



# **Andean Tragedy: Fighting the War of the Pacific, 1879-1884 (Studies in War, Society, and the Militar)**

*William F. Sater Ph.D. MA AB*

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The year 1879 marked the beginning of one of the longest, bloodiest conflicts of nineteenth-century Latin America. The War of the Pacific pitted Peru and Bolivia against Chile in a struggle initiated over a festering border dispute. The conflict saw Chile's and Peru's armored warships vying for control of sea lanes and included one of the first examples of the use of naval torpedoes. On land, large armies using the most modern weapons—breech-loading rifles, Gatling guns, and steel-barreled artillery—clashed in battles that left thousands of men dead on the battlefields. Eventually, the warring parties revamped their respective military establishments, creating much needed, civilian-supported supply, transportation, and medical units. Chile ultimately prevailed. Bolivia lost its seacoast along with valuable nitrate and copper deposits to Chile, and Peru was forced to cede mineral rich Tarapaca and the province of Arica to the victor.

Employing the primary and secondary sources of the countries involved, William F. Sater offers the definitive analysis of the conflict's naval and military campaigns. *Andean Tragedy* not only places the war in a crucial international context, but also explains why this devastating conflict resulted in a Chilean victory.



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