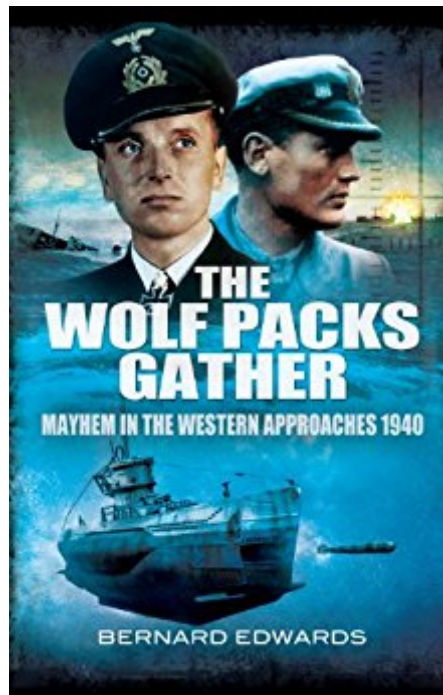




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The Wolf Packs Gather: Mayhem In The Western Approaches 1940



Synopsis

The capture by the German surface raider Atlantis of the British steamer City of Baghdad's secret code books in July 1940 enabled the Nazis to de-cypher Admiralty convoy plans with deadly effect. This book describes the resulting appalling Allied losses suffered by four convoys during the Autumn of 1940. Admiral Donetz, aware of the movements of the Allied convoys, marshaled as many of his U-boats as possible. The first convoy, SC2, consisting of 53 merchant men was attacked in early September by four U-boats. Due to poor weather only five ships were lost. Shortly after HX72, with 41 ships, sailing from Nova Scotia, lost eleven ships to five Type VIIC U-boats. Top Aces Otto Kretschmer and Joachim Schepke, who penetrated inside the columns, accounted for nine. No less than nine U-boats attacked SC7 in October 1940. Of 35 merchant men a staggering 20 were lost. HX79 also fared terribly despite being a 'fast' convoy with ten escorts, losing twelve ships. In total forty-eight merchant men were sunk and seven more damaged without any U-boat losses at all. The Wolf Packs Gather is an authoritative account of the darkest hours of the War in the Atlantic. It describes not only the German tactics but the inadequacies of what few escorts there were and the heartbreaking loss of defenseless life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Superb history A must read for anyone interested in a fascinating segment of WW 2 history.

During 1940 Hitler's U-boats savaged many of the convoys sailing for England with needed supplies. With the Admiralty desperately short of warships, many of those convoys sailed with few or no escorts and tragically paid the price, especially once Admiral Doenitz perfected the wolfpack attack strategy. British author Bernard Edwards chronicles the darkest hours of the Battle of the Atlantic in *THE WOLF PACKS GATHER, MAYHEM IN THE WESTERN APPROACHES 1940*, a 2011 Pen & Sword Books release. *THE WOLF PACKS GATHER* makes for grim reading. In 1940, Germany's U-boats sank more than two million tons of Allied shipping. Aces like Prien, Schepke, Kretschmer and Endrass slashed through the weakly-defended convoys. Edward's book details the fate of six convoys who braved the Atlantic and the U-boats. Out of 256 merchant ships assigned to those convoys, 65 vessels were lost and four more damaged. One convoy - SC7 - lost 20 of 35 merchantmen! In all, almost 1,000 brave sailors were lost in the convoy battles of 1940. Edwards brings the Battle of the Atlantic to vivid life, effectively conveying the tension, suddenness, terror and utter finality of the U-boat attacks on ships who were often hardpressed to maintain seven knots speed. He uses various first-person reminiscences from Allied and German participants as well as official documents to alternately put the reader on the bridge of a merchantmen or in the conning tower of one of the 'grey wolves.' In short, *THE WOLF PACKS GATHER* is a gripping, well-done if ultimately saddening account of the Battle of the Atlantic. Highly recommended.

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