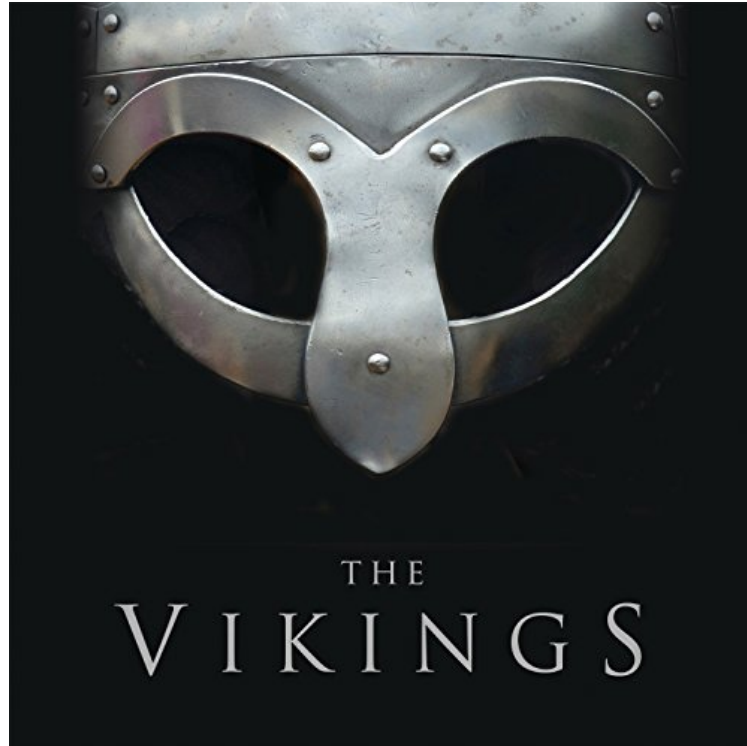


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The Vikings (General Military)

Ren Chartrand, Keith Durham, Mark Harrison, Ian Heath
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Ren Chartrand, Keith Durham, Mark Harrison, Ian Heath : The Vikings (General Military) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Vikings (General Military):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Colorful compilation of excerptsm from Osprey's guidebooksBy John L MurphyFirst off, that titular word's more a verb than a noun. Derived probably from {vk} for inlet, bay or fjord, the derivation suggests a pirate lurking within these waters, going {a-viking}. Second, while the Vikings receive a bad reputation, and their descendants may revel in such, the peoples of Scandinavia who undertook such raids did so not merely to carry out rapine, but to break out of a stratified, limited society. This led war-bands to assemble. Violence became institutionalized in the Northern lands.The division of the peoples into a king {jarls}, (earls), {bn dis} (freemen) and thralls reminds readers of the harsher reality beneath the boasts and brawls of a militant troop. Slaves could be snatched up by raiders and delivered to Dublin or Byzantium markets. Without forced labor, farms could not operate, for the freemen had to serve in the royal levy. Some farmers sold produce in town. Others sought their own fortune {a-viking}. While they invaded monasteries such as Lindisfarne and gained ecclesiastical condemnation early in the medieval period, the Viking targets, one of the joint authors of this book avers, were selected not out of a desire for desecration as much as sudden self-valuation.The Church and State did not collude to restrict aggression outside the English Saxon kingdoms. Therefore, the Vikings aimed for lucrative centers, whether monks lived there or lay-folk in a trading port or river town. Those privateers marshaled against the Continental or British and Irish storehouses formed a "fundamental combat group," with ties beyond blood linked to a gift economy connecting a warrior to his

lord. Freely pledging their troth, the fealty of a Viking to his commander could be tenuous rather than permanent. The flexibility of this arrangement enhanced their fighting tactics. The combination of nimble sailing and rapid mobility enabled shield-walls, with soldiers formed up to five deep in a phalanx. These "artificial tribes" as {Jomsvikings} formed professional cadres. Norwegian king Harald Hardrada tried to claim the throne of England in 1066, using this arrangement. He met his doom at the hand of Harold, Godwin's son, who too soon after was forced to rush to Hastings with the same battle plan, only to lose his exhausted men and his own life to another Viking descendant, William the Conqueror, less than three weeks later. The intricate web of those from the North who sought a greater share of the Northlands draws in many from the territories; Harald had been a mercenary in nascent Russia and among the Byzantines as part of his long and storied career as a Viking overlord. This wanderlust compelled some such as Harald to journey south. The Russians, Greeks and Arabs all called these intruders Varangians. A guard of this name protected the Byzantine monarch in the city his guardians called Miklagarr, that is, big wall/stronghold. One roamer gave his name to Russia. Others fared as far as Newfoundland to settle, if temporarily given their combative temper and disdain for the natives. The lively illustrations in this little volume will appeal to those curious about how the Vikings dressed, fought and celebrated. Motivated to join Odin in Valhalla, those fallen in a bravely conducted struggle found reward with more daily fighting in their eternal hall, followed by feasting. The last section of this primer explains the function of the longship. These crafts evolved to carry trade and terror more widely. But the voyages must have wearied even doughty crews. For no fixed seats were installed on the vessels. Instead, for that same flexibility, rowers made do with crates. This colorful compilation of excerpts from the military publisher Osprey's series of historical guidebooks lacks some cohesion, not to mention a proper introduction and conclusion. Marketed as a "gift book," the results will appeal to the fan of strategy, war-games, history and re-creation of venerable warriors. They sought fame in this world and continual strife, if for play themselves, in the next realm.

The history of the Vikings is bloody and eventful, and Viking warriors continue to capture the popular imagination to this day. They made history, establishing the dukedom of Normandy, providing the Byzantine Emperors' bodyguard, and landing on the shores of America 500 years before Columbus. Beautifully illustrated with color photographs and original Osprey artwork, this book presents a new window into their way of life including detailed studies of the Hersir, the raiding warrior of the Viking world, and the legendary Viking longship.

About the Author Mark Harrison is a Curator at the Royal Armouries, Tower of London and has a strong interest in the early medieval world. He lives in Colchester, UK. Ian Heath is a highly respected author, currently working on a five-volume project covering the armies of 19th-century Asia. Ian lives in Cambridgeshire. Keith Durham lives in Northumberland. He has a lifelong interest in the Vikings and their ships. Ren Chartrand was a senior curator with Canada's National Historic Sites for nearly 30 years, and is now a freelance writer and historical consultant. He lives in Quebec.