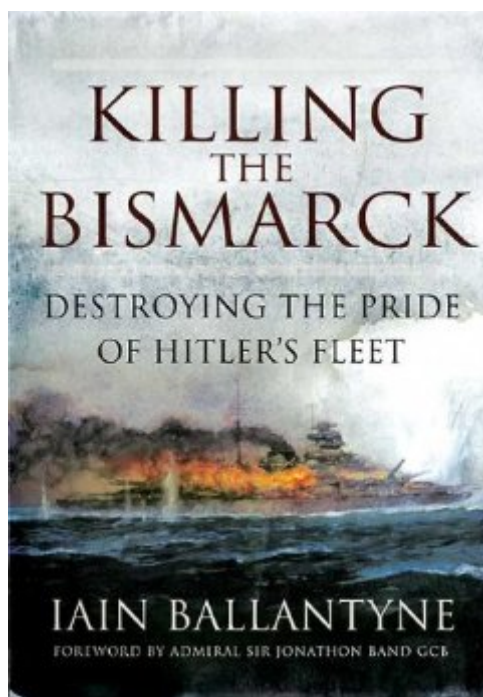


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Killing The Bismarck: Destroying The Pride Of Hitler's Fleet



Synopsis

In May 1941, the German battleship Bismarck, accompanied by heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen, broke out into the Atlantic, to attack Allied shipping. The Royal Navy's pursuit and subsequent destruction of Bismarck was an epic of naval warfare. In this new account of those dramatic events at the height of the Second World War, Iain Ballantyne draws extensively on the graphic eye-witness testimony of veterans, to construct a thrilling story, mainly from the point of view of the British battleships, cruisers and destroyers involved. He describes the tense atmosphere as cruisers play a lethal cat and mouse game as they shadow Bismarck in the icy Denmark Strait. We witness the shocking destruction of the British battle cruiser Hood, in which all but three of her ship's complement were killed; an event that filled pursuing Royal Navy warships, including the battered battleship Prince of Wales, with a thirst for revenge. While Swordfish torpedo-bombers try desperately to cripple the Bismarck, we sail in destroyers on their own daring torpedo attacks, battling mountainous seas. Finally, the author takes us into the final showdown, as battleships Rodney and King George V, supported by cruisers Norfolk and Dorsetshire, destroy the pride of Hitler's fleet. This vivid, superbly researched account portrays this epic saga through the eyes of so-called 'ordinary sailors' caught up in extraordinary events. Killing the Bismarck is an outstanding read, conveying the horror and majesty of war at sea in all its cold brutality and awesome power.

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Customer Reviews

Well written and with first person accounts of the fate of the Bismarck. Detailed descriptions of the events from both sides as well as commentary on modern research. Well worth the read and a welcome addition to the existing literature on this subject.

Some years ago I saw the movie "Sink the Bismarck" and then read C.S. Forester's book by the same title, as a military history major I found both very enjoyable. Then I got a copy of Baron Von Mullenheim-Rechberg book "Battleship Bismarck" and found it very interesting written by the senior survivor of the Bismarck and from the German point of view. Now along comes "Killing the Bismarck", needless to say I had to have it. I am impressed with this book, not only is it from the British point of view but it covers why the British had to sink Bismarck before she could get under German support. The author has done a tremendous job with his research not only from British sources but also referring to the German too. The fact he uses plot charts as well as photos of the ships and senior officers helps one follow the story, although I think it would have helped if the charts were in the section the narrative covered. The sections that follow the actual book are very informative particularly dealing with what happened to the British ships after Bismarck was sunk. As a side note he mentions sending deep diving rigs to examine Bismarck as she lays on the sea floor with a photo of her bow. Several years ago I saw on TV one of these dives and the question then was, as he puts it in the book, did the British really sink her or did the German crew scuttle her. After reading this book and the Baron's I am inclined to go with the British theory. Bismarck had too much battle damage and it appears to few officers left to give the order to scuttle her or abandon her. All in all I found this a very good, well written history of an action that took place many years ago and most of us know little or nothing about.

This was a fascinating book. I know there are others about this fabled ship and her very short life. I would have given it five stars if the author would have taken advantage of how maps, photos, illustrations, etc. can be put in the book for free when formatting the electronic version. There were photos, but they were in the center of the book as you'd find in old print versions. Instead of trying to describe where the HMS Hood was and so forth, create a map and put it right in the book. The same is true for photos of different things that are being described. Yes, I realize there are not as many photos of the actual Bismarck as we might like, but close up photos of US battleships to show

similar guns, armor, etc. would really bring the reader into the world of being on a battleship. After reading about how big the shells were, how fast the ships were moving in the water and how far apart they were, I thought about how hard it would be for me to try to hit some other moving car I could see twelve miles away while we were both moving 30 miles per hour. I think you'll love this book.

A fascinating account of the famous naval battle and riveting in every way. As others have noted, the story is told primarily from the standpoint of the British navy's engagement with the German battleship. While this in no way detracts from the story itself, if one wishes to learn more from the German perspective, further reading is in order. That said, this is an immensely engaging account.

A good, workmanlike book, a bit top-heavy with naval terminology that might turn some readers off, but solid and steady, rather like HMS Prince of Wales plowing through the stormy Denmark Straits. As promised, the narrative focuses on the British efforts to prevent the Bismarck from breaking out into the convoy lanes and then to sink her. The tale bounces from the politicians to the naval wonks in the Admiralty to the commanders and captains of the various British fleets and ships, rather like a dinghy in the swells off the Grand Banks. For all the changing points of view, however, I found the background information useful and the unfolding descriptions of the more immediate actions interesting, if not always compelling. It is true that the author relied on first-hand accounts--and reminiscences--of many participants, and it is equally true that they are presented in a style very like the "stiff upper lip" cliché so often used to describe British fortitude in the midst of real or impending disaster. This isn't a fault in a non-fiction account, I think. Not to be overlooked either are the clear, concise maps, course plots, and photos that augment the narrative rather than function as mere decoration. For readers wanting to know more about the Bismarck herself, this isn't the book. Read *Battleship Bismarck: A Survivor's Story* for that point of view. Here the enemy ship with those wicked 15-inch guns and more than 12 inches of armor plating is nothing more than the enemy, a target to be fixed in one's sights and then fired at. For those who want more visceral action, watch the classic British film, *Sink the Bismarck*, with Kenneth More.

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