



The Odin Mission

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Fans of Sharpe will love the first novel in the Jack Tanner series. Set in Norway, April 1940. Sergeant Jack Tanner and his Yorks Rangers, separated from the main battalion, are drawn into a desperate mission to smuggle Norway's King Haakon's treasures to safety.

The Odin Mission Details

Date : Published June 10th 2008 by Bantam Press (first published 2008)

ISBN : 9780593058343

Author : James Holland

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, War, World War II, Military Fiction, Thriller, Action

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From Reader Review The Odin Mission for online ebook

M.J. Webb says

Entertaining read with excellent historical notes/details. A sort of Sharpe for WW2. Peaked my interest so I'm reading the sequel next.

Ben Jackson says

Loved it! Great book and thoroughly enjoyed it.

John Boyda says

Cracking good read! A lost patrol behind enemy line during the German invasion of Norway teams up with other stragglers to protect a scientist. During the debacle of the British/Norwegian holding action/retreat they try to make it to ever-shifting friendly lines. Full of realistic action. Well written with a believable hero. Looking forward to reading the next in this series.

Smithers says

This is the first book I have read by James Holland and really appreciated his meticulous attention to detail, well-drawn characters and relentless pace of the action. I highly recommend The Odin Mission and am only disappointed that this is the first in a series of five! I will now look for other authors who meet James' high standard;

Daniel Taylor says

My father was a Vietnam Vet and my Grandfather served in one of the world wars, so I was raised with respect for the sacrifices our soldiers had made. All the soldiers I met as a boy were old.

In the Second World War, Jack Tanner is leading his men back to the Allies out of Norway but on the way they come across a man they must help because his survival is essential to a victory for the Allies. Tanner and his men selflessly put aside their own desires and do their duty.

Despite my family history, I'm not a lover of war books, or anything to do with war really. But this novel worked for me on so many levels. The soldiers are young men who bumble along, going in pursuit of their objectives but making a lot of dumb mistakes along the way. They are heroes, but not in a Hollywood over-the-top dramatic way; the heroism is understated.

You don't have to be into war books to enjoy this. If you like a good adventure, you should read it. But if you do like war stories, then you'll have a lot of fun with it.

Andreas A says

This historical novel is a must-have for anyone who likes history about the second world war. While Jack Tanner is the main person, the story is a lot about some Germans and other people too. I like how much detail this book has, the comical parts such as the French officer who gets mad about a thrown shovel, the historical setting and how the characters act. It is very exciting as the characters get into trouble a lot, and the feelings of them are described very well. I haven't read more than one other book by James Holland - Darkest Hour - and I really enjoy the series. By no doubt, I will get all books in the series and probably even more by the author. I read the Swedish version (Operation Oden) by the way, if that matters.

Pete Cross says

Worth reading

Great read a story of true British guys more enjoyable because it based on facts. Also giving an understanding of what happened when bad planning took place

Graham says

A Boy's Own adventure writ large - that's the scope of THE ODIN MISSION, the first in a series of WW2 adventures featuring British Sergeant Jack Tanner by James Holland - and those expecting anything more will be sorely disappointed.

First up, this is written to a straightforward, no-frills action-adventure mould, heavily indebted to genre master Bernard Cornwell. It's Sharpe in a WW2 era, without the experience and skill that Cornwell brings to his authors. Instead, this is Holland's first fictional work, and his inexperience shows. The worst thing about this book is the plot, which is simplistic (and formulaic) in the extreme. The repetitive template involves Tanner and his allies caught in a battle, escaping, taking refuge in a mountain shack/farmhouse, then caught in a battle, and so on. The way the action cuts from Tanner to some rather extraneous German officers can be fairly irritating, slowing things down, so don't go looking for a masterpiece here.

Saying that...I loved this book. I love nothing more than simple, escapist entertainment and THE ODIN MISSION offers this in spades. I'm particularly fond of well-written action sequences, and this is a book brimming with them. Tanner is a simple, working class hero, and following him taking out countless Nazi enemies (either with his trusty sniper rifle or plastic explosive) is definitely my idea of a good time. Forget political correctness - our hero is out for blood, and woe betide any Germans who get in his way!

So, if you're looking for uncomplicated action and explosive hijinks in the icy Norweigan mountains during WW2, you could do a lot worse. I'll be actively checking out the sequels in this series.

Matthew Cunningham says

Awful. Seemingly an attempt to capture the vibe of the old Warlord/Commando comics with a touch of various WW2 movies thrown into the mix, it fails due to its paper thin plot, underdeveloped supporting characters and totally unbelievable action man hero (the plastic doll is somewhat more charismatic than Jack Tanner). What could have been a thrill a minute boys own adventure is a soulless bore sorely lacking in excitement.

Jeff Jones says

This is the first Second World War book I have ever read, my preference usually being ancient history, especially Roman, but in all honesty I saw this book for 50p in a charity shop and intrigued by the cover/title, decided I had nothing to lose but time by trying it.

I think at least one of the other reviewer's said in their review that it felt like reading one of the old Commando type comic books as opposed to something by Leo Kessler or Sven Hassle, and I wouldn't disagree.

