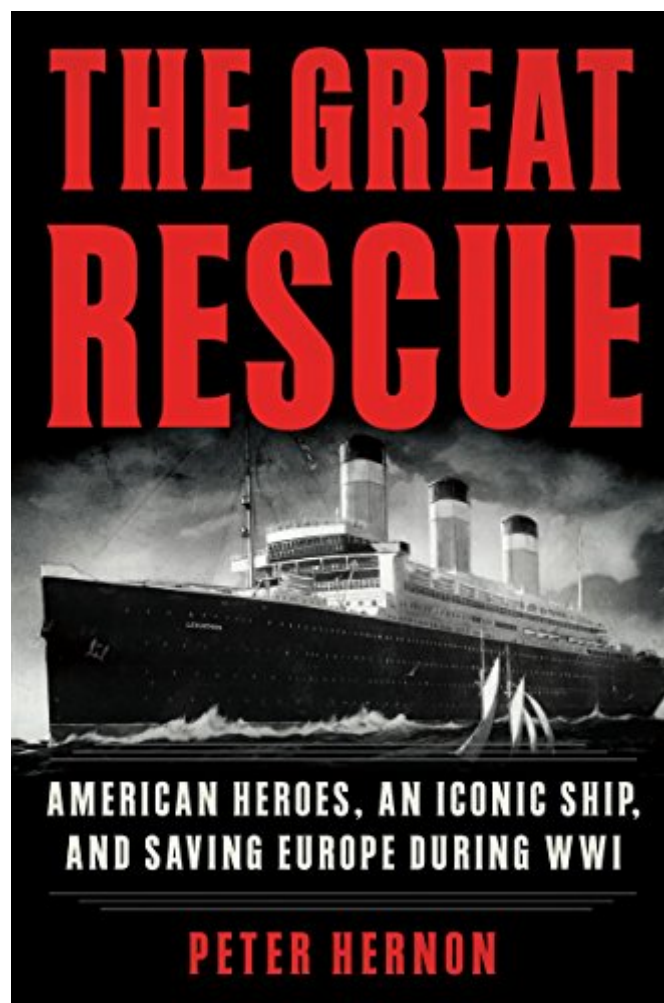




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# The Great Rescue: American Heroes, An Iconic Ship, And The Race To Save Europe In WWI



## Synopsis

Published in commemoration of the centennial of America's entry into World War I, the story of the USS Leviathan, the legendary liner turned warship that ferried U.S. soldiers to Europe—a unique war history that offers a fresh, compelling look at this epic time. When war broke out in Europe in August 1914, the new German luxury ocean liner SS Vaterland was interned in New York Harbor, where it remained docked for nearly three years—until the United States officially entered the fight to turn the tide of the war. Seized by authorities for the U.S. Navy once war was declared in April 1917, the liner was renamed the USS Leviathan by President Woodrow Wilson, and converted into an armed troop carrier that transported thousands of American Expeditionary Forces to the battlefields of France. For German U-Boats hunting Allied ships in the treacherous waters of the Atlantic, no target was as prized as the Leviathan, carrying more than 10,000 Doughboys per crossing. But the Germans were not the only deadly force threatening the ship and its passengers. In 1918, a devastating influenza pandemic—the Spanish flu—spread throughout the globe, predominantly striking healthy young adults, including soldiers. Peter Hernon tells the ship's story across multiple voyages and through the experiences of a diverse cast of participants, including the ship's captain, Henry Bryan; General John Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force; Congressman Royal Johnson, who voted against the war but enlisted once the resolution passed; Freddie Stowers, a young black South Carolinian whose heroism was ignored because of his race; Irvin Cobb, a star war reporter for the Saturday Evening Post; and Elizabeth Weaver, an army nurse who saw the war's horrors firsthand; as well as a host of famous supporting characters, including a young Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Thoroughly researched, dramatic, and fast-paced, *The Great Rescue* is a unique look at the Great War and the diverse lives it touched.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is an excellent introduction to WW1 history. Unfortunately, the book is often more about the War and less about the ship. Many of the stories told are only loosely connected to the Leviathan. The book could have been improved with more information about the ship while she was the German IMPERATOR, and also more about her post war service as a US flag passenger ship. This ship had a very rich history, in addition to its role in the war, but these facts are glossed over. A deck plan would also have helped the story. Overall a good WW1 book, but maybe less about the ship then you might think you are getting.....

worth the read - lots of side stuff. Fun

Riveting. Very interesting, and a lot of little-known details concerning a time over a century ago.

Not a bad book. Certainly learned some things I did not know. A bit redundant in some areas but overall it held my interest and expanded my knowledge of The Great War.

Only read half so far but can't wait to finish!

Outstanding History!!!!

This is a well written, informative, and entertaining "biography" of an important and historic ship. Author Peter Hernon covers each of the ship's wartime cruises, and her happy post-war duty of returning doughboys to the United States. He also covers the stories of a number of noteworthy

passengers and crew; these stories are sprinkled throughout the book and make for an interesting narrative. Some of the people covered: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Irvin Cobb (American journalist), Congressman Royal Johnson, Humphrey Bogart (who was a US Navy sailor aboard the vessel), and Army nurse Elizabeth Weaver. The accounts of some of the voyages are gripping. Hernon's description of a voyage in the autumn of 1918, during which many of the passengers and crew fell ill with influenza, is particularly graphic and memorable. Hernon has given us a fine tribute to the Leviathan, her crew, and her passengers. They helped to win the war. Peter L. Belmonte Days of Perfect Hell: The U.S. 26th Infantry Regiment in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, October-November 1918 Calabrian-Americans in the US Military During World War I: Cosenza-Area Immigrants: Marano Marchesato and Marano Principato (Calabrian Americans in World War I) (Volume 1) Italian Americans in World War II (IL) (Voices of America)

I was given this book by Harper Collins exchange for an honest review. An interesting and quick read about one ship's effort to help with the war. The story starts with the war beginning and the Vaterland was stopped from going home to Germany, leaving the ship, the crew, and all the passengers stuck in America. So begins the years of war and change for the ship. From a new name the Leviathan to a new purpose as the biggest troop ship in the American Navy, we travel with her and some of the people she took to and from Europe. With detailed notes from journals, interviews, and other first hand sources we learn the amazing history of this forgotten ship. Hernon touches briefly on the Spanish Flu and now I must get my hands on a book about it. I would recommend this book. I give this book a Four out of Five stars.

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