



Louis Botha's War: The Campaign in German South-West Africa, 1914-1915

Adam Cruise

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A mere twelve years after fighting the British in the Anglo-Boer War, Louis Botha went to war again – this time on Britain's side. As prime minister of the Union of South Africa at the outbreak of the Great War, Botha agreed to lead his country on a campaign against the Germans across the border in South-West Africa. But first he would have to deal with a revolt from fellow Afrikaners who would rather take up arms against him than side with the old enemy.

Louis Botha's War is the story of how a former Boer War general crushed a rebellion and rallied his country's first united army to fight a better-equipped enemy in harsh conditions. It is a tale of thirsty men and horses trekking over miles of barren desert; German aviators flying above in rickety aeroplanes; the unusual presence of a prime minister's wife on the field of battle; and a fabled gold-filled safe at the bottom of a lake.

Adam Cruise recreates these fascinating events from journals, memoirs and documents, and describes how the remote battle sites look today. He also explores the effects of Botha's campaign, which determined the relationship between South Africa and its northern protectorate until well into the twentieth century. This is an absorbing chronicle of the exploits of a remarkable man who has been strangely forgotten by history, but whom Winston Churchill described as the greatest general he had ever known.

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