner's earlier work, the atlas of WW II at sea. These are not the first atlases of the world wars, but they ARE the first dedicated to the wars "at sea." As such, they fill a deep void. Battle maps, strategic and tactical, are so important for an understanding of the flow of military action -- on water as well as on land. The many full-color maps are large and clear, Earlier atlases of the wars often did cover major military action on water, but smaller battles were passed over. These atlases include those actions -- some, for the first time. And they do it well.

Vince O'Hara's review of this atlas mirrored my thoughts on it so perfectly, I originally thought it pointless to write a review of my own. Still, I thought I'd throw in my two cents regardless. Stylistically, the maps are presented in the same format as they were in *War at Sea: A Naval Atlas, 1939-1945*. Some aspects of those maps nagged me a bit (each nation receives different ship silhouettes for each type, which can be hard to differentiate without flipping back and forth to the key), but I appreciate the more intimate approach taken here. There's quite a bit on the Baltic and Black Seas, the Dardanelles campaign, minelaying and minesweeping operations, German auxiliary cruiser voyages, and some lesser-known amphibious operations. There's even a page of the siege of Tsingtao, something I haven't been able to find anywhere else. Maps of individual battles are, for the most part, very clear and easy to understand, and Jutland receives an impressive seven pages. Well-known minor actions, such as the escape of the Goeben and Breslau, U9's sinking of the Aboukir, Hogue, and Cressy, and the Battle of Durazzo, also receive their own spreads. Formatting and editing, however, suffer somewhat this time around. No doubt everyone involved had an enormous amount of material to sift through, but I'm not sure how the errors mentioned by Mr. O'Hara crept in, or why some of the maps have important information falling into the gutter. The map of the Battle of Heligoland Bight is especially bad in this regard - you practically have to break the binding to get a proper overview of the action. I'm not sure why the pre-Dreadnought Queen is shown as being sunk during the October 26, 1916 Raid on the Dover Strait, either; the ship was based in Taranto, Italy, at the time, and was scrapped after the war! The color scheme employed by the maps isn't terribly appealing, either. For some reason, having dark brown for the Central Power territories, bright yellow for sandbanks, and black and red lines for ship movements, seems to affront my aesthetic sensibilities. Although it isn't quite as strong a reference work as its predecessor, there's still much to like about "The Great War at Sea." The majority of the

maps are informative and very nicely done, even if they aren't "pretty." The introduction provides an excellent summary of the importance of seapower during World War I, and Marcus Faulkner's text is quite readable. I know it's weird to read an atlas from cover to cover, but considering the chronological, theater-by-theater format used here, I'd actually recommend doing so. Finally, there's a lot of subject matter covered here that's only lightly touched upon in popular histories of the war, which tend to focus mainly on the North Sea. If you're going to buy this book, I'd recommend buying a gently used copy of the Seaforth edition, rather than forking over the \$66 that wants for the Naval Institute edition. I jumped on the Seaforth edition when still had it for \$36, which is a perfectly reasonable price, considering that it's 100 pages shorter than "War at Sea."

I anxiously waited for this book to be published, and I was NOT disappointed! The maps are excellent, and the key lists each ship type. The book is set up chronologically, and it make sense. The previous review listed several complaints about the design of the maps, but I found this to be a non-issue. The maps are extraordinary overall, and the book is a valuable addition to my WW I collection. If you want to know about World War I at sea, THIS is a book you need to have!

Magnificent atlas but the price (\$68) is out of bounds. Their WW II atlas sold for a more reasonable 50.

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