

**CLIVE  
CUSSLER**

and Dirk Cussler



**BLACK  
WIND**

A Dirk Pitt<sup>®</sup> Novel

# BLACK

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK

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*Publishers Since 1838*

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA \*  
Penguin Group (Canada), 10 Alcorn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4V 3B2 (a division of  
Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.) \* Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL,  
England \* Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin  
Books Ltd) \* Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124,  
Australia (a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd) \* Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd,  
11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110 017, India \* Penguin Group (NZ),  
Cnr Airborne and Rosedale Roads, Albany, Auckland, New Zealand (a division of Pearson  
New Zealand Ltd) \* Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank,  
Johannesburg 2196, South Africa \* Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices:  
80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

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Published simultaneously in Canada

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cussler, Clive.

Black wind / Clive Cussler and Dirk Cussler.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-399-15259-8

1. Pitt, Dirk (Fictitious character)—Fiction. I. Cussler, Dirk. II. Title.

PS3553.U75B56 2004 2004053536

813'.54—dc22

Printed in the United States of America

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

This book is printed on acid-free paper. ♻

*Book design by Lovedog Studio*

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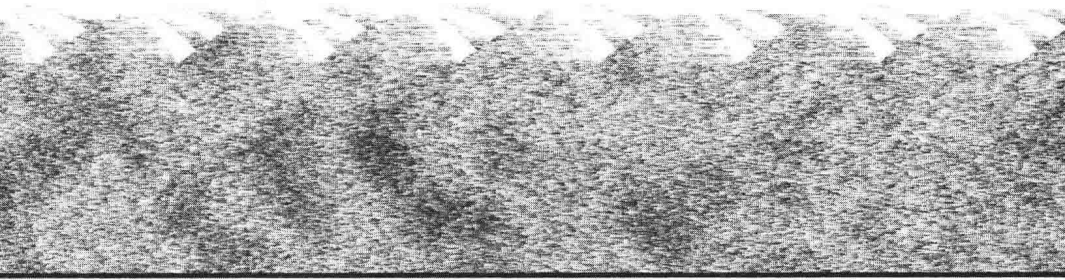
*In memory of my mother, Barbara, whose love,  
compassion, kindness, and encouragement are  
deeply missed by all who knew her.*

