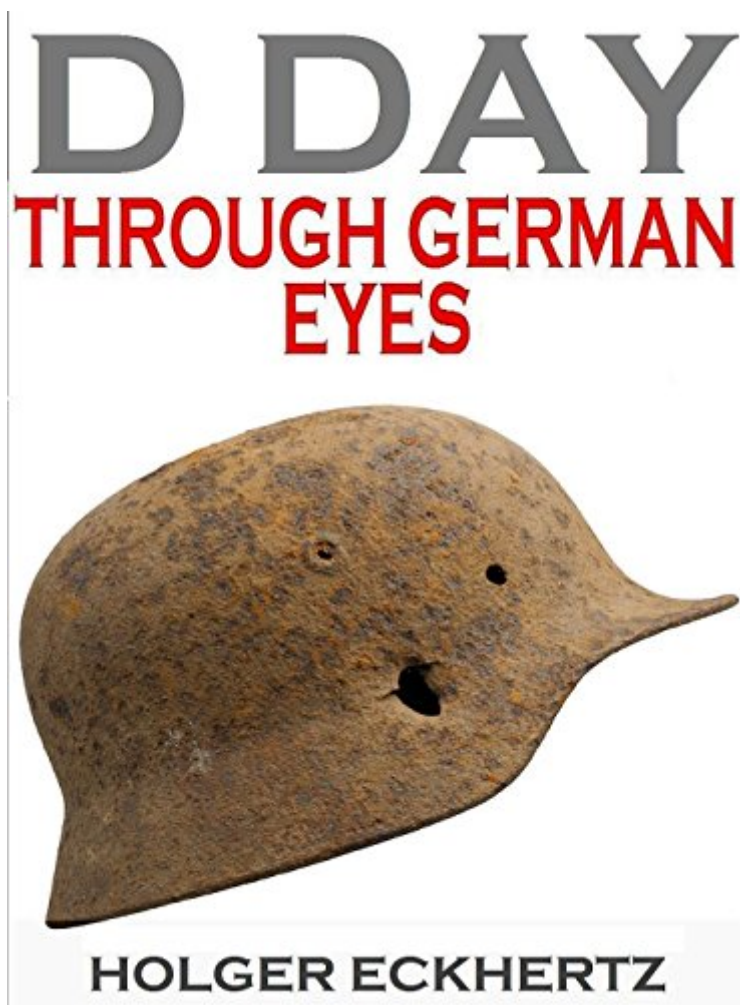


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D DAY Through German Eyes - The Hidden Story Of June 6th 1944



Synopsis

This is the hidden side of D Day which has fascinated readers around the world. Almost all accounts of D Day are told from the Allied perspective, with the emphasis on how German resistance was overcome on June 6th 1944. But what was it like to be a German soldier in the bunkers and gun emplacements of the Normandy coast, facing the onslaught of the mightiest seaborne invasion in history? What motivated the German defenders, what were their thought processes - and how did they fight from one strong point to another, among the dunes and fields, on that first cataclysmic day? What were their experiences on facing the tanks, the flamethrowers and the devastating air superiority of the Allies? This book sheds fascinating light on these questions, bringing together statements made by German survivors after the war, when time had allowed them to reflect on their state of mind, their actions and their choices of June 6th. We see a perspective of D Day which deserves to be added to the historical record, in which ordinary German troops struggled to make sense of the onslaught that was facing them, and emerged stunned at the weaponry and sheer determination of the Allied soldiers. We see, too, how the Germans fought in the great coastal bunkers, perceived as impregnable fortresses, but in reality often becoming tombs for their crews. Above all, we now have the unheard human voices of the individual German soldiers - the men who are so often portrayed as a faceless mass.

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Customer Reviews

And then began the battleship bombardment, shells large enough to see coming in, that leave their bunkers cracked and broken and men deaf and bleeding from the eyes. When allied numbers overwhelm it becomes hand to hand for survival. All believe reinforcements are imminent and that few prisoners would be taken. Another soldier in a guard position away from the beach realizes an attack is on when in the night his partner is killed paratroopers. A third soldier survives a tank flamethrower attack on his bunker. The author interviewed men at all 5 beaches prior to the invasion. He finds survivors and interviews them when they are about 30 years old, the memories are horrible in their detail. Each beach is a chapter. Many of the soldiers serve here as a result of wounds in Russia or infirm conditions like asthma. After regaining consciousness later in the morning, one soldier finds himself in a wire enclosure with fellow Germans being treated by an allied medic. In low whispers the prisoners discuss the beach spectacle. "Defective equipment is pushed aside with no attempt at repairs. Where are the horses? Can fuel be so plentiful that there is no need for horses? If that is so, our war is lost."

