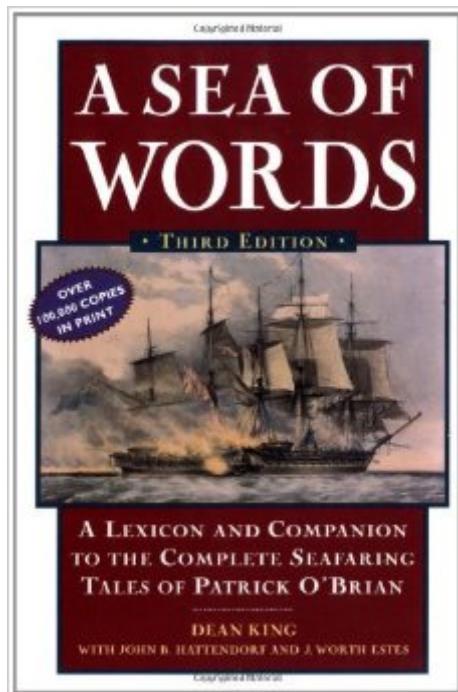


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A Sea Of Words, Third Edition: A Lexicon And Companion To The Complete Seafaring Tales Of Patrick O'Brian



Synopsis

This comprehensive lexicon provides definitions of nautical terms, historical entries describing the people and political events that shaped the period, and detailed explanations of the scientific, medical, and biblical references that appear in the novels.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a great reference for all interested in the age of fighting sail, or readers of nautical fiction. The heart of the book is an immense lexicon or dictionary of nautical terms and (British) naval history and leaders during the times of the French Revolution and Napoleonic world war about A.D 1800. Specifically geared to the Patrick O'Brian novels about Captain Aubrey and his surgeon-spy Maturin, this can be read with benefit also to understanding any other authors in the genre. The lexicon is prefaced with Hattendorf's chapter on the organization of the British Navy from top to bottom. It specifies the career ladder from landman to Admiral of the Red, basic British vs. French battle tactics, and overviews the War of the French Revolution (1793-1803) and the Napoleonic Wars (1805-1815). A time line of these wars is appended. Another chapter by Estes discusses the state of contemporary medicine. Perhaps most immediately useful is a brief section illustrating the standing and running rigging of square-rigged ships, and their sail plans, the most confusing part of all for a lubber. In light of Maturin's cover as a naturalist, a chapter on the state of naturalist studies before Darwin would be a useful addition to a future edition (as would a section about the competition to determine longitude accurately). If you are new to nautical matters, and

begin the Forester, Kent or Woodman series of novels with the start of the hero's career, I suggest you not consult this work until later so that you taste the same initial confusion as any raw young midshipman. This is a useful rite of passage for anyone falling in love with nautical fiction: if you care enough to learn the challengingly obscure terms you will be hooked.

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