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German Submarine Blockade, Overseas Imports, and British Military Production in World War II (PDF)

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BIOGRAPHY

Erin Weir graduated from high school in Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1999. He received a BA from the University of Regina with a combined major in Economics and History and a minor in Political Science in 2002. He finished the course component of an MA in History at the University of Calgary in 2002/2003. Erin is now working on his MA thesis, *The Nazi Submarine Blockade: A Near Victory of Economic Warfare?*. His other research contributions include a paper published by the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, online essays through the Progressive Economics Forum, a paper presented to the 2003 Conference of the Society for Military and Strategic Studies, and entries in books to be published by the Canadian Plains Research Center. Erin's main extracurricular activities are debate and politics.

ABSTRACT

In World War II, German submarines sought to undermine the Allied war effort by curtailing the seaborne flow of supplies to Britain. This paper partially evaluates the economic effectiveness of Germany's submarine blockade by assessing the extent to which wartime reductions in imports constrained British military output. Frequently cited figures on Britain's total imports show a substantial overall decline during the war, but obscure equally significant variations between imports of different goods. An examination of the economic consequences of these variations and of the means by which Britain adjusted for lost imports shows that reduced imports had only a small impact on war production. However, several other factors would have to be addressed to fully evaluate the effectiveness of Germany's submarine blockade.

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