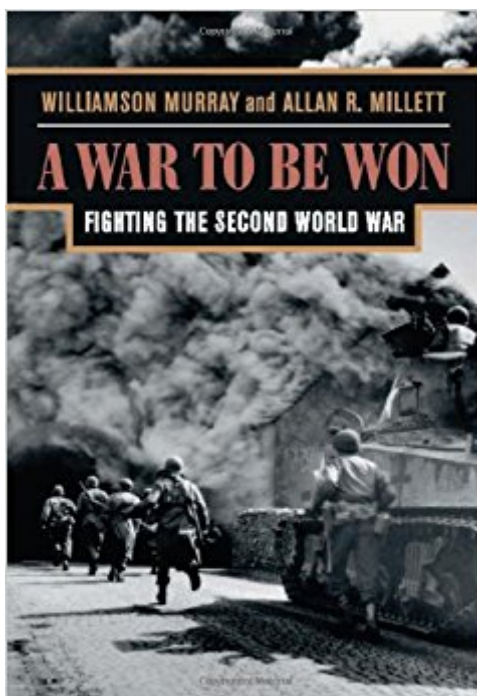


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# A War To Be Won: Fighting The Second World War



## Synopsis

In the course of the twentieth century, no war looms as profoundly transformative or as destructive as World War II. Its global scope and human toll reveal the true face of modern, industrialized warfare. Now, for the first time, we have a comprehensive, single-volume account of how and why this global conflict evolved as it did. *A War To Be Won* is a unique and powerful operational history of the Second World War that tells the full story of battle on land, on sea, and in the air. Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett analyze the operations and tactics that defined the conduct of the war in both the European and Pacific Theaters. Moving between the war room and the battlefield, we see how strategies were crafted and revised, and how the multitudes of combat troops struggled to discharge their orders. The authors present incisive portraits of the military leaders, on both sides of the struggle, demonstrating the ambiguities they faced, the opportunities they took, and those they missed. Throughout, we see the relationship between the actual operations of the war and their political and moral implications. *A War To Be Won* is the culmination of decades of research by two of America's premier military historians. It avoids a celebratory view of the war but preserves a profound respect for the problems the Allies faced and overcame as well as a realistic assessment of the Axis accomplishments and failures. It is the essential military history of World War II—from the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 to the surrender of Japan in 1945—for students, scholars, and general readers alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Scholarship and insight place this book in the front rank of military history written in the 20th

century's final decade. The authorsDMurray is senior fellow at Washington's Institute for Defense Analyses and Millett is a chaired professor of military history at Ohio StateDmake no secret of their convictions on personal, institutional and operational issues, but are nevertheless remarkably successful at avoiding the armchair debunking that mars so many histories of the period. Backed by meticulous operational analysis, Murray and Millett compellingly view the war as a death grapple between civilization (however imperfect) and genocidal, racist imperialism. Both sides absorbed unprecedented levels of punishment and still functioned effectively, yet the authors show that the Allies mobilized resources to an extraordinary degree and developed unprecedented levels of cooperation against Germany and Japan, with U.S. armed forces in particular demonstrating high learning curves. After recovering from Stalin's purges, by 1943 the Red Army was successfully combining numbers and technology to take full advantage of every opportunity offered by a declining Wehrmacht. On the other side of the front, instead of making the hard choices required by Germany's limited resources, Hitler and his military leaders attempted everything simultaneously. They increasingly substituted ideology for men and equipment. Japan, too, fought a vitalist war, with will power unsuccessfully substituting for both fire power and rational calculation. The result, Murray and Millett brilliantly show, was to exclude negotiation and persuasion, leaving victory in battle the only choice in modern history's only total war. (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Any attempted one-volume study of World War II must either be superficial or a large book. Two distinguished military historians choose the latter course, with satisfactory, if not perfect, results. They effectively combine narrative, analysis, and backgrounding on economics, technology, etc., and, therefore, can be profitably read by comparative newcomers to military history. An occasional fact has gone astray (the Japanese had more than a "reinforced division" in Manchuria in 1939), the grasp of naval affairs isn't quite as firm as that of land and air doings, and the authors have an axe to grind against Douglas MacArthur. But the quantity of data crammed between the book's covers, including particularly fine treatment of the war on the Eastern Front, compensates for those shortcomings. Murray and Millett unapologetically consider the war just and necessary, refuting those who have challenged that view without ever mentioning them. If a trifle below the level of achievement of Gerhard L. Weinberg's *A World at Arms* (1994), this book can rest on the same shelf deservedly. Roland GreenCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is the best single volume history of the war in Asia and Europe. I've probably read a couple hundred books about the conflict, its personalities, causes and aftereffects. I'm a "baby-boomer" and grew up knowing about WW2 because everybody's father was in it. All you had to ask was, "Which branch of the service?" There's a couple of generations that have grown up since then and don't share these experiences. I strongly recommend this book to any who want or need to know more about it. It's 600 pages but I really don't think you could get a comprehensive history in any less. The authors don't leave anything critical out of the story and use an economy of words while making it all understandable and interesting. There's no revisionist history (in fact the authors rebut some of it) and the authors are equally critical and praiseworthy of key personalities and decision makers. Highly recommended. Even the Indices are interesting and a list of further reading is included by subject.

