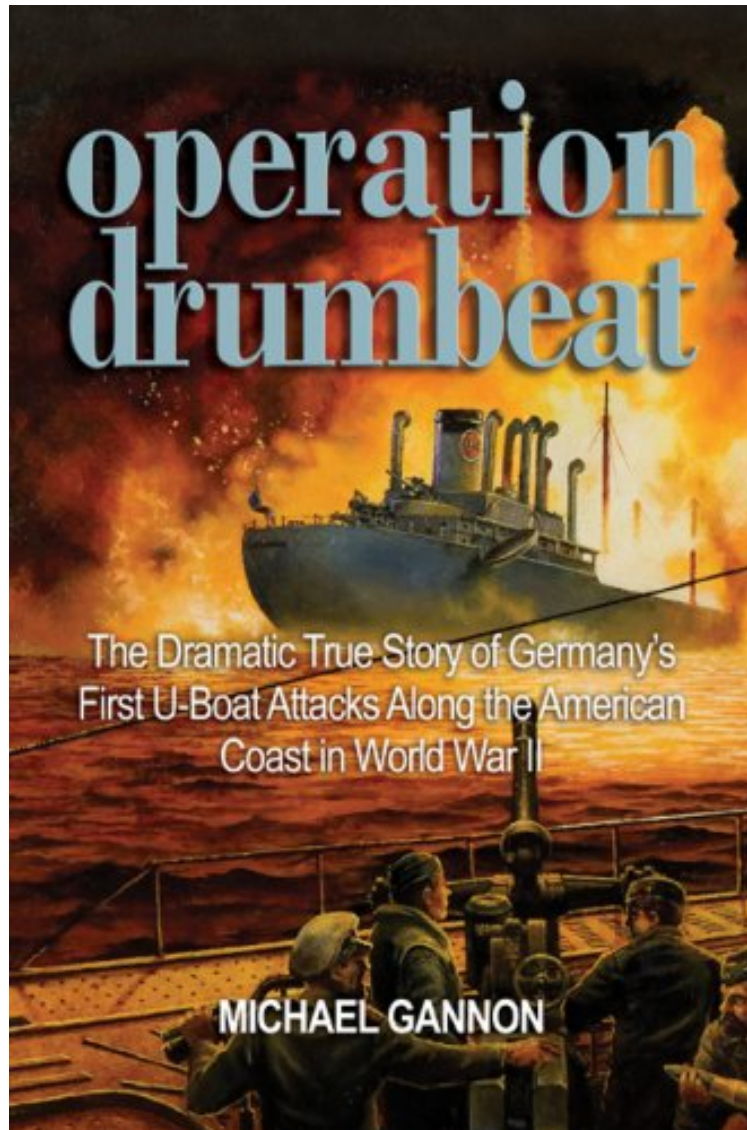


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## Operation Drumbeat: The Dramatic True Story of Germany's First U-Boat Attacks Along the American Coast in World War II

*Michael Gannon*

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**Michael Gannon : Operation Drumbeat: The Dramatic True Story of Germany's First U-Boat Attacks Along the American Coast in World War II** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Operation Drumbeat: The Dramatic True Story of Germany's First U-Boat Attacks Along the American Coast in World War II:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Loved The Book, But The Scanning Was Horrible

**By Andy in Washington**  
Operation Drumbeat is a look at the actions of U-Boats off the East Coast of the United States during the 1941-42 time frame. However, it covers much more than that. It devotes quite a bit to the American response (or lack of it), some background on U-Boat history and the politics of the German Navy, and a look at how the British fought U-Boats.==== The Good Stuff ====\* While it gets a little overly detailed, I found the book captivating and ended up reading it in a couple sessions. There is a fair amount of detail on how a U-Boat operated, including torpedo handling and launching, the rigors of the U-Boat environment, naval tactics and US Navy actions.\* Michael Gannon captures some of the "human" side of the U-Boat wars. At times we find U-Boat commanders going out of their way to help survivors by giving them water and a course to land. At other times, we find them coldly sailing away as men are stuck at sea with little chance of rescue. Both are just a part of WWII as fought at sea, but the story is certainly worth capturing.\* Gannon concentrates on one boat, U-123, and we meet the captain and a few of the officers, although only the character of the captain really comes out. There are a few tales from other boats, just enough to round out the story. The amount of named characters stays small, and you can concentrate on the story without getting wrapped up in a recitation of facts.==== The Not-So-Good Stuff ====\* I would have rated this a 5 star book, if only someone had bothered to proof read the Kindle edition. I got the book very cheaply, but I was sorely tempted to ask for my money back. While Kindle editions usually have a good number of errors, this book was ridiculous. The name of the U-Boat was U-123, but it was a rare event to actually have the name printed correctly. The typos really got in the way of reading the book, both from breaking my concentration and making it difficult to decode what the author was really talking about. My personal favorite is this gem-"Hoffmann had not yet introduced him. £ 5 macht nichts-- Vs/ e\\, it was probably all right." I honestly have no idea.\* The same guy that scanned the text must have also worked on scanning the graphics. The photos, and especially the map, was just about useless. It would have been nice to have more maps, but since it wouldn't have been readable, there was no reason to include them.\* Parts of the book get a bit carried away, especially when the narrative turns from relating events to analyzing the motives and morals of the men involved.==== Summary ====The book was great, but the scanning was so bad that it really detracted from the experience. It is a shame that his level of incompetence is considered acceptable, both by the publishers and . I would recommend the book to Naval history fans, but only as a hardcopy.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Terrible Proofreading