*D.E.C.*

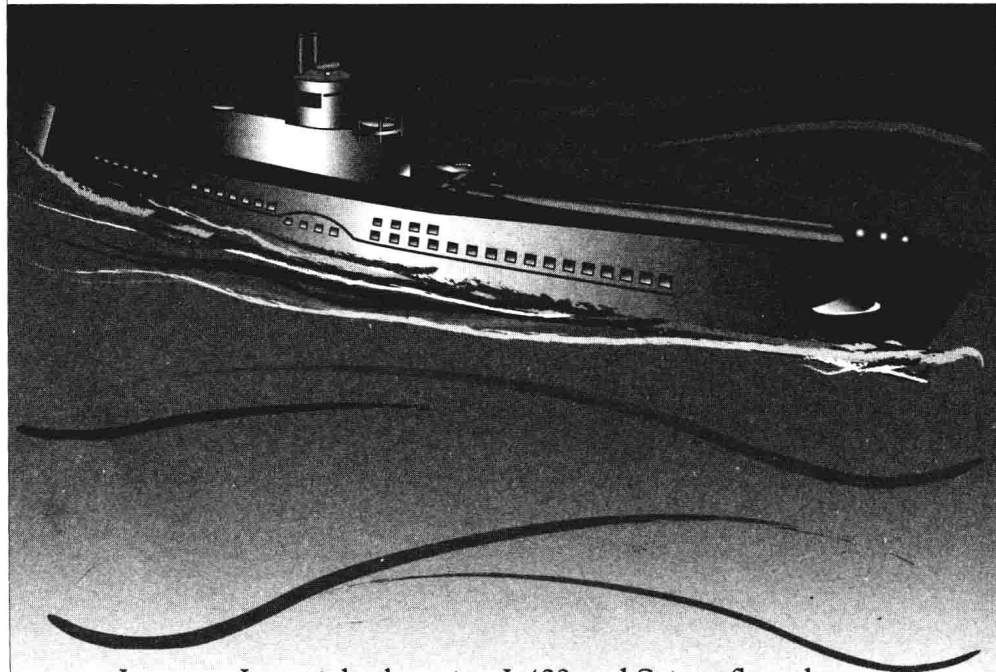
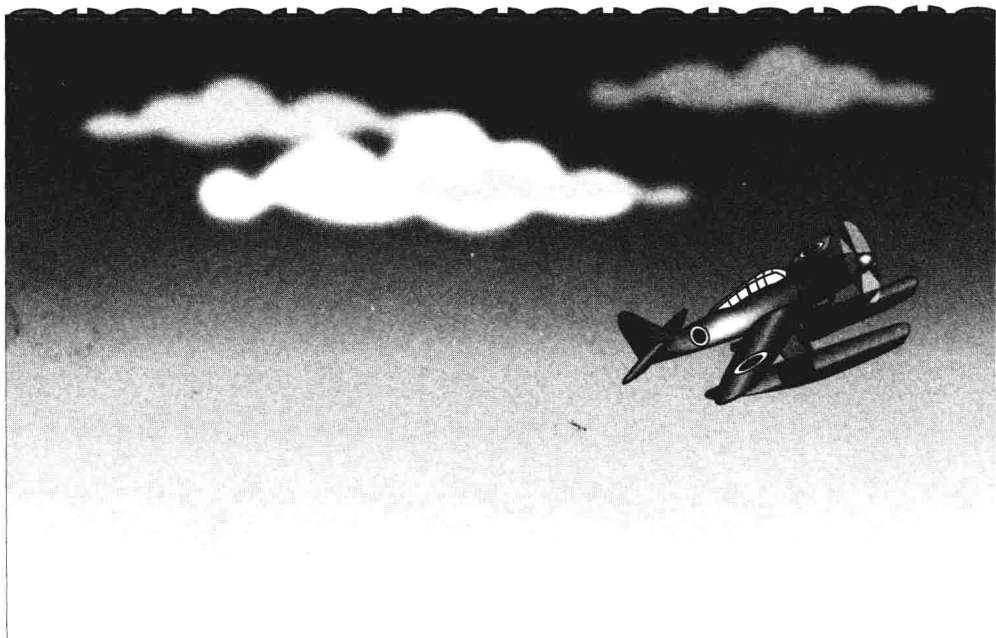
## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With appreciation and gratitude to Scott Danneker, Mike Fitzpatrick, Mike Hance, and George Spyrou of Airship Management Services, for sharing the wondrous world of airship flight.

Thanks also to Sheldon Harris, whose book *Factories of Death* has helped open the door to the horrors of biological and chemical warfare practiced during World War II and its thousands of forgotten victims.



MAKAZE



Japanese Imperial submarine *I-403* and Seiran floatplane



DECEMBER 12, 1944  
KURE NAVAL BASE, JAPAN

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER Takeo Ogawa glanced at his wristwatch and shook his head in irritation.

“Half past midnight already,” he muttered anxiously. “Three hours late and still we wait.”

A young ensign staring through the glazed eyes of a sleep-deprived insomniac nodded slightly at his superior’s grieving but said nothing. Waiting atop the conning tower of the Japanese Imperial Navy submarine *I-403*, the two men gazed across the naval yard searching for signs of a pending arrival. Beyond the expansive naval base, a haphazard twinkling of nighttime lights glistened about the scenic Japanese city of Kure. A light drizzle fell, lending an eerie tranquility to the late hour, which was broken by the distant sounds of hammers, cranes, and welding torches. Repairs to enemy-damaged ships and new vessel construction persisted around the clock in other parts of the shipyard, in a futile rush to aid the increasingly bleak war effort.

The distant whine of a diesel truck soon echoed across the water,

the sound rising in intensity as the vehicle approached the submarine docks. Rounding the corner of a brick warehouse, a slate-colored Isuzu cargo truck rumbled into view and turned along the wharf. The driver inched his way cautiously toward the submarine's pen as he struggled to make out the edges of the darkened pier, barely visible under the truck's wartime-blackened headlights. Pulling alongside a large gangplank, the truck ground to a halt as its worn brakes squealed loudly in protest.

A moment of silence ensued, then six heavily armed soldiers sprang from the truck bed and enveloped the vehicle in a perimeter guard. As Ogawa made his way down from the conning tower to the dock, he sensed one of the guards pointing a weapon in his direction. The soldiers were no Imperial Army regulars, he noted, but elite members of the feared Kempei Tai military police.

