



Blitzkrieg: From the Rise of Hitler to the fall of Dunkirk

Author: Len Deighton
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Many great men over the centuries have uttered the old maxim that 'those who don't know their history are condemned to repeat it'. This book is a good place to start learning.

This is a book about tanks. It is a text that, from several view-points, examines the rise of the tank in modern warfare whilst also profiling Heinz Guderian, the pioneer of the armoured division and for my money the greatest commander of World War II. In addition, it also sees author Len Deighton chart the rise of the politician that gave Guderian the means to transform his vision into a reality: the infamous Adolf Hitler.

So, to the nuts and bolts no pun intended (well, ok, it was really). Made up of 6 main sections, spread over roughly 300 pages, and supported by 20 maps and many other illustrations, *Blitzkrieg* offers a selection of first-hand accounts describing the pivotal moments in the rise of the Third Reich and of its armed forces. It is an old text (originally coming to print in 1979), but this is not a bad thing because it means that many of the leading characters of the Nazi establishment were still alive and in a position to offer comment. Not least among these is General W. K. Nehring, a man who served with many of the generals of the war (being Guderian's Chief of Staff), and who wrote the foreword to this volume. The text itself meanwhile, sees Deighton explain the situation amongst the politicians at the time, along with the concerns of the military, the diplomatic wrangling between the European powers as the war loomed and most interestingly of all, it highlights the weaknesses in the wider German master-plan; i.e., why tactics/strategies that worked well against opponents in the early stages of the war were doomed to failure against Stalin's Russia.

I like this book. It quotes many of the people who witnessed personally the events they discuss, both from all levels of German society and of course their opponents. Moreover, it also offers an insight into the thoughts of specific individuals throughout Europe who had an important part to play in the development of the 'lightning war', but were not necessarily members of the Wehrmacht. So, anybody who wants to learn anything about how and why the Germans conquered the French (and British) force(s) in just a few weeks, as well as what happened both before and after, need look no further than *Blitzkrieg*.

9 sausages out of 10

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