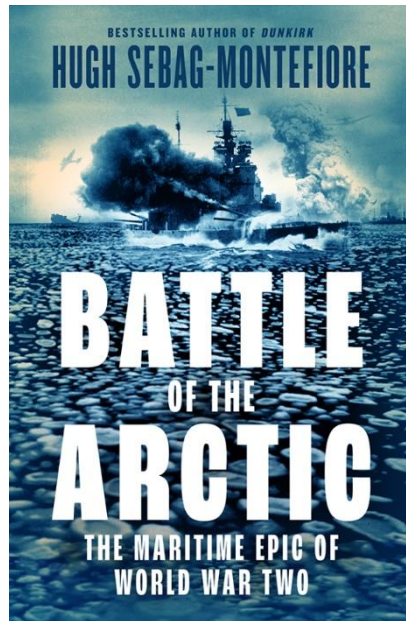


BATTLE OF THE ARCTIC

The Maritime Epic of World War Two



By Hugh Sebag-Montefiore

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From the bestselling author of *Dunkirk: Fight to the Last Man* and *Enigma: The Battle for the Code*, a deep dive into the Second World War's maritime epic in the Arctic.

No campaign during World War Two contained more spine-tingling drama, outstanding courage and heartbreaking tragedy than the Arctic convoys. Yet they – and the multifaceted Battle of the Arctic that had to be fought to get them through to Russia – remain one of the war's most undercelebrated feats.

As this book's title implies, *Battle of the Arctic* tells a unique story. For much of the conflict was complicated by terrific storms, snow, ice, fog, whales and Arctic mirages, so that what is chronicled at times sounds like a cross between the nightmarish torment experienced by both Shackleton on his ship *Endurance* and Scott of the Antarctic, and an Arctic version of *Robinson Crusoe*.

The action unfolded as Allied naval and merchant seamen, airmen, submariners, soldiers and intelligence officers delivered on their countries' promise to take arms to Russia notwithstanding the German attempts to hunt them in their aircraft, U-boats and surface fleet spearheaded by *Tirpitz* and *Scharnhorst*. When ships were attacked, and went down in seas so cold that a man could die after five minutes of immersion, it triggered events

reminiscent of the do-or-die moments during the sinking of the *Titanic*. Men perished one by one in lifeboats, and as castaways on deserted Arctic islands where they were stalked by polar bears. Frostbitten and wounded survivors ended up in primitive Russian hospitals where amputations were carried out without anesthetics. Others, while stranded for months in the communist state they were aiding, experienced the murky worlds of the NKVD, and the gulag, as well as famine and prostitution.

Using new material unearthed in American, British, Russian and German archives, as well as Polish, Norwegian, French and Dutch sources, and a remarkable collection of vivid witness accounts brought together at the passing of the last survivors, Hugh Sebag-Montefiore can at last shine a revealing light on this extraordinary tale that oscillates between the sailors' eye view on the front line, and the controversies that infuriated world leaders.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hugh Sebag-Montefiore was a barrister before becoming a journalist and historian. He has written for the Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph, Observer, Independent on Sunday, and Mail on Sunday. He is the author of three bestselling history books, two about the 2nd World War (*Enigma: The Battle for the Code* and *Dunkirk: Fight to the Last Man*), and one about the 1st World War (*Somme: Into the Breach*). He also wrote *Kings On The Catwalk: The Louis Vuitton Moët-Hennessy Affair*.

EARLY PRAISE FOR *BATTLE OF THE ARCTIC*

'This book is original, comprehensive, dynamic and thought-provoking.'

R. B. J. Knight, naval historian, archivist and former deputy director of the National Maritime Museum Greenwich

'Sebag-Montefiore's impressive new research provides the most comprehensive history so far on a forgotten campaign. He recreates the human toil and harrowing dangers of the Arctic journeys. An inspirational story of courage and human endurance.'

Dr Helen Fry, WWII intelligence and espionage historian

'Journalist and historian Sebag-Montefiore is a tireless researcher who has turned up letters, diaries, and personal accounts. The author takes advantage of interviews and fresh documentation to emphasize the experiences of individual sailors. A gripping chronicle of warfare in extreme conditions.'

Kirkus Reviews

EVENTS

Hugh will be speaking about *Battle of the Arctic* at:

- HMS Belfast on Thursday 6 November at 6.30pm. Tickets can be booked [here](#)
- The National Maritime Museum at 6.30 pm on 13 November (members only)
- Warwick Words History Festival on Saturday 15 November at 4.30pm. Tickets can be booked [here](#)
- Chorleywood Bookshop on Tuesday 25 November at 7pm. Tickets can be booked [here](#)

Copies of the book can be purchased from any good bookshop, as well as online retailers:

[Amazon](#)
[Bookshop.org](#)