



Terror on the Alert

Robert W. Mackay

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The year is 1962 and the Cuban Missile Crisis is brewing. Naval lieutenant Ted Hawkins is sent to sea aboard the HMCS *Alert*. The submarine's mission is to shadow an aggressive Soviet submarine. Hampered by claustrophobia caused by a trauma, Ted is forced to deal with both his fears and a superior, Alert's executive officer, who hates him.

Terror on the Alert is an exciting thriller set on a submarine during the compelling Cold War era. Ted's battle with his nemesis propels the action to a shattering conclusion.

Terror on the Alert Details

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From Reader Review Terror on the Alert for online ebook

Steve Wilson says

Received this novel courtesy of Goodreads first reads.

Set in 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis serves as the background to this book which is heavily focused on the operations and functioning of what is referred to as an A class submarine. As my knowledge of both submarines and submarine warfare is quite limited, I thoroughly enjoyed the descriptions of both submarine life and the things that can go wrong in operating a submarine. Certainly, in the latter case, there is no shortage of things that do go wrong. By focusing on these items the author is able to provide the reader with detailed information on the complexities of submarine operations and I enjoyed that aspect of the book and it is apparent that the author has a solid knowledge of the subject matter and is able to convey that knowledge in an entertaining and informative way. In short, I learned a lot.

The plot line of the story seems to have been developed as a means of providing scenarios wherein submarine operations can be focused on. In my opinion this has come at the expense of thorough character development. The tension (animosity) that exists between the protagonist (Hawkins) and antagonist (Rijker) seems excessive given the little information that the reader is given as to the origins of the dispute. Similarly the problems between Hawkins and his wife could have been more thoroughly developed.

Regardless, the book is thoroughly entertaining and would be of special interest to those who have an interest in naval history and operations.

Betty says

An exciting tale that not only details life aboard a submarine but also gives the reader a glimpse into the terrifying days of the Cuban Missile Crisis. It starts out slow but builds to a climax that keeps you turning the pages and burning the midnight oil to find out what happens aboard the submarine.

John Eldridge says

A novel featuring the Royal Canadian Navy is rare so when I found this book in The Laughing Oyster bookstore, Courtenay BC, I was interested right away. I really enjoyed it and Terror on The Alert held my interest right to the end. Since it is unique in its focus on the RCN, I would like to have seen more Canadian content. It's a Canadian submarine but the story starts out in England and then develops in the eastern Atlantic. While there are references to Canada, particularly Victoria, the story is pretty light on Canadian content. That's a mild complaint however as it's nice to see Canada's navy featured in a novel in any way and the author created a very good submarine story.

Julie Ferguson says

First, a disclosure. Bob Mackay, the author, is a writer colleague and fellow submarine author.

"Terror on the Alert" is his second novel and it's a cracking good read. It's a thriller set on an A class submarine during the Cold War with a Canadian protagonist. During the 1950s and '60s a squadron of these RN boats was based in Halifax and about 200 Canadians trained as submariners in the UK. Bob was one of them, and the authenticity of this book flows from his experience.

I enjoyed the accuracy and attention to detail regarding submarine operations, but I admit to finding the story of the conflict between the two officers a bit far-fetched. It certainly made for excitement and tension — "Terror" certainly kept me up one night. To say more would constitute a spoiler.

Ideal read for those who love a rip-snorting thriller at sea - recommended.

Craig Pearson says

A good read but not great. The protagonist has an ill developed case of claustrophobia who finds himself assigned to a Canadian submarine during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The XO of the boat is the antagonist with an undefined hatred of Ted, the newly assigned officer. Ted's marital problems are not resolved at the end of the story. Throughout the book I had difficulty keeping up with the inconsistent timeline. The conflict between Ted and the XO, Rijker, was building to a climax but suddenly Rijker goes berserk and pulls out a 9mm Remington in the control room for no apparent reason. No explanation given. During the military conflict a Soviet Badger bomber flies from Russia to the Gibraltar Straits, prosecutes a sub attack and hunt for over 12 hours, very unrealistic.

Problems aside, Terror on the Alert was very interesting. The description of the A class submarine was detailed and the shipboard routines fascinating.
