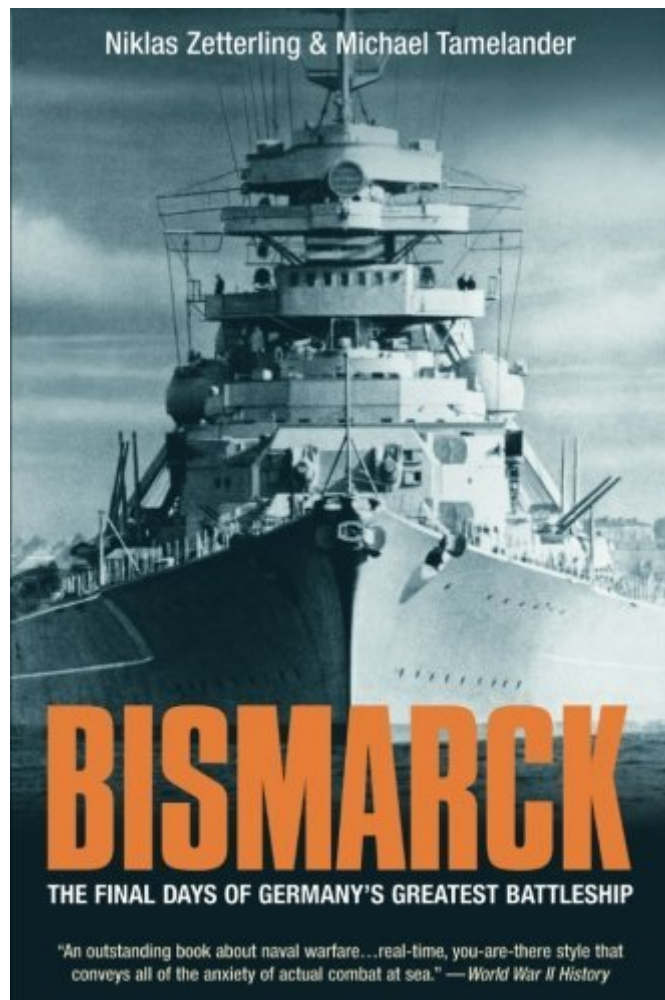




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Bismarck: The Final Days Of Germany's Greatest Battleship



Synopsis

A gripping tale of heroism and doom on the high seas . . . The sinking of the German battleship Bismarck—a masterpiece of engineering, well-armored with a main artillery of eight 15-inch guns—was one of the most dramatic events of World War II. She left the port of Gotenhafen for her first operation on the night of 18 May 1941, yet was almost immediately discovered by Norwegian resistance and Allied air reconnaissance. British battlecruiser Hood was quickly dispatched from Scapa Flow to intercept the Bismarck, together with new battleship Prince of Wales. They were ordered to find the ship quickly because, on their way from the USA, several large convoys were heading for Britain. On 24 May, Bismarck was found off the coast of Greenland, but the ensuing battle was disastrous for the British. The Hood was totally destroyed within minutes (only 3 crewmen surviving), and Prince of Wales was badly damaged. The chase resumed until the German behemoth was finally caught, this time by four British capital ships supported by torpedo-bombers from the carrier Ark Royal. The icy North Atlantic roiled from the crash of shellfire and bursting explosions until finally the Bismarck collapsed, sending nearly 2,000 German sailors to a watery grave. Tamelander and Zetterling's work rests on stories from survivors and the latest historical discoveries. The book starts with a thorough account of maritime developments from 1871 up to the era of the giant battleship, and ends with a vivid account, hour by hour, of the dramatic and fateful hunt for the mighty Bismarck, Nazi-Germany's last hope to pose a powerful surface threat to Allied convoys. NIKLAS ZETTERLING, a researcher at the Swedish Defense College, is most recently co-author of *The Korsun Pocket: The Encirclement and Breakout of a German Army in the East, 1944*. Together with MICHAEL TAMELANDER, a part-time military author, they have written books about the battleship Tirpitz, the D-Day landings and the 1940 campaign in Norway.

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Customer Reviews

Without boring you to death with technical details, this book will give at least all the basic facts about this unbelievable chase and unequal battle between dozens of ships (and airplanes!) against one German ship (even being a very powerful one). It is a fast read, breathtaking and despairing at the same time. However, there are indeed various typo errors. Also, a new world record for the use of the word "unfortunately" beginning a sentence must have been set in this book!

