



# The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945

By Nicholas Stargardt



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As early as 1941, Allied victory in World War II seemed all but assured. How and why, then, did the Germans prolong the barbaric conflict for three and a half more years?

In *The German War*, acclaimed historian Nicholas Stargardt draws on an extraordinary range of primary source materials—personal diaries, court records, and military correspondence—to answer this question. He offers an unprecedented portrait of wartime Germany, bringing the hopes and expectations of the German people—from infantrymen and tank commanders on the Eastern front to civilians on the home front—to vivid life. While most historians identify the German defeat at Stalingrad as the moment when the average German citizen turned against the war effort, Stargardt demonstrates that the Wehrmacht in fact retained the staunch support of the patriotic German populace until the bitter end.

Astonishing in its breadth and humanity, *The German War* is a groundbreaking new interpretation of what drove the Germans to fight—and keep fighting—for a lost cause.



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## The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945 By Nicholas Stargardt Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

Review

### ***Times Higher Education***

“Ambitious... Stargardt's book is a prodigious accomplishment, as he manages to keep us in touch with the grand sweep of the war, as well as its ebb and flow, without losing sight of specific soldiers' behaviour. Its treasure trove of interesting information, clever observations and fresh insights make *The German War* essential reading for anyone interested in the Second World War in Europe.”

### ***Washington Times***

“Exhaustive.... A first-rate historical read.”

### ***Washington Book Review***

“An important addition to the growing number of books on the history of WWII... a very insightful study.”

### ***Roanoke Times***

“Exhaustively researched, well-written... well and unblinkingly told.”

### ***The Australian***

“History is wisdom after the fact, and in *The German War* Nicholas Stargardt, a professor of modern history at Oxford, has created a wise book from the facts of German life under Hitler... *The German War* is an important and significant book.”

### ***Economist***

“[Stargardt's] method of using letters and diaries of ordinary Germans yields unexpected insights, both into the Germans' humanity and their turn to barbarism.”

### ***New York Review of Books***

“[Stargardt] draws on diaries, letters, and contemporary documents to paint a huge social canvas of Germans at war, soldiers and civilians, men and women of all ages... [he] tells his bleak story fluently and well, and illustrates it with a host of telling and often unfamiliar anecdotes.”

### ***Washington Post*, Richard Cohen**

“In his new and excellent book, ‘The German War,’ Oxford University historian Nicholas Stargardt exhumes the letters and diaries of German soldiers and others. He details how a cultured nation went insane, how ordinary soldiers became mass killers and how the churches of Germany looked the other way as the innocent were murdered.”

### ***Foreign Affairs***

“Enthralling... Stargardt puts together a complex portrait of a nation gripped by patriotism and resentment, thrilled by early military victories, and proud of the fighting skills of the Wehrmacht.”

### **Saul Friedlander, author of *Nazi Germany and the Jews***

“Using letters, diaries and other published and unpublished testimonies, Nicholas Stargardt shows that notwithstanding the spreading knowledge of the regime's crimes—particularly against the Jews—and the growing impact of major defeats, Wehrmacht and population were determined to go on fighting, possibly out

of fear of retribution, to the very end. Beautifully written and convincingly argued, this book is a must.”

**Ian Kershaw, author of *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler's Germany, 1944-1945***

“A terrific book. Nicholas Stargardt brilliantly explores diaries, letters, and other previously untapped sources to provide more vivid and nuanced insight than ever before achieved into the motivation of ordinary Germans fighting the most horrific war of all time.”

**Mark Roseman, Professor of History, Indiana University**

“Little by little, with a raft of new insights, and a clear and empathetic eye, Nicholas Stargardt's remarkable new book transforms our view of something we thought we already understood: the German population's evolving attitudes during the war. For the first time, the wartime chronology of German sentiment, of popular hopes and fears, realism and fantasy, becomes truly visible. A powerful and compelling account.”

**Robert Moeller, Professor of History, University of California, Irvine**

“Why did most Germans, reluctant to enter a second World War in 1939, ultimately unify behind an effort that by 1943 seemed doomed to failure? Weaving together first person testimonies drawn from diaries, memoirs, and letters, Nicholas Stargardt provides insightful, illuminating, complex, and convincing answers in this big book. Seven decades and a mountain of monographs later, I wouldn't have thought there'd be much more to say about WWII. Stargardt has proven me wrong.”

**Geoff Eley, Professor of History and German Studies, University of Michigan**

“*The German War* is a tour de force of historical learning, breadth of vision, and narrative skill. In depicting the intricate back-and-forth between the big violence of the conduct of the war and the impossible complexities inside individual stories—between the challenges facing ordinary lives and the relentlessness of a wartime beyond their control—Nicholas Stargardt brings an acuteness of insight and sureness of touch to an extraordinary wealth of material. A truly epic account.”

**Jane Caplan, Emeritus Fellow, St Antony's College, Oxford**

“Forcing reflection on many different levels, Nicholas Stargardt's book pierces through the tangles of both propaganda and moralism to offer a searching and compulsively readable account of a conflict that was understood from within as a German, not just a Nazi, war. Stargardt negotiates the considerable risks of writing from inside German experiences of this brutally destructive war with subtlety, humanity, and wisdom. This is a rich and deeply impressive lesson in ethical understanding without sacrifice of historical distance or critical judgment.”

