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The Churchill Documents, Volume 6: At the Admiralty, July 1914-April 1915 (Official Biography of Winston S. Churchill)

Winston S. Churchill

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The letters and documents reproduced in this volume of *The Churchill Documents* were written between July 1914 and April 1915, the period covered by the first part of Martin Gilbert's volume III of the official biography of Sir Winston Churchill. They contain the documentary evidence of his initiatives, setbacks, and achievements as wartime First Lord of the Admiralty. The volume includes his efforts to sustain the siege of Antwerp, his support for the use of air power in war, and his central part in the early development of the tank. It also shows the enthusiasm and forcefulness with which he supported an offensive naval policy, first against Germany, then against Turkey, impressing and influencing his colleagues.

By examining in detail the evolution of British war policy, Martin Gilbert has discovered the extent to which the precise nature of Churchill's involvement and responsibility, with regard to all he controversial aspects of his war policies, differed greatly from what many of his contemporaries believed: misconceptions that soon became widely accepted in the public mind.

A few of the documents reproduced here were first printed in full in Volume III of the eight-volume Churchill biography. Others were printed in part, but most only as brief extracts or not at all. In this volume, the materials selected are reproduced in full. A substantial number are published here for the first time.

More than half the documents printed here come from the Churchill papers now at Churchill College, Cambridge. The remainder were found in more than seventy different archival sources, both public and private. The selection is not restricted to Churchill's own writings; the context in which he was putting forward his opinions, and the part played by colleagues and opponents in influencing policy, are illustrated throughout by other people's letters, diaries, and documents, most published here for the first time.

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