(Review is of the Kindle edition) I have to agree with others that this is a fascinating story, and the author has clearly done his homework to assemble credible courses and to think through the events in a way that I found compelling - I really could not put this down. At the same time, the book is more of a rough author's draft than a product ready to be published! It's repetitive; individuals are referred to repeatedly and only much later introduced; and, it's riddled with spelling and grammatical errors (some bad enough to make the meaning of sentences unclear.) On my Kindle (even when using the Kindle computer reading apps, so I could have the big screen) the various maps are pretty much illegible. The book needs a good edit to be a great book. But, as I say, I still could not stop reading this compelling story, and I feel I understand what happened much better. One substantive criticism is that there is little mention of some of the controversies about the sinking - in particular, whether it was scuttled or sunk by Allied action. One other thing - the Bismarck was subsequently located on the ocean floor, which would, one might think, be worth at least a post-scriptural mention!

I must preface this review by saying that I am by no means an expert of the German Navy in World War II. I have read several accounts of the Bismarck that focused solely on 14 FEB 1939 and 19-27 MAY 1941. This book gives a good overall account. As other reviews have stated, this work draws heavily on Mullenheim-Rechberg's memoir (which I have yet to read). The authors do a good job placing the mission of the Bismarck in the context of the Kriegsmarine's overall strategy for

naval warfare concerning surface ships. The main drawbacks of the book are the numerous editing and proofreading mistakes. The main drawback--I was willing to overlook the grammatical errors with some effort--was that the footnotes in the back of the book do not match up with the ones in the text. They are off by one. This caused some confusion at first, as the first footnote does not seem to have a place in the text. The footnote was interesting, and I would have liked to see how it matched up within the main text. If one is willing to overlook these moderately serious shortcomings, the main text and the explanation of Cruiser Warfare and what the Germans were hoping to accomplish are quite interesting.

This book seems to me to be an excellent account of the topic. It explains the reason the Bismark was to attack convoys rather than other warships, the problems that the Germans encountered in their approach, and how the pending attack on the USSR affected decisions by the German Navy. It also outlines what is known, or can be extrapolated, of the situation from both the German and British perspectives once the Bismark sailed. Consequently, it gives a good overall picture of an important naval battle. Some have criticized the book for "spelling errors," but what I found was British spelling, which most Europeans use, rather than American. Others said it doesn't present new material, and perhaps they're right, but it's accurate and very helpful to those like myself who haven't done any in depth study on the topic. The maps were quite useful, also. I didn't find it dry or heavy reading- in fact I stayed up too late last night to read "just one more chapter". And we all know how that goes. :)

There must be hundreds of books, TV shows, and magazine articles dedicated to the sinking of the Bismarck therefore it may be difficult to find anything new on any work about this battleship. Nevertheless it is a good reading for the naval enthusiast. The book begins with a brief history of the battleship including of course the Dreadnought era. The central characters are the commanders of both the German and the English squadrons, Churchill makes only a brief appearance here therefore this is a book about ships, naval strategy and naval commanders and does not mess much with the politics nor the politicians from both sides. The Kindle version has several typos and minor editorial flaws that should be corrected, the maps aren't a great deal either but you must have into account that this is not a book that should be valued by its graphic content but by its narrative.

A good book which could have been better. I like how the authors include an account of Operation "Berlin" before getting into Operation "Rheinübung," thus enlightening the reader regarding

how alert the British were when the Bismarck sailed out. I like, as well, the good amount of first hand accounts from survivors. I have to mention though, the book does not present much new material, unless of course the reader is new to the subject. The accounts of "cat and mouse" situations are too long in my opinion, sometimes making the reading repetitive and loose momentum. I was expecting more material on how life was on board the Bismarck, her construction; armament; power plant, etc; but on this the book has little. There is little as well of the new material collected by research after the wreck was discovered and investigated in recent years.

After all the books I've read on the mighty Bismarck, yet another thrilling one emerges. Good read. Rather well-researched. Some books I have to ration myself to reading little at a time...a recent book Blood, Steel and Myth comes to mind...another lost German cause (Kursk) but such a good book to read. The cover stares at you every time in a compelling manner, but the contents are worth every minute.

Just getting in to it, looks like a great read.

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