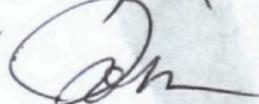


John M. 11/07/07  
R Waters, Jr.  
Berry Ray -

Put this with  
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Capt. John M. Waters, Jr.  
I have his book if you  
want to read it! 

Here is the chilling story of the Allies' narrow escape from defeat in the bitter Battle of the Atlantic—at a time when defeat would have meant the loss of World War II. Although the battle of the convoys lasted more than six years, the winter and spring of 1942–43 marked the climax of the fighting. It was during this period that the Allied effort gained momentum. As the tide of battle was reversed, the famed German U-boats were dealt a blow from which they never recovered. The loss of life suffered by both sides was staggering.

John Waters offers a vivid account of the day-to-day fighting as seen from the bridges of the Allied escort ships and from the conning towers of the German submarines. He is well qualified to tell the story of these grim months. As a young U.S. Coast Guard officer, Waters served with a small group of American destroyers and cutters that were in the midst of some of the heaviest fighting.

For *Bloody Winter* he has carefully reconstructed the convoys' desperate attempts to carry out their missions. But he has not limited the scope of the book to the Allied view. He also describes in detail what went on in the U-boats, using personal interviews with U-boat officers and captured secret documents to bring their side to life. His view of the notorious German submariners will surprise many. New to this updated edition is information obtained from the British files on Ultra, released more than thirty years after the war. This amazing and highly secretive code-breaking operation had a profound effect on the war at sea, and Waters clearly shows how the revelations of Ultra are forcing historians to reevaluate many critical events. Over seventy powerful illustrations accompany the text.

An intriguing documentary of one of the most critical periods of World War II, *Bloody Winter* offers an objective, revealing, and human story of the men on both sides who fought and died in the battle.

25-year career that included both sea and air commands, he participated in hundreds of rescues at sea, a field in which he is an internationally recognized authority. In 1967 and 1968, he was on special assignment to the National Highway Safety Bureau for the purpose of establishing a system of emergency services for aiding victims of accidents on the nation's highways. His work in this field led to the establishment of the present nationwide system of emergency medical service.

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LT. JOHN M. WATERS, JR., of the USCG, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Waters of Wilson, entered the service at the USCG Academy July 1939, and was commissioned upon graduation, June, 1942. He has been on active sea duty for the past two years, having seen action in the North Atlantic Mediterranean and South Pacific.

## FOREWORD

The submarine is that type of warship which is best qualified for offensive operations in sea areas which are dominated by the enemy. This is again shown in this book.

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest, fiercest, and—for the outcome of World War II—the most important campaign of the war at sea. The most critical period of it was the “bloody” winter of 1942-43, when the submarine offensive was at its peak, and when eventually the tide was turned by the anti-submarine forces on the surface and in the air who got the upper hand.

This significant period is the subject of this fine book. The author, himself a participant in that battle, and a thorough student of all the relevant war diaries and memoirs, paints such a vivid and accurate picture of the actors, and gives such a stirring account of their actions on both sides of the conflict, that even an old war-horse of that theatre (as I am) is still amazed. It is an exciting story which will appeal not only to the professional sailor, but to everyone.

This book deals with a period which is approximately a year and a half after my active part in the battle was over. Old and new friends of mine on both sides are pictured in this book: my

classmates, Siegfried von Forstner and Dietrich Lohmann, my exec of U-99, Klaus Bargsten, and last, but not least, Donald MacIntyre, my old foe and captor and new friend.

It is interesting to see how the tactics developed on both sides. It appears to be a natural evolution—only one thing strikes me today: the frequent electronic emissions by the U-boats as observed by all escorts, which made the HF/DF so effective. In my time, everybody was conscious of the danger of using the wireless transmitter, and I remember that we were very reluctant to use it even when ordered to do so by Flag Officer Submarines. Of course, that U-boat which first sighted the convoy had to signal its enemy contact report, and was later responsible for informing the other boats of the now automatically disbanded patrol line from time to time about the position, course, and speed of the convoy. But all the other boats of the wolf pack remained completely silent.

