

FOREWORD

This latest book by Commander David D. Bruhn, USN (Ret.), *Ingram's Fourth Fleet*, is a well written, well organized, and extremely interesting history of a little-known aspect of the Second World War: the naval war in the South Atlantic area between South America and Africa. Though not entirely neglected, the South Atlantic theater is usually treated as a small part of the Battle of the Atlantic, leaving historians to write about the smaller theater piecemeal, focusing largely on Germany's surface raiders, the blockade runners, and the Battle of the River Plate in which the *Graf Spee* was scuttled. This work is the first truly comprehensive history of the war in this theater.

As I read the book, I became aware that in some respects, the South Atlantic theater was a replay of World War I with variations. The first example is the use of the U.S. Navy for conducting "Neutrality Patrols" in both wars, but with a difference. In World War I the Neutrality Patrols were enforcing President Wilson's 4 August 1914 Neutrality Proclamation, the principal task being to prevent German agents in the United States, and American sympathizers, from supplying the German surface raiders with coal and other necessities. The three centers of those activities were New York, New Orleans, and San Francisco. In the second war, Neutrality Patrols extended from Newfoundland into the South Atlantic, following a 5 September 1939 directive by President Roosevelt and later expanded by the 2 October 1939 Panama Act. The latter was ostensibly a common United States' policy to keep the war out the Americas. But in order to carry out the policy, the Neutrality Patrols were after German blockade runners, surface raiders, and U-boats. The similarity between the two wars in this respect is that the Neutrality Patrols in both wars were anything but neutral.

Another feature of the conflict in these waters was that the British employed the so-called "Distant Blockade" of Germany as they had in the first war, but this time the British were not concerned with Germany reestablishing trade with the United States as was the case in 1914-1917. In this new war they were stopping German blockade runners making runs between Germany and Japan and Japanese-occupied Asia. Though the Germans were more successful breaking the blockade in the second war, the losses among their blockade runners were enormous.

Another similarity, but one with a difference, was Germany's use of a fleet of cargo submarines to run the blockade, carrying war materials to and from ports in Asia. The Germans pioneered the use of cargo U-boats in World War I when they undertook to build a fleet of eight cargo U-boats to carry pharmaceuticals and dyestuffs to the United States and return to Germany with iron ore, tungsten, rubber and cotton. Only two boats were completed, *U-Deutschland* and *U-Bremen*, with the *U-Deutschland* making two round trips before the Germans reopened the unrestricted submarine warfare campaign in February 1917, thus ending the cargo U-boat operation. In World War II, German cargo U-boats carried freight in both directions between Asian ports and Germany right up to the end of the war.

German front-line U-boats operated in the theater, attacking allied and neutral shipping. Though six U-boat flotillas sent boats into the theater, the undersea war did not match the effort the Germans made in the North Atlantic. This was due in part to the enormous distance involved to reach the operations area, and the limitations placed on time-on-station. Only the bigger, long-range U-boats could effectively operate in the theater. Some of the smaller Type VIIC boats from the 6th, 7th, and 9th Flotillas did show up there, but most of the U-boats encountered there were the Type IXC and XCD2 from the 2nd, 10th and 12B Flotillas.

There is an aspect of the war in the South Pacific that illustrates the most dramatic difference between the two wars with regard to the war at sea—aircraft. The Allies used aircraft for antisubmarine patrols in World War I, but not over the distances that are described in this work. Commander Bruhn clearly shows that by 1943, the Allies had complete air superiority over the Atlantic between South America and Africa. From 1942 to 1944, the Allies sank eighteen U-boats and one Italian submarine in those waters, all but two of which were sunk by aircraft.

Commander Bruhn has described in detail how each one of those eighteen U-boats was caught and destroyed, and wherever possible has included the survivors' narratives of the attacks. Those accounts and the detailed coverage of the destruction of individual German surface raiders and blockade runners make this an action-filled read. The volume of information provided here is supplemented with excellent tables, photographs, and maps, making this book a truly comprehensive study of the war in this theater.

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