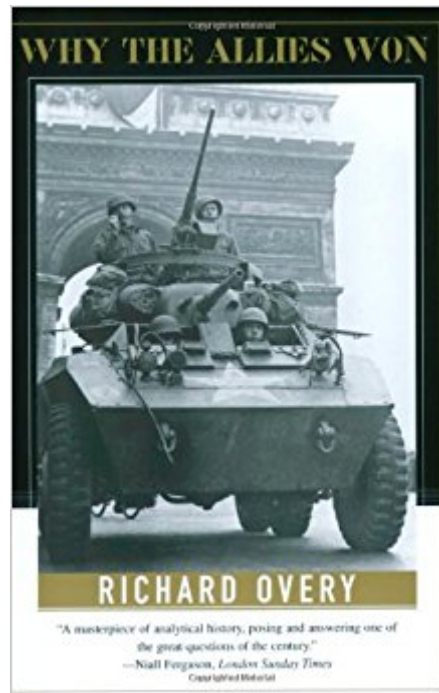




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Why The Allies Won



Synopsis

"Overy has written a masterpiece of analytical history, posing and answering one of the great questions of the century." •Sunday Times (London) Richard Overy's bold book begins by throwing out the stock answers to this great question: Germany doomed itself to defeat by fighting a two-front war; the Allies won by "sheer weight of material strength." In fact, by 1942 Germany controlled almost the entire resources of continental Europe and was poised to move into the Middle East. The Soviet Union had lost the heart of its industry, and the United States was not yet armed. The Allied victory in 1945 was not inevitable. Overy shows us exactly how the Allies regained military superiority and why they were able to do it. He recounts the decisive campaigns: the war at sea, the crucial battles on the eastern front, the air war, and the vast amphibious assault on Europe. He then explores the deeper factors affecting military success and failure: industrial strength, fighting ability, the quality of leadership, and the moral dimensions of the war. Photographs

Book Information

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; Reprint edition (May 17, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 039331619X

ISBN-13: 978-0393316193

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 100 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #33,751 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 in Books > Textbooks >

Humanities > History > Military #62 in Books > History > Military > Strategy #255 in Books >

History > Military > World War II

Customer Reviews

Having won an unprecedented series of victories and acquired huge new territories in 1942, Germany and Japan seemed poised to dominate most of the world. A year later both empires were reeling back in the face of Allied assaults. The rapid turnaround, King's College history professor Richard Overy writes, came about largely as a result of technological innovation and structural responsiveness. The Allies were able to convert their economies to a war footing with few institutional fetters, while the Axis powers imposed layers of bureaucracy that often competed internally. In fact, Overy writes, at one point during the war, the Luftwaffe had more than 425

different aircraft models in production, the result of different state agencies' and manufacturers' vying to push their models into the order of battle. The defeated Axis powers' conversion to their foes' economic model enabled them, according to Overy, to become technological leaders in the postwar years. His study is full of detail, and it makes for very good reading.

In *The Road to War* (1990), Overy plumbed the origins of WWII. Here, he examines the reasons for the war's outcome, challenging two pieces of conventional wisdom: that the Axis overextended itself by taking on the U.S., Britain and the Soviet Union, and that the Allied victory was due to material strength only. Instead, Overy contends that the Allies' triumph depended on the exponential improvement of an initially inferior military capacity, as well as on moral fiber. The Allies, he argues convincingly, turned economic potential into fighting power, exploiting modernity by integrating technology and logistics into a comprehensive war effort that was sustained by moral force. Combining telling detail and wide scope, the author shows that, ultimately, the governments and peoples of the Allied Grand Coalition triumphed because they acted on the understanding that WWII was a life-and-death struggle for fundamental values. Photos; maps. History Book Club main selection; BOMC selection. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Very good, impartial and thorough. It is distant but well based history, thought-provoking view upon your former acquired opinions

