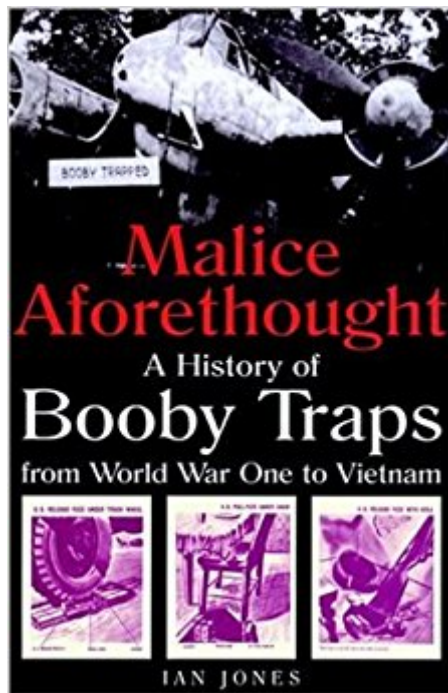




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# Malice Aforethought: The History Of Booby Traps From World War 1 To Vietnam



## Synopsis

In Italy in 1943 British troops came upon a highly desirable billet abandoned by the retreating Germans, its front door invitingly half open. Entering cautiously through a window, to avoid the likely booby trap, they approached the front door from inside and found attached to it the expected explosive charge apparently designed to function when the door was moved. They left the house and attached a line to the doorknob of the front door. They retreated across the road to a conveniently sited slit trench and pulled the line. A second trap hidden in the trench and connected to the door exploded and killed them all. This fiendish and lethal attack illustrates the effectiveness of booby traps and the ingenuity with which they can be laid. A booby trap is any device which is designed, constructed or adapted to kill or injure, and which functions unexpectedly when a person disturbs or approaches an apparently harmless object or performs an apparently safe act. Also included are manually emplaced munitions designed to kill or injure, which are set off by remote control or automatically after a lapse of time. *Malice Aforethought* covers the period from WWI to Vietnam, and examines the malicious use of explosives in booby traps and sabotage devices by all sides during this period. It looks at their design, development, deployment and effectiveness, and is fully illustrated with photographs and illustrations of many of the devices used.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Booby traps have always featured in warfare since time began, but the advent of the first World War brought the skill to new highs and certainly low's. The unlucky, clumsy, fatigued or greedy soldier, is

the greatest asset that an enemy has for these devices. A nice warm dugout with a stove ready to light, but with a length of fuse and a block of explosive up the chimney. A picture hanging at an angle, an invitation to an officer to straighten, with a grenade recessed in the wall behind it. These and many more such devices really started to be used on an organised mass scale with the German retreat of 1917. Even the British dead were used by the hiding of a pull fuse attached to their belt. Other nice touches, like taking the delay component out of a grenades fuse for your enemy to pick up and try to use against you (a practice reborn in Vietnam, where the instantaneous fuse of the M26 'Smoker' was deliberately replaced into another persons 'Frag' Grenade, ensuring instant maiming or death to the user). Another trick the delay fuse, one of which blew up a clock tower 104 hours after the Germans had retreated. The deadly game of booby traps and counter methods, carried on into WWII, where in one Italian town, some 8th Army troops found a nice intact house, but with a wire to the door handle. They tied a string to the door, moved over and took shelter in a convenient slit trench opposite and pulled the string. The door triggered the booby trapped mines hidden under the 'handy' slit trench, result, they all died. Also another driving force behind booby traps was the secret agents needing new and reliable fuses for acts of sabotage, which inspired the 'boffins' inventiveness. Now however as the author points out, that these once purely military tactics of delay and fatiguing your opponents, has found a new use. The deliberate targeting of the civilian population to spread terror and stop people working their land or moving back to their abandoned homes, has in modern times reached new lows. The author stops at Vietnam, because with the current climate of IED's, he never intended to produce a handbook. He does mention that the radical reduction of electronic components size and cost, their improved accuracy, all make modern booby traps much more powerful and intelligent. Also from the Germans research into wood and glass mines, the new generation of plastic mines have become the greatest threat to civilians by their deliberate indiscriminate usage. A very readable book, but you will never be able to leave your house again without being paranoid over every trig, beer can, door handle.

--By S. P. Magnus  
The book is filled with anecdotal booby trap incidents, giving information about a variety of mines and especially explosive booby traps. Beginning with WWI, he covers various types of explosive traps utilized by the retreating German army. The reading can be technically "dry" at times, but the stories of real booby traps and some of the men who set them will certainly get your attention! I only wish there was more detail about Viet Nam era traps and explosive devices.

Recommended reading for anyone who enjoys military literature in any form. --By Steven

Allmonvery informative. I love this book...hard to put it down. I recoomend to anyone interested in this subject matter....I love it. --By johnnie Bell Jr.

Ian Jones has worked in bomb disposal for the last thirty-five years. As a major in the British Army, he served as officer commanding for all bomb disposal in Northern Ireland as well as working in Germany, Bosnia, Belize, Southern Africa, and most recently in Kosovo. He is now an explosives officer for the Metropolitan Police Force Bomb Squad in London.

This book discusses a history of booby traps mostly up to Vietnam. It discusses the psychological advantage of simple tools made to slow down and and disrupt the advance of enemy forces. Some mechanical booby traps used by military and government agencies are discussed but other non-mechanical and much easier made booby traps are examined. IMHO, this is not a book for your teenager but a book for a military historian. Social media can show many of the same traps and their basic design which is highly illegal to use on your property or in your home in every state of our country. Friends of mine in the war were PSYOPS and recommended this book to me. Hope this helps. As always, be safe. JJ

very informative. I love this book...hard to put it down. I recoomend to anyone interested in this subject matter....I love it.

Very well done. I've read hundreds of WWII books from every angle, so it's rare that I truly come across something new and intriguing- and that's what I found in this book. I never knew the massive extent of how large these weapons played a part in land and sea. I never knew it was standard procedure for Wermacht troops to send their Engineers behind them and boobytrap areas upon orders for withdrawal. Short of time and with war materiel dwindling, tactical withdrawals demanded retreating troops stretch their imagination in order to slow down their pursuers and buy some time. And this book shows you both how they set the traps, and how they were discovered and disarmed. I have new respect for the troops who had to learn "on the job". This is a good read, and if you're not careful-- you just may learn something, too.

The book is filled with anecdotal booby trap incidents, giving information about a variety of mines and especially explosive booby traps. Beginning with WWI, he covers various types of explosive traps utilized by the retreating German army. The reading can be technically "dry" at times, but the stories of real booby traps and some of the men who set them will certainly get your attention! I only wish there was more detail about Viet Nam era traps and explosive devices. Recommended reading

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