

in gender and conflict studies (Margaret Higonnet and Patrice Higonnet), Orr illustrates how women were able to maintain their wartime gains into the interwar period, and expanded on those gains during World War II (p. xix).

Orr splits French women's service in the Second World War between those who served in the Free French Forces or participated in the Resistance, and those who were civilian employees of the Vichy and Free French armies. Finally, in the decree of 21 April 1940, officials agreed to create a women's auxiliary corps within the French army, but before it was implemented, German forces invaded France. Perhaps the most interesting portion of the study concerned how the liberation of France affected these different forces containing women.

Orr convincingly demonstrates that women civilian employees should be recognized for their service and seen as an integral cog in the army: "They were not soldiers, but they were part of the French Army" (p. 183). Despite the few drawbacks, Orr crafts a complete and nuanced argument, detailing how civilian women were essential to the French army from 1914 to 1940, and beyond.

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The World at War, 1914–1945. By Jeremy Black. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. ISBN 978-1-5381-0835-2. Notes. Index. Pp. x, 351. \$39.00 (paperback).

With more than 100 titles published, Jeremy Black, MBE, is not resting on his laurels. The two world wars of the last century may be regarded as the high points of global conflict in terms of death and human suffering, sufficient justification for a concise study from a master of his craft, able to convey the "big picture" while delving as necessary down into the weeds.

Much about the two world wars has solidified, in popular memory, into "narrative" that all too often eclipses the complex reality. Jeremy Black is at war with narrative, confounding it with an abundance of inconvenient truths. The outbreak of World War I is a case in point. While expressing qualified endorsement of the "Fischer thesis," Black firmly rejects the notion that mobilization timetables pushed everything else aside to make war inevitable, persuasively arguing that "rulers, generals, and politicians were not trapped by circumstances" (p. 18). The crisis arising after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand might have been settled short of war but for the extreme bellicosity of imperial Germany's military leadership, which effectively muzzled the nervous Kaiser, as well as the deferential civilian cabinet members and the Reichstag.

Black also makes it clear that the war on the Western Front was not the simple story that lives in popular memory: "chateau generals" sending troops "over the top" to be slaughtered. Both sides implemented infiltration tactics, but with the Allies showing considerable tactical and technological improvement during 1917–18, Black concludes that "trench warfare had evolved into deep battle" (p. 51) after the shock of the Ger-

man spring offensives had been contained. Black succinctly explores the maritime and nascent aerial aspects of the war, with geography and logistics determining the outcome of the former, and the rapid improvements in aviation technology as well as expanding operational uses of aircraft coming into play as the war advanced. Another aspect of the war largely fallen off the radar was the usefulness of military force as a tool of domestic social control, chiefly within the British Empire.

Black eschews a quick leap to the next war by addressing the “immediacy of the conflicts that occurred after the First World War.” War in those years, he argues, “should be seen not as the breakdown of systems of peace and practices of deterrence, but rather as a product of the willingness, indeed eagerness, to fight, together with the additional encouragements offered by the large numbers of men habituated to fighting by the recent war and the plentiful supplies of armaments” (p. 96). These conflicts, largely insurrection and “people’s war,” were “far more confusing” than the Great War campaigns, and Black is at pains to emphasize how warfighting doctrine and technologies emerging from the Great War did not stagnate but were relevant to many of those largely forgotten conflicts.

The chapters on the Second World War testify to the commendable economy of Professor Black’s prose as he covers a daunting array of operational and technical topics. He reviews the multiplicity of belligerents and campaigns during the first two years of the war and brings into focus much military history that has been long neglected. In the fast-moving campaigns in southern Europe, the Middle East, and both northern and eastern Africa, he shows how Britain and its few allies eventually managed to halt the Axis juggernaut, albeit at considerable cost in lives and territory. Black admirably sums up a truth that loses nothing in its retelling: “the Germans benefitted in their early campaigns, in 1939–41, from the army’s doctrine, training, and leadership, and, notably, the stress on flexibility, personal initiative, and action. Germany’s opponents could not match these elements” (p. 196).

In separate chapters dealing with warfare on land, at sea, and in the air, Black further demonstrates how the postwar media has painted a misleading picture. Blitzkrieg and tank operations stand highest in our popular memory of the war in Europe, but the author reminds us that artillery remained the principal battlefield killer and a decisive factor in most battles. Armored and mechanized maneuver was important, and Germany’s superiority in this realm faded during the long struggle on the Eastern Front, where the Soviet army eventually became the dominant practitioner of warfare at the operational level. The Western Allies never really mastered “operational art,” but their unimaginative “broad front” approach did, in time, wear down the stubborn German defense.

The war at sea receives similar coverage: the complex naval war in the Mediterranean, the Battle of the Atlantic, and the Pacific war. Pearl Harbor was “a classic case of an operational-tactical success but a strategic failure” (p. 241). At the subsequent battle of Midway, the U.S. carrier fleet benefitted from superior intelligence and was better prepared to handle the “fog of war” than the inflexible Japanese naval leadership. This aptly sums up a key lesson: the Axis powers knew how to win battles but the ideological pathologies of their regimes foreclosed any chance of winning the war.

The air war in World War II saw repeated cycles of innovation and counteraction in the operational and technological spheres. “The scale of airpower was extraordinary” (p. 301) even if it never quite lived up to the promises of its prewar advocates. Black details the enormous resources devoted to aircraft production by the Allies, and the stupendous output. He highlights the impact of training flight hours dependent on POL (Petroleum, Oils, & Lubricants) availability; the Germans and the Japanese initially had a strong advantage in pilot experience that diminished steadily as the war progressed and POL became scarce.

Black’s concluding chapter is a taut summary of this dreadful half-century. The “resource-based explanation of success is clearly pertinent in both world wars” (p. 304). With regard to World War II, “The key Axis failures were those of strategy, both military and political” (p. 305)—judgments with which no one can argue. It’s also refreshing that Black sees aspects of both wars conducive to “counterfactual” analysis that have yet to be explored.

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War and Public Memory: Case Studies in Twentieth-Century Europe. By David A. Messenger. War, Memory & Culture. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2020. ISBN 978-0-8173-5964-5. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xii, 243. \$39.95 (paperback).

War’s violent legacy stretches far beyond the battlefield, lingering for decades in the minds and bodies of its survivors and their descendants. In *War and Public Memory*, David Messenger explores the memory of Europe’s twentieth-century wars, drawing our attention to the aftermath of conflict as it affects everyone, not just soldiers. Messenger reveals how Europeans have remembered these cataclysmic conflicts, and how the memory of war continues to shape contemporary life.

A military historian by trade, Messenger tackles issues of collective memory, or how societies understand past events through the lens of their world today. This approach puts Messenger in the camp of “new military history,” or the study of war and society. *War and Public Memory* is not a product of original research; instead, Messenger compiles the work of other scholars focusing on war in public discourse and space. Using a comparative approach, Messenger’s book reveals how war affected everyone not just in its immediate aftermath, but for generations to come.

To discuss Europe’s wartime legacy, Messenger features case studies of the most prominent European wars of the twentieth century. He focuses on countries such as Spain and Germany that had significant changes in how wars have been remembered. Arranged chronologically, each chapter provides general background on the war before examining issues surrounding wartime memory.

Starting with World War I, Messenger shows how the war’s memory differed drastically from state to state. War commemorations in France emphasized national unity, while in Germany, commemorations quickly turned political and

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