



Dear Mr. Aldorfer,
concerning your letter of Feb., 8th, I can give the following information:

- p. 60, later on criticized scheme of black and white lines...
This was done so by the late Kkpt. Dechend, later on leader of the "Luftschuttschule" (disguising, camouflage etc.) in his memorandum "Das Tarnen von Schiffen", which was one of our basic resources. That black and white scheme was pronouncing bow and stern, providing very good and clear marks for any optical range finding for the enemy, in general, just the opposite to good dazzle painting. As a sample, he used the photo, given as no. 13 on p. 29, top, and his lines concerning this are given on p. 20, ("V. Falsche Tarnung" = wrong disguising)
- Stern, yellow tops of main and secondary guns (pp. 36/37): I don't think this publication a very reliable one concerning colours. As a mark for identification by German aircraft, since 1939 all German vessels had painted the swastika in white circle on the fore-castle, very often on a broad red band or rectangle, so looking similar to the ensign. In 1940, those oblique parts of the main turrets of big ships like PRINZ EUGEN and BISMARCK were painted "weinrot" (if you are a stamp collector, take red-lilac of Schwaneberger colour guide, or Germany 2.50 Mk. of march, 1920, Michel-no. 115e). Top of the guns was dark grey, so giving an impression for the aircraft just the opposite of Abb. 186 (p. 141, top), which was the old WW I-identification sign for German vessels for aircraft. Smaller vessels, e.g. GRILLE as gunnery training vessel, M-boats e. s.o. had all the gun painted that red-lilac. As far, as we know, BISMARCK and PRINZ EUGEN left 18.5.41 Gotenhafen with all grey turrets, but still wearing that criticized black and white scheme, - may be, to pronounce similarity between most big units to "optical spys" - but this is only something like a hypothesis. This scheme was overpainted in Bergen, 22./23.5. except falso bow wave. As to yellow parts of guns, turrets, fore-castle, this was the aircraft identification mark for operation "Barbarossa", officially given out on 16.6.1941. So it is quite clearly, that
a) PRINZ EUGEN and BISMARCK hadn't this colour scheme during operation "Rheinübung" one month earlier.

b) This yellow was used in the Baltic Sea mainly. We do not know, if it was also in use in the Black sea, this still being a matter of investigation.

All vessels had to have on hand something to cover the yellow sign, if aircraft of the enemy were in the round about. So you easily will see, that these identification marks were more and more hidden away, allied airforce getting stronger and stronger. I think, the yellow mark was never officially cancelled, but more and more "forgotten" to re-paint. But in fact, at least those sub's being in the period of training in the Baltic sea, had those yellow marks down to 1945, this being shown on the back cover for a type XXIII sub. I have bought that coloured painting years ago from the man, who did it as a PK-officer in Gotenhafen in 1945 - he was one of those war time painters, very skilled and reliable. Alas - he is dead now.

I hope, that this will answer some of your questions. As to Mr. Schmalenbach, it is correct, what Müllenheim-Rechberg told you: he has had a heart break-down some months ago, and said good bye to me some days ago, when he had to go to hospital. He is getting blind, and they try to help him, but nobody does know, if his heart will be strong enough... In fact, during last years, nearly all former officers and shipbuilders from that aera have passed away all of a sudden - the whole range from 50 - 80 years of age. I have lost a good number of members of my team too, and so I must conclude, that it is now "last minute to noon", to ask any question - some years ahead, there will be nobody, able to judge from own experience. I fear, that then more and more such paintings as in "Stern" will be taken as the truth. Of course, they are looking quite nice to a model shipwright, but...

- Yours sincerely -

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'S. R.', written over a light-colored background.