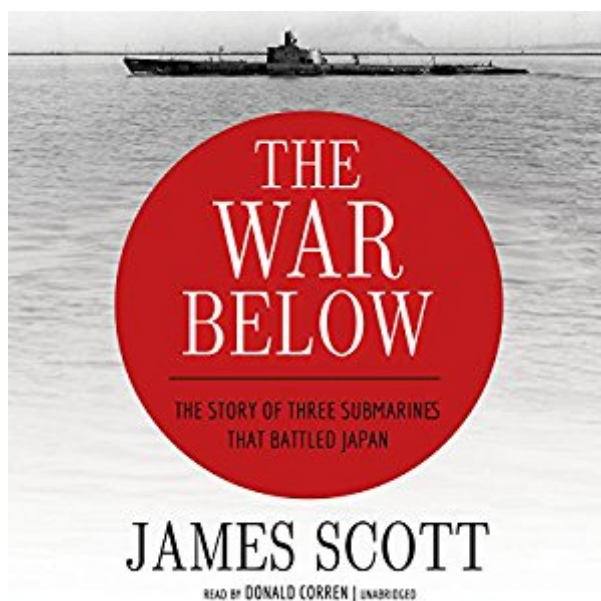


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# The War Below: The Story Of Three Submarines That Battled Japan



## Synopsis

The riveting story of the submarine force that helped win World War II by ravaging Japan's merchant fleet and destroying its economy. *The War Below* is a dramatic account of extraordinary heroism, ingenuity, and perseverance-and the vital role American submarines played in winning the Pacific War. Focusing on the unique stories of the submarines *Silversides*, *Drum*, and *Tang*-and the men who skippered and crewed them-James Scott takes readers beneath the waves to experience the thrill of a direct hit on a merchant ship and the terror of depth charge attacks. It's a story filled with incredible feats of courage, including an emergency appendectomy performed with spoons by an inexperienced medic and the desperate struggle of sailors to escape from a flooded submarine stuck on the bottom, as well as tragic moments such as American submarines sinking an unmarked enemy ship carrying some 1,800 American POWs. The casualty rate among submariners topped that of all military branches, a staggering six times higher than the surface navy. The war claimed almost one out of every five boats. But Japan was so ravaged by the loss of precious fuel and supplies that by war's end, Japanese warships lay at anchor while hungry civilians ate sawdust. Scott paints an unforgettable picture of the dangerous life submariners endured, including the atrocious prison camps where the Japanese beat, tortured, and starved captured Allied troops. Based on more than one hundred interviews with submarine veterans and a review of more than three thousand pages of previously unpublished letters, diaries, and personal writings, *The War Below* allows readers to experience the Pacific War as never before.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor, an order was issued to execute unrestricted submarine warfare on Japan. During the course of the Pacific War, the American submarine service wreaked havoc on Japanese merchant shipping. Over 1,000 Japanese merchant ships were sunk during the war, along with dozens of warships. But the price was high; 52 American submarines were lost during the war. "The War Below" describes the war patrols of three American submarines: Drum, Silversides, and the immortal Tang. Each of these boats was lead by one of the "new breed" of American submarine skipper. These men went to submarine school expecting to be fighting an enemy one day. Thus, they developed aggressive tactics, unlike older skippers trained in peace time. Names such as Burlingame, Coye, Morton, and O'Kane would soon become etched in the annals of submarine history. These aggressive skippers and their crews carried the war directly to the Japanese homeland. It became so dangerous for Japanese merchant shipping that it was unsafe for the ships to even sail in their home waters. Along with vividly describing the submarine tactics used by American skippers, this book also gives the reader a general overview of the war in the Pacific. Major campaigns are discussed, and the role of submarines is fitted into each. Author James Scott also describes life aboard the submarines. He discusses the fear of a sustained depth charge attack, the exhilaration of a successful sinking, and some unusual aspects, including an emergency appendectomy performed on a wardroom table. "The War Below" is a fine book that accurately and interestingly describes the exploits of three of America's greatest submarines. Silversides, Drum, and Tang combined to sink over sixty enemy vessels, and their exploits have become legendary. The book is well-researched, well-written and contains good information about the American submarine service in World War II. Highly recommended.

Action packed, if uneven account of the submarine warfare and early life in the silent service in the wake of Pearl Harbor. The story telling is good, but the toggling back and forth between the three different subs and their respective commanders did not always flow; it's a minor criticism. Scott is able to illustrate the strategy and tactics of American sub warfare over the course of the war; the focus on sinking enemy shipping, the move away from escort, recon, and rescue, and the faulty torpedo controversy that plagued sub skippers. Overall, a nice piece of work and exciting read. In contrast, Iron Coffins, which chronicles the life about a Uboat from the perspective of it's commander who began as an ensign at the start of the war is superior in breadth and scope as well as the quality of the writing; will give a nice perspective of enemy operating in North Atlantic.

By following the exploits of three submarines and their rotating crews as they fought it out against

the Japanese during World War Two, the author does a masterful job in writing an account of the "war below" in the Pacific, from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay. I find in this book the perfect balance between different components: introducing the reader to different characters (the subs' skippers) and their leadership philosophies without getting bogged down in biographical details; providing context by chronicling the main war developments without getting lost in yet another narration of the Pacific campaign; and giving an idea of how life was on a submarine without getting lost in technicalities. The accounts of the combat patrols give the reader a sense of what it was like, what the challenges were, and how bravely these sailors did their duty. Bravo

Listening to the audiobook version of *Enemy Below* helped bring some of the pace, nuance and story telling alive even more so probably than reading this well written book about world war two submarine battles in the Pacific against Japan. There were times that I was thinking so much about the content of this audiobook that I lost track of what I was doing either mowing the yard or driving while listening to the book -- thankfully no accidents occurred on my behalf. The narrator of the book expressed well the drama, boredom and interruptions of battles and engagements in sheer terror back to boredom and uncertainty these men faced in the submarines during world war two. The stories being told such as music being played in one of the subs to the individual unique behaviors of several of the captains in their detailed 'by the book' to 'seat of the pants' cowboy like mode of operation helped bring personalities into play as to what made these three subs successful in battle operations in their own unique ways. It was great hearing about some of the quirks, fears and take charge attitudes of some of these skippers and officers. I'm so impressed at the humbleness these captains were portrayed as having and willing to risk life, limb and even pride for unorthodox or bold actions all for doing well in battle and caring for their men pushing them to excel. The broad big picture details, such as the number of ships in the war at start to war's end, down to what was causing problems such as torpedo issues in the early part of the sub campaign were fascinating as how design of these weapons played a role in many early battles. The play by play battle strategies used in many encounters was also very interesting. I found myself lining up the ships in an imaginary battle field to grasp the close and distant nature of how many of these battles went down either quickly or drawn out for days. My utmost respect goes out to the guys of this generation of submariners. Overall, this is an excellent and well written book. Recently, I heard James Scott speak and show additional materials and stories not included in the book and through his work gained an even higher level of admiration for the world war two generation of US Navy personnel. James is a very good speaker as well as an excellent writer.

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