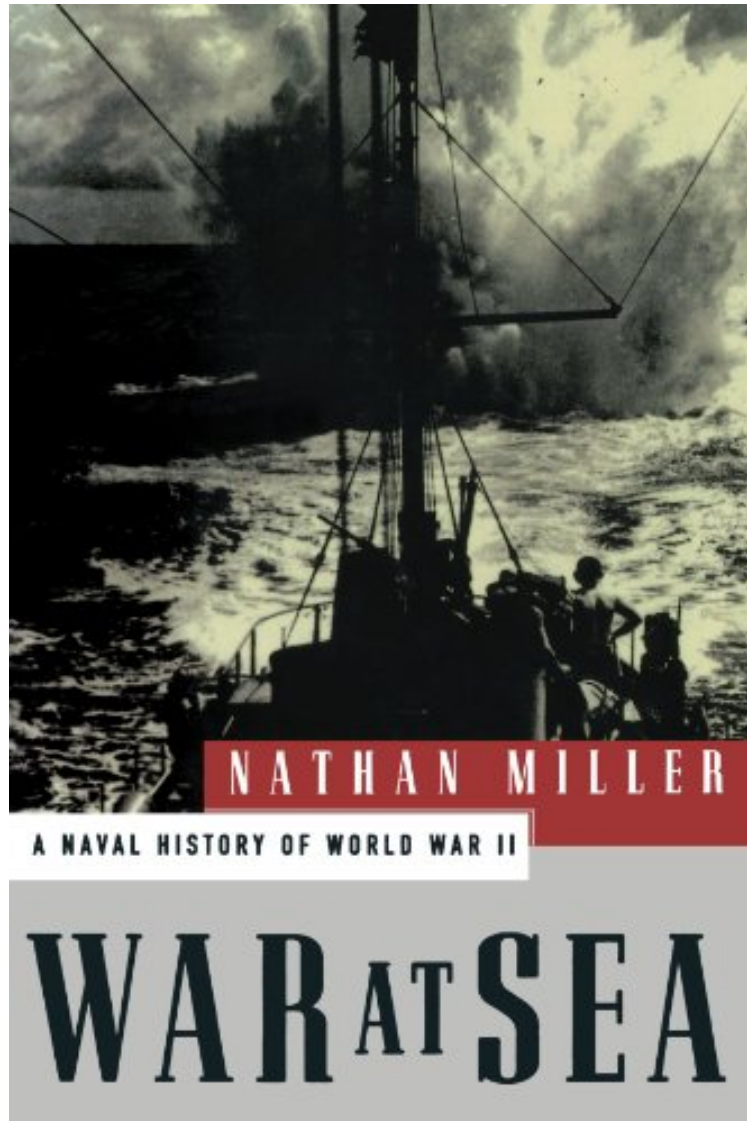


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War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II

Nathan Miller

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Nathan Miller : War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Best yet
By alex wilson I have been a WW II buff for ~ 40 years and have read lots of reports of battles and leaders but this one-volume survey covered and tied together the whole sweep of naval events (with timeline references to on-land events). Many influences revealed as well as lesser known clashes, especially in the Pacific. The personalities and their motives for resource allocations brought light to many whys and whens of events. It helped put some nominal heroes under illumination for ego and bias decisions that were not in the

interest of the overall goals of defeating Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan (may I mention MacArthur and Churchill here?) and elevated some leaders to more appropriate status (Adms. King and Nimitz). I am grateful to Nathan Miller for this book. 15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Easy reading, good coverage for a 1-volume history. By Craig MACKINNON As a 1-volume history of the naval war in all theatres in WWII, this book can by no means be complete or in-depth. However, if you read this book as an introduction to naval warfare, or as a look at the "big picture", this volume does the job very well. It is easy to read, informative, touches on virtually all the important events, and keeps up a good pace. Of course, certain events are relegated to mere footnotes, including the Dieppe raid and the loss of USS Indianapolis (where most of the deaths were from sharks and exposure, not enemy activity) in the interest of timing and length. However, Miller usually points the way to further readings in such cases, if the reader wants to know more. There is an extensive notes section at the end of the book divided by chapter, listing many primary sources, which gives the book a good deal of credibility. His analysis is generally brief as well, which is ideal for a book of this type, where pace is important. This doesn't mean it's any less insightful, however. He convincingly argues that the use of the atomic bomb was a strategic, war-ending measure, not just an attempt to scare the Soviet Union; that the refusal of the Japanese to withdraw skilled pilots to train the next generation was a fatal error; and that the industrial might of the combined allies was too much for the Axis - they had to win in the first couple of years or be ultimately worn out. Another important point in praise of this book is the way Miller is careful to point out the involvement of the so-called minor allies. For example, by 1945, Canada had the 3rd largest navy in the world, but because the RCN primarily participated in the Battle of the Atlantic, they get ignored by historians who get caught up in Big Events storytelling. Miller is always very careful to point out these countries' contributions. Unfortunately, there are a few quibbling points that drop the book to 4 stars. First, the maps are conveniently located together at the back of the book, but are never referred to in the text, and are often of too large an area to be useful. For example, a lot of space is devoted to amphibious operations on Guadalcanal, Okinawa, etc., but these islands are merely dots on a "Pacific theatre" map. Even a 1/4 page sketch per island would have been very helpful. Secondly, Miller seems to have a vendetta against Winston Churchill - he is always quick to ridicule Churchill's wild ideas, but never to give credit to his good ones, instead saying, "The British wanted" Finally, there's an occasional confusion, such as mixing up the British cruisers Dorsetshire (that sunk the Bismark) and Devonshire. These quibbles do not really detract from the overall enjoyment of the book, however, and it's recommended for any armchair historian interested in the naval aspects of World War II. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Naval History. By Texas Tuit The War at Sea is an excellent book that gives you a thumb nail view of the entire naval action of WW-II without getting bogged down with detailed tactical issues. I enjoyed the many stories and comments from individuals who were part of the action. The only complaint I have is the sorry excuse of the maps used as a reference. Great, easy to read overview of WW-II Naval action.