Two uniformed men exited the cab of the truck and approached Ogawa. Recognizing a superior officer, Ogawa stood at attention and saluted smartly.

"I've awaited your arrival, Captain," Ogawa stated with a tinge of annoyance.

Captain Miyoshi Horinouchi ignored the innuendo. As staff operations officer for the Sixth Fleet, his mind was occupied with graver matters. The Japanese submarine fleet was slowly being decimated in the Pacific and the Imperial Navy had no answer for the antisubmarine warfare technologies being deployed by the American forces. Desperate battles by the fleet's submarines against overwhelming odds inevitably resulted in the loss of crew and vessels, which weighted heavily on Horinouchi. His short-cropped hair had turned prematurely white, and stress lines creased his face like dry riverbeds.

"Commander, this is Dr. Hisaichi Tanaka of the Army Medical College. He will be accompanying you on your mission."

"Sir, I am not accustomed to carrying passengers while on patrol," Ogawa replied, ignoring the small bespectacled man at Horinouchi's side.

“Your patrol orders to the Philippines have been rescinded,” Horinouchi replied, handing Ogawa a brown folder. “You have new orders. You are to take Dr. Tanaka and his cargo aboard and proceed immediately per fleet directives to strike at the enemy’s doorstep.”

Glancing at one of the guards holding a German Bergman MP34 submachine gun pointed in his direction, Ogawa asserted, “This is most unusual, Captain.”

Horinouchi tilted his head to the side, then took a few steps to his right. Ogawa followed, leaving Tanaka out of earshot. Speaking softly, Horinouchi continued.

“Ogawa, our surface fleet was annihilated at Leyte Gulf. We counted on a decisive battle to stop the Americans, but it was our own forces that were defeated instead. It is just a matter of time before all of our remaining resources will be assigned in defense of the homeland.”

“We will make the Americans pay heavily in blood,” Ogawa said harshly.

“True, but there is no question that they have the will to conquer, regardless of the losses. The slaughter of our own people will be appalling.” Horinouchi contemplated the sacrifice of his own family and fell silent for a moment.

“The Army has approached us for assistance in a valiant operation,” he continued. “Dr. Tanaka is affiliated with Unit 731. You will take him and his cargo across the Pacific and launch an attack on the American mainland. You are to avoid detection and protect your boat at all costs en route. Succeed, Ogawa, and the Americans will bow to a truce and our homeland will be preserved.”

Ogawa was stunned by the words. His fellow submarine commanders were waging a mostly defensive battle to protect the remnants of the surface fleet, yet he was to cross the Pacific single-handedly and launch an attack that would end the war. He might have ridiculed the idea, had it not been a fleet staff officer dictating the order to him out of desperation in the middle of the night.

"I am most honored by your confidence, Captain Horinouchi. Rest assured my crew and officers will uphold the honor to the emperor. If I may ask, sir, what exactly is Dr. Tanaka's cargo?" Ogawa inquired.

Horinouchi gazed forlornly across the bay for several seconds. "*Makaze*," he finally muttered quietly. "An evil wind."



UNDER THE watchful eye of Dr. Tanaka, a half-dozen oblong wooden crates were carefully loaded by the Kempei Tai guards into the forward torpedo room of the *I-403* and tightly secured. Ogawa ordered the submarine's four diesel engines turned over and the deck lines released. At half past two in the morning, the iron sub nosed slowly into the inky harbor and inched its way past several other fleet I-boats docked in the yard. Ogawa noted with curiosity that Horinouchi sat silently in the darkened truck on the pier, refusing to leave until after the *I-403* was well out of sight.

Creeping past the docks and warehouses of the sprawling navy yard, the sub soon approached a massive shadow looming against the darkness ahead. Lying quietly in a repair dock, the massive battleship *Yamato* towered above the submarine like a behemoth. With its massive eighteen-inch guns and sixteen-inch-thick armor plating, the *Yamato* was the most feared vessel afloat. Ogawa admired the lines and armament of the world's largest battleship as he sailed past, then felt a touch of pity toward her. Like her sister ship, the *Musashi*, recently sunk in the Philippines, the *Yamato*, he feared, was destined to find her way to the bottom of the sea before the war was over.