**Jan T. Gross, author of *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland***

“*The German War* is an outstanding book by a master historian. Weaving together personal letters, secret police reports, Goebbels' propaganda ministry assessments, and other sources, Nicholas Stargardt shows what and when the German people knew about the conduct of the war, what they thought about it, and how the regime, always attuned to people's moods, tailored its message and policies accordingly. *The German War* is a masterpiece of historical writing, blending seamlessly a ‘bird's eye’ view with intimate micro-history of this calamitous period in twentieth century Europe.”

***Forbes.com*, Steve Forbes**

“*The German War* brilliantly and with impressive nuance and texture deals with the astounding questions of how the most educated and cultured nation on earth could unleash such a murderous, barbarous and genocidal war... Stargardt smoothly and vividly weaves together the stories of more than a score of individual Germans from all walks of life and the unfolding events of the war.”

***The Daily Telegraph* (UK)**

“*The German War* by Nicholas Stargardt is a riveting account of how...ordinary Germans experienced and sustained the war.”

***Independent* (UK)**

Trying to make sense of the mood and thoughts of 80 million-odd people is an immense task but Nicholas Stargardt has made a terrifically good stab at it.

***Spectator*, (UK)**

“Superbly researched and clearly written, *The German War* is an important and significant book.”

***The Observer***

“[T]his is a beautifully written and, yes, sensitive and subtle portrayal of war. The author deftly weaves individual tales with surprising observation.”

***Open Letters Monthly***

“Utterly gripping... By consulting a wide array of first-hand civilian sources, Stargardt broadens what would otherwise be a very good history of the Third Reich at war into a something far richer and more complicated. *The German War* eventually culminates – in a way few other English-language accounts have managed – into a stunning account of the physical and psychological trauma of an entire people.”

***Kirkus Reviews***

“[A] massive but thorough meditation.... A well-researched, unsettling social history of war that will prove deeply thought-provoking—even worrying—for readers who wonder what they might have done under the same circumstances.”

***Library Journal***

“Important... Stargardt provides a vital and necessary addition to the World War II canon that will appeal to World War II buffs and anyone with an interest in 20th-century German history.”

**One of the *New York Times Book Review*'s 100 Notable Books of 2015.**

**Winner of the PEN Hessel Tiltman Prize**

**Editor's Choice, *New York Times Book Review***

“A dramatic look at the lives of ordinary German men and women during World War II.”

***New York Times Book Review***

“[A] gripping new book.... To write like this requires a rare sensitivity and psychological sophistication coupled with a degree of fearlessness.... Stargardt impresses not only as a cultural historian. He also has an impressively strong grasp on the military narrative of the war. And this is indispensable.... Stargardt has given us a truly profound piece of history.”

***The Guardian***

“This vivid history of everyday life captures the complex feelings of ordinary Germans under the Nazi regime.... A superb study.”

## ***Wall Street Journal***

“Nicholas Stargardt's...gracefully written *The German War* offers by far the most comprehensive and readable guide to these issues...This is splendid scholarship.... Anyone interested in National Socialist Germany, World War II and the many murderous regimes that still disfigure the earth should relish *The German War*.”

About the Author

**Nicholas Stargardt** is a professor of modern European history at Magdalen College, Oxford, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. The author of the award-winning *Witnesses of War*, Stargardt lives in Oxford, England.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Michele Stein:**

The book *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945* can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Exactly why must we leave the good thing like a book *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945*? A few of you have a different opinion about guide. But one aim which book can give many data for us. It is absolutely suitable. Right now, try to closer with your book. Knowledge or information that you take for that, you could give for each other; you can share all of these. Book *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945* has simple shape nevertheless, you know: it has great and large function for you. You can seem the enormous world by wide open and read a e-book. So it is very wonderful.

#### **Tina Wilson:**

The reason? Because this *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945* is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-book waiting for you to snap it but latter it will jolt you with the secret that inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such awesome way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book possess such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I were being you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

#### **Mary Bradford:**

Reading can called brain hangout, why? Because if you are reading a book especially book entitled *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945* the mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every aspect that maybe mysterious for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging each word written in a reserve then become one form conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get before. The *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945* giving you an additional experience more than blown away your mind but also giving you useful info for your better life on this era. So now let us explain to you the relaxing pattern is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished

studying it, like winning a game. Do you want to try this extraordinary spending spare time activity?

**Adam Hay:**

A number of people said that they feel uninterested when they reading a publication. They are directly felt that when they get a half parts of the book. You can choose typically the book *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945* to make your personal reading is interesting. Your current skill of reading expertise is developing when you like reading. Try to choose straightforward book to make you enjoy to see it and mingle the idea about book and studying especially. It is to be very first opinion for you to like to wide open a book and study it. Beside that the book *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939–1945* can to be your friend when you're really feel alone and confuse with the information must you're doing of that time.

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