



Weird War Two: Strange Facts and Tales from the World's Weirdest Conflict

Richard Denham, M.J. Trow (Introduction)

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Welcome to the wonderfully weird World War Two...

The Second World War was the bloodiest on record. It was the first total war in history when civilians - men, women and children - were on the front line as never before. With so many millions involved, the rumour machine went into overdrive, tall stories built on fear of the unknown. With so much at stake, boffins battled with each other to build ever more bizarre weapons to outgun the enemy. Nazi Germany alone had so many government-orchestrated foibles that they would be funny if they were not so tragic.

Parachuting sheep? Pilot pigeons? Rifles that fire round corners? Men who never were? You will find them all in these pages, the weird, wonderful and barely believable tales from World War Two.

Weird War Two: Strange Facts and Tales from the World's Weirdest Conflict Details

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From Reader Review Weird War Two: Strange Facts and Tales from the World's Weirdest Conflict for online ebook

Joseph says

Weird War 2 by Richard Denham is a look at the odd and experimental plans to gain the upper hand in the war. Aside from the curious, there are also some myths that are straightened out. Denham is the co-author of the popular 'Britannia' series with M. J. Trow. These books follow a group of soldiers and their descendants through the madness of a chain of events which will eventually lead to the fall of Roman Britain and the descent into the Dark Ages.

World War II was a conflict that killed well over 50 million people directly and many millions indirectly through displacement and famine. It is not a war that is associated with humor, but in hindsight, several programs that were taken seriously are now seen as almost comical. From sheep and cat bombs to antitank dogs there were a number of weaponized animal programs that failed miserably. There are also stories of actual products and event of the war from Fanta to Marines (not soldiers) raising the flag on Iwo Jima that are separated from their mythical in their origins. Other stories reflect heroes like the Navajo Code Talkers whose talk could not be decoded by the enemy and the allies own code breaker who was later charged as a homosexual.

Denham leads the reader through an improbable collection of stories and facts from World War II. Each item is only a page or two but provides enough information to explain the event or project. Are the stories true? There does seem to be enough supporting evidence although none of the stories are cited as the author claims there is still some disagreement among historians. Several of the stories I have had heard of before in my reading and history classes. Some, however, are very new to me. A fun look at out of the box thinking that accompanied WWII and the desire for a technological edge.

Bandit says

World War II has long held a morbid sort of fascination for me. And why I attempt to explain this fascination I come up with something like...it is the perfect microcosm of good and evil from the recent past. It's a time that's produced some of the most compelling dramatic works of historical fiction, but also giving credence to the maxim, when it comes to WWII the truth has always been stranger than fiction. This is a collection of such truths (strange, bizarre and credulity stretching as they are), presented and told with an anecdote like quality. The author deliberately threads lightly in some very dark territories, making this a relatively easy read despite the heavy subject matter. It's prefaced by M.J. Trow's succinct account of WWII summary to provide readers less familiar with the war a basic outline. I've read a lot on the subject and have watched tons of educational programs, so many of these stories were familiar, but there were still some interesting new things. The volume is slim and each story is only a few pages, it's probably made for dipping in and out off, not plowing through the entire thing in two sittings, but it's easy to get through either way and informational in an entertaining manner. The version from Netgalley had some typos, nothing too distracting, presumably this'll be taken care off for the final publication. Fans of historical nonfiction angling toward brevity should enjoy this one. Thanks Netgalley.

Nicky says

This was a fun and informative read. I enjoy the author's ability to switch between admiring, disgusted and funny depending on the subject. Some of the facts and stories are so crazy they are almost unbelievable but they did happen. Things such as the mystery board game, the leningrad orchestra, cryptic cross word and the saint of auschwitz are even slightly spooky. A good punchy book.

Sumit RK says

There are many books about the World War II but *Weird War 2* attempts something different. It's a collection of weird facts, myths ; some known & some unknown, some amusing and disturbing, all from the World War II. It also has some interesting yet forgotten stories. At the very outset, the writer is honest to admit that not all the stories may be real and many don't have any reference or source to back them. Having said that, it still is a very entertaining read.

This book can be broadly divided into different parts viz;

. **Weird Facts:** The Battle of LA (did the Japanese raid LA?), Allies & Germans fighting together, Hitler almost dying in WWI, Ghost Armies and various high profile disappearances & conspiracies.

• **Nazi & Allied Super-weapons, Myths & Rumors:** From V1 & V2 rockets to Ice ships, From anti tank Dog (which incidentally killed more dog trainers than enemies), Bat Bombs & Bat Soldiers, Search for Atlantis & weird Nazi experiments

But the highlight of the book for me were **the stories about the bravery, sacrifice and kindness** of some individuals, amidst the destruction of the war. Some of them like, A Japanese navy pilot who regretted bombing a US town, the story of **The Stalingrad Symphony**: holding of a musical performance in Stalingrad at the height of the Nazi siege, **the Bride of Belsen, The Kindertransport project**, the German priest who saved thousands of Jewish lives or the Russian female sniper were truly memorable. These are the stories that restore your faith in humanity and will stay with you long after you have read the book.

