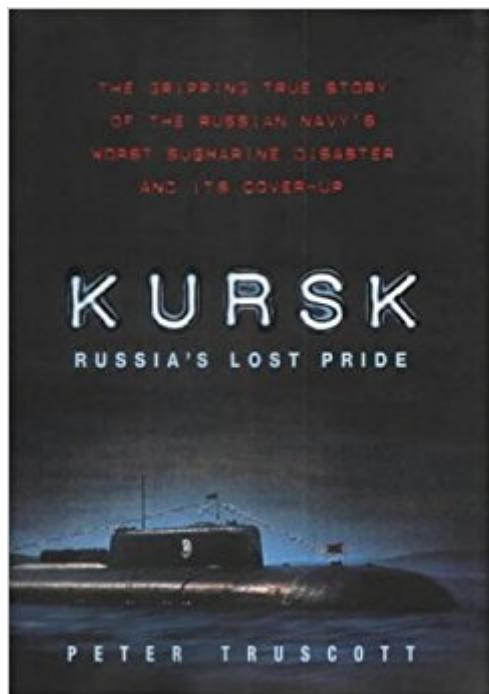


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"Kursk": Russia's Lost Pride



Synopsis

In the worst peacetime disaster experienced by the Russian Navy, on 12 August 2000 the state-of-the-art nuclear-powered Kursk submarine sank with the loss of 118 officers and crew. The sinking was a humanitarian, environmental, and military catastrophe for Russia, and a powerful political reversal for President Putin. But what really happened? Peter Truscott, former Foreign Affairs and Defence spokesperson in the European Parliament and Vice-President of the Security Committee, aims to provide the answers. An expert on Russia, with a modern history doctorate from Oxford University, Truscott has met President Mikhail Gorbachev, three Russian Prime Ministers, two parliamentary Speakers and the leaders of all Russia's political parties over the past decade. For this book, the author has also interviewed relatives of the crew; Russian, British and American nuclear submarine commanders; international torpedo experts; politicians; diplomats; British and Norwegian rescue teams and their leaders; submariners; seismologists and members of the defence and intelligence communities. This work vividly re-creates the terrible final hours of the crew as they waited in vain for rescue at the bottom.

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Customer Reviews

The Base: In Search of the Terror Network that shook the World

Dr Peter Truscott was MEP for Hertfordshire between 1994 and 1999 and is now an Associate Fellow at the Institute of Public Policy Research. An independent policy analyst and broadcaster

specialising in Russian, defence and security matters, he is also the author of RUSSIA FIRST (1997).

Dr Peter Truscott's book is the most convincing to date on the Kursk disaster. Not only is he a Russian expert of over ten years standing, he also has a doctorate from Oxford University, and has clearly interviewed all the key players, including the rescuers and families of those who tragically died. He shows that the Russian government and military were more concerned with protecting their military secrets aboard the Kursk than the lives of their 118 submariners. What Truscott does here is also to show not only the harrowing effects of the disaster on the families and crew, but also the political background. We learn just why President Putin and the Russian top brass were reluctant to accept help from the West, and what influenced their Soviet mind-sets. He also debunks once and for all the idea floated by some other writers that the crew survived for several days. A careful reconstruction, based on specific scientific evidence, and the Russian government's own report on the sinking shows the crew were tragically all dead by the end of the first day. This is backed-up by eyewitness statements by relatives on the state of their loved-ones, and forensic evidence. He also explains why the crew could not escape from the rear escape hatch. For those who want the true story of the Kursk sinking, with all the background you can expect from a real expert (covering also Putin's backlash against the independent media- which he virtually closed down after the Kursk sinking)- there is no better book

Dr Peter Truscott has written the best book on the Kursk disaster. He has obviously interviewed all the key players, including the rescuers and relatives of the 118 crew tragically lost at sea. He brings to bear ten years or so of experience as a Russian expert, and a doctorate in modern history from Oxford University. This book not only describes the human tragedy of the disaster, both for the crew and their families, but goes into the political background of the whole affair. Truscott explains that from President Putin down, the Russians were more concerned in protecting their military secrets than the lives of their submariners. He shows how old Soviet mind-sets still reign in Moscow. Truscott also debunks the theory that the crew lives for several days, and exposes the wilder conspiracy theories surrounding the disaster- which the Russians sought to encourage. In fact, as the scientific and eye-witness statements from relatives indicate, all the crew were dead by the end of the first day of the crisis. This was supported by forensic evidence and the Russian government's own report into the disaster- which led to the sackings of a number of the top brass in the Navy. The book also shows why the survivors in the stern of the sub couldn't make it out. But the story

goes much wider, showing how Putin later cracked-down on the independent media which criticised him so heavily over the Kursk, bringing the press under the Kremlin's sway. There is not a better book on the tragic Kursk disaster and its political fall-out, and this account is certainly the last word on this sorry episode in Russian history.

Am I the only one to notice that Peter Truscott seems to have anonymously reviewed his own book here? The second review here reads like a desperate CV - "Dr Peter Truscott has written the best book on the Kursk disaster. He has obviously interviewed all the key players ... He brings to bear ten years or so of experience as a Russian expert, and a doctorate ... from Oxford University." Somehow I doubt that most people who are interested in this subject and read the book would retain quite so much biographical data on ol' Pete here, or find it necessary to boast that he went to "Oxford University." This book is lousy, supercilious spite, peppered with the usual Russophobe barbs about evil Russian conspiracies. As we all know, the satanic "top brass" under direction of KGB killer Putin "cracked-down" on "independent media" to bring innocent orphans, Swedish human rights activists and the "independent media" under the "Kremlin's sway". Frankly I'm always at a loss as to what "independent media" he is talking about. The Moscow Times, with its humourless agit-prop columnist hooker Pavel Felgenhauer, is one of the most anti-Russian publications around. It is written, published and distributed in Moscow. It may not be independent from the Dutch company that owns it, but has no connection to the Russian government. And what has that evil Putin done while supposedly clamping down on Human Rights and Press Freedom? Nothing. It is amazing how little words resemble actions among the pious proponents of the "independent media", whatever that is supposed to mean. I passed 6 years of school at St. Mary's Primary. And I can tell that Pete's book is pathetic, and his attempt to covertly review his own book is laughable.

A tragedy with Cold War legacies. The West knew hydrogen peroxide fuelled torpedos were vulnerable to explosions (see [...] Perhaps Russians were told, perhaps they were not in a financial position at the time to fix. Sadly, 118 men died learning this lesson again. Peter Truscott has written a well researched account in a thriller style. Once you start reading this book, you'll find it hard to put down, even though you know the outcome.

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