



A Short History of World War II

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Despite the numerous books on World War II, until now there has been no one-volume survey that was both objective and comprehensive. Previous volumes have usually been written from an exclusively British or American point of view, or have ignored the important causes and consequences of the War.

A Short History of World War II is essentially a military history, but it reaches from the peace settlements of World War I to the drastically altered postwar world of the late 1940's. Lucidly written and eminently readable, it is factual and accurate enough to satisfy professional historians. *A Short History of World War II* will appeal equally to the general reader, the veteran who fought in the War, and the student interested in understanding the contemporary political world.

A Short History of World War II Details

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From Reader Review A Short History of World War II for online ebook

Jeff Brateman says

One word, amazing. I loved every part of this book. I don't know why this isn't required reading for high school students. There was way more World history in this book than my entire college World History class.

I am still impressed with the lasting nature of the war on modern international relations. Maybe that's because I am naive, or just plain ignorant. Either way, amazing is still the word I would pick.

Trisher says

IT IS DONE

I HAVE FINALLY FINISHED.

I HAVE BEEN READING THIS SINCE JANUARY.

YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAY

Dave says

A few years ago, I got on a WWII kick and watched Band of Brothers, The Pacific and Saving Private Ryan. After watching those movies, I was really interested in refreshing my factual knowledge of World War II. Many books focus in on specific figures, alliances, battles, etc. Stokesbury takes a different tack, giving a great, broad stroke overview of the incidents leading up to the start of the war and then focuses in on specific figures, the strengths and weaknesses of both the Allies and the Axis powers, and decisive incidents, diplomatic, political and military. The result is a comprehensive, insightful and enjoyable account of one of the most horrific military clashes in history, a war that continues to resonate in American foreign and domestic policy and the world abroad. Highly recommended.

Lara says

This military history is a very informative overview of World War II. My knowledge of World War II has greatly increased after reading this book.

Jean Saba says

A short History of WWII is as the title implies a short book to go around the aspects of World War II along with the major battles and decisions that took place and shaped Europe between 1939-1945 and following 1945 through the Cold War (The Soviet Union's Demands in Europe and the Effect on China in the aftermath of the war).

A fast Read though for the important info of the war.

James says

Hello.

I am the author of the above-listed book on the history of World War Two, here to reveal that 98% of the quotes and anecdotes related in it are totally invented, and also to ask you: Does this matter? To me, probably not--it seems unlikely that anyone responsible for my continued solvency (my publisher; my department's chairman) will come across this, and if they do, I will claim to have had nothing to do with it. I will publicly write it off as slander, probably on the part of a disgruntled former student. I will be lying-- Professor Bradley, if you are reading this: I am about to lie right to your smug little fucking face, and you will have to believe me, because there is no way to prove that I wrote this.

Again: Every war-widow testimonial, every artfully recreated battle scene, every noble-sounding last utterance on the part of some fast-expiring French soldier to be found in the book that you can buy above for \$13.99 is a complete and total lie, bad fiction masquerading as history and seeming all the more real for how hokey and cinematic it all sounds--"cliche is ultimately the truest form of expression" is something you might have written in the margins of this book if you're a pretentious fucking moron, but you're wrong-- cliche is cliche and those fabricated dying words, lost to the sounds of artillery fire, were probably actually "ACHHgurglegurgleFUCKi'mDYingAHCH!"

But to get back to my first question: Does it matter to YOU? Do you read history to receive an accurate, objective retelling of What Happened? To position yourself in time, make sense of a world that you have no way of proving you did not invent? To kill time on the commuter train because it's better than humoring your next-door neighbor, drunk already and eager to show you lurid cell phone photos of his mistress?

I ask because I am curious. I have lied in this, what will probably be my final contribution to the great, futile cause of comprehension, because I no longer have any answers. A life spent trying to understand and artfully depict four years of unprecedented slaughter and my blood cells and only son still rebel, the former multiplying and what's left of the latter rapidly diving itself w/ the assistance of the drugs I was always too busy to experiment with. My wife, a superior student of history in every respect, lies buried among corpses which when animated could not have summarized an article in that very day's paper and still they died the same, maybe happier.

Which is all to say: Five stars. He really makes history come alive.

Jeanne Halloran says

This is a great read. Stokesbury has a creative touch to writing history. I liked all the military statistics for the various theaters and battles. It is very informative. I'm going to read his work on World War I. If you want a good feel for all that occurred during World War II, with an objective perspective, read this.

