On the morning of June 7, 1942, six months to the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the USS Yorktown turned over on her port side and sank in about 3,000 fathoms of water with all battle flags flying. Many of her men watched from the decks of the Vireo, the Benham, the Hughes, and the Hammann, weeping as the Old Lady went down. The Battle of Midway was finally over. Though the Yorktown was lost, the battle was won—what John Keegan has called as great a reversal of strategic fortune as the naval world has ever seen. From that point on, the Japanese remained primarily on the defensive at sea. On the morning of May 19, 1998, Robert D. Ballard stared into a video monitor hoping for a glimpse of metal on the bottom of the sea. Thar she blows! Bingo! After almost three weeks out, painstakingly scanning the ocean floor with high-altitude sonar, and many months of research and planning, Ballard and his crew had spotted the Yorktown some three miles down. The wreck was in remarkably good condition: It was as if we had stumbled on the ship a few minutes after it made its death plunge. In Return to Midway, Ballard weaves a compelling narrative, blending the story of the famous battle with his battle to find the sunken ships—the Yorktown and the USS Hammann, as well as four Japanese aircraft carriers. First-hand accounts by the men who were there, including two Japanese and two American servicemen who joined Ballard and his crew for the hunt, as well as paintings and archival photographs, detail the battle in all its horror, while capturing the honor of the men who fought on both sides. Military-history buffs will find this book—the first in decades specifically about the Battle of Midway—especially valuable, though fans of Ballard’s work as an oceanographer will be equally captivated. --Sunny Delaney

My Personal Review:
Dr Robert D. Ballard seems not to know when to stop - and why should he? We who admire his work and, of course, his books, are much the richer through his sharing of his many adventures with us.
Just as soon as I took delivery of "Return to Midway" I was aware I was holding a 5 Star Book and there was nothing contained within it's 190 pages to make me take away any of those stars. On the contrary, I could so easily have added stars for the factual detail, the readable style of writing, the photography and undoubtedly the artwork. But, in the same way as 5 stars are the most that can be awarded to either a military Generals or an hotel, so 5 stars are the most I could possibly allot to this particular book - and each one is thoroughly well deserved.

As the name suggests, this book is about the author's return to Midway - the scene of one of the fiercest naval battles of WW2. In what has become his customary style, Dr Ballard skilfully takes the reader through his own journey towards his eventual goal whilst giving an accurate account of the Battle of Midway itself. In so doing, he treats us to historic facts, memories from some of those who were there (Americans and Japanese), documents, maps, historic photographs and his own photography which are all combined to produce a story which is as complete as it should be.

The greatest loss on the US side during the battle was the 19,900 ton Aircraft Carrier USS Yorktown - and Ballard's discovery of this wreck almost 3 miles down on the seabed is as great a discovery as either the Titanic or the Bismarck.

Having found this famous and yet elusive ship so deep, the author has again skilfully put together the most complete account of his search, discovery and final success. The various underwater photographs of the ship are then cleverly matched with a description of what the reader is looking at coupled with a photograph of that particular view from when the ship was afloat.

As I have said before when reviewing this man's work; As I know from researching and writing about lesser ships, he really has done the most thorough job of work on all fronts.

Once again, the book's front cover shows the artwork of Ken Marschall. From thousands of photographic images taken far below the surface, montage after montage of the various sections and profiles of the USS Yorktown were created so that Mr Marschall was able to provide us with a number of paintings which are every bit as accurate as a colour photograph.

I congratulate Dr Ballard on yet another excellent and professional job of work. Once again he has succeeded where others only dream.

NM

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Return to Midway by Rick Archbold - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!