

The Raid on Zeebrugge

BOEKBESPREKING: Carl Decaluwé and Tomas Termote

Pen & Sword Books recently issued a new book entitled **“The Raid on Zeebrugge – 23rd of April 1918, as seen through the eyes of Captain Alfred Carpenter, VC”**.

This book is the fruit of the chance discovery of a series of photographic plates belonging to Alfred Carpenter, who commanded the lead ship, **HMS ‘Vindictive’**, during the raid.

These pictures provide us with a unique insight into this daring naval operation. The plates were used by Captain Carpenter as his illustration material during lectures he gave whilst in the United States and Canada in the post war period. Winston Churchill called the raid on Zeebrugge ‘the finest feat of arms of the Great War’.

This brief, but bloody, action resulted in the highest number of Victoria Crosses ever awarded for a single action. Approximately one thousand officers and men of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines stormed the most heavily defended U-boat base in Occupied Europe.

German submarines based at Bruges and Zeebrugge were responsible for a third of all allied shipping losses during the First World War. During the Passchendaele offensive of 1917, the Allies attempted to capture these U-boat bases by means of a land-based attack.

The failure of the Battle of Passchendaele made it clear that a naval assault was the only solution. As a result, on 23 April 1918, a small force of fighting vessels, towing three blockships, set out across the North Sea....

Carl Decaluwé read Geography at the University of Ghent, graduating in 1982. He went on to work for the European Parliament, before becoming a Belgian MP and subsequently, since 1 February 2012, Governor of West Flanders. His hobbies include naval history and collecting books, photographs and ship’s models. Tomas Termote holds an MA in Archeology from the University of Leuven (Belgium) and a further MA in Marine Archeology and History from the University of Bristol (UK).

He has his own business and works as a freelance diver and shipwreck investigator.

His hobbies include German Marinekorps, U-boats and torpedo boats.

“The Raid on Zeebrugge” (ISBN 978-1-47385-431-4) is a hardback and counts 145 pages. It can be bought at any good bookshop, or direct with the publishers, Mssrs Pen & Sword Books Ltd, Freepost, 47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 2BR, UK.

E-mail: enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk,

Tel. 0044(0)1226 734222,

website: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk