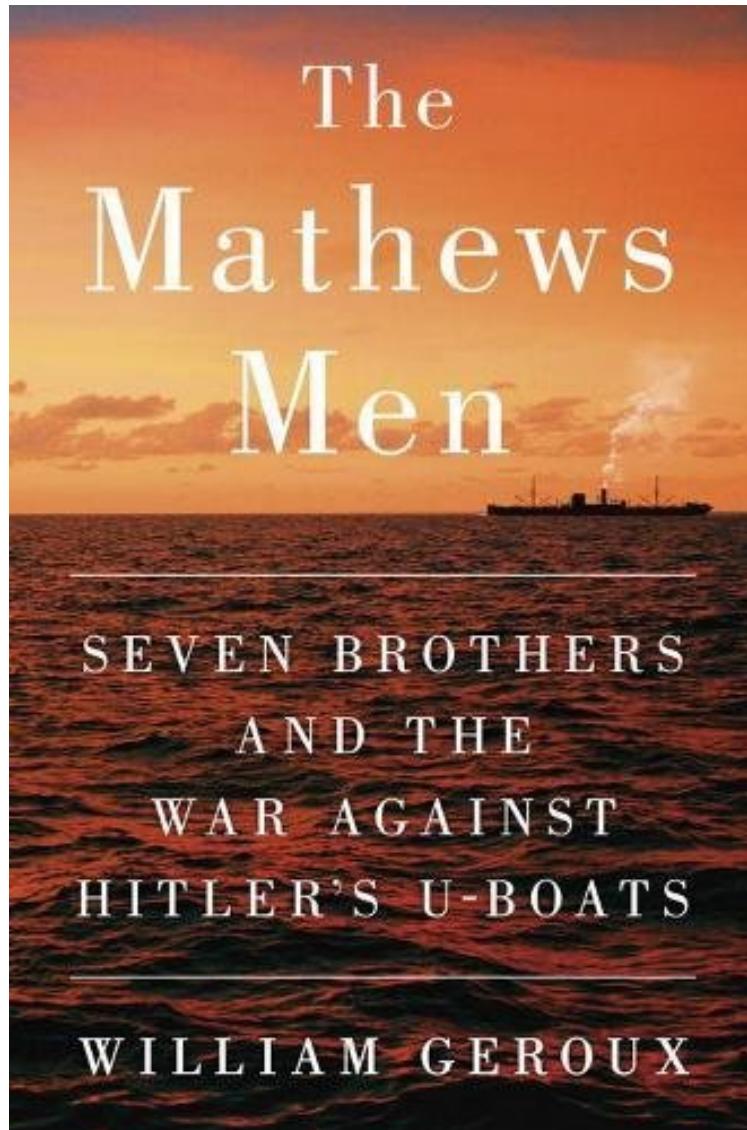


(Free read ebook) The Mathews Men: Seven Brothers and the War Against Hitler's U-boats

The Mathews Men: Seven Brothers and the War Against Hitler's U-boats

William Geroux

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William Geroux : The Mathews Men: Seven Brothers and the War Against Hitler's U-boats before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Mathews Men: Seven Brothers and the War Against Hitler's U-boats:

51 of 53 people found the following review helpful. Rural town, big war...By Long-Suffering Technology ConsumerWhen pondering the possible content for World War II histories, the options are endless. The strategic

machinations of political leaders and the decisions (for better or worse) of generals and admirals, the life of the ordinary on the front lines, the battles at home to keep the war effort strong, individual stories of triumph and tragedy that stem from the happenstance of ships, planes or combat units in fateful places at exactly the right (or wrong times). As the Greatest Generation dwindles in numbers, it's fair to wonder how many more unexplored stories of the WWII era are left to be told. "The Mathews Men" is focused generally on the merchant mariners from Mathews County, Virginia (with emphasis on the men from a single family, as representatives of a community of seafarers). Mathews County sits on spit of Chesapeake Bay land wedged between the Rappahannock and York Rivers north of Hampton Roads. Before the start of the war, its proximity to the sea and a lack of other opportunities created a natural draw towards merchant seamanship. William Geroux tells an often under-appreciated story in any sustained conflict: that logistics are the lubricant of victory., and that strategy and tactics are meaningless without fuel, food and the materials of war. This book is well researched, well written. You will feel the heat (and the menace of sharks) of the Caribbean, the chill of the Barents and feel the ominous threats of angry seas and menacing U-Boat captains across the Atlantic and the waters that join it. Expect to come away with a bigger appreciation for the role of beans and bullets, and true insight into the character of the men who brought those things to the fight. Excellent reading!

31 of 31 people found the following review helpful. If only we could shake their hands and thank them personally

By Jerry Saperstein

One of the least known and understood aspects of World War II is the contribution of America's maritime industry. From 1939 through 1945, Free Europe – which at one point was limited to the United Kingdom alone – was largely dependent on American merchant shipping. Until December, 1941, American merchant ships faced little danger from German submarines, but British merchant ships were being sunk at an alarming rate. After Pearl Harbor and Germany's declaration of war on the United States, American ships became very dangerous places to be at least through late 1943 when anti-submarine warfare became effective. The men who manned American merchant ships have never received the credit they were due. This is the story of some of those men, all from Mathews County, Virginia, including seven brothers. It is a harrowing story of terror and sudden death. Imagine sailing on the Atlantic on a moonless night and your unarmed or inadequately armed ship is struck without warning by a torpedo and your only hope is diving into the cold ocean and hoping to be picked up by rescue ships that often bypassed helpless survivors. The casualty rate was very high, the life lonely and dangerous just from the job, even before you factored in German submarines and sometimes aerial bombing. Yet, voyage after voyage, these men persisted. It was their job – and without them Britain in particular might have starved and surrendered to the Germans. This book is tribute to the men of Mathews County in particular and the Merchant Marine in general. It is a masterful telling of the struggle to keep freedom fighting, an often exceedingly dangerous task, by delivering the food and tools needed to first resist and ultimately invade and conquer. A great read.

Jerry

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An untold story of WWII

By Barbara

Even though it sounds like an oxymoron, my husband is currently employed as a civilian mariner for the US Navy. Essentially, US Navy owned supply ships are crewed by federally employed civilian mariners, i.e., "merchant marines." On certain overseas deployments, these civilian crewed ships are assigned a military detachment crew for security. During WWII, however, civilian owned and crewed supply ships for the US Navy were on their own without military escort or support. The ships and crews were easy pickings for the German U-boats that skulked off the Atlantic coast, and the loss of lives and resources while the Navy turned a blind eye is appalling. The Mathews Men focuses on the men from Mathews County, VA, which had a long history of coastal mariners running in families, and how they and their families were affected by WWII. The narrative is well researched, and while some of the tales are horrific, the telling is not overly graphic or gruesome, just frustrating and sad. The narrative also describes the daily life of a merchant marine, which in some respects (at least according to my husband) hasn't changed all that much except for wi-fi and cell phones. I recommend this book for WWII history buffs and for anyone with a friend or loved one in the present day "merchant marine." It's an eye-opening look into a career and lifestyle of which many people are most likely unaware.

"Vividly drawn and emotionally gripping."—Daniel James Brown, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Boys in the Boat*

One of the last unheralded heroic stories of World War II: the U-boat assault off the American coast against the men of the U.S. Merchant Marine who were supplying the European war, and one community's monumental contribution to that effort

Mathews County, Virginia, is a remote outpost on the Chesapeake Bay with little to offer except unspoiled scenery—but it sent an unusually large concentration of sea captains to fight in World War II. *The Mathews Men* tells that heroic story through the experiences of one extraordinary family whose seven sons (and their neighbors), U.S. merchant mariners all, suddenly found themselves squarely in the cross-hairs of the U-boats bearing down on the coastal United States in 1942. From the late 1930s to 1945, virtually all the fuel, food and munitions that sustained the Allies in Europe traveled not via the Navy but in merchant ships. After Pearl Harbor, those unprotected ships instantly became the U-boats' prime targets. And they were easy targets—the Navy lacked the inclination or resources to defend them until the beginning of 1943. Hitler was determined that his U-boats should sink every American ship they could find, sometimes within sight of tourist beaches, and to kill as many mariners as possible, in order to frighten their shipmates into staying ashore. As the war progressed, men from Mathews sailed the

North and South Atlantic, the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and even the icy Barents Sea in the Arctic Circle, where they braved the dreaded Murmansk Run. Through their experiences we have eyewitnesses to every danger zone, in every kind of ship. Some died horrific deaths. Others fought to survive torpedo explosions, flaming oil slicks, storms, shark attacks, mine blasts, and harrowing lifeboat odysseys—only to ship out again on the next boat as soon as they'd returned to safety. The Mathews Men shows us the war far beyond traditional battlefields—often the U.S. merchant mariners' life-and-death struggles took place just off the U.S. coast—but also takes us to the landing beaches at D-Day and to the Pacific. “When final victory is ours,” General Dwight D. Eisenhower had predicted, “there is no organization that will share its credit more deservedly than the Merchant Marine.” Here, finally, is the heroic story of those merchant seamen, recast as the human story of the men from Mathews.

.com An Best Book of April 2016: When the United States entered WWII, it was still in the process of building up its naval fleet to take on the enemy at sea. Much of the early burden was placed on the merchant marine, which moved cargo and personnel, essentially unprotected, through the initial period of the war. Author William Geroux has produced a well-constructed and meticulously researched account of the heroics performed and sacrifices endured by the merchant marine, focusing on the Chesapeake Bay county of Mathews, Virginia. As Geroux writes, “For more than 250 years, the profession of choice in Mathews had been sailing merchant ships.” These men, including the Hodges family, which sent seven sons to war, performed an essential but underreported service for the country. If the cover reminds you of *Unbroken* or *The Boys in the Boat*, it should. This one deserves to be a best seller. --Chris Schlupe s for *The Mathews Men* “The valor and contributions of the U.S. Merchant Marines to victory in WWII has seldom been acknowledged . . . Geroux presents an unflinching, inspiring, and long delayed tribute to the sacrifice of these men.”—Booklist (starred review) “Poignant . . . A deep, compassionate group biography of these ‘unsung heroes’ of the Merchant Marines.”—Kirkus “Geroux combines the skills of a newsman and those of a scholar to tell the story of the vital and heroic role played by the U.S. Merchant Marines during WWII”—Publishers Weekly Advance Praise for *The Mathews Men* “Vividly drawn and emotionally gripping, *The Mathews Men* shines a light on the mostly forgotten but astonishing role the U.S. Merchant Marine played in winning World War II. It brings back to life a breed of men who repeatedly risk all for their country. It chronicles the sagas of families that stoically endured heartrending losses. It honors a community that pulled together to support its sons as they set out—again and again—on deadly seas. And it reminds us how much we owe to the legions of ordinary Americans who quite literally saved the civilized world in the 1940s.” —Daniel James Brown, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Boys in the Boat* “William Geroux has written a classic American tale, a gripping story of courageous everyday heroes facing death in World War II.” —James Bradley, author of *Flags of Our Fathers* “William Geroux’s *The Mathews Men* harkens to the war heroics of Laura Hillenbrand’s *Unbroken* and the British detective drama *Foyle’s War*. A little-known story about the brutal sacrifices made by Merchant Mariners—and the tiny bayside community they left behind in Mathews County, Virginia—Geroux’s book is a gripping account of hard-drinking and even harder-working seamen, and a fresh take on World War II history. Loaded with offbeat characters trying to survive against astonishingly impossible odds, Geroux gives these unheralded heroes their belated due in an account that is as meticulously researched as it is even-handed and poignant.” —Beth Macy, author of *Factory Man: How One Furniture Maker Battled Offshoring, Stayed Local - and Helped Save an American Town* “When a reporter who writes as elegantly as Geroux unearths such a dramatic and untold story, he must feel as if he’s hit the motherlode. With *The Mathews Men*, Geroux gives us a rollicking read that plunges you into the middle of the ocean and seduces you into caring for the story’s heroic seafarers. This is both a terrific and terrifying blow-by-blow of the actions of the sailors of the U.S. Merchant Marine as the dodged deadly U-Boats during the course of World War II and who, as Lincoln put it, too often made the ultimate sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.” —Bob Drury and Tom Clavin, co-authors of *Halsey’s Typhoon* and *The Heart of Everything That Is* “Often overlooked and unsung, the men of the U.S. Merchant Marine risked all against stealthy German U-boats whether within sight of East Coast cities or on the Arctic run to Murmansk. Mr. Geroux has superbly chronicled the gripping and deeply personal story of brothers in blood as well as in mission.” —Walter R. Borneman, author of *The Admirals: Nimitz, Halsey, Leahy, and King—The Five-star Admirals Who Won the War at Sea* “The German U-Boat war against American merchant men was deadly and dramatic—in World War II, the U.S. Merchant Marine had twice the fatality rate of the U.S. Navy. William Geroux has unearthed a fascinating tale of one small coastal town caught in the thick of the fight, and he tells it with a sharp reporter’s eye and a real feel for the heroic men who went down to the sea in ships.” —Evan Thomas, author of *Being Nixon and Sea of Thunder* About the Author William Geroux wrote for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* for twenty-five years. His writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Associated Press*, and various regional magazines. He also has worked for Maersk, the largest container-shipping company in the world.