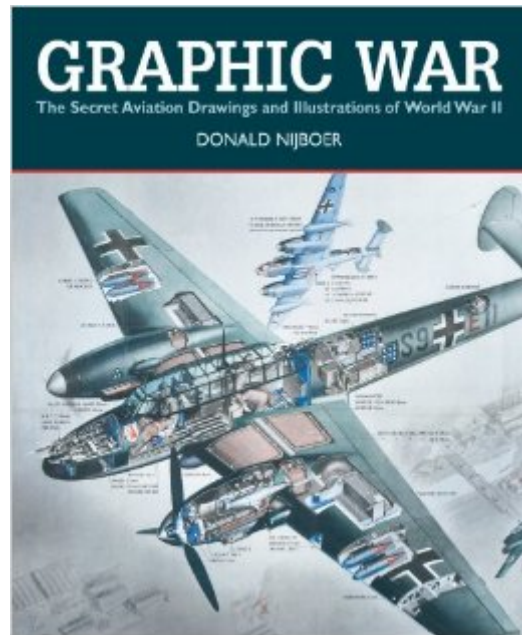


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Graphic War: The Secret Aviation Drawings And Illustrations Of World War II



Synopsis

"This fascinating book is a gold mine for aviation trivia junkies." --Airforce Graphic War is a superb collection of top-secret drawings, including training manuals and colorful wartime posters, from World War II. They were brilliantly created from a few downed aircraft, but mainly from pilots' views of the enemy in the air, during missions. Almost all of the material was originally listed as "restricted -- official use only" and previously unpublished in any form. The cutaway drawings of the aircraft and airborne weaponry were critical to the war efforts of Allied and Axis forces alike. As there was little intelligence available to pilots about the design, power and armament on opposing aircraft, these "graphic transcriptions" were essential. Many of the graphic artists and technical illustrators employed by the Allies, and most employed by the Axis powers, remain anonymous. Their work survives on these pages, however, to provide rare and unique insight into war room strategy and the air- and ground-crew trainee classroom. Aviation enthusiasts, modelers, illustrators, artists and anyone with an interest in World War II history will find Graphic War a compelling inside look at the war fought in the sky.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Donald Nijboer deserves high marks for the research and presentation in his detailed and in-depth book, "Graphic War: The Secret Aviation Drawings and Illustrations of World War II." His book should appeal both to WW II aviation enthusiasts and to graphic artists (especially those either interested in or plying their skills without computers). Drawing on a wealth of historical materials from

military archives, training manuals, posters, and technical diagrams, he organizes the materials into four large collections of images representing Great Britain, Germany, United States, and Soviet Union. Many drawings are elegant, detailed technical schema created by now unknown draftsmen. Depictions of how to abandon an aircraft by parachute, dinghy, or lifeboat or of strategies emergency landings and safe bombing altitudes underscore the harrowing circumstances these pilots faced. Other illustrations offer tips on using cloud cover and reminders to watch for the "Hun in the Sun." Bright collections of aircrew clothing would not seem out of place among the hordes of Christmas catalogs that pile up every fall. An occasional dose of levity sneaks into some of the British and American graphics about safety and maintenance ("What prop?"), but the use of humor is always to emphasize the many types of danger air crews faced, including accidents. The German and Soviet collections, to no surprise, lack any humor but contain meticulous, even overwhelming levels of detail. The progression of the war is mirrored in the technological advances in the various aircraft, as captured by the growing complexity and nuance in the later graphics. One point to ponder is that the aircrews had to memorize and comprehend the information contained in these graphics.

The concept behind "Graphic War" is simple and intriguing. In 272 crisp, glossy 9-by-11-inch pages, author Donald Nijboer presents hundreds of superb examples of aviation-related World War II technical artwork from Great Britain, Germany, the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Most of the artwork comes from wartime training manuals, operations handbooks, aircraft production and assembly documents, posters, etc. Without exception, the artistic quality is stunning. Sixty-some years ago, when anonymous artists created these amazing works, computer-generated imagery (and, indeed, even the computer itself) was not even a gleam in the eye of the most visionary dreamer. Dedicated and talented artistic craftsmen turned out these exquisite pieces of technical art using "low-tech" items such as India ink pens, colored chalks, airbrushes, rubber cement, vellum and Bristol board. "Graphic War" shows that these artists not only succeeded in conveying complex technical information to the airmen who needed to know it--they also often created beautiful works of art in the process. Check out, for example, the intricate "Halifax III Main Structure" (pp. 78-79), the superbly detailed "Centaurus Aero-Engine" cutaway (pp. 156-157) and the colorful "B-17F Armament--Forward Compartments" diagram (pp. 210-211). About half of the artwork in "Graphic War" is from Great Britain. The other half is about evenly split between Germany and the U.S. The Soviet Union gets only 14 pages, because wartime Soviet artwork is very rare and hard to find. While I marveled at the superlative illustrations, I also really appreciated the captions. Rather than describing the artwork itself (which is largely self-explanatory), each caption discusses the actual

subject that the artwork depicts.

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