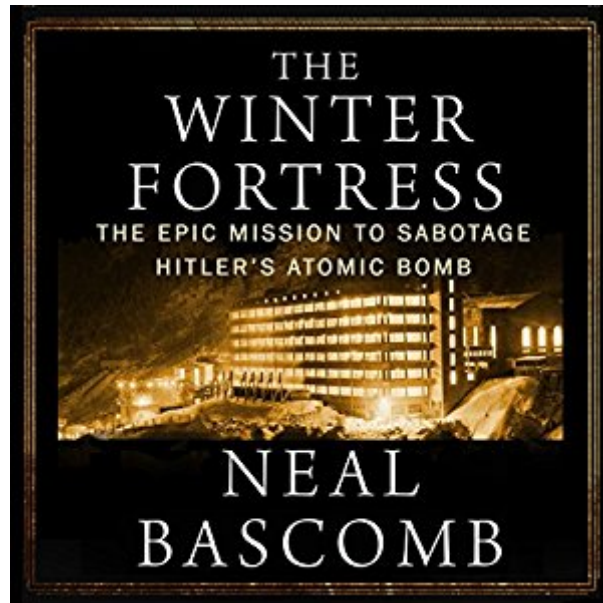


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The Winter Fortress: The Epic Mission To Sabotage Hitler's Atomic Bomb



Synopsis

From the internationally acclaimed, best-selling author of *Hunting Eichmann* and *The Perfect Mile*, an epic adventure and spy story about the greatest act of sabotage in all of World War II. It's 1942 and the Nazis are racing to be the first to build a weapon unlike any known before. They have the physicists, they have the uranium, and now all their plans depend on amassing a single ingredient: heavy water, which is produced in Norway's Vemork, the lone plant in all the world that makes this rare substance. Under threat of death, Vemork's engineers push production into overdrive. For the Allies, the plant must be destroyed. But how would they reach the castle fortress set on a precipitous gorge in one of the coldest, most inhospitable places on Earth? Based on a trove of top secret documents and never-before-seen diaries and letters of the saboteurs, *The Winter Fortress* is an arresting chronicle of a brilliant scientist, a band of spies on skis, perilous survival in the wild, sacrifice for one's country, Gestapo manhunts, soul-crushing setbacks, and a last-minute operation that would end any chance Hitler could obtain the atomic bomb - and alter the course of the war.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 14 hours and 7 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: 11th Street Productions LLC

Audible.com Release Date: April 22, 2016

Language: English

ASIN: B01EM9ATCS

Best Sellers Rank: #18 in Books > History > Europe > Scandinavia #29 in Books > History > Military > Weapons & Warfare > Nuclear #55 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > True Crime > Espionage

Customer Reviews

Neal Bascomb's "The Winter Fortress" is history that reads like a novel, and despite scrupulous research, as is obvious from the end notes, it does just that. He presents us with the saboteurs approaching the heavy water plant at Vemork, Norway, and then skips backward in time to present us with the events leading up to the mission. He describes heavy water to us, and its uses and importance (only vaguely understood before the war), before introducing the players - both allied and German - against the backdrop of Hitler's invasion of Norway. We learn who they are and how

they came to be trudging through the snow in February 1943. The process of producing heavy water is fascinating in itself. The efforts by allies and Germans to engage in atomic research has been fully elucidated elsewhere, but its inclusion here is necessary to the story, and Bascomb does not dwell on it at the expense of that story. Mostly, he is interested in the characters who populate his account, from Norwegian soldiers and scientists to German scientists and soldiers (and Gestapo) to British soldiers (and Churchill). We learn quite a bit about them, and as in a well-written novel, begin to feel we understand something of their motivations. What they went through is truly astonishing. From tales of Gestapo brutality to forces of nature almost as horrific, the men who risked and gave their lives to derail Nazi Germany's atomic research have proven themselves to be heroes. You may have read about these efforts before, but probably not at such depth. I had no idea some of the Norwegians engaged in the effort were literally starving to death leading up to it. Hitler's infamous Kommandobefehl (Commando Order) was, in many ways, the least of their problems.

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