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I am greatly honoured by the author for being asked to contribute a foreword to this wonderful book.

Kiel, 11th July, 1967

OTTO KRETSCHMER, *Rear Admiral, Germany*

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## PREFACE

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to take a look from the "other side of the hill," as the U-boat commanders saw it from the conning tower and periscope.

The enemy was seldom seen, though his presence was often evidenced by burning ships, a shadow in the night, a small pip on the radar scope, a returning beep on the underwater Asdic detection gear, or the high-pitched chirp of his radio transmissions. What went on in the U-boats during those nights of fire and blood and terror? Who had fired the torpedoes that blasted a fine ship and 60 men to eternity? What was the reaction of the U-boat crews to our counterattacks as we dropped tons of depth charges that tore the ocean apart while they attempted to evade us 600 feet below the surface? What manner of men were they?

During their days of ascendancy, the U-boat men were never far from our wakeful thoughts, but at first we knew little of them, and they at times seemed eight feet tall. Later, when the tide had turned and our superiority in weapons, numbers, and tactics had clearly established a mastery that would not again be challenged, we had learned a great deal about them by studying them carefully, as any good hunter studies his quarry. The wet, dazed, and shocked U-boat survivors fished from the sea were less imposing than we had earlier imagined, yet throughout their terrible two years of agony following their 1943 defeat, the spirit of the Kriegsmarine remained high and until the bitter end they sailed. Their story, as well as that of the escort men who defeated them, deserves to be objectively told.

This narrative is confined to the North Atlantic convoy routes between America and the United Kingdom, for it was there around the great trade convoys that the issue had to be decided. Only by stopping the flow of men and matériel to Britain did the Axis have any chance at ultimate victory. To many old friends who suffered in the terrible weather of the Greenland convoy runs, sweltered in the sticky heat of the Caribbean, or endured the monotony of the Central Atlantic convoys to Gibraltar, I can only plead a certain parochialism, as well as my regret that the

scope of this story did not allow the inclusion of the action in those areas.

Likewise, to those who came after May, 1943, I apologize for omitting their role. With the defeat and withdrawal of the wolf packs in May, the dangerous threat to the Allied lifelines was ended, as was the role of the Atlantic as a decisive war theatre. In the months that followed, the weather continued as nasty as before, the days were as long and dreary, and men still died, but most of those dying were German. For the Allies, despite occasional losses, the two years after May, 1943, were the years of the hunter, and they inflicted a terrible revenge on the U-boats.

This, then, is the story of the winter crisis of 1942-43, and of some of the men, ships, and planes who fought through it, turning the spectre of defeat that faced them in March into the victory of the escorts in May. It is also a story of the men of the U-boat fleet, who came within a measurable distance of bringing the Allies to their knees; finally failing to do so, most of them paid with their lives while fighting to the bitter end a battle that had already been decided.

The victory of May was in the main a British, and to a lesser extent, a Canadian one. For reasons explained later, only a handful of American escorts and their crews, totaling perhaps 3,000 men, were engaged in the crucial winter battles. In addition to a few ancient and weary but indomitable 1918-vintage flush-deck destroyers, the American surface detachment on the mid-ocean North Atlantic run consisted of five modern Coast Guard cutters of the HAMILTON class, and these at the time formed the hard core of the American effort. It is around these destroyers and cutters that the narrative centers.

The keeping of personal diaries was forbidden during the war, and it was not until 1946 that I began the notes that later became the basis of this story. They were added to occasionally after spinning sea yarns with old comrades and shipmates. Finally, in 1964, having been assigned to duty in Washington, where I

had access to many of the official records, as well as to some of the people involved, I commenced work on the book. Over the next two years, by correspondence and personal visits, I contacted many participants in the battles, both Allied and German, and in nearly every case I received the utmost cooperation. Combining my own observations and notes with those of other participants, and checking all against the official records and documents, the true picture of the battle began to emerge.