History records few more gripping dramas than the naval history of World War II. It was the last great sea war, but in the half century since the final battles of that struggle, the conflict has receded into the past. Narvik, the Battle of the Atlantic, Midway, and the Philippine Sea are to the current generation as remote as Waterloo and Gettysburg. In *War at Sea*, Nathan Miller brings the story of these monumental events--and the achievements, suffering, and heroism of those who served at sea during World War II--to the attention of readers who have only a nodding acquaintance with it. In doing so, he illuminates in dramatic fashion the costly mistakes and the blunders, the great skill and courage of the Allied commanders, tactical leaders, and enlisted men that denied the Axis powers victory. From the sinking of the British passenger liner *Athenia* on September 3, 1939, by a German U-boat (against orders), to the Japanese surrender on board the *Missouri*, on September 2, 1945, *War at Sea* covers every major naval battle of World War II in one fascinating volume. In gripping detail, Miller recounts the major operations of the British, German, American, Japanese, Italian, Canadian, and Russian navies. Based on recently released Ultra intelligence information the Allies procured from their deciphering of coded messages passed by their enemies, ship logs, official reports, interviews with surviving servicemen, and personal accounts and anecdotes from the men who manned the ships and the aircraft, Miller gives a human face to the daily routine of life at sea--from being torpedoed to living in the confines of a submarine for weeks at a time. Miller also details the political and historical backgrounds of each navy and analyzes the strategies of the combatants. He goes on to show how new technology, such as aircraft carriers and submarines, pushed aside the battleship and changed the course of the war and modern warfare. Too often today, war is viewed as a bloodless computer game complete with "smart" bombs, guided missiles, and "surgical strikes." In reality, war is about death. It is a mixture of boredom, exhaustion, and sudden and terrifying moments of horror. This is particularly true of war at sea. One minute a ship can be steaming peacefully on a calm ocean; in the next it can be ripped apart by torpedoes with its crew fighting for their lives in a cauldron of flaming oil or scalding steam. *War at Sea* tells the true story of naval warfare during World War II, capturing the drama, suspense, and narrow triumph of the Allied forces in the great battle to secure the seas.

From Publishers Weekly With authoritative analysis, and in one volume, Miller majestically relates the history of the

last great sea war for the general reader, from the sinking of the passenger ship Athenia on September 3, 1939, to the surrender ceremony aboard the USS Missouri on September 2, 1945. The battle to secure the seas was the one campaign fought from the beginning of the conflict to its conclusion. The narrative covers the major operations of the American, British, Canadian, Soviet, German, Japanese and Italian navies, with recollections by those who manned the ships and planes. Miller's sweeping version of the Battle of the Atlantic?German U-boats versus Allied convoys?confirms that victory went to the Allies when American shipyards succeeded in producing merchant vessels faster than the Germans could sink them. His compelling account of the turning-point Battle of Midway reveals how the supremacy of carrier aircraft as the decisive factor in modern naval warfare was established. Miller is the author of *FDR: An Intimate History*. History Book Club main selection; BOMC alternate. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Miller, whose book *The U.S. Navy: An Illustrated History* (Morrow, 1990. rev. ed.) is used as a text at the Naval Academy, has written a book that is as captivating and intriguing as a novel. It tells all sides of the history of naval warfare during World War II. Each chapter deals with a specific campaign or policy. A positive point of the work is that Miller didn't write a sanitized history. He clearly presents mistakes, both good and bad, and good or bad judgment from all sides. Extensive footnotes provide additional information, anecdotes, and clarifications of official accounts. Essential for libraries dealing with military and American history and highly recommended for other libraries. Terry Wirick, Erie Cty. Lib. System, Pa. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Miller has written four previous volumes of popular naval history--plenty of practice to make his fifth a superior example of the one-volume naval war history. During World War II, naval power moved into three dimensions of combat--air, surface, and undersea--and this development as well as the sheer number of combatants involved make it a daunting task to compress such hefty subject matter into a single volume of reasonable size. Although every reader will find some favorite incident left out or interpreted in a way that will raise their eyebrows, Miller is at his best with straight narrative. Yet his analyses are also sound: for instance, U.S. productive capacity was the decisive factor in the Allies' naval victory; also, its U-boats were the only potentially decisive naval advantage Germany possessed after failing to win the Battle of Britain; and Douglas MacArthur was a better politician than strategist. Equipped with fine notes and a bibliography for the scholarly reader, the book yet aims more at informal students of World War II--a target audience it squarely hits. Highly recommended. Roland Green