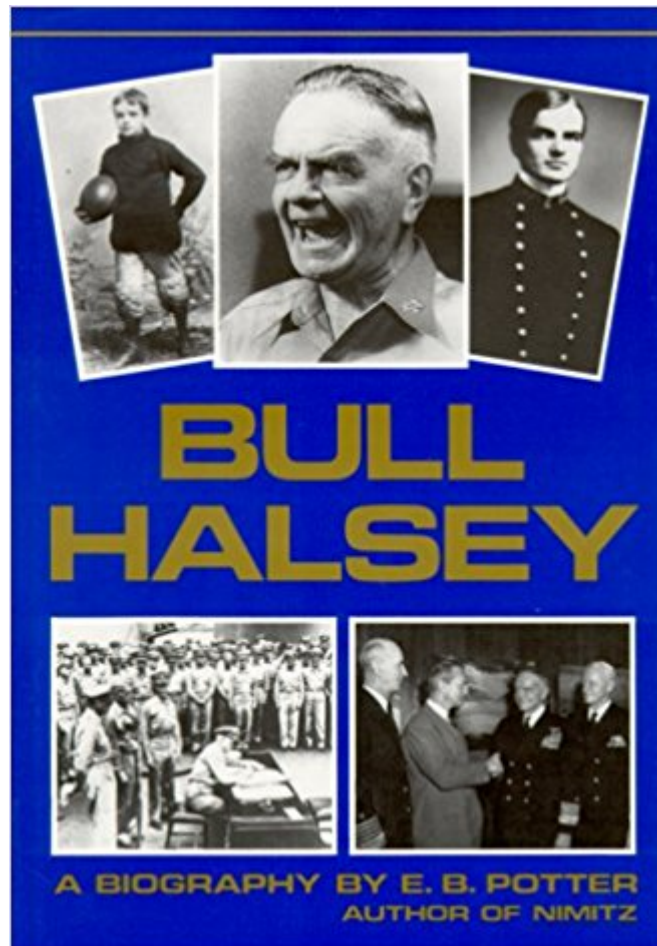




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# Bull Halsey



## Synopsis

Applauded by the public and revered by the men who served under him, Adm. William F. Halsey was one of the leading American personalities of World War II. His reputation as a no-holds-barred fighter and his tough-guy expression earned him the nickname "Bull," yet he was also known for showing genuine compassion toward his men and inspiring them to great feats in the Pacific. Originally disclaiming the praise heaped on him, Halsey eventually came to believe in the swashbuckling legend that surrounded him, and his conduct became increasingly controversial. Naval historian E. B. Potter, who established his reputation with an award-winning biography of Chester W. Nimitz, gets behind the stereotype of this national hero and describes Halsey at his best and worst, including his controversial actions at Leyte Gulf. To write this book Potter had full access to Halsey's family and to the admiral's private papers and provides detail of Halsey's youth and career before the war. First published in 1985, it remains the definitive study.

--This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

By the author of Nimitz, this is the first comprehensive biography of Admiral William F. Halsey, the best-known American naval hero of World War II. Drawing on unpublished memoirs, oral histories, and interviews with relatives and military colleagues, Potter has constructed a scholarly and highly readable account of the life of this colorful, bold, controversial leader. The last of the great swashbuckling sea dogs, Halsey was one of the key figures in the defeat of Japan. His strategical decisions during the Battle for Leyte Gulf, however, have been debated for over 40 years. Here the

