



Day the World was Shocked: The Lusitania Disaster and Its Influence on the Course of World War I

John Protasio

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By far the most controversial sinking during the First World War was that of the Lusitania. As opposed to the loss of the Titanic several years earlier, which could be attributed to nature, the destruction of the passenger-liner Lusitania came at the hands of a German U-boat, one of many which infested the Atlantic at the time seeking destruction.

Over 1,200 people perished in this attack, including citizens from the then neutral United States of America. Although America did not declare war over this incident, the repulsion over needless loss of life put the country in psychological terms on an inexorable path toward intervention in Europe.

Many questions, however, rage to this day. Was the liner armed? Did she carry contraband (munitions) in a secret effort to aid the Allies? Did the Germans set out from the start to sink this ship? Was the Lusitania deliberately allowed to be sunk (by the supposedly protective Royal Navy) in order to draw the United States into the war?

This book answers these and other questions surrounding this emotionally charged sinking. It traces the story from the time of the vessel's construction to her demise, while providing a real-time look at the chaos on board once German torpedoes had shattered the ship. And what of the U-boat commander, who may either have made the greatest mistake in history, or had just been performing his duty? This account deals with the diplomatic repercussions of the sinking while at the same time examines the human side of the story.

John Protasio, author of three previous books on maritime disasters, has here provided an expert account and analysis of the sinking that swayed a nation?in fact, the world?into a new era, as the United States finally found that it could no longer hide behind its oceans, and instead felt compelled to assert itself as a global power.

REVIEWS

"...does an excellent in unraveling the supposed mysteries that surround that sinking and putting to rest conspiracy legends that infest most histories of the Lusitania. ...compelling story of negligence on the part of Cunard and merciless total warfare on the part of the belligerent European states."

Western Front Association, 10/2011

"...not only tells the story of that disastrous day in 1915 but also provides valuable context for this important episode in naval history....For those readers looking for a top to bottom review of the Lusitania disaster, Protasio's book is a perfect fit. His comprehensive approach to the subject will interest historians, sea service professionals and the general public.

Naval History

“After thorough analysis of the historiography and details revealed by underwater archaeologists...he presents an insightful analysis from a perspective of a maritime historian of what might have happened on the fateful day the Lusitania sank to the bottom of the sea. ”

Nautical Research Journal

“...uses first person accounts to bring home the horrors of life and death scenarios at sea...a chilling human dimension to a story all too often retold as one of international importance but ignoring individual suffering... a crisp style, making for a quick and engaging read...ties the sinking of the Lusitania to America’s entry into the First World War painting and accurate picture of wartime diplomacy and domestic political squabbles....”

SEA HISTORY

“... does an excellent job presenting and dissecting various myths and conspiracy stories concerning Lusitania...draws into one volume all of the recent scholarship about this ship. It is a good introduction into the life and times of Lusitania and the effect the sinking of the ship had on American opinion. The book is well worth reading by anyone interested in World War I naval warfare.”

Naval Historical Foundation

“...thorough research and exploration of the wreckage...a good addition to your collection.”

Aerodrome

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Robert Delaney:

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