These documents included the ship logs and war diaries of individual ships, the action reports of various escort commanders, reports of anti-submarine attacks, reports on interrogation of Allied survivors, and the "post-mortem" reports based on interrogation of captured U-boat crewmen. From the German side, the best sources were the very detailed War Diaries of U-boat Command (*Befehlshaber der Untersee-Booten Kriegstagebuch*), the war diaries of the individual U-boats, and the records of individual torpedo firings. A number of very informative essays and manuscripts were also prepared by German naval officers for the occupation authorities shortly after the end of the war.

In reconstructing what actually happened in the midst of actions involving dozens of ships and U-boats, cloaked usually in darkness, and subject to confusion and sometimes chaos, it is unlikely that we will ever learn the truth concerning many events. Some of the secrets are forever with men long dead, and there they will remain. In the bitter struggle for survival, and of killing or being killed, not all men acted with heroism or even common discipline. The wonder is not that a few failed, but that for the most part the fighting men on both sides acted with courage, dignity, and a long-enduring fortitude under conditions that few men have had to face.

I am especially indebted to Dr. Jurgen Rohwer, Director of the Library for Contemporary History in Stuttgart, Germany, for his painstaking analysis of material which I gathered, for his frank and penetrating criticism of some of my conclusions, and for much valuable data on individual U-boat torpedo attacks.

Himself a former U-boat man, and a widely known writer and historian, Dr. Rohwer is probably the outstanding authority today on the history of U-boat operations in World War II.

I am also grateful to Rear Admiral P. N. Buckley, C. B., D.S.O., Royal Navy (Ret.), and others in the Naval Historical Branch of the British Ministry of Defence for their assistance in providing data, and especially for answering numerous questions regarding the fate of British vessels.

Vice-Admiral B. C. Watson, C.B., D.S.O, Royal Navy (Ret.), was most helpful in providing information from his diary, in recalling many events of those days, and in suggesting improvements which have been incorporated into the manuscript. The opportunity to see the Admiral again years after seeing his ship torpedoed was one of the many highlights of writing this book.

Rear Admiral D. W. Piers, D.S.C., C.B., Royal Canadian Navy (Ret.), made available his records of the actions, and contributed his time and constructive criticism, which were invaluable in deriving an accurate picture of the events.

Vice-Admiral Roy L. Raney, USCG (Ret.), a fine escort commander with whom I was privileged to serve in three oceans, was very helpful in his recollections of the events around Convoy SC-118, and the subsequent rescue of survivors.

For information and background on the late Korvettenkapitän Siegfried Freiherr von Forstner, I am indebted to his widow, Annamaria, now Frau Karl Rapp, and to his only surviving brother, Korvettenkapitän Wolfgang-Friedrich Freiherr von Forstner, German Navy, himself a former U-boat commander.

Mr. Dean Allard, Mrs. Mildred D. Mayeux, and Mr. Harry E. Riley of the Division of Naval History, Chief of Naval Operations, were most efficient and helpful in providing me with dozens of documents, as well as researching and finding the answers to endless questions which I posed. Without them, the research would have proved impossible to complete.

Captain Joseph R. Steele, USCG, and Mr. Henry Winters, of U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, contributed many hours of their

time in translating German documents and letters, and I am much in their debt.

For her cooperation in digging out photographs from the Archives, I give my thanks here, as on other occasions, to Miss Elizabeth Segedi of the Public Information Division, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters.

In obtaining information on many aspects of the German side of the picture, I would have been lost without the great help of Captain Helmut Schmoeckel, the German Naval Attaché in Washington. He not only answered numerous technical questions from his own experience as a U-boat commander, but through him I was able to locate many of the former U-boat men in Germany.