issue is explained with clarity, and readers can draw their own conclusions. Halsey was the only military man of comparable rank who was able to work harmoniously with Douglas MacArthur. Potter not only explains why this was so but provides new material on that increasingly maligned general in his account of the Halsey-MacArthur partnership during the South Pacific campaign. Photos. Military Book Club selection. November Copyright 1985 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Three years after assuming command of the southwest Pacific area, a triumphant Halsey led the Third Fleet into Tokyo Bay to accept the Japanese surrender. No man did more to assure U.S. victory in the Pacific. A colorful and cantankerous figure, Halsey was one of the greatest combat leaders in U.S. naval history. While Potter brilliantly illustrates Halsey's ability as a leader and tactician, he candidly admits to the Admiral's shortcomings and explains the reasons behind his most controversial decisions the Battle of Leyte Gulf and the typhoon incidents of 1944/45. Potter had access to sources not previously available and has produced a remarkably fine and objective biography, the best account of the "Bull" to date. Essential for all World War II collections. Military Book Club main selection. Stanley Itkin, Hillside P.L., New Hyde Park, Copyright 1985 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This work, overall, is a good biography of Admiral William "Bull" Halsey. He is most renowned for his work in the Pacific Theater during World War II, with distinguished service from Guadalcanal to Okinawa. This volume does a sound job in laying out his career in the Pacific. A couple cavils: (1) The jumping back and forth between his early life and World War II makes for a sometimes jarring narrative; (2) Some of the more controversial aspects of his leadership in World War II, such as his decision-making in the Philippines, seem a bit underplayed. I'm not sure of the background of the John Wayne movie, *In Harm's Way*, but the description of Halsey taking over from his predecessor here sure has some analogues with John Wayne's Rock Torrey taking over from an ineffectual admiral to win a battle that has some clear parallels with Guadalcanal. Halsey was a "take no prisoners," "full steam ahead" fighting admiral. It is interesting to compare this biography with, for example, a nice biography of his colleague Raymond Spruance, *The Quiet Warrior*. These admirals of the Pacific had very different personalities and tactics. Nonetheless, they were both effective in their distinct ways. This volume certainly informs readers of those facets of Halsey's leadership that served the United States well in the Pacific. All in all, despite some questions one might have about the book, this is worth reading by those interested in the naval war in the Pacific during World War II.

Condition as advertised, shipping prompt. Would use again.

great

Longtime United States Naval Academy professor E. B. Potter presents us here with a biography of William F. "Bull" Halsey, the famed USN admiral of the Pacific War. This book covers Halsey's military life and exploits in thorough detail. Halsey's participation in the Great White Fleet of Teddy Roosevelt, his time spent in destroyers and his introduction into aviation late in life all make for great reading in describing the growth of the pre-WWII Halsey as a naval commander. Where we get the most fully developed picture of Halsey is in his leadership during WWII. From the early raids on the outlying Japanese possessions, his bitter disappointment in missing Midway, to his dramatic replacement of Ghormley during the Guadalcanal campaign and perseverance throughout Operation Cartwheel we see him come into his own as the eventual commander of the Big Blue Fleet. It is only at this highest level that we see Halsey's actions called into question, most prominently the decision to abandon the San Bernardino Strait to confront Ozawa's Northern Force at Leyte Gulf. Halsey spent much of his post-WWII years in defending himself, often ineptly, against the charge that he had "taken the bait" and left the strait wide open for Kurita's Central Force. As another reviewer stated, where Potter fails to give us a full picture is of Halsey the man, the way Manchester did with MacArthur, D'Este with Patton, or even Potter himself with his earlier biography of Nimitz. We know Halsey smoked a lot, and liked to drink, but what other interests or hobbies did he have? What books did he read? How disappointed was he that his son's poor eyesight would keep him from significant posts in the navy? These types of details are what help give such a complete picture of the subjects mentioned above in their excellent biographies. Even Nimitz, admittedly much less colorful than Patton or MacArthur, was still fully developed by Potter in the earlier biography. Despite this shortcoming, the book still merits four stars due to its thorough coverage of Halsey's many achievements and few, though highly publicized, mistakes as a naval commander. One last note: The disjointed chronology, which seems to have bothered other reviewers, was not a problem. If you can grasp the movie Pulp Fiction, or the Seinfeld episode where they go to the wedding in India, Potter's timeline should provide little challenge.

Great History of a great fighter.

This is a great, most excellent book, a good read, broadening, and should have six stars, not five.

Great book

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