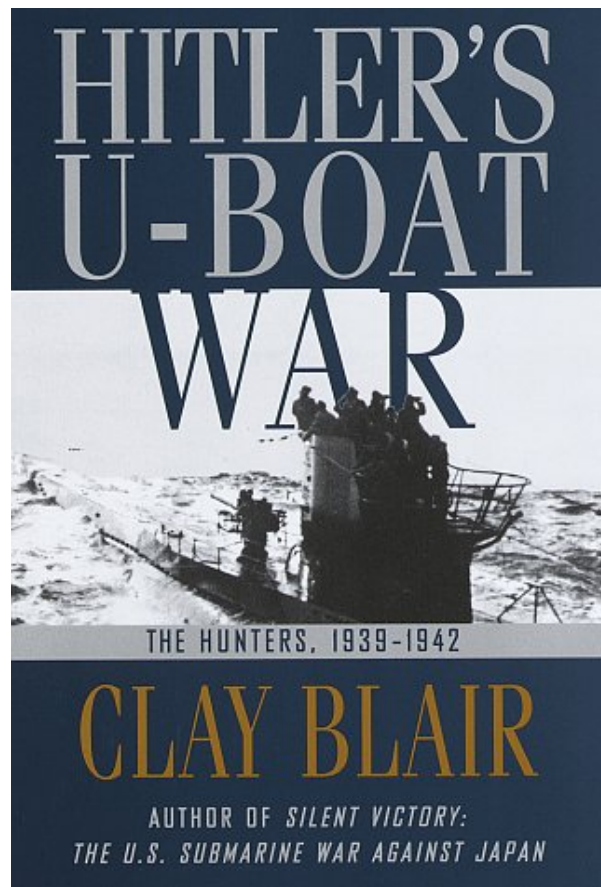
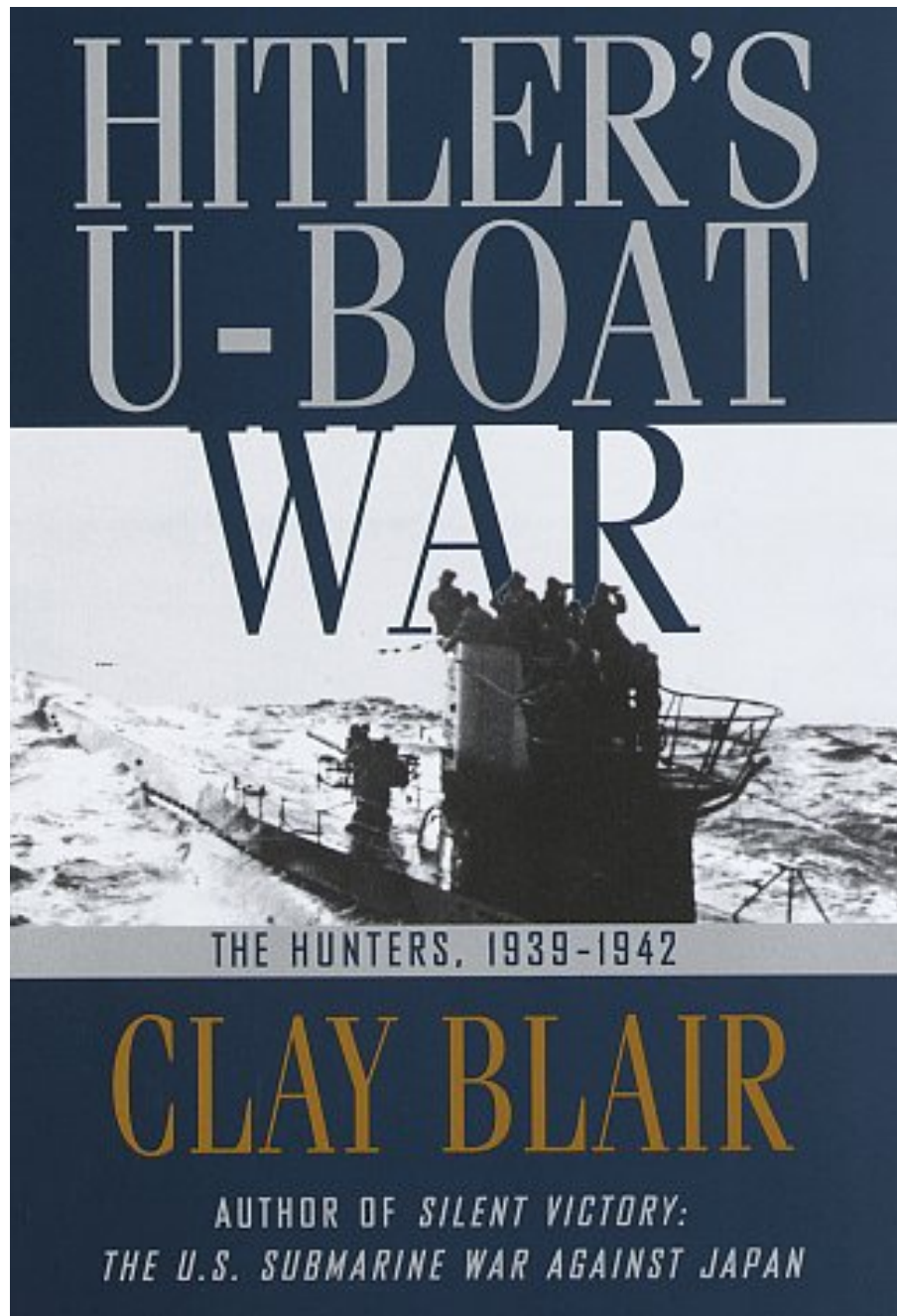


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1939-1942 (HITLER'S U BOAT WAR) BY
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Amazon.com Review

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(HITLER'S U BOAT WAR) BY CLAY BLAIR PDF

Clay Blair's best-selling naval classic *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*, is regarded as the definitive account of that decisive phase of the war in the Pacific. Nine years in the making, *Hitler's U-boat War* is destined to become the definitive account of the German submarine war against the Allies, or "The Battle of the Atlantic."

