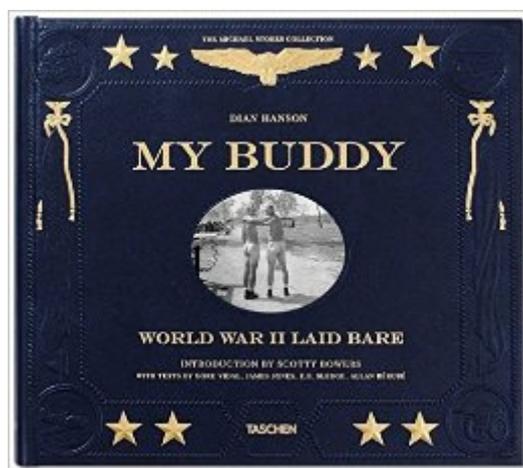


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# My Buddy: World War II Laid Bare



## Synopsis

Off guard: Young World War II allied soldiers laid bare – Every harrowing day for a serviceman during World War II was potentially his last. To help bolster troops against the horrors of combat, commanders encouraged them to form tight “buddy” relationships for emotional support. Many war buddies, together every moment, and depending on each other to survive, formed intimate friendships. When they weren’t fighting side by side, they relaxed together, discharging tension in boisterous “sometimes naked” play. The full extent of nude horseplay among men during World War II can’t be known, as cameras were rare and film hard to process, but some men did document this unprecedented male bonding in small, anonymous photos mostly kept hidden away until their deaths. Los Angeles photographer Michael Stokes has spent years searching out these photos and building an archive of over 500 images. His collection includes soldiers and sailors from Australia, England, France, Italy, Poland, Russia, and the USA, cavorting on the sand in the South Pacific, shivering in the snow of Eastern Europe, posing solo in the barracks, and in great happy groups just about everywhere. These images show men barely out of boyhood, at their physical peak, responding to the reality of battle by living each day to the fullest—a side of the war never before made public. The introduction is by Scotty Bowers, an 89-year-old ex-Marine and author of *Full Service*, the best-selling memoir of his sexual exploits in Hollywood, and how the war forever altered his attitudes about gay and straight, just as these photos may alter our attitudes about World War II and war buddies. – Text in English, French, and German

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars – See all reviews (52 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #392,027 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #86 in Books > Arts &

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Photography & Video > History #2134 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video >

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## Customer Reviews

Possibly the gold standard in WWII memory book of mixed gay and straight interest, this is one of the most complete collections of "off-duty" photos of soldiers and sailors of many nations in wartime currently available. Aside from the excellent photos themselves, the most notable aspects of the publication is the selection of excerpts from earlier texts from pop tunes ("My Buddy") to pointedly gay texts used for only veiled erotic context if at all ("Coming Out Under Fire") to famous man memoirs (Gore Vidal) to set up and organize the collections of depictions. One of the most extensive of these, an "Introduction" (some introduction! It starts 61 pages into the text!) by one Scotty Bowers, an at one time baby faced 18 year old marine closet case now in his 80's (see his own more salacious post-war gay Hollywood memoir, "Full Service") whose detailed memoir of the context of the photos would raise the book head and shoulders over the competition were it not for his too frequent "me thinks the lady doth protest too much" insistence that there was no homosexual activity or even subtext in his beloved Marine Corps. - an insistence all too often belied by the photos themselves and his own narration. CAN one "even rub another guy's cock" (Bowers' words) with no thought of homosexual overtones? A couple illiterate commentators have objected to the multi-lingual text of this excellent Taschen release claiming it was frustrating that they could not follow ALL the text. Had they bothered to look a little closer, even without significant linguistic skill, they would have noticed that the multi-lingual texts are merely REPEATING in French and German (for the aid of other nations' readers where Taschen markets) the same texts first given in English.

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