Gradually the lights of Kure fell away as the submarine snaked around several large islands, then entered the Seto Inland Sea. Ogawa ordered increased speed as the mountainous island outcroppings fell away and the first gray patches of predawn light tinted the eastern sky. As he marked their route in the conning tower with the *I-403*'s navi-

gator, Ogawa was approached by the executive officer climbing up from below.

“Hot tea, sir,” Lieutenant Yoshi Motoshita said, thrusting a small cup toward the commander. A thin man with a warm demeanor, Motoshita mustered a grin even at five in the morning.

“Yes, thanks,” Ogawa replied crisply before gulping at the tea. The hot liquid was a welcome tonic against the chilled December air and Ogawa quickly drained the cup.

“The sea is unusually calm this morning,” Motoshita noted.

“Fine conditions for fishing,” Ogawa said reflectively. The son of a fisherman, Ogawa had grown up in a small village on the southern island of Kyushu. Accustomed to a hard life on the water, Ogawa had overcome a modest background by passing the formidable entrance exams to Etajima, the Japanese naval academy. After gaining his commission, he was drawn to the growing prewar submarine force and served on two boats before attaining command of the *I-403* in late 1943. Under his leadership, the *I-403* had sunk a half-dozen merchant ships, along with an Australian destroyer in the Philippines. Ogawa was considered one of the top submarine captains remaining in the rapidly shrinking underwater fleet.

“Yoshi, we’ll initiate a zigzag running pattern when we reach the strait, then submerge before we leave the mainland. We can take no chances with enemy submarines patrolling off our coast.”

“I will alert the crew, sir.”

“And Dr. Tanaka. See that he is situated comfortably.”

“I have offered him my cabin,” Motoshita said with a pained look. “Judging by the stack of books he brought with him, I think he will keep himself occupied and out of our way.”

“Very well,” Ogawa replied, wondering silently about his unwanted passenger.

As a crimson sun crept up over the eastern horizon, the *I-403* veered south from the Inland Sea into the Bungo Strait, a pathway

above Japan's southern island of Kyushu that poured into the Pacific Ocean. A gray destroyer limped past the sub on its way back to port, listing heavily to one side and showing a rash of gaping holes in its bridge and decks, the result of a nasty encounter with a pair of U.S. Navy Hellcats. On the submarine, several petty officers crowded the conning tower to take a final glimpse of their green island nation, uncertain as all seamen departing for battle whether they would return home again.

When the approach to the Pacific became visible to the lookout, Ogawa issued the command to dive. A loud bell clanged throughout the submarine and sailors scurried to secure the deck and hatches.

"Submerge to fifteen meters," Ogawa ordered from the bridge.

Large ballast tanks were flooded with seawater and the diving planes tipped forward. With a rush of collapsing water, the *I-403*'s nose dipped downward and the entire submarine was quickly gobbled up by the murky green sea.

In the Pacific waters off the Bungo Strait, aggressive American submarines lurked in the depths hunting merchant supply ships or armed vessels en route from the Kure Navy Base. Submarine-against-submarine attacks were not unheard of and Ogawa was not about to make himself easy fodder. Entering the Pacific waters, he quickly aimed the *I-403* northeast and away from the bulk of the wartime traffic traveling south toward the Philippines.

As were most subs of its era, the *I-403* was powered by diesel and electric motors. In daylight hours, the *I-403* would operate submerged, powered by battery-operated electric motors that pushed the sub along at a sluggish 6 knots per hour. Under cover of darkness, the *I-403* would surface and crank up the diesel engines, which propelled the boat to better than 18 knots, while recharging the batteries. But the *I-403* was no ordinary submarine. Stretching over 390 feet long, the *I-403* was one of a handful of Sen toku-class submarines, which were the largest built in their day. The massive iron vessel dis-

placed over 5,200 tons and was pushed through the water by four 7,700-horsepower diesel engines. The *I-403*'s truly unique feature, however, was the vessel's armament of aircraft. The *I-403* could carry three Seiran floatplanes, which were small converted dive-bombers that could be launched from a catapult on the center bow. While traveling at sea, the planes were disassembled and stored in a 110-foot-long watertight hangar that stretched along the sub's deck. A shortage of aircraft had forced Ogawa to give up one of his seaplanes for coastal reconnaissance, however, and his vessel now carried just two of the Seiran aircraft.



