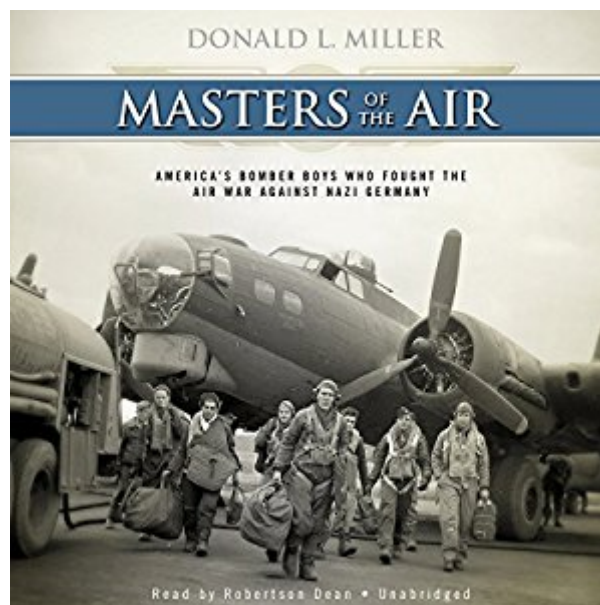




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Masters Of The Air: America's Bomber Boys Who Fought The Air War Against Nazi Germany



Synopsis

This is the dramatic story of the American bomber boys in World War II who brought the war to Hitler's doorstep. With the narrative power of fiction, this is a harrowing ride through the fire-filled skies over Berlin, Hanover, and Dresden. Fighting at 25,000 feet in thin, freezing air no warriors had encountered before, bomber crews battled new kinds of assaults on body and mind. Air combat was deadly but intermittent: periods of inactivity and anxiety were followed by short bursts of fire and fear. Unlike infantrymen, bomber boys slept on clean sheets, drank beer in local pubs, and danced to the music of Glenn Miller's Air Force Band. But they had a much greater chance of dying than ground soldiers. In 1943 an American bomber crewman stood only a one-in-five chance of surviving his tour of duty. The Eighth Air Force lost more men in the war than the US Marine Corps. The bomber crews were an elite group of warriors. Actor Jimmy Stewart was a bomber boy, as was "King of Hollywood" Clark Gable. The air war was filmed by Oscar-winning director William Wyler and covered by reporters like Andy Rooney and Walter Cronkite, all of whom flew combat missions with the men. The Anglo-American bombing campaign against Nazi Germany was the longest military campaign of World War II, a war within a war. Until Allied soldiers crossed into Germany in the final months of the war, it was the only battle fought inside the German homeland. Strategic bombing did not win the war, but the war could not have been won without it. American airpower destroyed the rail facilities and oil refineries that supplied the German war machine. The bombing campaign was a shared enterprise: The British bombed at night while American bombers attacked by day - a technique that British commanders thought was suicidal. Drawn from interviews, oral histories, and American, British, German, and other archives, this is an authoritative, deeply moving account of the world's first and only bomber war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the most amazing book you will ever read regarding the WW II European air war from the American side. There are detailed stories in this book, from both the American, British and German side that many people, I am sure, never heard of before. Service in the Eighth Air Force over Europe was a dangerous assignment that required courage, stamina, and skill that I never realized. Skill that was often exhibited by young men in their late teens and early twenties. Many men that were away from home for the first time. Most that had never even flown in an airplane, let alone fly one in combat. In the future, when I look at bombers from WW II that are still flying at air shows that I visit, I will look at them with an entirely different view than I did in the past. The romance of flying those planes has been replaced with the stark reality of the hell those flight crews went through, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I knew some of those men intimately when I was growing up as a boy having been born after WW II. Some were my relatives and it is interesting to me that not one of those men ever told me about the horror they went through serving in the air crews over Europe during WW II. Not one mentioned anything about their experiences. I used to ask the former air crew members I met why they did not keep involved in flying after the war. Only my cousin answered me when he said that he associated flying with death and he had had enough of it. After reading this book, I realized what he was talking about. Buy and read this book. You owe it to the men that were there. Many did not come home again. The author makes this era come so alive that I had to stop reading and take a break at some of the vivid detailed scenes he captured on the page of what it was like to fly over Europe for the USA during WW II. I liked this book so much that I bought additional copies and gave them to people I know that are interested in the subject.

Donald Miller produced a well-documented and frequently harrowing account of the history of the US Army 8th Air Force, the first US Army unit to engage in combat with elements of Nazi Germany during WWII. When the vanguard of the 8th Air Force arrived in Britain the RAF was carrying out a night bombing campaign against targets in Nazi occupied Europe. In this book you will read about strategic and tactical differences of opinion between the RAF and leadership of the US Army 8th Air Force. The 8th came to Britain to join in the fight with Germany, but in a way that had never before been attempted - high-level, precision, daylight, strategic bombing designed to deliver a knock-out blow to the industrial and economic centers of Nazi occupied Europe. If you are like me, and have

read different accounts of the war in Europe in WWII including accounts of the air war, you, like me, may have accepted the general conclusion that the daylight bombing campaign of the 8th was not only effective, but decisive. Miller's account, however, provides a rich and focused account of the risks, challenges, successes, and failures of the 8th which provide readers with a reason to revisit their opinions about the 8th's ability to carry out precision bombing. Miller uses many, many personal accounts from individuals who were members of flight crews, ground crews, and members of command staffs as he weaves his historical account of the 8th. I was repeatedly impressed, deeply impressed, by the heroism, grit, and determination of men who climbed again and again into bombers heading to the air war over continental Europe. Time and again I had to stop reading and re-read passages of the book out loud to my wife who was likewise awed by the terrible conditions of battle and inspired by the bravery of the men in those bombers. In the heading for this review I use the word "unvarnished." That's not because there is undue use of profanity, but because the account presented by Miller details the conditions encountered in the air: fighter attacks, flack, extreme cold, constant stress, and other challenges associated with the WWII bomber air war. The account is also "unvarnished" because of the direct and candid description of the challenges in carrying out precision bombing...which from many accounts was not as precise as we may have been led to believe. This book was outstanding. If you are interested in the military history of WWII in general, and of the air war in specific, then you will greatly enjoy this book. 5 stars all the way!

A wonderful history for my experience as a B-17 bombardier flying 15 missions in the 8th AF. I was captured at Regensburg after 15 missions and became a POW at Stalag Luft I for 15 months. Masters of the Air filled in gaps of knowledge and gave me an understanding of the strategic and political events relating to my experience.

An outstanding account of the creators and heroes of the 8th Air Force. What sets this apart is the balanced approach the author takes. He brings well known figures of the past like Clark Gable, Jimmy Stewart and others out front and explains their exploits in detail. Miller takes you through harrowing missions without belaboring them or trivializing them. Sometimes in graphic detail he explains that being on a bomber crew was not necessarily the glamour job of the war. The reader will appreciate how the author delves into the area of strategic bombing and its effectiveness. It reveals much about the controversy and attempts to settle the need to bomb the designated targets that some historians and revisionists feel were unnecessary and cruel. A thoroughly enjoyable and informative book. A must for those who appreciate what was done for us by the Greatest

Generation, as well as for aircraft and air war enthusiasts.

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