



All Hands Down: The True Story of the Soviet Attack on the USS Scorpion

Kenneth Sewell, Jerome Preisler

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Forty years ago, in May 1968, the submarine USS *Scorpion* sank in mysterious circumstances with a loss of ninety-nine lives. The tragedy occurred during the height of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, and it followed by only weeks the sinking of a Soviet sub near Hawaii. Now in *All Hands Down*, drawing on hundreds of hours of interviews, many with exclusive sources in the naval and intelligence communities, as well as recently declassified United States and Soviet intelligence files, Kenneth Sewell and Jerome Preisler explain what really happened to *Scorpion*.

In January 1968, a U.S. intelligence ship, USS *Pueblo*, was seized by North Korea. Among other items, the North Koreans confiscated a valuable cryptographic unit that was capable of deciphering the Navy's top-secret codes. Unknown to the Navy, a traitor named John Walker had begun supplying the Navy's codes to the KGB. Once the KGB acquired the crypto unit from the North Koreans, the Russians were able to read highly classified naval communications.

In March, a Soviet sub, K-129, mysteriously sank near Hawaii, hundreds of miles from its normal station in the Pacific. Soviet naval leaders mistakenly believed that a U.S. submarine was to blame for the loss, and they planned revenge. A trap was set: several Soviet vessels were gathered in the Atlantic, acting suspiciously. It would be only a matter of time before a U.S. sub was sent to investigate. That sub was *Scorpion*. Using the top-secret codes and the deciphering machine, the Soviets could intercept and decode communication between the Navy and *Scorpion*, the final element in carrying out the planned attack.

All Hands Down shows how the Soviet plan was executed and explains why the truth of the attack has been officially denied for forty years. Sewell and Preisler debunk various official explanations for the tragedy and bring to life the personal stories of some of the men who were lost when *Scorpion* went to the bottom. This true story, finally told after exhaustive research, is more exciting than any novel.

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