



Hitler's Generals

Correlli Barnett (Editor)

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In Hitler's Generals, distinguished historian Correlli Barnett has gathered together an outstanding team of military historians to write about the characters and careers of twenty-six generals of the Third Reich. The book probes the central mystery of why a generation of the world's most able commanders and staff officers came to be seduced by Hitler, and why they failed to deflect him from his disastrous decisions.

Hitler's Generals Details

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Liam says

Despite my earlier comment r.e. that swine Irving, this book is still well worth reading, in the first instance because of the extremely interesting, though subtle, differences in perspective of the various distinguished contributors. It would still be worth reading aside from that, however, even if only because the late General Dr. Ferdinand Maria von Senger und Etterlin's excellent biographical sketch of his father, General der Panzertruppe Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin, is so beautifully written...

Greenturtle says

Overall I enjoyed this book. I will say that the various essays were hit or miss. I thought some were too biased towards the protagonist.

Lysergius says

An excellent series of essays charting the rise and fall of Hitler's most important military leaders.

Jill Hutchinson says

This was a slow read for me since I really struggled through a few of the chapters which were dry as the Sahara. Correlli Barnett compiled this book with each chapter written by a different historian/scholar on 23 of Hitler's Generals. It has a good introduction, photographs, glossary, maps, and an explanation of the German Army rank structure; all of which are helpful in following the careers and activities of each General. A chronology of each man is also given which identifies what happened to them after the war - suicide, execution, prison, or freedom. He further breaks the book down into categories: the anti-Nazi Generals, the Desk Generals, the Fieldherren, the Battlefield Generals, and the Innovators.

Anyone who is familiar with WWII will recognize these men although it is usually the Battlefield Generals (think Rommel and Paulus) who get the most coverage in other history books and Desk Generals such as Warlimont get rather short shrift. The only problem I have is the use of different authors for each chapter which creates an uneven flow of narrative. But it added a lot of information of which I was unaware and would recommend this book to WWII buffs.

Mick Maye says

Informative overview of a range of German generals.

John Nelson says

This book contains a series of biographical essays about many of Germany's leading generals and field marshals during WWII. Each essay is by a different author. The result is somewhat disjointed. While certain characteristics, such as the Prussian background of most of the generals and their widespread opposition to Hitler, frequently reappear, there is no overall evaluation of the major questions presented by their careers, which as I see it are two: (1) How did Germany's military elite and other leaders lose control of their country to an anti-Semitic street bum from Austria; and (2) when should they have rebelled against Hitler, who, after all, started out as Germany's democratically-elected leader? There also is no analysis of how Hitler's actions may have been restrained by the sometimes-questionable loyalty of his generals. On the whole, this book is a respectable but by no means outstanding part of the very lengthy literature on WWII.

Steven Peterson says

This is a useful overview of some of Germany's leading generals in the years leading up to World War II and their performance in that conflict. This is a volume that looks at the "good" (e.g., Rommel, Guderian, Manstein, Kesselring), the "bad" (e.g., Paulus), and the "ugly." (e.g., Keitel and Jodl). As such, it provides context for understanding the actions, decisions, and effects of a series of major general officers.

Is this book a whitewash? Hardly. Generals such as Seeger are portrayed as trying to ignore the atrocities that they knew were happening and rationalizing their unwillingness to do anything. The desk generals, such as Keitel and Jodl are portrayed in less than a flattering light. The fates of generals who were not wholeheartedly Nazi is part of the context of the behavior, perhaps, of some of these generals (witness the fates of generals such as Beck and Fritsch).

Interesting, too, is the discussion of the commanding field generals, such as Rundstedt, Manstein, and Kesselring. One wonders what might have been if there were more Manstein's and fewer Nazi loyalists in high command. But, given the micromanagement of Hitler and his desire for pliant commanders, that seems improbable. Another interesting element of the volume is its consideration of battlefield generals--some of whom, like Rommel, were excellent and some of whom, like Paulus, fell short.

The last two chapters examine "innovators," one of whom is the well known Guderian, whose armored perspective was revolutionary and not always appreciated by more traditional generals. His ongoing conflicts with Hitler are aptly illustrated (and see Guderian's autobiography, "Panzer Leader," for more detail). Student was for the airborne forces the equivalent of Guderian with armor.

This is a useful volume, with relatively short chapters detailing the talents (or lack of same) and the courage (or lack of same) and the accomplishments (or lack of same) of a wide array of German generals.

Bill V says

This book is a collection of short biographies of over 20 German generals during World War II. The book divides them into a few categories such as desk generals, innovators and the battlefield commanders. There is a good cross section of the commanders; some of the names are well known and quite a few are quite

obscure. Some of the better known names include Rommel, Manstein and Guderian. Each biography is written by different authors, which maybe 2 authors doing more than one general. As a result, the writing styles vary from author to author. Each general only gets about 20 or so pages so there is little biographical data or detail to the various campaigns so there is not much depth given to any of them.

One of the more interesting aspects, with the different authors, one author may portray a particular general in a certain light while a different author may cast that general in a contrasting position. For example, I remember the author who covered Kluge portrayed him as quite decisive while another author, while focusing on another general who had some interactions with Kluge, said he tended to be indecisive.

Charles says

An excellent reference source to provide a quick overview of the German generals in World War II. It doesn't go into great depth about any particular general, but gives you enough detail to understand their backgrounds and relationships to Hitler.

Rhonda says

From what I've read so far, nobody liked Hitler. His own people thought he was crazy, and most were involved in plots to assassinate him at some point. I don't know if there is a good reason to continue on with this book. LOL