Each topic has a brief summary and the stories are short but well detailed . Overall this book is a superb collection of interesting facts & myths and if you are history buff you will find this entertaining & exciting to read.

Thank you NetGalley and Thistle Publishing for the ARC.

George (BuriedInBooks) says

Weird war two is full of interesting and intriguing facts that even the most the most well researched historian may not know.

I like the way humour is worked into the book to take a edge off the darker stories. My favourite story is

about a cat called Sam which survived three shipwrecks!

The formatting on kindle is good which is how I read this book. I also like the cover and just that the book is so interesting and entertaining.

Peter says

Peculiar

Weird War 2 is a collection of totally disparate facts from World War II that range from horrific to humorous, and from recognisable to strange. Most are aimed at being at least slightly weird, and it does reinforce the saying that “truth is stranger than fiction”. The stories cover all regions of conflict in WWII, including the Western front, the Eastern front, North Africa and the Pacific.

It is remarkable how creative and innovative we become during times of war and how technology advances made during WWI and WWII haven't happened at the same pace since. The slant of this book is that not all creative solutions were grounded in common sense. For example, tank dogs left with a payload of explosives to run under an enemy tank and explode, but most returned to their owners killing more of them than the enemy. There were also plans to use cats, bats, rats and pigeons, and of course, there are always those myths around the Nazi gold, the supernatural, the occult and Sci-Fi advances.

One of the most touching stories is when a young British soldier Norman Turgel who was one of the first to enter the Bergen Belsen concentration camp and when he came across a young woman Gena, starving and in rags, he proclaimed that “*This is the girl I'm going to marry*”. They did marry and had a happy life together with 3 children. She became known as the Bride of Belsen.

All the facts are coded with exclamation marks ranging from ! to !!!, which is an indication of how weird the fact is. !!! being the weirdest. What I found was that it is a useful book to read for a bit of fun but only for short spells. Reading it in a continuous flow, with such diverse information, made it distracting for me. It's like a lot of encyclopaedic reference books, they are great and interesting to delve into for short periods, but not as a read-through.

If you love titbits of information you'll love this book. My son loves to challenge me with little snippets of information. I have my revenge.

Many thanks to Thistle Publishing Limited and NetGalley for an ARC version of the book in return for an honest review.

Paromjit says

This is a short book with a wide range of diverse facts/stories from WW2 and the many participants in the conflict, and whilst so much is tragic, the main thrust here is to try and concentrate on the strange, weird, and often comic aspects that occurred. Denham admits that not all facts in the war are certain, whilst some facts are not what actually happened but what was reported to be so. Any war, and WW2 is no different, is a scenario where rumours proliferate, and as such were often used as a strategic tool as part of the war effort. For readers that are not familiar with the key pre-war and during WW2 events, a concise summary is

provided by the author as a guide.

The elements of the book that made the most impression on me were those involving the use of animals. Animal lovers will be appalled at the deployment of antitank dogs, something that was particularly popular with the Russians who continued with the practice long after the end of the war. There were crazy ideas put forward like that by an American dentist of bat bombs, that were thankfully discarded, as indeed were cat bombs, explosive rats and more. One of the most helpful illusions that many will already be aware of is the American use of Ghost Armies, techniques and tactics used to give the impression to the Germans that huge numbers were being deployed as in the preparation for D-Day. This is an interesting book likely to appeal to history buffs, those with a special interest in WW2 and or those just drawn to the odd and the strange features of the war. Many thanks to Thistle Publishing for an ARC.

Paul Falk says

The signing of the Treaty of Versailles signaled the end of World War 1. In part, it stipulated that Germany pay reparations of 3.5 billion dollars which would in today's economy be somewhere in the neighborhood of 46 billion dollars. It was never paid.

Some twenty years later, Germany reclaimed some of its land lost through the ravages of war. And if that's not enough, the warring country began to build armaments once again; it knew not peace. To the amazement of the world, the battle-prone country was beginning to flex its military muscles once again. Fool me twice...

Finally, In September, 1939, Germany boldly invaded Poland. The world was in shock. In retaliation, Britain and France declared war on the invader. Notice had been served. It marked the beginning of World War II.

By May, 1941, blanket bombing had been responsible for the senseless death of 40,000 British civilians. Over a million homes were in ruins. Six million people had been exterminated in death camps the likes of Auschwitz, Dachau and Treblinka. At the hands of the merciless Japanese, thousands of British POWs died while building the Burma Railway. To cap it all off, the first use of a nuclear weapon on a civilian population ended the lives of tens of thousands of Japanese bringing the war to a tumultuous end.

