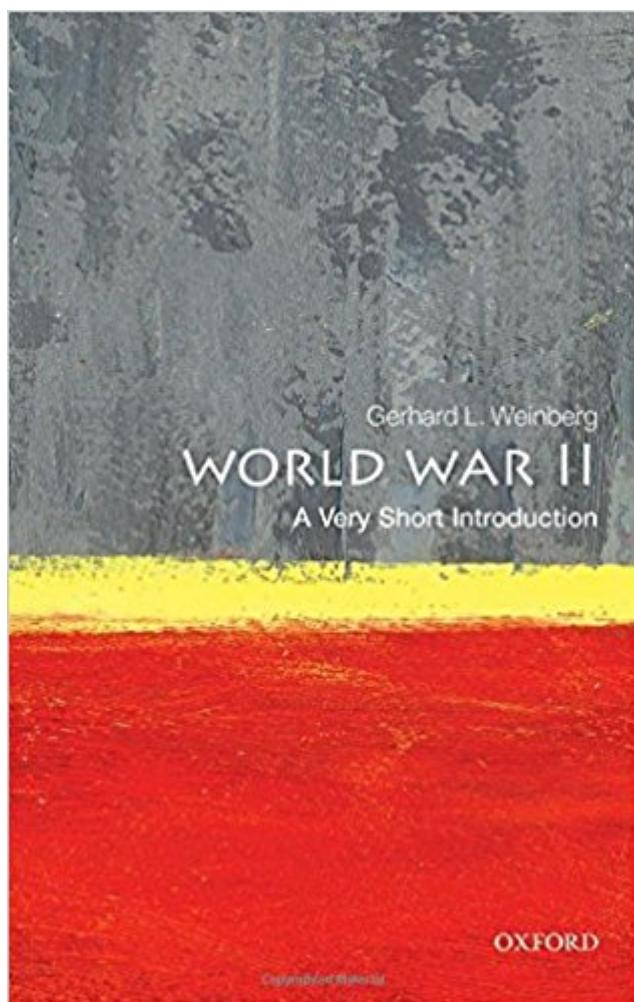


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World War II: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



Synopsis

The enormous loss of life and physical destruction caused by the First World War led people to hope that there would never be another such catastrophe. How then did it come to be that there was a Second World War causing twice as much loss of life and more destruction than any other previous conflict? In this Very Short Introduction, Gerhard L. Weinberg provides an introduction to the origins, course, and impact of the war on those who fought and the ordinary citizens who lived through it. Starting by looking at the inter-war years and the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, he examines how the war progressed by examining a number of key events, including the war in the West in 1940, Barbarossa, the German Invasion of the Soviet Union, the expansion of Japan's war with China, developments on the home front, and the Allied victory from 1944-45. Exploring the costs and effects of the war, Weinberg concludes by considering the long-lasting mark World War II has left on society today.

ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Born in Hanover, Germany in 1928, Gerhard L. Weinberg spent from 1939 until September 1940 in England. He moved to the USA and in 1944. He worked on the War Documentation Project, establishing the project for microfilming and studying captured German documents. He has taught

at the Universities of Kentucky, Michigan, and North Carolina, retiring in 1999. Weinberg has held numerous positions in professional organizations and has served on and chaired a number of US government advisory committees. His books have earned him a number of prizes, fellowships, and two honorary doctoral degrees.

I've read scores of books about World War II, including Weinberg's A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II, which is the best single-volume history. Nothing this book covers was new to me, and yet I found it consistently interesting and revealing. Inevitably a book this brief can offer no more than the barest sketch of so broad a topic as the Second World War, but a sketch by a master such as Weinberg has its own special value, providing a clear view of the underlying structure neither distorted nor obscured by the mass of detail in a work such as A World at Arms. Weinberg is particularly good at drawing out the linkages and tradeoffs that connect seemingly separate theaters and operations, emphasizing that the war is more than a simple sum of separate parts. Seventeen high-quality sketch maps at an appropriate level of detail make it easy to follow the flow of the operations the book describes. There are no notes and one sometimes wonders about the basis for a particular judgment, but the sound and well-considered guide to further reading is helpful.

Gerhard Weinberg's earlier full-scale study of World War II, A World at Arms, is for my money the best one-volume work available. In this brief book, he recapitulates many of the arguments from his earlier work, such as Hitler's being unlikely to have been satisfied with anything less than the occupation of most of Eastern Europe, and destruction of the Soviet Union, and the elimination of whatever Jews he could get his hands on. I think the book does a good job of capturing the key elements in a vast and complicated subject. The included maps are excellent--much better than the maps in the companion volume in this (by a different author) on World War I.

When I just about finished with the book I was getting a feeling of the author having a personal reflection by referencing the holocaust more than I would expect out of an 'outline'. I do value the authors experience which I am sure he has shown insight with his other books.

Excellent short but concise history covering some major events. Not complete by any means but suitable as a refresher or introduction.

Sufficiently detailed with information that goes beyond the surface of the topics of WW2. I would highly recommend this book as a su

Good quick reference.

Very good, just the right amount of detail!

As always, Weinberg is the source for WWII. My mother read it and loved it.

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