Wow. My best vacation read this year. Highest recommendations.

As a longtime travel journalist, and someone who was born in London back in the days when Great Britain was fighting for her life (WW2!) and because I've always been, well, "mesmerized" by various aspects of the Nazi "military machine," I found this unique, intriguing, fascinating book totally awesome. I have countless books about WW2, and almost 98% of them are written from the British, American and Canadian point of view. Few are written about the German/Nazi view. To have a book like this in one's collection is a goldmine. The fact that these ARE first hand, unvarnished words from soldiers who were ACTUALLY there, is priceless. A cliché phrase for sure, but this riveting book is a "page turner." I read it cover to cover in 3 days. As it encompasses mostly the events in Normandy, it was for me as mesmerizing as a flickering neon sign, because as a journalist I've been to Normandy 5 times. There's another aspect to this brilliant book that makes it even more compelling - the words and thoughts comes from military men TEN years AFTER the event. Why is that important? Well, it gives the person relating his experiences, 10 years to think about and in

many cases VIVIDLY remember, how awful, terrible and beyond comprehension, the fight was. How "mentally disturbing" it is to come face-to-face with the enemy, and know it is either you or him. Even if you are not interested in WW2, and even if you don't like the German military of that era, this is still a "Must Buy" book as it provides an absolutely fascinating insight into how human beings face being in combat. I wish there were many more books like this. My photo shows French schoolchildren visiting the famous Pointe du Hoc - June, 2004

I'm not a big history buff but so much of understanding something about combat has to do with getting to see things through the eyes of those actually doing the fighting. Man to man, face to face. I've never seen much from the German soldier point of view. I had never heard that the German soldier's motivation came from the idea that they were defending the "united Europe" from the forces of communism and industrialization. They saw the Allies as invaders and the next invasion if they were not successful in throwing back the allied invaders from the beaches of Normandy was Germany itself. Soldiers needed motivation and it seems that German soldiers were provided with that sort of motivation. It seems sort of a spurious motivation in retrospect but it does demonstrate that perspective has much to tell us about history. I also came away from the reading with a sense that these German soldiers were indeed honourable men in a very bad situation. They fought out of duty and survival and the loyalty they had for one another not unlike every soldier called to such duty. Good book.

This exceptional book is one that should not be missed. It is the recollections, many years after D-Day, of a few of the German soldiers who manned the defensive positions above the beaches that were the focus of the D Day invasion. Unusual among war books, it is the tale of the losers in this battle. Several of them recall a sudden awareness that they were going to lose--both this battle, and the war.. But they had no alternative other than to fight. Some, while looking for a chance to surrender; others, while risking all to validate the fighting they had endured before this fateful event. Not surprisingly, different men had , or at least now think they had, different reactions to the enormity of the catastrophe all of them saw impending. One of the former soldiers realized that not only the battle, but whole war, was going to be lost; and that Germany's decision to declare war on the U.S. was a massive mistake, given the industrial might of the U.S. A quite similar epiphany came to Wolfgang Faust, author of the related tales of German tank forces on the Eastern front, as his panzer divisions, running short on munitions and fuel, were chased from Russia, desperately seeking to get to the Elbe so they could surrender to the Americans. Which leads one to wonder if

the U.S. would have declared war on Germany had Hitler not elected to declare war on the U.S. The U. S. declared War on Japan on December 8. It was not until several days later after Germany declared war on the U.S., that our Congress declared war on Germany. There appear to have been good reasons for Hitler's having been but a corporal during World War I.

It is a insightful and yet pertinent collection of tales, giving understanding to then an enemy of the time period. To bring collective information of all they did, gave, and dutiful died in a belief that all living man and all who have something worth dying for will always meet the counter force in war with nothing but sheer bravery and self sacrifice .

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