Those were all some of the worst, most memorable tragedies that will live on in our minds and hearts for eternity. Out from the rubble of this nightmare, however, arose some of the weirdest, yet, interesting events that never made it into the history books.

In a well-written narrative, Richard Denham brings to light an overflowing assortment of the strangest occurrences to address the war such as: anti-tank dogs, balloon bombs and pigeon missiles, just to name a few. The author revealed countless uncanny events that could best be described as *bizarre*. This flip side of the war proved to be entertaining.

Contained in this book are a multitude of episodes that just seem too unbelievable to be true, in many cases, absurd would better describe it. If you have an unspoken desire to learn about the uncanny and curious events that baffled the world during World War II, then this is the book for you.

I offer my gratitude to NetGalley and Thistle Publishing for this ARC in exchange for an unbiased review.

Rianna (RiannaBlok) says

2/52 books read in 2019.

Weird War Two is a collection of anecdotes about the Second World War. They are sorted in alphabetical order and above each story you can find a representation of the weirdness factor, from one to three exclamation points.

Personally, I would have sorted the stories by this weirdness factor; ending the book with the most bizarre story the writer could find, but this was a pleasant way to read them and it will be easy to find a specific story when you want or need to.

History is a subject that I have always enjoyed, so this was right up my alley. Most of the stories were new to me and they all highlighted how we, as people living in a peaceful time, have no clue what living during a war and surviving during a war entails.

I especially liked the stories about deception. Trying to deceive your enemies seems like a difficult task, but some people clearly succeeded and had some spectacular stories to tell afterwards.

Whispering Stories says

I review books for the Historical Novel Society and I've noticed lately that there are an awful lot of novels coming out about World War II. It is doubtful, though, if most of them have plots nearly as fantastical as many of the true stories of the war.

Weird War 2 is a collection of strange stories about the Nazi party and the war the Nazis brought about. It is no academic study; there is no bibliography or footnotes and undisputed facts appear alongside conjecture and one or two tales that are admitted to be almost certainly false. Even so, my own knowledge of the history of the war suggests that most of the tales are accurate and some of them debunked stories I had always believed to be true but which turn out to have been exaggerations or propaganda. As a source of fascinating facts for the non-specialist, this book is brilliant.

Weird War 2 does rather pander to the modern taste for factoids. Each 'chapter' is one story, event, or theme from the war, each given just a page or two. They are arranged in alphabetical order of title, but as the titles are fairly arbitrary ('The Horizontal Collaborators' for a piece on the treatment of women in the occupied territories who had taken German lovers; 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!' about the Nazi apologist Lord Rothermere) the result is a random selection of 'Things you never knew about the War'. (There is a brief but incisive historical introduction for those who aren't sure what the whole thing was about.) With no index, this will never be a useful work of reference but, for anyone planning World War 2 as their specialist subject in a pub quiz, it's invaluable.

The format means that significant (and often tragic) items are juxtaposed with the trivial, the farcical and the downright hilarious. An item on the treatment of Black US soldiers by their own Army (scandalous), is followed by a very short item on Hitler's 'Night and Fog' decree, 'vanishing' dissidents (horrific) and then a discussion of the Nazi campaign against smoking, which linked smoking and cancer and was remarkably effective over three decades before the Allies belatedly recognised the dangers of the weed.

There are stories about heroic martyrs in the concentration camps and plans to use pigeons to operate guided

missiles. Some of the stories seem quite mad but are definitely true: I've heard the one about the Allied plan to build aircraft carriers out of ice before and construction was actually started. They'd probably have worked but (as this book fails to mention) their main value would have been to support the D Day landings and they weren't ready in time.

I found this an ideal book to pick up and read for a few minutes before getting on with something more serious. Those few minutes tended to stretch much longer than intended, though. It's easy to decide to read 'just one more' Richard Denham has an engaging style and a light touch for covering what are often very serious historical details.

Reviewed by guest Reviewer, Author Tom Williams at www.whisperingstories.com

Gram says

A fascinating collection of World War II historical facts & fictions laced with examples of propaganda and outright lies. Students of the Second World War will recognise some of these brief stories but nonetheless there will be scores of others which are new to many.

There are tales of super weapons which, thankfully, were never made, the use of birds, bats, cats, dogs and other animals as weapons or mascots, strange plans which failed to get beyond the drawing board and spy stories mixed with some of the more disturbing events on World War II, such as the Japanese Army's use of "comfort women" from the female populations of Korea and China (a fact that the Japanese Government still denied in the 21st Century) and the horrific experiments carried out by German and Japanese military.