During a visit with Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz at his home near Hamburg, I was received with the greatest courtesy and friendliness, and the discussion was most helpful. The Admiral emphasized that his ten years imprisonment in Spandau after the Nuremberg trials had no connection with the manner in which his men fought, and should not reflect adversely on them. His point was well taken. The German submariners fought an unrestricted warfare, but in an almost identical manner with that admitted by their British and American counterparts.<sup>1</sup> Admiral Doenitz was obviously sensitive about the large number of U-boat men lost at sea, which included one of his two sons. The other was lost in an I-boat. Though he realized clearly that the Battle of the Atlantic was lost after May, 1943, the huge Allied resources tied up by a relatively few U-boats at sea mandated that the fight be continued in spite of appalling losses. As the architect of the U-boat war, and later Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, no other figure in the German armed forces exerted such an influence on Allied strategy, or so threatened their final victory.

<sup>1</sup> After thousands of U-boat attacks, only one commander, Kapitänleutnant Eck in U-852, was convicted of attacking survivors. He and his officers were executed by British firing squad on November 30, 1945. The incident provided the background for Gwyn Griffen's best selling novel, *An Operational Necessity*.

Lastly, I am deeply grateful to Rear Admiral Otto Kretschmer, German Navy, formerly Chief of Staff, Allied Forces, Baltic Approaches, for preparing the foreword to the book. The top-scoring submariner of World War II, with over 300,000 tons of shipping, no man is better qualified by combat experience to speak for the men of the U-boat arm. His exploits as a U-boat commander, and his later almost unbelievable escape from a prisoner-of-war camp have been told by Terance Robertson in his book *The Golden Horseshoe*. Captain Donald MacIntyre, Royal Navy, who sank Kretschmer's U-99 and captured him and his crew in 1941, gives this profile of him at the time:

Otto Kretschmer was the most dangerous enemy of them all. Utterly fearless, supremely confident of his skill as a seaman and a fighter and devoted single-heartedly to his career in the navy, he commanded his U-boat with the iron hand of a martinet, bringing his crew to the highest pitch of efficiency, yet earning their complete devotion. Not for Kretschmer the boastful speeches, the theatrical gestures, the contemptuous over-confidence in the face of the enemy. His equals found him hard to know, nicknaming him "Silent Otto." The hero-worship which was showered on him and the glamour which his name evoked were equally distasteful to him. Compared with his exuberant fellow aces he seemed a sinister figure. Out in the wastes of the North Atlantic he and U-99 were indeed a sinister and deadly menace. . . .

Though at the turning point of the Battle of the Atlantic, Kretschmer was a prisoner-of-war, many of the officers he had personally trained as student-commanders had risen to command of U-boats, and as will be seen in the narrative, several of them tried us sorely.

This latest edition contains the story of Ultra, the amazing code breaking operation of the British at Bletchley Park, which has only been released in part over 30 years after the events.<sup>2</sup> No history of major actions in Europe in World War II can be complete and in perspective without examining the impact of

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the British ability to intercept and quickly decode the most secret communications of an unsuspecting enemy. This cryptographic breakthrough was a primary factor in the outcome of the war, but due to the highly classified nature of Ultra, only a select few knew the source of this crucial intelligence, and they guarded the secret zealously, even in their own published memoirs, until it was officially released by the British government, beginning in 1976. The revelations of Ultra will force future historians to reevaluate many of the leaders and crucial events of World War II.

In the war at sea, Ultra had a profound effect. But in the crucial period covered by this book, Ultra penetration of the German naval codes was sporadic and at times non-existent. Even when available, the lack of adequate Allied forces to act promptly on the information diminished its value. The most complete knowledge of the enemy's intentions is not decisive without the means to thwart him. Not until mid-1943 did we have adequate ships, aircraft, and equipment to act on the unprecedented intelligence provided by Ultra, and the combination, notably demonstrated by the Hunter/Killer and Support Groups, exacted a terrible retribution from the U-boat fleet in the final two years of the war.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II, Ultra—Riddle Within An Enigma.

