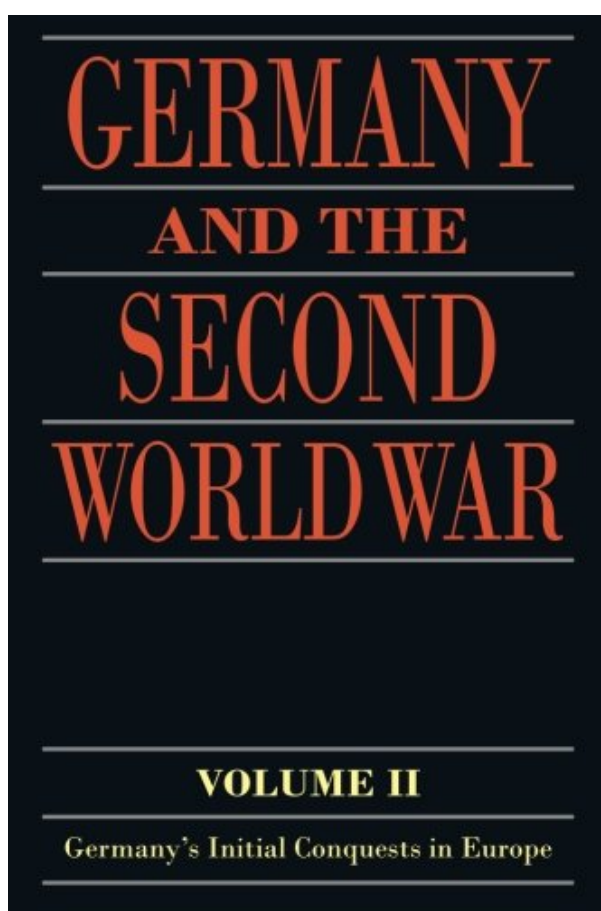


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Germany's Initial Conquests in Europe

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About the Author

Edited by Klaus A. Maier, Horst Rohde, Bernd Stegemann, and Hans Umbreit

Project coordinated by the Militargeschichtliches Forschungsamt

Translated from German by Dean S. McMurray, P.S. Falla, and Ewald Osers

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Germany's Initial Conquests in Europe surveys the first year of the war deliberately begun by Nazi Germany. The authors examine the train of interconnected political and military events, and set military operations against the background of Hitler's war policy and general aims, both immediate and long term. Their comprehensive analysis, based on detailed scholarly research, is underpinned by a full apparatus of maps, diagrams, and tables. The conflict took a course quite different from that which Hitler had intended, but nevertheless resulted in a series of conquests for the Third Reich. At the same time, the establishment of hegemony on the European continent confronted the aggressor with new problems.

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Volume Two of this series covers the period from prior to the outbreak of the war on 1 September 1939 to approximately the end of 1940 and the failure on the part of Hitler to woo the Vichy French and the Spanish into a truly active alliance with the Third Reich. The volume has a copyright of 1991, was translated into English in 2003, has been compiled by four different authors and has nine parts. They are:

Part I- Politics and Warfare in the First Phase of the German Offensive.

Part II- Action Plans and Situation Assessments of the Luftwaffe and Navy before The Outbreak of War.

Part III- Hitler's First Blitzkrieg and Its Consequences for North-eastern Europe.

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Part VIII- The Second Phase of the War at Sea (until the Spring of 1941).

Part IX- Direct Strategy against Britain.

Almost all of these parts are subdivided into sections and sub-sections. Although a few consist of only one or two pages, most are appreciably longer. The intent of the authors (as described in the introduction) has been to present a general overview of events and not to become bogged down in details which are available elsewhere in more dedicated works. In this writer's opinion, they have been imminently successful, as the entire work (including index) is sufficiently detailed and yet contains only 444 pages.

The preliminaries to both the invasion of Poland (Case White) and the invasions of Norway and Denmark (Operation Weserubung) are well covered, as are the actual campaigns themselves. The actual campaign against France and the Low countries (Case Yellow) is less well covered in detail; the preparations for it are, however, presented very well and make clear that:

1. The basic- the very basic- concept of effecting a penetration south of Liege "to cut off the enemy forces assembled in Belgium" was first mentioned and demonstrated by Hitler himself in October of 1939 (a concept which "completely surprised" the Army High Command), and that;
2. Lieutenant-General von Manstein (after consultation with Lieutenant-General Guderian) independently put together a far more wide-ranging plan of attack than Hitler envisaged.

Other points of interest in this work include details surrounding the resignation of Admiral Hermann Boehm, and the pre-war German Aircraft and Naval vessel production plans (the latter two of which appear to call into serious question the validity of Andreas Hillgruber's "Step-By-Step" plan which he attributes to Hitler.

Far more is available in this work which is well worth the investment, and I strongly recommend it- but only to serious students of the conflict. The presentation is dry and matter-of-fact, so buyer beware.

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