It is an epic sea story, the most arduous and prolonged naval battle in all history. For a period of nearly six years, the German U-boat force attempted to blockade and isolate the British Isles, in hopes of forcing the British out of the war, thereby thwarting the Allied strategic air assault on German cities as well as Overlord, the Allied invasion of Occupied France. Fortunately for the Allies, the U-boat force failed to achieve either of these objectives, but in the attempt they sank 2,800 Allied merchant ships, while the Allies sank nearly 800 U-boats. On both sides, tens of thousands of sailors perished.

The top secret Allied penetration of German naval codes, and, conversely, the top secret German penetration of Allied naval codes played important roles in the Atlantic naval battle. In order to safeguard the secrets of codebreaking in the postwar years, London and Washington agreed to withhold all official codebreaking and U-boat records. Thus for decade upon decade an authoritative and definitive history of the Battle of the Atlantic could not be attempted. The accounts that did appear were incomplete and full of errors of fact and false interpretations and conclusions, often leaving the entirely wrong impression that the German U-boats came within a whisker of defeating the Allies, a myth that persists.

When London and Washington finally began to release the official records in the 1980s, Clay Blair and his wife, Joan, commenced work on this history in Washington, London, and Germany. They relied on the official records as well as the work of German, British, American, and Canadian naval scholars who published studies of bits and pieces of the story. The end result is this magnificent and monumental work, crammed with vivid and dramatic scenes of naval actions and dispassionate but startling new revelations and interpretations and conclusions about all aspects of the Battle of the Atlantic.

The Blair history will be published in two volumes. This first volume, *The Hunters*, covers the first three years of the war, August 1939 to August 1942. Told chronologically, it is subdivided into two major sections, the War Against the British Empire, and the War Against the Americas. Volume II, *The Hunted*, to follow a year later, will cover the last years of the naval war in Europe, August 1942 to May 1945, when the Allies finally overcame the U-boat threat.

Never before has Hitler's U-boat war been chronicled with such authority, fidelity, objectivity, and detail. Nothing is omitted. Even those who fought the Battle of the Atlantic will find no end of surprises. Later generations will benefit by having at hand an account of this important phase of World War II, free of bias and mythology.

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Most helpful customer reviews

28 of 29 people found the following review helpful.

Exhaustive and complete, but a bit much for the lay reader

By Matthew D. Carr

Clay Blair has written a masterful account of the German submarine war in WWII. While it is extremely thorough, the level of detail can become cumbersome to the amateur historian. Mr. Blair outlines every mission undertaken by a German submarine during the entire war; a blessing for other researchers in naval history but a curse to the lay reader. The author does a commendable job outlining the major campaigns and summarizing the effects of the submarine war. He even comes to the conclusion that the feared "wolf packs" and the submarine war in general never posed the serious threat that the Allies believed it did. Perhaps the most interesting portion of the book is the chapters devoted to describing the development of submarine/ASW technology and the encryption/decoding efforts of both sides. The author does an average job as far as the "characters" are concerned. For most people he simply describes their military careers and follows their progression through various commands and notes the awards they receive. Very few players get the background coverage that makes them come alive and seem like real people.

I highly recommend this book for any reader of history interested in the German submarine war. However, the casual or amateur reader will do well to skim through the endless details.

16 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

AN AMERICAN VIEW OF U-BOAT OPERATIONS

By A Customer

This is a very comprehensive work! The author is not only meticulous in describing practically each u-boat sailing during this period, but he tends to keep the reader's interest in what could be a dull assignment, by explaining pertinent background information and providing in-depth detail on various crew members, making many of them "come to life" in the words on the page. At the same time, he keeps the reader informed on what is going on in other parts of the war that could affect u-boat and ASW (anti-submarine warfare) operations and practices, such as code breaking, Hitler's rash decision-making, Operation Torch, dropping off of secret agents, saboteurs, and/or commandos into enemy territory, development of radar and sonar and HF direction finding, u-boat activity on the U.S. coast, military officials involved, etc. This book is important historically since it not only provides an extremely detailed account of operations, but it reviews it from an American standpoint based on the author's incredible current research and his reading of British historians, and then commenting on divergences of viewpoint or, in some cases, the lack of British commentary on certain embarrassing happenings. - As some reviewers have noted, Blair tends to "stick with the facts" instead of sensationalising, and in the process gains the reader's trust. Excellent u-boat history, engrossing reading.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

A broad view without a human face.

By David Kurtz

You probably can't find a more exhaustive detailing of the Atlantic U-boat war. And generally speaking, this work makes for good reading and good history. What is excellent here is the overall strategic view of the war and the surrounding attempts to stay one step ahead of the enemy. The book has two flaws (they are inter-related): The mass of tonnage statistics begins to lose relevance after a while to a casual reader and also dehumanizes the story. Missing from this book is a good description or feel for any but the most famous of U-boat captains, or descriptions of individual patrols that brings them to life.

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