

Hitler, Donitz, and the Baltic Sea: The Third Reichs Last Hope, 1944-1945



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Reviews

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(Marilyne Macejkovic)

HITLER, DONITZ, AND THE BALTIC SEA: THE THIRD REICHS LAST HOPE, 1944-1945

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US Naval Institute Press. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 287 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.1in. x 1.4in. The popular conception of Hitler in the final years of World War II is that of a deranged Fuhrer stubbornly demanding the defense of every foot of ground on all fronts and ordering hopeless attacks with nonexistent divisions. To imply that Hitler had a rational plan to win the war flies in the face of widely accepted interpretations, but historian Howard D. Grier persuasively argues here that Hitler did possess a strategy to regain the initiative in 1944-45 and that the Baltic theater played the key role in his plan. In examining that strategy, Grier answers lingering questions about the Third Reichs final months and also provides evidence of its emphasis upon naval affairs and of Admiral Karl Donitzs influence in shaping Hitlers grand strategy. Donitz intended to starve Britain into submission and halt the shipment of American troops and supplies to Europe with a fleet of new Type XXI U-boats. But to test the new submarines and train their crews the Nazis needed control of the Baltic Sea and possession of its ports, and to launch their U-boat offensive they needed Norway, the only suitable location that remained after the loss of France in the summer of 1944. This work analyzes German naval strategy from 1944 to 1945 and its role in shaping the war on land in the Baltic. The first six chapters provide an operational history of warfare on the northern sector of the eastern front and give evidence of the navy s demands that the Baltic coast be protected in order to preserve U-boat training areas. The next three chapters look at possible reasons for Hitlers defense of the Baltic coast, concluding that the most likely reason was Hitlers belief...



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