The definite book on why the Allies won and also why the axis lost. From resource management (the author explains that while the Soviet Airforce were producing only 8 type to simplify production of aircrafts, the Luftwaffe was working on 400 different types of aircraft). In the squandering of resources the author mentions that the V weapons were costly to make, compare to the heavy bombing of Germany the V1 and V2 rocket barely scratched London and Antwerp. The USAAF study in 1946 showed that if those vengeance weapons would not have been made, the Luftwaffe could have produced 19 000 more fighters! Also the allies had the moral ascendancy even while not perfect (Stalin was a paranoid dictator who killed millions). What I mean by that is that all the axis did was plundering the conquered lands. There are many more subjects on why World War two went the way it went. A must have book for every person interested by World War two.

I really enjoyed this book, having read it as part of a college history course. As the title notes, the

book analyzes the strategies, mistakes, and successes of the participants in WWII offering insights with both qualitative and quantitative supports. The reader might not agree with some of the author's conclusions but the material is presented in way that provokes thought and discussion. Not quite the typical war book of which I have read quite a few.

The author, Richard Overy, is one of the world's leading scholars about WW2. In this book, Overy systematizes his thesis about the factors that lead to the outcome of WW2. First, he elaborates on the decisive campaigns of WW2: The submarine battles on the Atlantic, the Air War over the Reich, the gigantic defensive battles in the Eastern Front in 1942 and 1943 (of course!), and the opening of the Western Front in 1944. In these chapters he elaborates on the basic factors that lead to Allied victory. The defensive battles of Kursk and Stalingrad were perhaps the most decisive battles in the war because in these battles huge losses were inflicted on the Germans and they denied victory in the Eastern front, which meant that the Germans couldn't take their army out of Russia to deal with other potential enemies, making the invasion of France feasible in the first place. The air war was also decisive because of the resources that were denied to Germany in the form of increased war production, the losses in fighters defending the Reich, the potential losses of bombers that could have been made instead of fighters to defend the Reich, the ammunition expenditures and the firepower and manpower allocated to the defense of the Reich that could have been allocated to the Eastern front, for example. Second, he elaborates on the general characteristics of the economic, morale and political factors of the war. For example, he argues that the Allies utilized their resources more efficiently than the Germans, which was why they obtained their material superiority in the first place. But this argument has some problems, first, Germany didn't have access to much needed natural resources to manufacture weapons, second, her conquered empire on continental Europe doesn't mean a proportional increase in war-making capacity, since foreign occupied lands aren't the same as domestic lands, so their military conquest didn't mean much in economic terms in the short term at least (before this pan-European empire could be consolidated). Then, he elaborates on his synthesis explanation, noting first that Germany was the major Axis power and that her defeat would seal the fate of her weaker allies. And he focuses on the importance of the Eastern front in breaking the back of the German army and on the air war in destroying the Luftwaffe.

This book is a jewel. Mr. Overy was able to thoroughly explain why the Allies won. The reasons are manifold; we can point out some of them.- Hitler's one man show at the helm of the German Armed Forces proved to be disastrous. His approach was amateurish and he was just not competent

enough for the momentous task at hand.- The German Armed Forces fastidious insistence on weapons that were finished with a high grade of precision impeded the mass production of standardized weapons that could match the weapon's output of the Allies.- Japan's industrial production and supply system could not match America's.- The Axis powers lacked sufficient oil and its derivatives.- Allied Armed Forces were able to learn from their mistakes and made the necessary adjustments to match the Axis powers' proficiency at the art of war, conversely, Germany's and Japan's Armed Forces did not improve their performance appreciably after their initial successes.- The Allies had the "moral high ground" which spurred them on to victory.- The Allies were successful at curbing the effectiveness of the German U-boats.- The Allies were able to wear down the Luftwaffe and thus achieve air superiority.- The Allies were able to keep the Germans guessing where the invasion force would land on continental Europe.- The Germans never mechanized their supply lines and their troop transport the way the Allies did. Mr. Overy is a word-Meister; he writes with clarity and elegance. It was a pleasure to read this book.

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