

BOOK REVIEW

WWII, MINERALOGY AND ME: A MEMOIR by F. Donald Bloss (2012) i-xxvi + 322 pages. \$25.00 paperback. ISBN 978-0-939950-89-8; 0-939950-89-8. Mineralogical Society of America, Chantilly, Virginia.

When this book appeared in the MSA office, where I am the Assistant Editor for *American Mineralogist*, it immediately appealed to me. I have always loved biographies and memoirs, and eventually I volunteered to review the book for *American Mineralogist*. As a memoir, the book didn't let me down. It contains all the elements of a moving life story: humble beginnings, a mischievous childhood, followed by love and life lessons, including heartbreak. Dr. Bloss takes a few paragraphs here and there to set the scene with fascinating historical information and context, interspersed with humorous and authentic stories—there is even some science in the mix. Similarly, he combines quotes from popular music and classic literature. A true Renaissance man, Dr. Bloss demonstrates a healthy appreciation of sports, history, and the arts, along with a brilliant scientific mind.

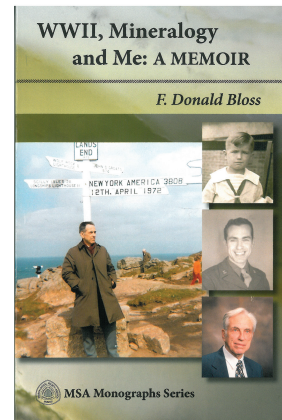
One treat for me as a MSA staffer was reading anecdotal accounts of professors and scientists whose names I recognized, whether from editorial dealings, citations, or previous MSA accolades. It must be an honor to be mentioned in the memoirs of a world-renowned author, researcher, and teacher such as Dr. Bloss. I was surprised to find how many books he had published over the years, including several guides to chess. Obviously, *American Mineralogist* readers will likely know best his optical mineralogy texts.

In this fast-paced modern world, it is a delight to read about life in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Before you begin to long for a simpler time, however, you are thrown into the disruption of war. WWII delayed both Dr. Bloss's undergraduate studies and his marriage; however, if not for the war, he might not have met

the love of his life, and perhaps would not have taken the first step down the path leading to his illustrious career in mineralogy. These are wonderful examples of serendipity.

Dr. Bloss reflects on a great many of these things, often speaking directly to departed friends, in a way that befits a man of his experience. I warn you now, Chapter 27 might make you cry, but it is so well written and soulful it should not be skipped.

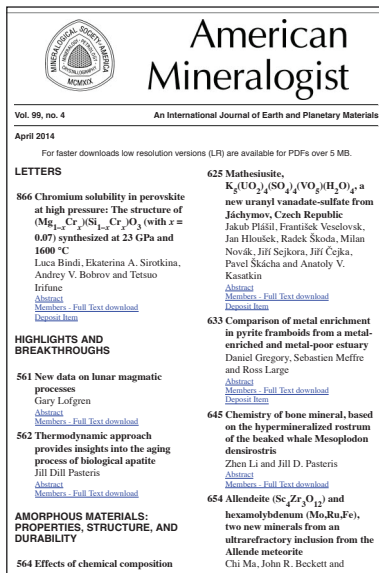
Overall, the book is an easy read and invaluable for the “human” touch it puts on mineralogy and the distinguished c.v. presented by Dr. Bloss. Even if you typically do not read memoirs, I highly recommend this one, especially for scientists and teachers. It puts in high relief what an impact you can have on the lives and careers of your students and colleagues simply by being part of your community. I am grateful that MSA was willing to go a little “outside the box” in publishing this book. I enjoyed the handful of reproduced photographs in the book. They give you a peek at the charming life of Dr. F. Donald Bloss. If anything, the only improvement I would make (other than a little light copyediting, I *am* a proofreader after all), would be to provide a CD of all the wonderful music Dr. Bloss references.



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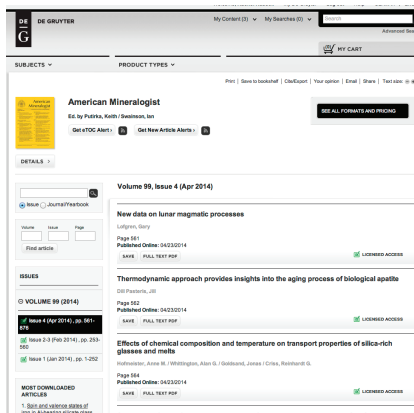
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