Penn Watson

23 Springmoor Drive

Raleigh, N.C. 27615

**Telephone # 919-848-7023**

Dear John -

I hope this brief "history"  
of my military service in WW II  
is what you were asking for -

Enjoyed talking with  
you, and I'm sending  
you instructions on how to  
find our house, when you're  
in Raleigh - We'd love to  
see you both!

Penn

## **Penn Watson's Military Service (WW II)**

I joined the Navy at Duke University (in the V-12 Program) in July of 1943...I took my Basic Training ("Boot Camp") at Bainbridge, Maryland and was sent to the Naval Operation Base at Norfolk , Virginia for temporary duty (in the Mess Hall) and was later transferred to Little Creek, Va. ( the amphibious base) where I joined my ship. The craft I was on was the "USS Paducah", which was built in 1917 and had a steam reciprocating engine. The Paducah was a Gunboat (PG-18), and along with the Dubuke they were the two oldest operating ships in the U.S. Navy. Our job was to train sailors in gunnery along with Convoy Duty in the Atlantic. The PG-18 had two 4" guns and a 5" gun along with six 20 mm. Guns. Needless to say, we only went out with the slowest freighters and tankers, as our top speed was around 10 knots (when the engines were running right.).

I was fortunate to get an appointment to Annapolis in 1945, and went into the Plebe Class of 1950, which was a big change from the USS Paducah. While I was at the Naval Academy, we lost both years to Army, and I had a bet for a bathrobe with Tilton Wilcox (from Wilson), who was at the Military Academy at West Point. One of the highlights of my stay at the Naval Academy was our Midshipman's cruise on the Battleship North Carolina, going to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba...New York... Newport, R.I., Christobal in the Panama Canal Zone, and several islands in the Carribbean. I did not graduate from the Naval Academy (as I had some academic problems with calculus and differential equations). I was mustered out of the Navy in March of 1947 with an honorable discharge. I entered Duke in the fall and graduated in the Class of 1950.

09/20/05

Petty Ray - J.M. Waters

I copied this out of J.M. Waters, Jr's book "Bloody Winter" to put in for his Bo - as you probably know - his Dad was a Prof at ACC.

Jim graduated from CLEAS in 1938 - and went to N.C. State on a football scholarship. He got nominated for Coast Guard School in 1939 - and graduated in 1942 just in time to be sent to Iceland as an Ensign on a "Hamilton" class cutter and take on the Normans

Woolpack in the North Atlantic.  
His book "Rescue at Sea" was  
written after he commanded  
the Coast Guard Air Sea Rescue  
Atlantic Division as a Captain.  
He taught himself to fly copters  
and pioneered the rescue tactics  
you have seen on T.V. this  
week in New Orleans. His  
sister Dorothy was married  
to my cousin Frank Jackson  
Lee - who died of a heart attack  
in 1968 at age 45. Just a  
few things I remember -

OK

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#### *About the Author*

John M. Waters, Jr., Captain, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.), a 1942 graduate of the Coast Guard Academy, served during World War II in the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Pacific, and the Far East. During a varied 28-year career that included both sea and air commands, he participated in hundreds of rescues at sea, a field in which he is an internationally recognized authority. In 1967 and 1968, he was on special assignment to the National Highway Safety Bureau for the purpose of establishing a system of emergency services for aiding victims of accidents on the nation's highways. His work in this field led to the establishment of the present nationwide system of emergency medical service.

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Kiel, 11th July, 1967

OTTO KRETSCHMER, *Rear Admiral, Germany*

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This is a story of the bitter six months of fighting that climaxed the Battle of the Atlantic, and ended with the defeat and withdrawal of the U-boat wolf packs from the shipping lanes in the spring of 1943. There was at first the temptation to write a personal narrative of some of these occurrences, for on a trip in USS GEMINI and as a watch officer on the U. S. Coast Guard Cutter INGHAM (WPG-35), I was involved in four of the most crucial battles, around Convoys SC-107, SC-118, SC-121, and SC-122. But as most combat veterans will admit, those actually engaged in the fighting have only a limited view of the whole picture, vivid though it may be. This was particularly true of the convoy battles, which often lasted for days and involved running fights over hundreds of miles of ocean. At any instant, as many as 50 miles might separate an escort, running down a radar contact in the van of the convoy, from a rescue vessel picking up survivors far astern. Furthermore, the battle can only be seen in its proper perspective if the reader is able to view the action from the vantage point of the senior commanders ashore, as well as from the bridges of the warships at sea. To round out the picture of the titanic struggle, it is also essential

to take a look from the "other side of the hill," as the U-boat commanders saw it from the conning tower and periscope.

