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Raphael Semmes and the Alabama (Civil War Campaigns & Commanders (Paperback))

Spencer C. Tucker

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May 1862. The C.S.S. Alabama is launched in Liverpool and makes its way to the Azores. There it receives its armaments, is commissioned under the command of Raphael Semmes, and embarks on a 21-month journey of unparalleled destruction of the Union merchant fleet. This campaign is highlighted by the sinking of the Union warship Hatteras off Galveston. Semmes and his Alabama search the seas from Newfoundland to the South Atlantic, from the Caribbean to the Indian Ocean, for Union merchant vessels. More than sixty ships are sunk or captured before Semmes and his exhausted crew finally meet their match. Trapped by the U.S.S. Kearsarge while anchored in the French harbor of Cherbourg, Semmes comes out to fight. For over an hour the ships bombard each other. Finally, the Kearsarge prevails, sinks the Alabama and takes many of her crew captive. Semmes and many of the rest of the crew are dramatically rescued by the English yacht, Deerhound, and make their way to England. A detailed account by a highly regarded expert in Naval History of the incredible exploits of Raphael Semmes and the Alabama during her 75,000-mile odyssey.

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