I think I'm right in saying this was the author's first attempt at fiction writing and that is evident by some of the all too wooden supporting characters in the book. Some of the language used and I don't mean foul language as there's very little in this book, doesn't sit as quite right either, but the lack of swearing means that the book can appeal to a wider audience and that's no bad thing.

That said, I quite enjoyed the book which moved along at a fair pace and the basic story wasn't too bad - sort of a 20th century Richard Sharpe is what it felt like.

In conclusion, not a book I would jump up and down with excitement about but if I happen to stumble across the sequel, which I'm sure there must be, I will certainly give it a try. The more the author writes the more realistic and rounded his characters will become I'm sure.

Samuel Tyler says

Many parts of history were violent, so it makes sense that historic fiction should reflect this, but there is something that feels a little off when the history is a little close to home. Reading about Sharpe shooting a French Officer seems far enough away from 2014 to pose no problems, but World War Two is a far more present war that still reverberates today. Since the 90s there has been a move away from the boy's own adventures about the 1939-45 war and instead a more sombre tone has prevailed. However, this has not stopped James Holland in his Jack Tanner series of novels as the Sergeant goes around shooting more Nazis than the Dirty Dozen combined.

'The Odin Mission' sees Tanner on the retreat in Norway as he has to try and get a group of green soldiers and a Norwegian specialist to safety. This is easier said than done when you are being overruled by a pompous French Lieutenant. 'Odin' is certainly an old fashioned feeling action adventure that mixes the grisly nature of true conflict, with out and out action that feels a little false. Tanner is a fantastic shot; not just good, but incredibly good. On more than one occasion he is able to fell 10 or more German soldiers alone. This is good high action, but does not feel particularly believable.

It does not make sense that taking the basic ingredients of the 'Sharpe' series and applying them to WW2 does not work as well. You have a charismatic lead, his loyal sidekick, a pompous ally and an enemy hell-bent on seeing our hero die. The book is very solid and entertaining; it is just that you feel as a reader that WW2 should be treated with slightly more reverence at times. Either make the book more overblown, or less so. 'The Odin Mission' sits somewhere in between a believable take on events in 1940 Norway and the crassest of action films. Entertaining none the less.

Jonathan says

I grew up in the 1970s reading the Warlord comic, and I must admit that Jack Tanner was reminiscent of characters like Union Jack Jackson and Spider Wells. It really did feel like a war comic (misnomer?) in novel form. Nevertheless, it was a pacy read, and the descriptions of the Norwegian campaign and military equipment and practices of the time were very accurate, as far as my knowledge goes. I sense that the author has genuine respect for his subject, and the ordinary British soldier caught up in the events he describes.

I shall continue with the series, and hope to see further character development as it progresses.

Gareth Russell says

Well, that was fun.

This is a breezy, action packed, page turning, ripper of a yarn, featuring Sergeant Jack Tanner as he crosses Norway during the disastrous British military campaign of 1940. I've read some of Holland's non-fiction historical work in the past and enjoyed it (Italy's Sorrow and Battle of Britain). Holland brings the historical detail and knowledge of the campaign brilliantly to bear, as the historical back drop to what is essentially a Commando story.

I just hope the rest of the series is as enjoyable as this was.

Spenser says

A solid 4 1/2 stars. Gritty down in the dirt WW2 quasi historical fiction read. Have had the Jack Tanner books on my to-read radar for some time. They are seemingly hard to find but managed to snag this one from Thrift Books. Hopefully I can stumble upon the others as this looks to be a good series for anyone interested in World War 2 reading.

James says

Before today I had not ever read a fictional account of WW2. I always thought that it was almost a taboo subject amongst fiction writers, with people being scared of writing the wrong thing about the most horrific modern history to date. However, this book proved me wrong.

Not only did it provide a gripping, heart racing tale but it managed it in a way that seemed to honour the dead and not make a mockery out of it. The atmosphere seemed real and shocked, the characters suitably written. There was no super human feats, nothing was taken lightly and in a way I would say that this is almost a tribute to those who died for the Allies fighting of the Nazis.

Through Tanner's actions Holland managed to convey the true sense of horror that people felt during these period, and how despite this they fought through and managed feats that one can barely imagine. Despite facing insurmountable odds Tanner and his men managed to overcome it all; a tale that was seen throughout the warzones and occupied countries.

It seemed that Holland managed to take the real actions of the disasterous Norweigan campaign, and create a tale that was compelling as well as completely believable. He managed to provide us with realistic characters who reacted realistically, who showed true humanity and put the lie to the traits that people seem to ascribe to heroes today.

Furthermore, Holland captured the thoughts and feelings of everyone at the time so spectacularly. At one stage I laughed at the French Lieutenant when he announced that France had the biggest, greatest army in Europe and that they would not fall easily; if my knowledge is correct, and I hope it is or else I may have just failed my history exams, then France fell within four weeks. Holland also portrayed the need for oil and its importance in the war; with 'Odin's' knowledge being likened to liquid gold.

Anyway... It is getting late and I fear that I am rambling on and on. If you love historical fiction then you will love this. If you love action packed stories then you will love this. If you love well written, realistic yet entertaining books then you will love this.

Have fun reading.
