



# The Oxford Companion to World War II

From Oxford University Press

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*'The Oxford Companion to the Second World War, by virtue of its scale, its range and its scholarship, is an outstanding guide, as sensible and cogent on the big questions as it is instructive and informed on the lesser ones.'*

HEW STRACHAN, *TLS*

*'indispensable...unlikely to be superseded this century'*

JOHN KEEGAN, *Daily Telegraph*

*'easy to use, solid of fact, perceptive and judicious'*

JOHN ERICKSON, *Times Higher*

*'It will immediately take its place as the indispensable reference book for students of the second world war.'*

GORDON LEE, *The Economist*

*'a magnificent volume and an invaluable resource'*

J. A. CRANG, *The History Association*

These are just a few of the review quotes generated by the *Companion* when it was published in hardback in 1995.

World War II was a war that affected the entire world and reached into every aspect of existence. It was a war which touched all nations, penetrated all aspects of people's lives, and which helped shape the world today. Over 140 distinguished and internationally renowned contributors have written over 1750 entries covering the very wide-ranging topics that make up the single subject of World War II.

Entries include:

surveys of major countries: France, Germany, Australia, India, USA, Japan, including sections in each about domestic life, culture, economics, government, resistance, and defence

colonial possessions and less major players: British Central Africa, British Cameroons, Dutch East Indies, Latvia, Libya, Slovakia

campaigns: East Africa campaign, Burma campaign, Normandy campaign, Fezzan campaigns, Western desert campaigns

battles: battle of the River Plate, battle of East China Sea, battle of Kasserine Pass

military operations: FALL GELB, BARBAROSSA, OVERLORD

types of warfare: electronic, chemical, economic, signals intelligence

wartime leaders: Stalin, Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt, Mussolini, Hirohito

politics and strategy: Grand Alliance, the Final Solution, the atomic bomb

design, development and use of machines and weapons: tanks, submarines, rockets, battleships, anti-tank weapons, human torpedoes, Baka bombs

organisations associated with the war: Arab League, Force K, Hitler Youth, Cossacks

places made famous in the war: Dachau, Bletchley Park, Nagasaki

slogans and phrases: wavy navy, Bevin Boys, Big Red One, jerry cans, Blackshirts

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

The definitive single-volume reference work for students of World War II, I. C. B. Dear's 1,400-page compendium provides a wealth of detail on matters that standard histories often gloss over or pass over altogether. For example, Dear covers the Night and Fog Decree, which called for the execution of any civilians committing crimes against German forces in occupied territories, as well as the Battle of the Courland Peninsula, in which Red Army soldiers overwhelmed the last German forces in the Baltic and seized Latvia and Lithuania for the Soviet Union. This is a fine book to browse through while watching *Bataan* or *The Longest Day*, or to have on hand to provide background material for other World War II-related reading.

### From [Booklist](#)

This compendium was issued in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of World War II. Several other one-volume encyclopedias treat this topic: *The Simon & Schuster Encyclopedia of World War II* (1978), *The Historical Guide to World War II* (Greenwood, 1983), *The Dictionary of the Second World War* (Bedrick, 1990), and *World War II: America at War, 1941-1945* [RBB Ja 15 92]. The last-named book is closest in coverage to *Oxford* but was criticized for its American viewpoint.

This new work has more than 1,700 alphabetically arranged entries. More than 160 scholars contributed to the volume, most from universities in Britain. Entries range from 50 words to almost 30 pages on major countries. Almost every aspect of the war is covered, including its effect on civilians. *Children* discuss the war's impact on children in many nations. Lengthy essays cover *Women at War* and *Religion*. The many biographical entries include both political and military persons. By far the most exhaustive essays are reserved for countries, all of which have standard subsections such as "Domestic Life, Economy, and War Effort" and "Government." The entry for the U.S. includes 27 pages of text and eight statistical tables. Briefer entries treat countries that were neutral during the war, for example, Sweden and Turkey.

In addition to statistics within entries, there are special tables accompanying articles. Unfortunately there is no index or table of contents for these tables. Cross-references within entries are noted by asterisks; there are limited *see also* references at the ends of articles. Like other Oxford companions, there is no index.

More than 100 line-drawn maps provide battle information as well as sites of death and concentration camps and the Manhattan Project. A separate section of color maps shows territorial changes between 1939 and 1945, the British and French empires, and other themes. A chronology begins in 1931 with Japanese troops occupying Manchuria and lists events under five geographic regions to the formal surrender of the Japanese on September 2, 1945. A list of place-name changes shows current and wartime names (e.g., Gdansk and Danzig).

Other titles give more detailed coverage of specific aspects of this period in history, for example, *The D-Day Encyclopedia* [RBB Ja 1 94] and the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* [RBB Mr 1 90]. But *The Oxford Companion to World War II* is an excellent overview for public and academic libraries that need to supplement other works in their reference collections.

### Review

`Review from previous edition (For more reviews see 'full description'.)

The Companion is quite an extraordinary achievement. In its range, depth and quality of contributions, its comprehensiveness and perhaps above all its numerous and admirably clear maps, charts and tables, it provides an indispensable guide to the conflict.'

Mark Mazower, History Today

## **Users Review**

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