



# The Wolf: How One German Raider Terrorized the Allies in the Most Epic Voyage of WWI

*Richard Guillatt, Peter Hohnen*

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On November 30, 1916, an apparently ordinary freighter left harbor in Kiel, Germany, and would not touch land again for another fifteen months. It was the beginning of an astounding 64,000-mile voyage that was to take the ship around the world, leaving a trail of destruction and devastation in her wake. For this was no ordinary freighter—this was the *Wolf*, a disguised German warship.

In this gripping account of an audacious and lethal World War I expedition, Richard Guillatt and Peter Hohnen depict the *Wolf*'s assignment: to terrorize distant ports of the British Empire by laying minefields and sinking freighters, thus hastening Germany's goal of starving her enemy into submission. Yet to maintain secrecy, she could never pull into port or use her radio, and to comply with the rules of sea warfare, her captain fastidiously tried to avoid killing civilians aboard the merchant ships he attacked, taking their crews and passengers prisoner before sinking the vessels.

The *Wolf* thus became a huge floating prison, with more than 400 captives, including a number of women and children, from twenty-five different nations. Sexual affairs were kindled between the German crew and some female prisoners. A six-year-old American girl, captured while sailing across the Pacific with her parents, was adopted as a mascot by the Germans.

Forced to survive on food and fuel plundered from other ships, facing death from scurvy, and hunted by the combined navies of five Allied nations, the Germans and their prisoners came to share a common bond. The will to survive transcended enmities of race, class, and nationality.

It was to be one of the most daring clandestine naval missions of modern times. Under the command of Captain Karl Nerger, who conducted his deadly business with an admirable sense of chivalry, the *Wolf* traversed three of the world's major oceans and destroyed more than thirty Allied vessels.

We learn of the world through which the *Wolf* moved, with all its social divisions and xenophobia, its bravery and stoicism, its combination of old-world social mores and rapid technological change. The story of this epic voyage is a vivid real-life narrative and simultaneously a richly detailed picture of a world being profoundly transformed by war.

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