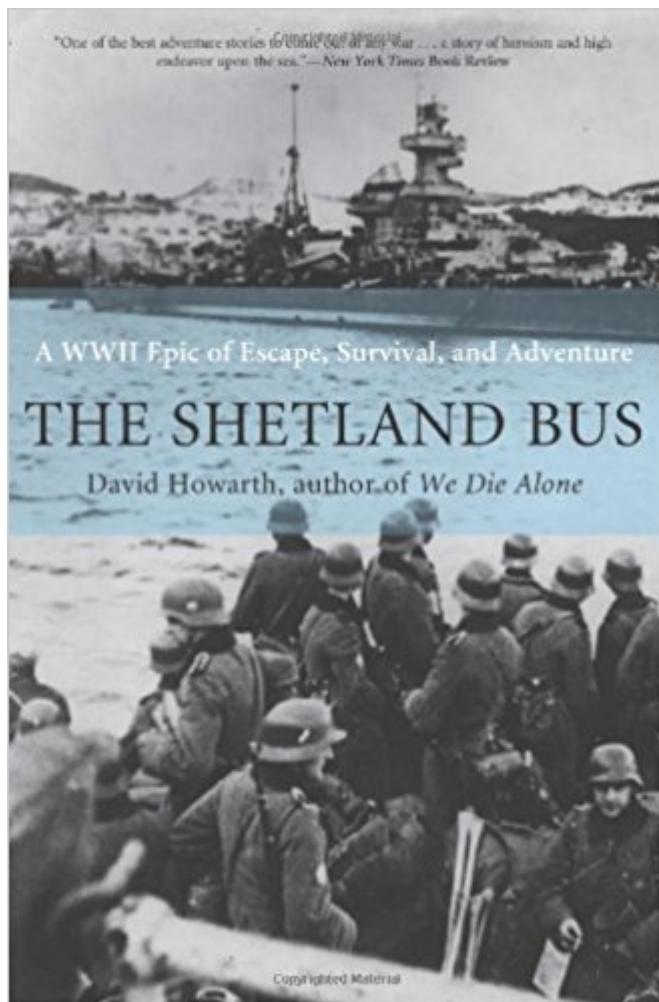


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Shetland Bus: A WWII Epic Of Escape, Survival, And Adventure



Synopsis

The Shetland Bus recounts the hundreds of crossings of small boats from the Shetland Islands to German-occupied Norway to supply arms to the Resistors and to rescue refugeesâ •all under constant threat by German U-boats and winter storms.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Shetland Bus" is the story of the British/Norwegian operation to run supplies, ammunition, weapons and secret agents from the Shetland Islands to Norway during WW2. Rescued refugees took the return trip. These efforts were key to the Norwegian resistance to the German occupation, which tied down 10 divisions and 280,000 enemy troops. Author Howarth was well placed to write SB. He was the number 2 British Naval man in the Shetlands and had a key hand in each mission. He was obviously as close to his men as a good commander can be and writes touchingly, respectfully and personally about his charges. We learn of close escapes from the treacherous weather, quislings and the persistent, if over stretched, German authorities. If his men were in trouble, they could -and did- die in minutes in the icy North Sea, far from shore or any hope of rescue. The author lends the reader an appreciation for the sheer logistical strains behind the Shetland Bus. Balancing people, personalities, supplies, and technical details was a demanding job-one, which the author plainly relished. He was a talented writer, producing 18 historical works, several of which are available on .com. The weak side to SB is that Howarth was shoreside throughout the war. The action here is all second hand and the telling suffers. Howarth simply wasn't there. He was hundreds of miles from the action. Since this book first appeared in 1951, one

gets the distinct impression that, so close to the War's end, some censorship of classified information may have been imposed. Something or someone may have held Howarth back. SB is hard to rate. Out of respect for the author, his obvious writing talent and his men: 4 stars. .com fans may wish to scroll through Howarth's (apparently) better-received WW2 efforts; "Sledge Patrol" or especially "We Die Alone". I'll end on a positive note: Here is one military book with decent maps! Hooray!

An interesting story of the operation of anti-Nazi forces in Norway during World War II. Howarth was the Royal Navy officer responsible for coordinating activities with Norwegian fishermen during this time. The stories represent the resistance Norwegians provided the Nazis and Quislings in Norway. Howarth was not allowed to go to Norway because of the dangerous activites, but his account is first hand, so I discount the previous reviewers assertion that this book is not truthful enough. From the previous reviewer's viewpoint, we can't trust any second or third party accounts. Well, Howarth was there and interacted with these resistance fighters, so that is good enough for most readers. The Shetlands are a remote island group of the United Kingdom. Howarth provides some details of the history of the region, and the geographic detail. Then the stories of ferrying supplies and spies to German occupied Norway. These stories are interesting, but not as interesting as the shoot ups I read about in some other Howarth books (We Die Alone, The Sledge Patrol, D-Day -June 6, 1944). Howarth is a great author, and I have read eight of his books. Anybody wanting to read good history should read his books. It is a shame of his recent passing, because I will soon run out of books written by him.

I've rarely been on a small boat on the ocean, I've never been to the Shetland Isles, and I wasn't on this planet during WW II. So, I found this book to be an interesting perspective that describes several years of a special operations group that supported Norway during the war. The book presents, rather drily at times, the stories of the men and ships who built the Shetland Bus operation -- from the time that they requisitioned and provisioned the ships and fishermen/sailors to the time when the wooden fishing ships were replaced with faster, more reliable submarine chasers. The glue that holds this book together is the adventures of the Norwegian sailors, as retold by Howarth after the debriefs of the crews. (Howarth was prevented from sailing by the British Navy so his only first-person perspectives are from the operations and shipyard management side of the picture.) In short, what makes this book real is the stories about the storms that they sailed through, the difficulties in getting their small vessels across the North Sea, and the narrow scrapes they had with

the Germans when they entered the protected waters of the Norwegian fjordsIn summary, this is a marvelous account of a small but important operation. It could be improved by slightly more adventurous writing style but is definitely worth a read if you're interested in seafaring adventures or personal stories from the World War II era.

Howarth's 'Shetland Bus' was interesting but not gripping. As compared to Howarth's 'We Die Alone'. I could not put down 'We Die Alone', it was a compelling story of human strength, human nature, and love for freedom. I could feel the cold wind, ice, snow, hunger... Wow, what a story. A must read for all to understand what the fighters who go to war may have to endure. Being a veteran of war, I think that many people do not have an understanding of the sacrifices and perhaps the ultimate sacrifice veterans make. A must read.

I found this story fascinating and enlightened me about what individual people do in the face of tyranny, to bring about that future world they only can dream about. This silent, oft-forgotten heroism in the winters of the Arctic Sea is a great read and as a sailor I have great respect for what these men endured. Good book. The title, The Shetland Bus is a master of understatement.

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