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## Graf Spee's Raiders

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## 146 Naval War College Review

some of these will seek immense power ostensibly to pursue earthly equality no matter how many people have to be repressed or even killed. Despite the counter-example provided by the Soviet tragedy, the temptation toward absolute power in the name of the people will remain, and that is the real tragedy.

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Yates, Keith. *Graf Spee's Raiders*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995. 360pp. \$32.95

As modern naval strategists rediscover maneuver warfare and protection of commerce as touchstones of naval warfare, Keith Yates's new history of Vice Admiral Graf Maximilian von Spee's remarkable campaign in the opening months of the First World War is most timely. As was "Stonewall" Jackson in his Shenandoah Valley campaign, Spee was outnumbered, yet, living off the land (sea) in a brilliant maneuver campaign, he distressed the enemy far out of proportion to his numbers and weight.

In August 1914 Spee commanded the German Pacific squadron at Tsingtao, with the armored cruisers *Schamhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and the light cruisers *Emden*, *Nürnberg*, and *Leipzig*. He also had *Königsberg*, in German East Africa, and the light cruisers *Dresden* and *Karlsruhe* in the western Atlantic. Arrayed against them was the Royal Navy's Pacific squadron, strengthened with Australian and New Zealand ships and the Japanese navy. Although the

allied forces outnumbered and out-gunned Spee, he had the advantage of the vastness of the Pacific, plus the choice of action. Gathering his forces, Spee set out southeastward across the Pacific to destroy "English trade." This he did by raiding ships and shore stations, disrupting vital shipping, and leading the Royal Navy a merry chase.

To further torment allied commerce, Spee dispatched *Emden* on an independent raiding expedition across the Indian Ocean, which succeeded brilliantly. Before *Emden* was surprised off the Cocos Islands and shot to pieces by HMAS *Sydney*, it had sunk eighteen British ships, captured three colliers (in order to fuel itself), and poured gunfire into the harbors at Madras and Penang. In the course of its romp, thirty-eight allied warships were variously devoted to trying to destroy it. That *Emden* could tie up such a portion of the allied navies and that no allied merchant sailor lost his life at its hands occasioned a British newspaper to describe its skipper, Commander Karl von Muller, as "the last gentleman-of-war."

Off Chile, Spee was joined by *Dresden*, which had been pursued from the Atlantic by Rear Admiral Christopher Cradock's small squadron of outmatched British ships. British and German squadrons collided off the Chilean coast on 1 November at Coronel, where Spee handed the Royal Navy its first defeat in a hundred years. Two British armored cruisers were sunk, and Cradock was lost at sea; the remaining British ships fled back to the Falkland Islands. Spee's ships were unharmed.

The British were chagrined and annoyed, for it appeared that Spee's

squadron might round the Horn and do real damage to British shipping in the Atlantic. Winston Churchill and Jackie Fisher pulled *Invincible* and *Inflexible*—two of Fisher's prized heavy battle-cruisers—from their watch over the German navy in the North Sea and sent them to the Falklands under Vice Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee. Both ships had greater guns, greater speed, and thicker armor than Spee's cruisers. When the two forces met off the Falklands on 8 December 1914 the outcome was foreordained: *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Nürnberg*, and *Leipzig* were sunk. Vice Admiral Graf Spee was lost with *Scharnhorst*, and his sons, lieutenants in *Gneisenau* and *Nürnberg*, were lost with their own ships. The *Dresden* did escape, however, only to run to ground and be destroyed off the Chilean coast not far from the site of the battle of Coronel.

Now only *Königsberg* was left to disturb British shipping between India and Europe. After some success, in October engine troubles had forced it into the Rufiji River delta of German East Africa. There it lay through the winter and into spring, a thorn in the lion's paw. A British squadron blocked the delta and, with aircraft spotting for gunfire by shallow-draft monitors, destroyed *Königsberg* in July 1915.

Beyond the pleasure of a good piece of naval history—Yates's book is uncommonly well done—the author's study of Spee's campaign dramatizes what an outnumbered yet well handled squadron might do.

Keith Yates is a retired professor of chemistry who has previously published in that field. Yet he writes on naval

warfare with rare style and insight. His history of this oft-forgotten campaign is well researched, perceptive, gracefully written, and a pleasure to read. The Naval Institute Press is to be congratulated for recognizing Yates's talent and introducing him to the wider naval audience. The book is a gem.

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Murfett, Malcolm H., ed. *The First Sea Lords: From Fisher to Mountbatten*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995. 309pp. \$59.95

Taking the 1980 publication *The Chiefs of Naval Operations*, edited by Professor Robert Love of the U.S. Naval Academy, as an innovation and a model, Malcolm Murfett has assembled a survey of the professional heads of the Royal Navy of Great Britain during most of the twentieth century. There is a chapter on every First Sea Lord who served between 1904 and 1959: eighteen in all. Murfett hints that there may be a subsequent volume on more recent First Lords.

The contributors are international: from Britain are Bryan Ranft, Donald Schurman, Eric Grove, Geoffrey Till, and Nicholas Lambert; from America, John Hattendorf; from Australia, James Goldrick and Tom Frame; from Canada, Barry Gough; and Professor Murfett himself, of the National University, Singapore, who, in addition to editing the book, wrote the introduction and three essays. A select bibliography fills a dozen pages at the end, and each chapter concludes with footnotes, citing