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Review of Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy, 1900-1945

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LJ Review Cover Sheet and Survey

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Title of the book: *Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy 1900-1945*

Author or editor of the book: Christopher McKee

This book is recommended for: public & academic libraries

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Review

Author: Christopher McKee

Title: *Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy 1900-1945*

Publisher: Harvard University Press

Release date: May 2002

Number of pages: 312 pages.

Features: 36 halftones, end notes, and 3 appendices

Format: Cloth

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Price: \$29.95

Stereotypes concerning the sailors of the British Royal Navy abound. Overly indulged in alcohol and sex, swaggering and reckless, these images of the Royal Navy man have become embedded in the minds of the general public as virtual truths. By quoting the lyrics of *HMS Pinafore* in his title, however, McKee signals the reality check to come.

Sober Men and True explores the everyday world of the sailors or “ratings,” who lived and toiled below decks. They were not officers and probably never would be. They joined largely to escape the poverty and boredom of working class existence.

Drawing from the first person accounts of the sailors themselves, McKee explores the danger, boredom (and ways of combating it), camaraderie, discipline, food, and the many other mundane details of a sailor’s life that are rarely encountered in the romantic renderings of fiction.

Vivid and full of personality, this book is very readable and is recommended for both public and academic libraries.

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