The enemy was seldom seen, though his presence was often evidenced by burning ships, a shadow in the night, a small pip on the radar scope, a returning beep on the underwater Asdic detection gear, or the high-pitched chirp of his radio transmissions. What went on in the U-boats during those nights of fire and blood and terror? Who had fired the torpedoes that blasted a fine ship and 60 men to eternity? What was the reaction of the U-boat crews to our counterattacks as we dropped tons of depth charges that tore the ocean apart while they attempted to evade us 600 feet below the surface? What manner of men were they?

During their days of ascendancy, the U-boat men were never far from our wakeful thoughts, but at first we knew little of them, and they at times seemed eight feet tall. Later, when the tide had turned and our superiority in weapons, numbers, and tactics had clearly established a mastery that would not again be challenged, we had learned a great deal about them by studying them carefully, as any good hunter studies his quarry. The wet, dazed, and shocked U-boat survivors fished from the sea were less imposing than we had earlier imagined, yet throughout their terrible two years of agony following their 1943 defeat, the spirit of the Kriegsmarine remained high and until the bitter end they sailed. Their story, as well as that of the escort men who defeated them, deserves to be objectively told.

This narrative is confined to the North Atlantic convoy routes between America and the United Kingdom, for it was there around the great trade convoys that the issue had to be decided. Only by stopping the flow of men and matériel to Britain did the Axis have any chance at ultimate victory. To many old friends who suffered in the terrible weather of the Greenland convoy runs, sweltered in the sticky heat of the Caribbean, or endured the monotony of the Central Atlantic convoys to Gibraltar, I can only plead a certain parochialism, as well as my regret that the

scope of this story did not allow the inclusion of the action in those areas.

Likewise, to those who came after May, 1943, I apologize for omitting their role. With the defeat and withdrawal of the wolf packs in May, the dangerous threat to the Allied lifelines was ended, as was the role of the Atlantic as a decisive war theatre. In the months that followed, the weather continued as nasty as before, the days were as long and dreary, and men still died, but most of those dying were German. For the Allies, despite occasional losses, the two years after May, 1943, were the years of the hunter, and they inflicted a terrible revenge on the U-boats.

This, then, is the story of the winter crisis of 1942-43, and of some of the men, ships, and planes who fought through it, turning the spectre of defeat that faced them in March into the victory of the escorts in May. It is also a story of the men of the U-boat fleet, who came within a measurable distance of bringing the Allies to their knees; finally failing to do so, most of them paid with their lives while fighting to the bitter end a battle that had already been decided.

The victory of May was in the main a British, and to a lesser extent, a Canadian one. For reasons explained later, only a handful of American escorts and their crews, totaling perhaps 3,000 men, were engaged in the crucial winter battles. In addition to a few ancient and weary but indomitable 1918-vintage flush-deck destroyers, the American surface detachment on the mid-ocean North Atlantic run consisted of five modern Coast Guard cutters of the HAMILTON class, and these at the time formed the hard core of the American effort. It is around these destroyers and cutters that the narrative centers.

The keeping of personal diaries was forbidden during the war, and it was not until 1946 that I began the notes that later became the basis of this story. They were added to occasionally after spinning sea yarns with old comrades and shipmates. Finally, in 1964, having been assigned to duty in Washington, where I

had access to many of the official records, as well as to some of the people involved, I commenced work on the book. Over the next two years, by correspondence and personal visits, I contacted many participants in the battles, both Allied and German, and in nearly every case I received the utmost cooperation. Combining my own observations and notes with those of other participants, and checking all against the official records and documents, the true picture of the battle began to emerge.

