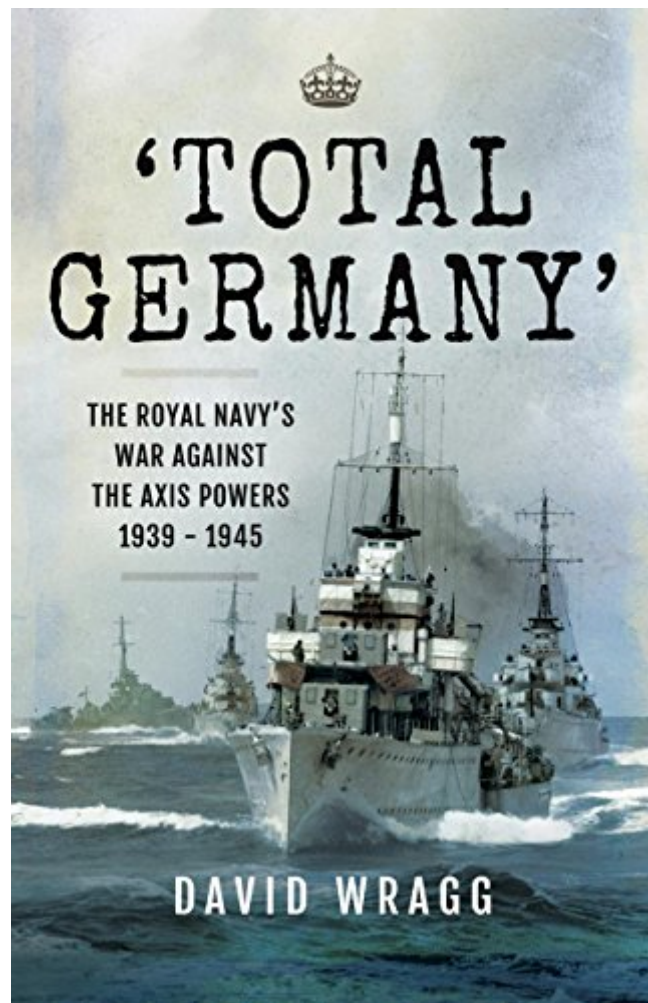




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'Total Germany' : The Royal Navy's War Against The Axis Powers 1939-1945



Synopsis

On the declaration of war in 1939 the British Admiralty signalled all warships and naval bases 'Total Germany, Total Germany'. It was fortunate that of Germany's three armed services, the Kriegsmarine under Grosseradmiral Erich Raeder was the least well prepared. True, Admiral Karl Donitz's U-Boat force was to give the Allies many anxious times but Hitler was never comfortable or competent in his handling of naval surface forces. Total Germany is a concise yet comprehensive account of the Royal Navy's part in the war at sea and the measures taken to ensure victory. The different approaches taken by the warring countries are expertly examined. The author reviews the differing strategies and tactics of the various theatres such as the Far East, Mediterranean, Atlantic and Arctic.

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Naval

Customer Reviews

Great book

This is a general history of the RN in the war. Despite the title, it is not simply the Royal Navy in

action against the Germans. It includes war against the Italians, Japanese and Vichy France. It's generally well-written. One surprising aspect is considerable coverage of the US Navy in the Pacific, especially Pearl Harbor and the carrier battles. Wragg's accounts of the actions are good, but they don't fit well in this book. Obviously it should, and does, cover actions in which the RN and USN cooperated, such as the Battle of the Atlantic against submarines, the landings in Africa, Italy and France and late in the war, against Japan. It also mentions lend-lease, and reverse lend lease in which some British craft were lent to the Americans, specially equipped boats. Also mentioned are several incidents in which RN units were repaired in US yards (notably Norfolk). To an American reader, a few chapters may be especially interesting because of not being as well known as the North Atlantic convoy wars. One is the chapter covering the Mediterranean actions, including battles with the Italians, supplying Malta, and disrupting the supply of Rommel's Afrika Corps. Another is the chapter on war in the Pacific (this also has a lot on the US war in the Pacific). Other aspects of the book are rather good. The raid on the Italians at Taranto is fascinating. The action against the French fleet is likewise, although one wonders if it was worth it, given that it poisoned British-French relations. There's information on technological change, on a couple of raids (Dieppe particularly), and lots on the importance of the RN in the Normandy landings. One thing the book considers briefly that I don't recall seeing in naval histories of the US is the shrinking of the service after the war--it was fast and drastic. There's also a chapter on RN submarines. The histories tend to focus on German boats, but the British subs were rather important in the Mediterranean, and overall sank 169 Axis warships (and lost 74 boats). Overall a solid account, with broad coverage in a single book.

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