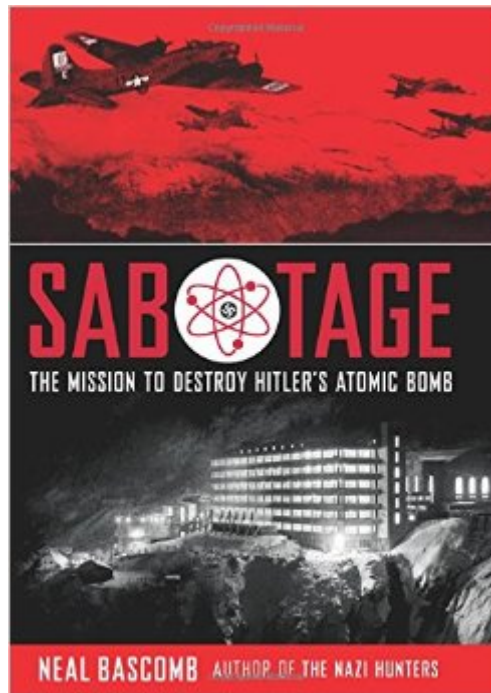


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Sabotage: The Mission To Destroy Hitler's Atomic Bomb: Young Adult Edition



Synopsis

Neal Bascomb delivers another nail-biting work of nonfiction for young adults in this incredible true story of spies and survival. The invasion begins at night, with German cruisers slipping into harbor, and soon the Nazis occupy all of Norway. They station soldiers throughout the country. They institute martial rule. And at Vemork, an industrial fortress high above a dizzying gorge, they gain access to an essential ingredient for the weapon that could end World War II:Â Hitlerâ™s very own nuclear bomb. When the Allies discover the plans for the bomb, they agree Vemork must be destroyed. But after a British operation fails to stop the Nazisâ™ deadly designs, the task falls to a band of young Norwegian commandos. Armed with little more than skis, explosives, and great courage, they will survive months in the snowy wilderness, elude a huge manhunt, and execute two dangerous missions. The result? The greatest act of sabotage in all of World War II.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1070 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 320 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (32 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

It's hard to think of this book aimed at young readers. I'd rather classify this book aimed for readers who want a cursory look at Norway's part in the war effort and its band of resistance fighters in the Milorg, why the Vemork power plant was important and the physicists working there, Norway's relationship to England at the time, basic descriptions of "heavy water" and nuclear fission and the German physicists fascinated in atomic power, and who the Norwegian heroes were, all while

avoiding deep military strategy which can bore readers. Neal Bascomb shows in a mere 259 pages while the efforts of the saboteurs were invaluable. He also adds some historical perspective of the 1930s and the efforts of several physicists around the world experimenting with atoms, neutrons and protons. Bascomb begins by introducing the brave Norwegians who are part of this story: 37-year-old Norwegian Institute of Technology professor Leif Tronstad and 28-year-old professor Kurt Haukelid who were trained in England and Scotland, and members of the Norwegian Independent Company who participated in Operation Grouse/Freshman: 23-year-old Norsk Hydro worker Einar Skinnarland, Jens Anton Poulsson, Arne Kjelstrup, Knut Haugland, Claus Helberg. The reading here is intense and thrilling as the men brave freezing lakes, harsh temperatures, night time operations and never knowing if Germans were listening in on their radio frequencies. Many of the English working with the Norwegians on the airlift didn't survive the ordeal when the planes crashed and survivors were rounded up by Nazis and executed. It took several attempts to make a successful landing and travel on skis to Vemork and beyond, always with the mission of making the Nazis' efforts more tiresome. The text is easy to read.

Neal Bascomb has written an excellent account of one of the most persistent, daring and underappreciated missions of World War 2 - the effort to destroy a chemical plant at Vemork in Norway which was producing heavy water for the Nazis' atomic bomb effort. The book is aimed at young adults but it will be equally intriguing for readers of all ages. The writing is crisp and Bascomb is adept at conveying the tension intrinsic in the whole story. The book mainly shines in three ways. Firstly Bascomb gives us a good background of why the mission was undertaken. He traces the beginnings of the Nazi atomic bomb effort and introduces brilliant scientists like Werner Heisenberg as well as bureaucrats like Kurt Diebner and Albert Speer. The proof of principle in making an atomic bomb is to first build a nuclear reactor. This is what the scientists needed the heavy water for. Bascomb also has capsule histories of parallel efforts toward the bomb pursued in Britain and the United States. Since fission was discovered in Germany and the country had no dearth of capable scientists it was assumed that the Nazis would try to build an atomic bomb; hence the motivation for destroying the heavy water plant. As it turned out the scientists received almost no support from the government and their progress toward a workable weapon was almost non-existent, but the Allies did not know this until 1944. Secondly and most importantly, the book shines in telling us the stories of the heroic Norwegian saboteurs, scientists and soldiers who were trained in England and who along with help from the British made no less than three attempts to sabotage the plant.

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