These documents included the ship logs and war diaries of individual ships, the action reports of various escort commanders, reports of anti-submarine attacks, reports on interrogation of Allied survivors, and the "post-mortem" reports based on interrogation of captured U-boat crewmen. From the German side, the best sources were the very detailed War Diaries of U-boat Command (*Befehlshaber der Untersee-Booten Kriegstagebuch*), the war diaries of the individual U-boats, and the records of individual torpedo firings. A number of very informative essays and manuscripts were also prepared by German naval officers for the occupation authorities shortly after the end of the war.

In reconstructing what actually happened in the midst of actions involving dozens of ships and U-boats, cloaked usually in darkness, and subject to confusion and sometimes chaos, it is unlikely that we will ever learn the truth concerning many events. Some of the secrets are forever with men long dead, and there they will remain. In the bitter struggle for survival, and of killing or being killed, not all men acted with heroism or even common discipline. The wonder is not that a few failed, but that for the most part the fighting men on both sides acted with courage, dignity, and a long-enduring fortitude under conditions that few men have had to face.

I am especially indebted to Dr. Jurgen Rohwer, Director of the Library for Contemporary History in Stuttgart, Germany, for his painstaking analysis of material which I gathered, for his frank and penetrating criticism of some of my conclusions, and for much valuable data on individual U-boat torpedo attacks.

Himself a former U-boat man, and a widely known writer and historian, Dr. Rohwer is probably the outstanding authority today on the history of U-boat operations in World War II.

I am also grateful to Rear Admiral P. N. Buckley, C. B., D.S.O., Royal Navy (Ret.), and others in the Naval Historical Branch of the British Ministry of Defence for their assistance in providing data, and especially for answering numerous questions regarding the fate of British vessels.

Vice-Admiral B. C. Watson, C.B., D.S.O, Royal Navy (Ret.), was most helpful in providing information from his diary, in recalling many events of those days, and in suggesting improvements which have been incorporated into the manuscript. The opportunity to see the Admiral again years after seeing his ship torpedoed was one of the many highlights of writing this book.

Rear Admiral D. W. Piers, D.S.C., C.B., Royal Canadian Navy (Ret.), made available his records of the actions, and contributed his time and constructive criticism, which were invaluable in deriving an accurate picture of the events.

Vice-Admiral Roy L. Raney, USCG (Ret.), a fine escort commander with whom I was privileged to serve in three oceans, was very helpful in his recollections of the events around Convoy SC-118, and the subsequent rescue of survivors.

For information and background on the late Korvettenkapitän Siegfried Freiherr von Forstner, I am indebted to his widow, Annamaria, now Frau Karl Rapp, and to his only surviving brother, Korvettenkapitän Wolfgang-Friedrich Freiherr von Forstner, German Navy, himself a former U-boat commander.

Mr. Dean Allard, Mrs. Mildred D. Mayeux, and Mr. Harry E. Riley of the Division of Naval History, Chief of Naval Operations, were most efficient and helpful in providing me with dozens of documents, as well as researching and finding the answers to endless questions which I posed. Without them, the research would have proved impossible to complete.

Captain Joseph R. Steele, USCG, and Mr. Henry Winters, of U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, contributed many hours of their

time in translating German documents and letters, and I am much in their debt.

For her cooperation in digging out photographs from the Archives, I give my thanks here, as on other occasions, to Miss Elizabeth Segedi of the Public Information Division, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters.

In obtaining information on many aspects of the German side of the picture, I would have been lost without the great help of Captain Helmut Schmoeckel, the German Naval Attaché in Washington. He not only answered numerous technical questions from his own experience as a U-boat commander, but through him I was able to locate many of the former U-boat men in Germany.