ONCE THE *I-403* had safely entered the Pacific, Ogawa retired to his cabin and reread the brief mission orders Horinouchi had given him. The succinct commands called for him to sail a northerly route across the Pacific, with a refueling stop in the Aleutians. He was to proceed to the northwest coast of the United States, where his two aircraft were to launch air attacks on the cities of Tacoma, Seattle, Victoria, and Vancouver.

On the face of it, it appeared a futile gesture, thought Ogawa. Japan needed her submarines for homeland waters defense rather than instigating minuscule attacks with a pair of small aircraft. But there was the question of Dr. Tanaka and his unidentified cargo.

Summoned to Ogawa's cabin, Tanaka bowed gracefully before entering the cramped quarters and seating himself at a small wooden table. The slightly built scientist bore a shrewish and unsmiling face. A pair of vacant black eyes that were magnified by thick glasses augmented his sinister appearance.

Dispensing with formalities, Ogawa pressed immediately for the nature of the doctor's presence.

"Dr. Tanaka, my written orders are to sail this vessel to the west

coast of North America and launch an airborne attack on four cities. There is no mention of your duties or the nature of your cargo. I must ask what your role in the mission is.”

“Commander Ogawa, rest assured that my assignment here has been authorized at the highest levels,” Tanaka replied in a quiet monotone voice. “I will be providing technical assistance for the attack operation,” he continued.

“This is a warship. I fail to understand how a medical officer will assist in a naval strike,” Ogawa countered.

“Commander, I am with the Army Medical School’s Epidemic Disease Prevention Study Group. We have received materials from a research facility in China that have enabled us to develop an effective new weapon against the enemy. Your submarine has been chosen as the means to launch the weapon for the first time against American forces. I am responsible for the security and deployment of the weapon on this mission.”

“These ‘materials.’ They will be dropped from my aircraft?”

“Yes, in special canisters that can be accommodated by your bombers. I have already made the necessary arrangements with your aviation ordnance crew.”

“And the men on my vessel. Are they in any danger with this weapon aboard?”

“None whatsoever.” Tanaka’s face was inscrutable as he lied.

Ogawa didn’t believe him, but figured the risk of the American Navy’s antisubmarine warfare forces were a greater risk to his sub than anything carried on board. Ogawa tried to procure what little information he could from Tanaka, but the Army doctor volunteered few additional facts. Whatever mystery was associated with the weapon, he kept close to the vest. There was something ominous about the man, Ogawa decided, and it made him uncomfortable. After sharing a quick cup of tea, he dismissed the eerie scientist. Sitting silently in his cabin, Ogawa cursed the Fleet Command for selecting his vessel for the assignment. It was a mission that he didn’t want.





THE SPORADIC ocean traffic of merchant ships and fishing boats soon dissipated as the Japanese mainland fell behind the sub's wake and the vessel crawled farther north in latitude. For the next twelve days and nights, the crew embraced a normal operating schedule as the sub nosed northeast, surfacing at night to run at higher speed. The prospect of being detected by an Allied plane or ship was more remote in the north Pacific, but Ogawa took no chances and ran submerged during all daylight hours. Operating under the waves, the bottled-up sub became like an oven to the men who drove her. Interior temperatures would climb into the nineties from the machinery, while the confined air would grow foul to the breath over the hours. Evening darkness was eagerly anticipated by each crewman, knowing the sub would finally surface, open its hatches, and vent cold, fresh sea air into the dank interior.

Naval authority on submarines was notably relaxed, even in the Japanese Navy, and operations on the *I-403* were no different. Officers and enlisted crew mixed easily, sharing the same meals and suffering the same miseries aboard the cramped vessel. The *I-403* had survived depth charge attacks on three different occasions and the near-death experiences had bonded the crew tightly together. They were survivors in a deadly game of cat and mouse and felt the *I-403* was a lucky ship that could defy the enemy.

On the fourteenth night, the *I-403* surfaced near the Aleutian island of Amchitka and quickly found the supply ship *Morioka* anchored in a small cove. Ogawa gently brought his vessel alongside the surface ship and mooring lines were tossed across. As diesel fuel was pumped into the submarine's reservoir tanks, crewmen on each vessel bantered back and forth in the freezing cold.

"Aren't you a little cramped in that anchovy tin?" asked a bundled yeoman at the ship's rail.