



Arctic Warriors: A Personal Account of Convoy PQ18

Julie Grossmith Deltrice, Deltrice Alfred Grossmith



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In mid-1942 Alfred Grossmith Mason became Navigation/Gunnery Officer on SS Empire Baffin, a 6,978 ton cargo ship assigned to carry essential war supplies to the hard pressed Soviet Union. Fortunately he compiled this remarkable diary of the dramas and disasters that befell the ill-fated Convoy PQ18. This inspiring story follows the movement of his ship and the other merchantmen together with their Royal Naval escorts from the mustering point at Loch Ewe to their destination Archangel.??Daily German attacks from the air and sea and long periods at action stations deprived crews of sleep. The loss of many ships and comrades and the ever-present prospect of death through drowning and hypothermia took their toll. Having to function while exhausted, ill-nourished and freezing cold demanded that every man gave of his utmost over a prolonged period. Yet remarkably, as this book shows, humour remained intact.??Once in Archangel his insight into the hardships faced by the Russian population is revealing. For the surviving sailors there remained the awesome challenge of the return journey without any escort. Unlike so many, the Author finally reached Britain in December 1942.??Arctic Warriors is a rare and graphic personal account that captures the atmosphere of this infamously costly convoy and others like it. If any doubts remain of the terrible conditions and dangers that merchant seamen faced in the hostile waters of the North Atlantic and Barents Sea, this superb record, published in the Year of the Convoy, will surely put them to rest.



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