



The Barque of Saviors: Eagle's Passage from the Nazi Navy to the U.S. Coast Guard

Russell Drumm

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In 1936 in Hamburg, a splendid three-masted sailing ship was christened Horst Wessel in the presence of Adolf Hitler and thousands of cheering Nazis. It became a training vessel for naval officers during World War II. After Germany's defeat, the U.S. Coast Guard found its young crew terrified and half starved. The Coast Guardsmen brought the Germans, so recently their mortal enemies, back to life; the Germans, in return, taught them the ways of the beautiful square-rigged ship, rechristened Eagle. In time, Eagle would become the Coast Guard's elite school ship — the barque of saviors.

Uncannily linking Eagle's malign past and its American present is a Coast Guardsman named Karl Dillmann, who believes that the spirit of a young German sailor drowned in a U-boat explosion inhabits his soul. The voices of Dillmann and other crew members are heard throughout the book, as are, incredibly, the voices of young sailors on the Horst Wessel. Drumm has obtained never-before-published logbooks from the war years, affording fascinating new insights into both the ship's everyday life and its moments of high drama.

A supremely gifted journalist and a vivid, lyrical writer, Russell Drumm knows Eagle intimately. His love of the ship, and of the sea itself, enriches every page. The courage and sacrifice of the "greatest generation" are alive and well today in the dedicated members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

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