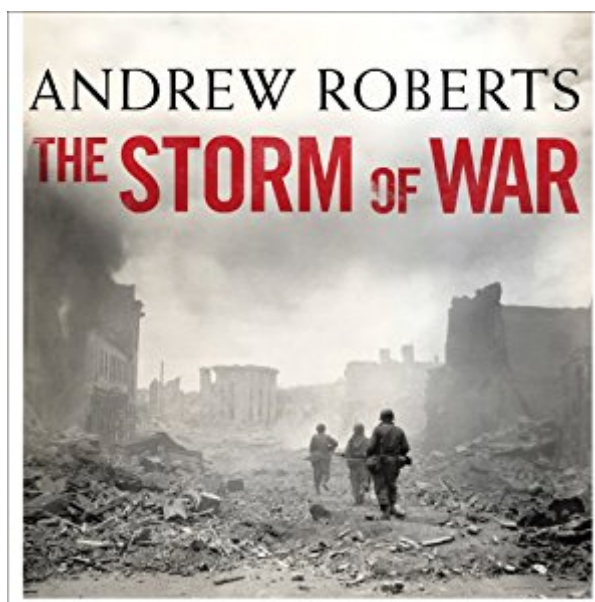


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The Storm Of War: A New History Of The Second World War



Synopsis

The Second World War lasted for 2,174 days, cost \$1.5 trillion, and claimed the lives of more than 50 million people. What were the factors that affected the war's outcome? Why did the Axis lose? And could they, with a different strategy, have won? Andrew Roberts' acclaimed new history has been hailed as the finest single-volume account of this epic conflict. From the western front to North Africa, from the Baltic to the Far East, he tells the story of the war - the grand strategy and the individual experience, the cruelty and the heroism - as never before. In researching this magnificently vivid history, Roberts walked many of the key battlefields and wartimes sites in Russia, France, Italy, Germany, and the Far East, and drew on a number of never-before-published documents, such as a letter from Hitler's director of military operations explaining the reasoning behind the Fuhrer's order to halt the Panzers outside Dunkirk - a delay that enabled British forces to evacuate. Roberts illuminates the principal actors on both sides and analyzes how they reached critical decisions. He also presents the tales of many little-known individuals whose experiences form a panoply of the extraordinary courage and self-sacrifice, as well as the terrible depravity and cruelty, of the Second World War. Meticulously researched and masterfully written, *The Storm of War* gives a dramatic account of this momentous event and shows in remarkable detail why the war took the course it did.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the first one-volume history of World War II that I'd really place in a category of reevaluation by an author who views the war from a comfortable distance in time, but then I'm not expert, not even, really, an amateur aficionado even though I've read a lot about the war, including biographies

of the personalities and memoirs by the participants. Roberts' thesis is that the Allies did not so much win the war as Hitler lost it, in large part by making independent judgments based on intuition and ideology. He was not a military strategist and didn't trust anyone who was. The smarter his generals, the more likely he was to fire them, as he did von Rundstedt and Guderian more than once, or ignore them when he didn't like their advice as he often did von Manstein who was maybe his best strategist. According to Roberts, Hitler's biggest misjudgment was invading Russia in June of 1941 thereby forcing Germany to fight thereafter on two fronts. He had already made a major error in not pursuing the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) who made the historic evacuation from Dunkirk--which the German army could have prevented had Hitler not called them off. He had not invaded England, having lost the air war of 1940 (The Battle of Britain). He had not beefed up his Navy--especially the submarines which tied up Atlantic shipping until 1943 but thereafter hadn't the wherewithal (submarines mainly) to continue--or his Air Force whose fighter planes were clearly inferior to Britain's. (He didn't halt airplane design or manufacturing but did force a new fighter to be made into a bomber which left him vulnerable in Russia.) He left all that hanging and went after the USSR, seeking "lebensraum" for the German people and success where Napoleon had failed.

Although my comments on "The Storm of War" will be mostly critical, I must note that I am familiar with the author's previous books, have heard a number of interviews with Mr. Roberts, and firmly believe he possesses the intellect, diligence, writing skill and flair of a first-rate historian. The field of modern history is much richer for historians of his quality and I am grateful for his contributions. The proof lies in the corpus of his work. This book is a Euro-centric history of the war by design and I notice that many of the other reviewers overlooked that point. However, while "The Storm of War" is a good and interesting read it is quite marginal on its major promise: to analyze the decision points and alternate courses of the war (p.11). On this goal the relevant sections run the gamut from mostly casual to almost superficial. I will elaborate my point by describing a few of the more tendentious passages in the book, how Mr. Roberts dealt with them, and how he might have made them better. "If, on coming to power in 1933, Hitler had developed long-range heavy bombers, built more fighters than he did and trained the Wehrmacht for amphibious operations; if he had not dissipated his naval forces by invading Norway; and if he had attacked much earlier to give himself months of better weather in the Channel, then the always risky Sealion would have stood far greater chance of success. If he had landed large numbers of well-supplied paratroopers on the major British airfields of southern England during the opening stages of the battle of Britain, though such an operation would undoubtedly have been risky, it might have paid off.

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