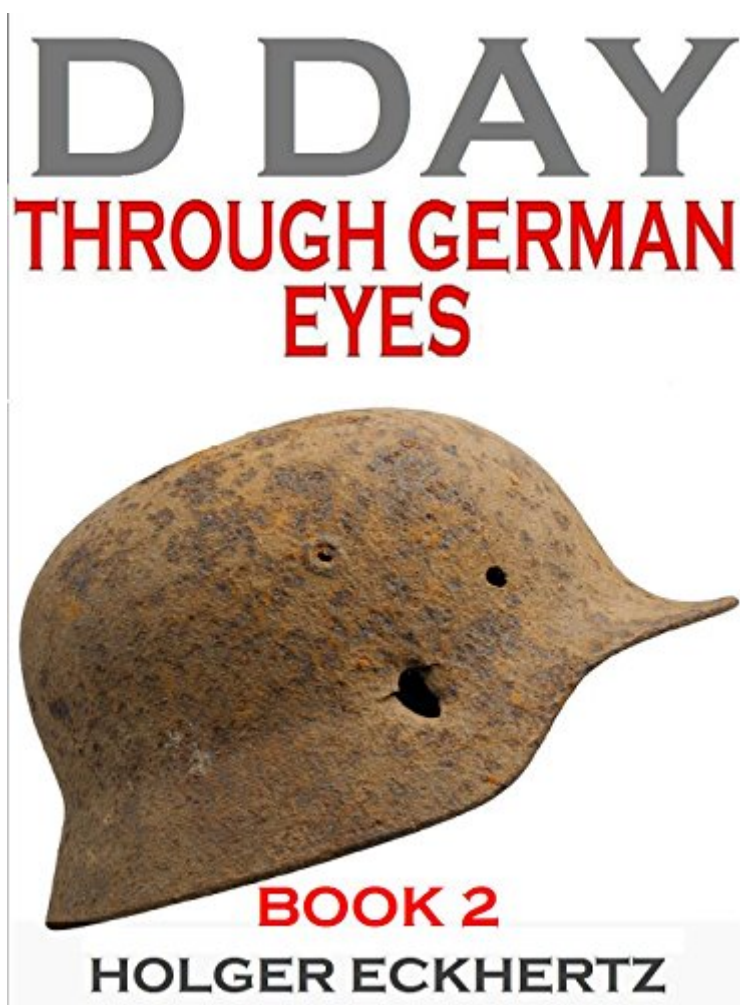


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D DAY Through German Eyes - Book 2 - More Hidden Stories From June 6th 1944



Synopsis

The first book of *“D DAY Through German Eyes”* fascinated readers around the world with its insight into the German experience of June 6th 1944. Now, Book Two contains a completely different set of astonishing German testimonies from the same archive. These newly translated eyewitness statements by German veterans show the defenders to be determined but psychologically insecure, often deluded in their thinking and all too human in their shock at the onslaught which they faced. These unique interviews with German soldiers are a historical treasure trove of new insights, heart-stopping combat stories and glimpses of wartime psychology which will absorb anyone with an interest in WW2. I am astonished by the immediacy of these new translations from the archive, and I believe that readers will find these accounts, if anything, even more compelling than the first book. These statements reveal the ambiguous relationships which the German soldiers had with French civilians, especially women, and the way these relationships were destroyed on D Day itself. There are accounts from a Luftwaffe pilot who was one of the first to witness the Allied armada from the air, and stories from foot soldiers, military police and panzer crews who fought desperately to hold back the beach landings and airborne assaults. The disturbing motivations of the German troops – political, personal and even religious – are presented with an honesty which sheds a radical new light on why the Germans fought so bitterly, so viciously, to keep control of what they perceived to be ‘their’ precious France. • Holger Eckhertz, archive holder.