**By SoapDad**  
This is a very good story that is well written and does a good job of keeping your interest. Unfortunately, it looks like it was transferred from a printed version to electronic by a scanner and then never proofread. It becomes nearly impossible to know which Uboat is being mentioned because the numbers are never scanned properly. The same applies to places and probably names. It was so bad that at points, I considered dropping the book. If you can get by guessing on boat numbers, places and sometimes entire sentences, then this book is Ok. It is really sad that no one took the time to proofread because the story is quite good. This is the third or fourth inexpensive Kindle book where I have had this experience.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An astonishing tale of U-boat Warfare in WW2

**By Christopher Kelly**  
Operation Drumbeat Operation Drumbeat: The Dramatic True Story of Germany's First U-Boat Attacks Along the American Coast in World War II is an extraordinary book about Nazi submarine warfare in World War II. Published in 1990, it was written by Michael Gannon – a Catholic priest from Florida. Operation Drumbeat (“Paukenschlag”) was launched by the Kriegesmarine immediately following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. German U-boats were sent from bases in France to attack merchant ships in the coastal waters of the United States. In the eight months following Pearl Harbor almost 400 ships were sunk off the US Atlantic coast killing more than 5,000 merchant mariners – more than twice as many as were killed on December 7 in Hawaii. The astonishing and shocking message of this book is the ineptitude and complacency of the US Navy at the start of the conflict. The utility of convoying merchant ships had been proven in WWI and by the British experience in the opening years of WW2. But we Americans seem to have forgotten these painful lessons. Gannon blames Admiral J. King for the US navy’s inadequate and slow response to the U-boat menace. Even the mild-mannered General Eisenhower wrote, “One thing that might help win this war is to get someone to shoot King.” The coastal waters of the Atlantic were left almost undefended for the Nazi U-boats to prey on. Gannon has closely researched the career of Captain Reinhard Hardegen who skippered U-boat 123 (“Eins, zwei, drei”) in Operation Drumbeat. On January 13, 1942 a coordinated assault conceived by Admiral Donitz on merchant shipping in American coastal waters began. Hardegen sunk freighters that were illuminated by the incandescent city lights of New York City – no black out or dim out orders had been given. Later Hardegen would sink merchant shipping off the coast of Florida during what the Germans referred to as the "Happy Time". Eventually, the US Navy did improve its performance with the implementation of active convoying and improved air patrols. By all accounts Hardegen was beloved by his crew, most of whom, against the odds, survived the war. Unlike many Japanese subs in WW2, Hardegen did NOT order the deliberate massacre of sinking vessels’ crew members. On the contrary he even stopped in the mid Atlantic to request that a neutral Swiss vessel come to the aid the survivors of the Pan Norway that he had sunk earlier. Gannon writes an astonishing empathy for Hargen and his crew while noting that the Kriegesmarine was “an armed force in service to objective evil”. He suggests that “most German officers and ratings went to sea for Navy, not for Nazi, reasons.” Gannon destroys many of the prevailing Hollywood myths about

submarine warfare in WW2. U-123, for example spent the vast majority of its multiple transatlantic cruises on the surface and NOT submerged. On the surface it was nearly three times faster than below. Nor were all submarine attacks delivered by torpedos. Hardegen often used his ship's 10.5 cm deck guns to sink merchant ships. In many ways the Battle of the Atlantic was the decisive war-winning Battle fought by the Western Allies in WW2. Without it tons of Lend Lease materials could never have been delivered to the Soviets, the British and other Allies. Without it the American and Canadian troops that stormed the beaches on June 6, 1944 could never have made it to their staging area in Britain. This is an important and well-told tale about a vitally important part of WW2. Reinhard Hardegen, mistaken for an SS officer spent time in jail after the war. Astonishingly, the former skipper (born 1913) is alive at age 102 and still plays an occasional round of golf! Christopher Kelly is the co-author, with Stuart Laycock, of *America Invades: How We've Invaded or been Militarily Involved with almost Every Country on Earth and Italy Invades and An Adventure in 1914: An American Family's Journey on the Brink of WWI*

