

December 18, 1990

Mr. William Aldorfer



Dear Mr. Aldorfer:

This is in response to your very interesting letter of December 13th.

I have thought a great deal about your question concerning the painting on the tops of the main & secondary batteries of the Bismark.

My first view of the Bismark was an oblique one from several miles away and consequently could not at that time see the "tops" of her batteries. That coupled with restricted visibility, (haze, low

clouds etc) the only color that registered in my mind was a dark grey wartime camouflage. My second view of her was a very fleeting one, although we were almost directly over her. The only thing that has registered in my mind was the bright orange flash of gunfire directed at us.

Consequently, I regret to say I can not with any positive assurance say one way or other the paint scheme of the ship.

My personal feelings are that it would be very foolish indeed to paint her super structure orange. Why, one might ask would anyone, when trying to escape and avoid detection, use the most visible of all colors to camouflage his presence. It just doesn't make sense and I might add, the German navy was not noted for stupidity!!

Sorry I can't be more definitive. However, I am sure that a note to Baron Mullenheim-Rechberg would give you a definite answer. He has in the past related to me some of their thoughts on camouflage and he never once mentioned painting anything orange!

Yours truly,

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L.B. Smith