This volume, written by two veteran historians, is in the same league as Gerhard Weinberg's "A World at Arms" and Martin Gilbert's "The Second World War" for the authors of this book have produced, like the others mentioned, a concise, scholarly, very credible and informative summary of the largest and most costly event in our history. Of the three books, this is my favorite for it specializes in the operational aspects of the war. Not only are many engagements covered well but there is also a wealth of personalities discussed and statistics presented. The authors not only discussed the facts of these events and people but also add their own analysis and comments which greatly added to the experience. The list of leaders and commanders discussed is extensive and covers all the major countries in the war, both Allies and Axis and the authors bring out the good and the bad. The usual key people are included but there are also politicians and lesser known commanders that will surprise you. The index is extensive and will help you find the people or event wanted. The pros and cons of key weapons like tanks and planes were also discussed as well as the atomic bomb. There is some prior and post war discussions but it's not extensive. There is no anecdotal experiences included. The book is laid out chronologically so you could be reading about von Bock driving toward Moscow and then in the next chapter you have Pearl Harbor being attacked. I would have preferred separating the Pacific War from Europe but it has certain advantages this way. The coverage is roughly 60/40 with the Pacific getting the smaller space. China, Burma, Singapore are included. There are a number of good maps and many photos that cover both theaters. There is also an Appendix and a Notes section but no Bibliography. I noticed a couple of errors but in a volume of this size, it wasn't rampant. The war was too large, too extensive to call one book definitive but the coverage in this book is admirable. There is coverage in this 612

page narrative that is not in the other two books mentioned but it can also be said they have coverage that's not in this volume. Owning all three would be a small investment in discovering the mammoth scope of this war.

I enjoyed reading this book, which is a bit off-putting due to its size and breadth. As long as one has a bit of time on his or her hands, this is a useful and entertaining way to spend some quality time with yourself in the company of two excellent history writers. The book has an amazing scope, and like Gerhard Weinberg's "A World At Arms" has a mammoth and daunting job at hand to describe the total scope and kaleidoscope of activities contained under the rubric of the second world war. The authors here are much more forthcoming than was Weinhard in discussing specific battlefield details of particular engagements, and this adds to the book's considerable value and readability to history buffs like myself. I enjoy their liberal employment of relevant economic, technological, geographical and other factors in describing the whos, hows, whens, wheres and whys of specific struggles as well as in describing the nature of the overall socio-political aspects of the war. So, when they subsequently launch into discussing their uniquely constructed "standards of military effectiveness", they add to its value by buttressing their findings with a wealth of different kinds of supporting data, information, and background that makes the total overview of the war much more understandable than it would be otherwise. The book does suffer from some minor drawbacks, such as the authors' obvious quarrel with the contributions and strategies of Douglas MacArthur, yet they are also suitably fastidious in pointing out his many contributions and effective tactics as well. This drawback is counterbalanced by an outstanding treatment covering the Nazi campaign against Russia, and the day to day details crammed into describing the ill-fated and terribly over-extended German occupation and troubles in Operation Barbarossa and in the subsequent crushing defeats at the hands of the Russian armies is worth the price of the book alone. In summary, I also believe their well-argued and documented take on the importance and lasting influence of the second world war is crucial in understanding all that followed in the balance of the 20th century to be well taken, and to be beyond reasonable dispute. In some respects (Such as level of detail regarding specific engagements) this is a better book than Weinberg's, and on other levels it falls short of his monumental work. Combined, the two books offer one an astounding and quite rich look at a war that we are just starting to appreciate in all of its amazing scope, ferocity, and consequence. This book should be required reading for anyone considering a career in 20th century history, or for all of us history nuts who just can't get enough of a great thing. Enjoy!

Great, inspiring

'A War to be Won' is a great source for those looking for more information on the events that happened prior and during WW2. For me, it cleared up a lot of the organization of events I had trouble remembering. The book not only goes over the events, but gives you names of the people involved and the reasons behind all the planning and action that occurred. It is a long book, but it wasn't as dense or hard to read as others that I've come across. I would definitely recommend this to anyone who is into wartime history.

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