However, most of these very brief stories (most of them only a few paragraphs long) are very entertaining and some of them will even make the reader smile. This book also proves that "fake news" is nothing new and that "In war, truth is the first casualty."

BAM The Bibliomaniac says

Netgalley #75

Many thanks go to Richard Denham, Thistle, and Netgalley for the free copy of this book in exchange for my unbiased review.

This was certainly a unique twist to a fact based WWII account. All major movers have tales to tell-Axis and Ally. Many of them seem way too kooky to really be true; some are awe inspiring. How he dug up these little tidbits I'll never understand; that would have been nice to know. I think I would have liked it if they would have been organized somehow too. But this was a quick read and good for that rare trivia fact to pull out at a party.

Susan says

Arc provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!

This is not an academic study; there is no bibliography or footnotes. The author himself states that there will be no reference to historical sources. Nevertheless, I really enjoyed it. World War Two is such a heavy topic, we have a war that took nearly 50 million lives (civilian and military), cause so much heartache, destruction and really showed the worst of humanity.

With so many millions involved, the rumour machine went into overdrive, tall stories built on fear of the unknown. It's full of strange anecdotes and facts that keep you reading onto the next one. Parachuting Sheep? Pilot Pigeons? Rifles that fire round corners? Men who never were? You will find them all here, the weird, wonderful and barely believable of World War Two.

I really enjoyed it and I think any history buff would find this a thrilling read as I did!

3.5 stars

Roopkumar Balachandran says

The war, though we dislike it quite a bit, is sometimes laughable, you must admit – A.P.Herbert Badoglovski.

I like to thank Thistle publishing for sending me a copy of Weird War 2 for reading and review. The book is around 166 pages and can be read in one day but reading a chapter a day is best method to remember most of the known and unknown events presented in the book.

The author Richard Denham in the start has provided a concise summary of pre war and World War 2 events which will familiarize the reader.

As I said earlier there are many events which will escape from our memory. Below are some from my memory.

The author mentions about the superweapons used by Nazi's V1 (cruise missile) and V2 (worlds first long range guided ballistic missile)

The Weird War 2 book does not have only the gory and humorous side of war but also a heart touching story, chapter on Bride of Belsen, a British soldier during the end of the war entered the concentration camp in Bergen Belsen and he came across a skeletal woman named Gena, he told to himself that this is the girl he is going to marry. Later that soldier married her and they lived happily with three children. Gena is known as the Bride of Belsen.

A soldier who had the opportunity to kill Hitler in World War I and he did not pull the trigger as he felt pity on seeing the condition of injured Hitler. Later he regretted.

The humorous side of the book, Russians plan of using dogs to destroy the German tanks. The dogs fitted with explosives were sent to blow up, instead most of the dogs returned to the owner thereby killing the soldiers. An US invention of Bat bombs which did not go well according to the plan. Ghost armies, creating an illusion of assembling of armies with mock tanks and other arsenals to deceive Germany.

A weird fact that Tsutomu Yamaguchi is the only person acknowledged by the Japanese government to have survived the nightmare of the atomic blasts of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And a Japanese soldier who did not know that the war has ended still fought the US for a decade and surrendered.

Another unknown event is after Germany surrendered, the allies and the Germans fought together to capture one castle.

A good book for world war II buffs, to gain more info it is advisable to re-read the book.

With images and more of the review click the link below.

<http://www.chromaring.com/2018/10/wei...>

Richard says

One of those books filled with zany facts and weird stories around the build up to and duration of World War II.

A wonderful introduction set it all in context so that the light humorous tales don't diminish the horrors of this time of conflict and unimaginable deaths.

Some interesting subjects are covered and wider reading prior to this and items seen on TV are familiar. Most are crazy and incredible but demonstrate that sometimes only with the distance of time can they be understood.

I liked the speculation about why the public were allowed to or led to believe misleading information. At a time when much could be controlled the control of facts are fiction was vital for the war effort.

There is something for everyone here from the last Japanese soldier to surrender to the use of animals to gain an advantage.

Each subject has a brief summary and explanation under a title. Each title is presented in alphabetical order. In passing it speaks clearly about Fascism being a strong factor in anti-Communist alliances and the reality of such views in Great Britain at the time of Hitler's rise to power. It also has themes of appeasement and that America coming to our aid not a given.

I was also angered that our war debt to America was not repaid until long after the war ended.

Perhaps not a book to be read in one sitting but coffee table book to dip into; certainly an alternative to nothing on the box. The subjects here could raise some interesting conversations like Henry Ford was a fan of Mr Hitler - discuss!

Plenty here to relax you and get your brain going. From the role of secret weapons to spies.

A good addition to the stranger facts around this period, in comic tones but never belittling the sacrifice, loss or terrible events at this time.
