



Neither Sharks Nor Wolves: The Men of Nazi Germany's U-Boat Arm 1939-1945

Timothy Mulligan

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Although countless books have been written about the U-boat war in the Atlantic, precious few facts have come to light about the men who served in the submarines that wrought such havoc on Allied ships. Eager to get beyond the stereotypes perpetuated in movies and novels and find out who these elusive sailors really were, archivist Timothy Mulligan started searching official records. Eventually he went straight to the source, conducting a survey of more than a thousand U-boat officers and enlisted men and interviewing a number of them personally. The result is this character study of the German submarine force that challenges traditional and revisionist views of the service. Mulligan found striking similarities in the men's geographic and social origins, education, and previous occupations, particularly within the specialized engineering and radio branches of the submarine force. The information he gathered establishes quantifiable patterns in age, length of service, and experience, as well as the organization's overall recruitment policies and training standards. The numbers and losses of U-boat personnel are also fully examined. Beyond these objective characteristics, this study lists such subjective factors as morale, treatment of enemy ship survivors, and the relationship of the submariners to the Nazi regime, and it confirms a serious crisis in morale in late 1943. The roles played by the head of the U-boat arm, Grand Admiral Karl Donitz, and its organizational chief, Admiral Hans-Georg von Friedeburg, are thoroughly addressed. Mulligan concludes that the U-boat arm quickly evolved from a handpicked elite to a more representative sample of the German navy at large but continued to be treated as an elite force. The only comprehensive investigation yet published, this book also draws on POW interrogations of U-boat survivors and documentation of Kriegsmarine personnel policy obtained from German archives.

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