

Q SHIPS

Thursday 15 April, 11am

UK 1928

Director: Geoffrey Barkas and Michael Barringer

Production Company: New Era

72 min

Cast: J.P. Kennedy – Admiral Sims

Roy Travers – Captain Von Haag

Synopsis

Long before Dunkirk, the little ships of Britain played a deadly game of cat and mouse with the German U-Boats. Underneath their modest exteriors these merchant ships were bristling with concealed weaponry, designed to lure the submarines to their doom.

Reviews

Kinematograph Weekly, 13th June 1928

Story – in January 1917, when the U-Boats were everywhere successful, something drastic had to be done. The American entry into the war released a fleet of destroyers, and the 'mystery ship' Q boat, was evolved. Apparently a peaceful looking merchantman, it concealed guns and played havoc with the submarine campaign. To this were added depth charges and the hydrophone, which enabled destroyers to pick up U Boat locations. These phrases are all shown, together with despairing German efforts and the final surrender of the fleet.

The convincing realism of the scenes gains picturesque effects from the ocean setting, and every incident is inspiring in its patriotic appeal.

Written by Michael Barringer, a British writer, playwright and screenwriter who directed a small selection of the films that he had written.

Acting – Roy Travers is good as Captain Von Haag, the commander of the Flanders U Boat base, while Lt. Commander Auten V.C shows considerable historic ability in re-acting his part as a Q Ship commander. Sailor types are very well chosen and naturally directed.

Production – naturally the continuity of the picture is of a loose nature, but it contrives to show the progress of the campaign and its various phases in chronological order.

Geoffrey Barkas and Michael Barringer have depicted encounters between U Boats and Q Ships with remarkable vividness, but as a dramatic entity it is not remarkable. It relies much more on the interesting aspect of navel warfare, which is convincing in detail having been supervised by Lt Commander Harold Auten V.C.

Setting and Photography – Sydney Blythe's photography is first rate. Seascapes, scenes in submarines, on destroyers and Q Ships are all very fine indeed. Technical work is on a high level throughout.

Points of appeal – a hitherto unfiled and adventurous part in the war played by the Q Ships; Its novelty and its technical and detailed excellence.

Bioscope, 13th June 1928

The Film – this production gives the history of the famous 'Q Ships' drawn from the Merchant service for the purpose of dealing with 'U' boat campaign during the war. It has had the active co-operation of the Admiralty, and Admiral Jellicoe himself consented to appear in some scenes. Lieutenant- commander Harold Auten, V.C Supervised the navel detail and the result is a picture of engrossing interest, which will be a worthy companion picture to the records of the war on land for which this company has been responsible. The convincing realism of the scenes gains picturesque effects from the ocean setting, and every incident is inspiring in its patriotic appeal.