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Customer Reviews

I read Eckherz's book 1 D-Day Through German eyes and wanted to read the rest of the interviews his father had with the German veterans who fought at D-Day in Normandy. I was looking forward to more insight in book 2. Eckhertz did not disappoint me. It is said the the victors write the history as well as get the spoils. The German soldier's perspective is one that most of us have not heard (even from our father's who fought in Europe in the WW2) in the United States. To read about a "unified Europe" and how the French interacted with their German Occupiers was eye opening. Most of these soldiers thought they were being patriotic and doing their duty. I should add there were no interviews with former SS. The interviews were done approximately 10 years after the D-Day invasion, so the memories for these German Veterans was still very fresh plus they now had the full picture of what their country's goals were during the war and were aware of . Many of these veterans had bought Hitler's & Goebbles' propaganda thoroughly and reflected back a bit of remorse. Ultimately they felt they had a job to do as any soldier and wanted to do their best. There was a lot of irony as many of these veterans expressed surprise at how vicious the Allies could be especially as they were from civilized countries. These are great interviews to gain insight and perspective from the German soldier's point of view. Eckhertz did not try to re-write history or make excuses with these interviews.

Through interviews taken ten years after, German survivors of the D Day "attack" describe their experiences during and after D Day, June 6, 1944 as the Allies massed their forces across the English Channel for the landing on five specific beaches in Normandy, France. I was struck by the common view of the German soldiers that they were protecting a "united Europe" and the the Allies were the invaders, The Germans saw themselves as the saviors of Europe. Each soldier's story is unique, from a machine gunner in a "Tobruk-style" bunker to the developer of a "mega weapon" that never got used in combat. I was fascinated by these stories for their poignancy, honesty, vividness, and their perspective. This second book of two goes deeper into the defending troop lines than the first book, which reports the view of one soldier at each of the five beaches designated by the allies. Here in Book 2, for example, we learn of the Luftwaffe pilot who is tasked to fly quickly out to

observe what is actually happening in the Channel and fly directly back to report. He had no communications with the ground, and the Allies controlled the air, so his mission was extremely risky but vital to the German command. Book 1 and Book 2 are each fairly brief, and I see them as two parts of the same story.

This is a good follow-up to supplement Book 1. It probably should have been combined with Book 1 and published in a single volume, but there were apparently political implications which needed to be considered. Like Book 1, it primarily consists of interviews of German survivors of the Anglo-American D-Day invasion of Normandy. It gives information about which most citizens of the Western powers have not been aware. Particularly interesting in this volume are the descriptions of the relationship of some German soldiers and French civilians prior to the invasion.

As a casual reader on the topic of the Normandy invasions by the Allies in World War 2, I have read several books on the topic. This one, for the first time, has illustres quite vividly the German soldiers' first-hand perspective and taught me several aspects of the combat, organization, and strategy that I was not fully aware of. The stories are compelling, the action is horrific and nearly unbelievable, and the first person accounts of the overwhelming power, brutality, and sheer audacity of the landings can be comprehended from a totally different perspective. Both of the volumes are great reads!

The German view us too often overlooked. To often the accounts I have read of D-Day makes it sound like every German soldier that was present was Warden SS. Instead in thus volume more information is given about the relationship between the local French and the German soldier's. Also accounted from people who helped plan the defense's. It was refreshing to hear that the original plan had been to have defense in depth. Also one of the officer's tells of his involvement with a wonder weapon that had IIT exploded it could have changed the outcome.

If you enjoy WWII history, you will want to read this series. Entirely based on interviews with German veterans in the mid-50s, and published by the interviewer's son. Aside from the unique experiences of each individual, you also receive insight into what they were thinking and how they justified their nation's aggression. As much as I have read, I still learned a lot of things about weapons, personal actions, tactics and what it was like to experience the Allied onslaught on "Fortress Europe."

Just as good as the first. I'm glad he captured the thoughts and feelings of the German soldiers on that day, and a lot of their feelings as time went on. It really hit me hard, as the war stories are very vivid, translated beautifully and made me think about war and how it affects the soldier. I was a history major, and wrote several papers on the political aspects of the world wars, so it was very fulfilling for me to read these stories and get a more informed understanding.

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