In the first eight months of 1942, German submarines sank nearly 400 Allied freighters and tankers along the U.S. Atlantic coast with a loss of more than 5,000 merchant seamen and sailors—twice the number of fatalities at Pearl Harbor. This book helps readers understand the complexities of the long Battle of the Atlantic by examining those disastrous early days of war and following the U-boats into action. The book traces the voyages of five U-boats to their destinations as they sink twenty-five ships unmolested by the U.S. Navy, which failed to follow through on British intelligence warnings. It also provides a compilation of personal stories from crewmen and officers of U-123 and from the Allied sailors and merchant seamen cast adrift in lifeboats by the U-boat's torpedoes. A bestseller when first published in 1990, it is now back in print as a trade paperback.

.com Historian Michael Gannon argues that the systematic assault by German submarines on merchant tankers and freighters along the U.S. eastern seaboard in 1942 "constituted a greater strategic setback for the Allied war effort than did the defeat at Pearl Harbor." The case for the claim is intriguing and includes a damaging assessment of the U.S. naval command, which ignored information that might have allowed it to avert the disaster, but Gannon never lets his argument distract from the compelling wartime story. Through original interviews and archival research, he describes the exploits of U-123 and its 28-year-old Lieutenant Commander Reinhard Hardegen, who terrorized American home waters on two separate missions. Operation Drumbeat presents a remarkable picture of life on the U-boats. (Fans of the movie *Das Boot* especially won't want to miss it.) Gannon's book eventually may become a classic work of naval history; for now it's a great book on a particular aspect of the Second World War. --John J. Miller  
From Publishers Weekly  
Interviews with a U-boat skipper, former German crew members and U.S. and British military personnel help explain why the Allies lost nearly 400 ships to U-boat attacks; evidence suggests that well-informed British intelligence was disregarded by the Anglophobic U.S. chief of naval operations. "The book will be of enormous interest to sub warfare buffs," said PW. Photos. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Gannon's book is a crisply written, vivid and thoroughly researched account of the adventure of U-123 in American waters." -- -- Michael L. Hadley, author, *U-Boats Against Canada* "Operation Drumbeat is a splendid book, moving in description, instructive in well supported analysis. Gannon knows how everything worked in a U-Boat, and he gives brilliant descriptions of all the technological conditions that shaped its warfare. He also makes a memorable contribution to our understanding of the nature of the U-Boat war and warriors. He is fully informed and he is full, fair and justifiably critical of some [U.S.] policies, personalities, and performances." -- Elting E. Morison, author, *Men, Machines and Modern Times*, and Admiral Sims and the Modern American Navy "Operation Drumbeat is a truly wonderful book the best by far that I have read on U-boats and believe me I have read them all. It combines a great knowledge of U-boats and meticulous scholarship with dramatic narrative. The upshot is an important and riveting story that gives the reader the most reliable and penetrating account of U-boat warfare ever written. Furthermore the 'Atlantic Pearl Harbor' thesis is well developed and unassailable. On every page the author demonstrates complete mastery of immense primary source material with shocking new revelations such as the failure to bring the 25 American destroyers into play despite clear warning from Bletchley Park that Drumbeat was afoot." -- Clay Blair, author, *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan* "Engrossing reading, most especially the part in which the dereliction of our naval leaders along the eastern seaboard is so well described." -- Capt. Edward L. Beach, author, *Run Silent, Run Deep* "Gannon's book is a crisply written, vivid and thoroughly researched account of the adventure of U-123 in American waters." -- Michael L. Hadley, author, *U-Boats Against Canada* "I started reading Operation Drumbeat and literally could not stop. I think it's an absolutely stunning book revelatory. It should startle everyone who thinks there is nothing more to be said about World War II. His exposé of the U.S. Navy's incompetence in the opening months of the war is the stuff of Pulitzer Prizes. His grasp of the German side of the story is equally remarkable. On top of all that it often reads like a novel." -- Thomas Fleming, author, *Time Tide* "It is difficult to fault Gannon's assertion that in the face of the U-boat threat [Admiral] King's failure to act decisively was 'like a sentry asleep at his post.'" -- Houston Chronicle