Kathy says

The perfect book for someone who realizes they don't really know what happened when in World War II. Well-organized, well-written, Stokesbury starts with the background causes and focuses on the basic political and military events of all the theaters of war. If I started my study of WWII over, I would read this first since it's a complete primer on the war. Then I would read the Rise and Fall of the Third Reich and the Churchill series (which I've stopped after two). And if I started this book again, I would get a few good maps to go alongside. He has a few hand-drawn maps of his own but they aren't even indexed in the back.

Nathan Moore says

For those of you who are inclined to overrating, please don't be deterred by my 3 star review (plus, it's more like a 3.5 star review.) Keep in mind that few subjects are as complicated or have had so much ink spilt over as World War II. One of the hardest issues facing a reader is determining which book to read when.

The wide breadth and shallow depth of book suited me quite well due to my embarrassingly poor grasp on the major events of WWII. Prior to this book, my piecemeal understanding of the subject was derived mainly from movies, documentaries, and more recently a few WWII memoirs. Stokesbury paints broadly with a wide brush and offers only modest levels of commentary on major events. Though Stokesbury, as any WWII author must do, was forced to jump from arena to arena and thus time frame to time frame, this book is organized chronologically by arena. I appreciated how the author often gave more attention to the catalysts that sparked individual conflicts than the conflicts themselves. In my judgment, this is critical for one's understanding of a major military conflict.

I did have a few minor disappointments. For those reading the kindle edition, the maps are both scarce and of such poor quality that they prove to be worthless. One must read this book in the company of a good atlas. I used a cheap one: The Historical Atlas of World War II. Also, Stokesbury's prose was a little wooden and clunky at times but still quite readable. My most significant concern about this book was the glaring lack of citations. Though the author provides a 20 page annotated bibliography, he does not use notes. While I concede this may be a necessary byproduct of a "Short History" it is hard to overlook. The author writes as if he is simply recounting a narrative of the war, as if he is a leading authority on the subject. There are a few times where he acknowledges the broader field of literature, but this lands this work squarely into popular history. Students, serious readers, and historians must bear this in mind and look elsewhere for any serious treatment on the issue. I can however, bear with these shortcomings as part of a "short history."

I spent some time in deliberation between this and John Keegan's The Second World War. After reading 50 pages of Keegan, I decided to defer his work till I had a better grasp on the chronology of the war. I feel I chose well. Keegan would be a better choice for beginner/intermediate readers. I will read him in the next 3-5 years.

With all this being said, I do give the book a moderate to high recommendation for anyone looking for a

western overview of the events of the War.

The Truong says

A good summary of WW2

Ann Rufo says

If you enjoy, as I do, World War II books that have a heavy human element, a more psychological discussion of how people live through horrible experiences, triumph in the face of adversity, or on the other side, find themselves committing horrible acts of hatred and violence, this is not the book for you. If however you want to be able to enjoy those books while also having a solid understanding of the nitty gritty facts, maneuvers, chronology and battles of World War II in order to contextualize the more individual-centric stories, this is absolutely the book for you. Having accepted a disappointing lack of knowledge of the politics, strategy and trajectory of World War II (I blame you Catholic school education), I picked up this book and found it to be a thorough and detailed explanation of the key aspects of the war. Though more meticulous students of war theory may take issue with his Stokesbury's interpretation or selection of detail, I found it well written and easily digestible, and exceptionally informative, exactly what I was looking for.

Joe Weathers says

Great overview of World War II.

Gary Gomes says

Wasn't planning on reading this one as I have done plenty of reading on WWII. Additionally I think there are also more hours of documentary time dedicated to it than the war actually lasted. However I had read the same author's Short History of WWI as I had less knowledge on that and found that book to be incredibly complete without providing unnecessary commentary. This book worked the same and I would recommend it as I did the other one as a good historical source if someone is looking for one.

Peter Delorenzo says

If you don't have time to do a lot of research, this is a good overview.

C. M. says

I liked the book (actually read it twice, still miffed that Goodreads won't let me mark that in some way),

although I skimmed through some pages detailing the battles in Asia. Some parts were also difficult to read because of my poor knowledge of African, Asian and even French geography.

The bit about Germans bombing civilian targets in Great Britain first was very interesting to read after recently finishing Ken Follett's *Winter of the Worlds*, where it's mentioned that the British were the first to approve bombing of civilian targets in Germany (I can't find the exact quote). Apparently the topic is still controversial.

Favorite quotes:

"Their problem was the unwillingness of their high command to risk its vessels; ships tend to be expensive prestige items, and navies trying to establish a naval tradition are often reluctant to risk the material, not realizing that the tradition depends less upon the possession of the ships than upon the way they are used—and even the way they are lost. The Italian Navy saved its ships, and lost its soul."

"Where American and British tanks sported names like "Daisy Mae" and "Donald Duck," the Russians carried slogans "For the Motherland!" and "Death to the Germans!""