During a visit with Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz at his home near Hamburg, I was received with the greatest courtesy and friendliness, and the discussion was most helpful. The Admiral emphasized that his ten years imprisonment in Spandau after the Nuremberg trials had no connection with the manner in which his men fought, and should not reflect adversely on them. His point was well taken. The German submariners fought an unrestricted warfare, but in an almost identical manner with that admitted by their British and American counterparts.<sup>1</sup> Admiral Doenitz was obviously sensitive about the large number of U-boat men lost at sea, which included one of his two sons. The other was lost in an I-boat. Though he realized clearly that the Battle of the Atlantic was lost after May, 1943, the huge Allied resources tied up by a relatively few U-boats at sea mandated that the fight be continued in spite of appalling losses. As the architect of the U-boat war, and later Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, no other figure in the German armed forces exerted such an influence on Allied strategy, or so threatened their final victory.

<sup>1</sup> After thousands of U-boat attacks, only one commander, Kapitänleutnant Eck in U-852, was convicted of attacking survivors. He and his officers were executed by British firing squad on November 30, 1945. The incident provided the background for Gwyn Griffen's best selling novel, *An Operational Necessity*.

Lastly, I am deeply grateful to Rear Admiral Otto Kretschmer, German Navy, formerly Chief of Staff, Allied Forces, Baltic Approaches, for preparing the foreword to the book. The top-scoring submariner of World War II, with over 300,000 tons of shipping, no man is better qualified by combat experience to speak for the men of the U-boat arm. His exploits as a U-boat commander, and his later almost unbelievable escape from a prisoner-of-war camp have been told by Terance Robertson in his book *The Golden Horseshoe*. Captain Donald MacIntyre, Royal Navy, who sank Kretschmer's U-99 and captured him and his crew in 1941, gives this profile of him at the time:

Otto Kretschmer was the most dangerous enemy of them all. Utterly fearless, supremely confident of his skill as a seaman and a fighter and devoted single-heartedly to his career in the navy, he commanded his U-boat with the iron hand of a martinet, bringing his crew to the highest pitch of efficiency, yet earning their complete devotion. Not for Kretschmer the boastful speeches, the theatrical gestures, the contemptuous over-confidence in the face of the enemy. His equals found him hard to know, nicknaming him "Silent Otto." The hero-worship which was showered on him and the glamour which his name evoked were equally distasteful to him. Compared with his exuberant fellow aces he seemed a sinister figure. Out in the wastes of the North Atlantic he and U-99 were indeed a sinister and deadly menace. . . .

Though at the turning point of the Battle of the Atlantic, Kretschmer was a prisoner-of-war, many of the officers he had personally trained as student-commanders had risen to command of U-boats, and as will be seen in the narrative, several of them tried us sorely.

This latest edition contains the story of Ultra, the amazing code breaking operation of the British at Bletchley Park, which has only been released in part over 30 years after the events.<sup>2</sup> No history of major actions in Europe in World War II can be complete and in perspective without examining the impact of

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the British ability to intercept and quickly decode the most secret communications of an unsuspecting enemy. This cryptographic breakthrough was a primary factor in the outcome of the war, but due to the highly classified nature of Ultra, only a select few knew the source of this crucial intelligence, and they guarded the secret zealously, even in their own published memoirs, until it was officially released by the British government beginning in 1976. The revelations of Ultra will force future historians to reevaluate many of the leaders and crucial events of World War II.

In the war at sea, Ultra had a profound effect. But in the crucial period covered by this book, Ultra penetration of the German naval codes was sporadic and at times non-existent. Even when available, the lack of adequate Allied forces to act promptly on the information diminished its value. The most complete knowledge of the enemy's intentions is not decisive without the means to thwart him. Not until mid-1943 did we have adequate ships, aircraft, and equipment to act on the unprecedented intelligence provided by Ultra, and the combination, notably demonstrated by the Hunter/Killer and Support Groups, exacted a terrible retribution from the U-boat fleet in the final two years of the war.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II, Ultra—Riddle Within An Enigma.