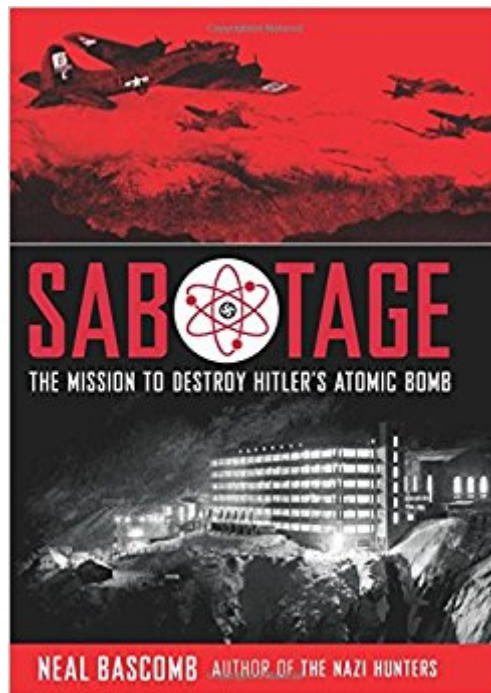




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# Sabotage: The Mission To Destroy Hitler's Atomic Bomb: Young Adult Edition



## 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: Hitler'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 Nazis' 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: 4.5 out of 5 stars 36 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up • The people of Norway had hoped to remain neutral during World War II as they had in the Great War, but that hope was shattered when Nazi Germany invaded Norway's ports in the early days of April 1940. In addition to taking over Norway's land and exiling their king, Germany also intended to capture the hydroelectric plant at Vemork in Norway's frozen highlands. The plant

was one of the only places in the world that produced a substance called heavy water, an extremely important ingredient in Germany's race to develop an atomic bomb. It would take the Allies several unsuccessful attempts before a time bomb planted on the ferry transporting the heavy water and production equipment across a deep lake spelled the demise of Germany's atomic research.

Bascomb is a master of taking complicated histories and turning them into exciting works of nonfiction. By exploring the various backgrounds of each of the Norwegian resistance fighters and scientists, he gives readers a chance to understand their motivations and properly empathize with their struggles. This investment pays off as the stakes get higher, and the narrative deftly switches between their perspectives, creating a dramatic and suspenseful tension like no other. A generous amount of captioned black-and-white photos of the men, buildings, and artifacts help to guide readers through the text. VERDICT This excellent treatise on a little-known episode of World War II is a first choice. —Eldon Younce, Anthony Public Library, KS

Praise for *Sabotage*: "This is an exciting and impeccably researched story of science, spies, and commando raids -- page-turning nonfiction at its best." -- Steve Sheinkin, Newbery Honor-winning author of *Bomb: The Race to Build -- and Steal -- the World's Most Dangerous Weapon* "Bascomb is a master of taking complicated histories and turning them into exciting works of nonfiction... This excellent treatise on a little-known episode of World War II is a first choice." -- School Library Journal, starred review "Bascomb's detailed narrative builds tension through each attempt, narrow escape, and comeback; vivid descriptions of the principal participants and their motivations, rigors of Norway's climate and terrain, and the risks calculated (and those unforeseen), producing a gripping account of individual and collective heroic effort." -- Publishers Weekly "The book is enhanced by impressive supplemental material, including a helpful list of participants, photographs, maps, and an intriguing author's note. A rich, well-paced narrative." -- Kirkus Reviews "Bascomb admirably balances dramatic tension and context throughout... *Sabotage* will find its place in a growing body of narrative nonfiction centering on military and political history." -- Horn Book "Bascomb's clear-eyed account, helped along by photos, maps, and diagrams, of the thrilling mission and its many challenges... will handily engage teens." -- Booklist Praise for *The Nazi Hunters*: Winner of the YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Award Winner of the Sydney Taylor Book Award for Teen Readers "The *Nazi Hunters* is a fabulously exciting piece of history that teens should know about -- and now they will! Bascomb's detailed scenes allow readers to live through this true tale of courage and daring as if they were there." -- Deborah Heiligman, Printz Honor-winning author of *Charles and Emma* and *Intentions* "I found *The Nazi Hunters* riveting, from its suspenseful search

for Eichmann to the capture of the war criminal responsible for orchestrating the murder of eleven million people, including six million Jews. Neal Bascomb's book is incredibly well-researched and paced like an espionage thriller. The hunters' commitment to bringing Eichmann to justice is sure to captivate readers." -- Susan Campbell Bartoletti, Newbery Honor-winning author of *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow* and *The Boy Who Dared*"From cafÃ©s in Buenos Aires to the halls of the fledgling Israeli government, from false identities to secret drops, this story has all the hallmarks of a spy novel. Bascomb has a knack for turning complex detail into a suspenseful, heart-pounding narrative." -- School Library Journal"Photographs are included throughout the text, adding not just to the evidence of Eichmann's guilt but to the reader's sense of being along on the mission." -- The Horn Book Magazine"Tension rises from the pages, thanks to Bascomb's command of pacing, judicious use of quoted material, inclusion of archival photographs and strong descriptions." -- Kirkus Reviews

On the subjects of science, geography, human survival, and intelligence, this is amazing. This provides greater depth to our homeschool high school study of WWII!

Sad, but never disappointing. A real eyeopener to the plight of Norway during occupation.

This book was on my sons summer reading list. He really liked the book. He has always enjoyed history and the occasional illustration made the story all the more interesting.

The book arrived in a timely manner. Very good shape, as stated. Good reading.

My grandson, 10, a voracious reader, and I both read this book separately and then compared notes. We both liked this book very much. My grandson was enamored of the Norwegian group. He is impressed with history, heroes, and anyone who has a good story. 'Sabotage' is an excellent method for educating our children about history and the 'Big One', WWII. This type of book gives a first hand experience to children who can visualize the events and note to themselves that this is truly a real event in history. What we have is the history of the Nazi invasion into Norway. In the dead of night, they came and occupied Norway. One of the most important areas of interest for the Germans was a chemical plant, Vermork. The Nazis were interested in developing a nuclear bomb, and this chemical plant was primary for their needs. The British heard of this project at Vermork, and they attempted to derail the mission, the British failed. At this time some very brave Norwegian

Commandos armed with very little but skis and explosives, wait months in the snowy climate to sabotage the chemical plant. I want to point out that I had very scant knowledge of this event, and I would wager that many Americans are aware of this event, either. It is through these kinds of books that I read with my grandchildren, that I learn a great deal about history, science and the world. This book is filled with excitement and tension, and my grandson told me he stayed up late on a weekend night to finish the book. The author, Neal Bascomb, is a wonderful writer, and kept my attention and that of my grandson. It is wonderful to have our children given the opportunity to read about heroes, and to have these Norwegian commandos show that strong beliefs, courage and love of your country are important virtues. Recommended. prisrob 04-18-16

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. There are plenty of black-white photographs that add imagery to the narrative, and everything is presented chronologically. The chapters are short and the narrative is straight reporting without any emotive prose. The end results is a summary of the courageous efforts of the Norwegians and English citizens to unite against an enemy. A highly recommended read for novices of military history.

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