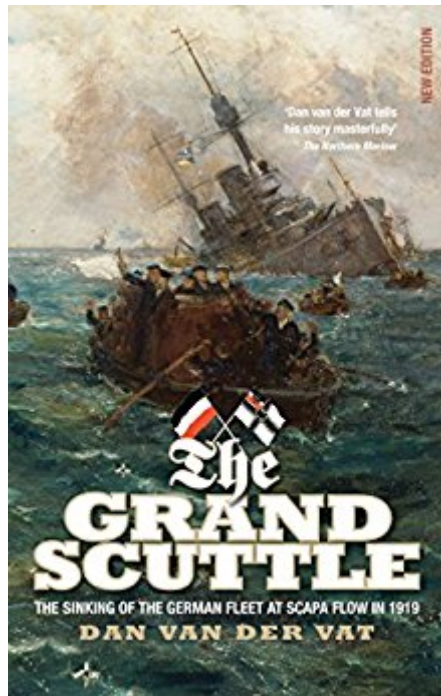


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The Grand Scuttle: The Sinking Of The German Fleet At Scapa Flow In 1919



Synopsis

At Scapa Flow on 21 June 1919, there occurred an event unique in naval history. The German High Seas Fleet, one of the most formidable ever built, was deliberately sent to the bottom of the British Grand Fleet's principal anchorage at Orkney by its own officers and men. This book presents the story of the scuttling of this fleet in Scapa Flow.

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Customer Reviews

On June 21, 1919 occurred the greatest single loss of shipping since Man first sat astride a log and floated away from land. The Persian Fleet met its end at Salamis and the U.S. Pacific Fleet was smashed at Pearl Harbor, but both of these disasters resulted from enemy action. The Spanish Armada was scattered and destroyed, but the main reason for its doom was a big storm. The German High Seas Fleet survived a cataclysmic war almost unscathed, but the bulk of its strength and tonnage was destroyed by order of the German admiral in command at the time. The scale of loss, over 400,000 tons of the finest warships then in existence, 74 vessels of which 52 actually went to the bottom under the eyes of the enemy, is unique in itself. That it was an act of self-destruction based on a misapprehension compounds the uniqueness of the event. At the end of World War I, the German High Seas Fleet was sent to Scapa Flow in the north of Scotland for

internment. The ships were demilitarized (i.e., all ammunition was off-loaded and all weapons were disabled) and swung at anchor while the Treaty of Versailles was being thrashed out. Skeleton German crews were on board and the Fleet was under the command of Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter. In mid-June 1919, Reuter, whose English was not good, read an article in The Times that the High Seas Fleet was to be parcelled out to the victorious powers. Rather than have that happen, he arranged for all the ships to be scuttled, and gave the order on June 21st. Unfortunately, The Times article was about options under discussion at Versailles. While the French, Japanese and Italians wanted some of the German ships, the British and Americans didn't want to upset the balance of naval power.

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