



## Last Orders

*Harry Turtledove*

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## **Last Orders** Harry Turtledove

In an extraordinary saga of nations locked in war, master storyteller Harry Turtledove tells the story of World War II, which begins over Czechoslovakia rather than Poland, eleven months earlier than it really came. Now we have the final installment in Turtledove's landmark World War II series.

Hitler's Plan A was to win in a hurry, striking hard and deep into France. There was no Plan B. Now the war grinds on. Countries have been forced into strange alliances. The Nazis fortify thin lines with Hungarian and Romanian troops. England, finding its footing after the suspicious death of Winston Churchill and a coup d'état, fights back in Europe and on the seas of the North Atlantic. Jews fight on both sides of the war—in secret in German uniform, openly in Spain, France, and Russia. Into the standoff come new killing tools, from tanks to bazookas. In the Pacific, Japan prepares bombs filled with macabre biological concoctions to be dropped on Hawaii.

For the U.S., the only enemy is Japan, as there has been no casus belli for America in Europe. Then Hitler becomes desperate and declares war on the United States. But is it too late? His own people are rising up in revolt. The German military may have to put down the violence, even perhaps bomb its own cities.

In this epic drama, real men and women are shaped by the carnage, and their individual acts in turn shape history: a Czech sniper fighting with the Republicans in Spain changes the war almost single-handedly. In Philadelphia, an American woman meets a scientist who reveals a momentous secret.

Drawing on the gritty, personal reality of war and on a cast of unforgettable characters, Harry Turtledove has written an alternate history that intrigues, fascinates, and astounds.

## **Praise for Harry Turtledove**

"If you like alternate histories, you're going to like this series a lot."—*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

"Turtledove is the standard-bearer for alternate history."—*USA Today*

### *Coup d'Etat*

"This is what alternative history is all about."—*Historical Novel Society*

### *The Big Switch*

"The Hugo Award winner continues to delight in exploring the world of 'what if?'"—*Library Journal*

### *West and East*

"There's plenty to satisfy fans of military strategy, tactics, and armaments."—*Publishers Weekly*

### *Hitler's War*

“Turtledove is always good, but this return to World War II . . . is genuinely brilliant. . . . The characterizations in particular bring the book to extraordinary life.”—*Booklist*

## **Last Orders Details**

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Author : Harry Turtledove

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## **From Reader Review Last Orders for online ebook**

### **Hank says**

I was disappointed that Turtledove seemed in a hurry to end this novel and, as a result, did not "close the loop" for a number of characters in the six-novel series. He also failed to make clear what happened after Hitler's death at the hands of some of his own military leaders beyond some discussion of retreats here and there in Europe. I had the impression that Turtledove just wanted to get this last book in the series over with and wasn't very particular about making it compelling or even consistently interesting.

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### **Alexander Seifert says**

Take a look at my review for the fifth book in this series. Turtledove fails to address most of the issues I had, and it's clear at this point I just read this because I'd read the previous books. It's still not a truly awful book, but it felt more like a chore to read this than anything else.

Much like the show 'How I Met Your Mother,' I limped along through the degrading storytelling just because I wanted to reach the end, and just like that show, Turtledove left me with a bitter and somewhat predictable taste in my mouth.

There's no real closure here, and it almost seems like there should be another book.

I hope not.

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### **Lucky Kearns says**

Let me say 1st that Harry Turtledove is my favorite author by far.

However, after finishing "Last Orders", I am quite disappointed. When compared to the "Timeline 191 Series", it was terrible. Several plot points were easily predictable. Not to mention, the action was limited, and several characters were incredibly boring, such as Hideki Fujita.

What i consider to be the biggest tragedy, is that some of the best characters (Adi Stoss, Vaclav Jezek, Julius Lemp, & Peter McGill), never got a conclusive end.

It was a Sopranos style ending. The only good part is, is that it easily leaves open the possibility for a sequel.

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### **Robert says**

When I first heard the announcement for The War That Came Early series, I was extremely excited. After all, Turtledove, the master of alternative history would finally be focusing on a World War II story that involved it starting early. I was left wondering all of the different scenarios that could possibly take place, considering

my own love for alternative history stories. There was a great deal of potential to be had.

Instead, the story was fairly predictable throughout the entire series with a couple of good twists here or there. The story felt more of a rehash of World War I than anything else. Turtledove's prose varies from me depending on the series or even the book. He has a strong writing style that I've come to appreciate (otherwise I wouldn't have read so many of his books) and he has his creative moments.

*Last Orders* feels more of a lackluster effort and going through the motions more than anything. I was waiting for the real action to pick up or something to happen that wasn't completely mundane or predictable. Unfortunately, that moment never came. *Last Orders* is not the worst alternative history book I've read by far, but it's certainly not some of Turtledove's best work. Although I suppose it is only fitting that I feel the last book in this series didn't live up to the potential of it. If you've gotten this far in the series, I suggest finishing it since it would only take you an afternoon to read.

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### **Patrick DiJusto says**

It's Harry Turtledove, so you know what you're going to get: a multi-threaded narrative, told in meticulous detail, usually from the "lower" point of view -- infantry privates, air force mechanics, refugees, housewives, etc. The soldiers develop new ways of cursing, most of the female characters discover inner strength they never knew they had - except for that one female character who always knew she had it. They all work toward one goal -- getting themselves out of this horrible situation they're in. In this book, that's a World War II that started in 1938 instead of 1939.

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### **Mark says**

Harry Turtledove's "The War That Came Early" series has suffered from two major flaws: a lack of plot development and a limited and repetitive perspective on events. Over five books, the grinding nature of a drawn-out stalemate has been viewed from the perspective of a dozen or so characters. Because most of them are ordinary soldiers, what the reader has gotten was a lot of the day-to-day monotony of combat, with the experiences basically interchangeable.

As this is the final volume of the series Turtledove has been forced to address the first of these flaws. With a need to wrap up events he gives developments an impetus that they had been lacking until now. Things actually start to *happen*, even if it does so in a rather boring and predictable manner. The improvement, though, might have been even more noticeable had he been able to draw upon a wider range of perspectives, but the fact that he still draws from the same limited range of experiences means that the problem with repetition still holds, as larger events are only told through gossip and radio reports. It's all a far cry of what Turtledove accomplished with his previous series (such as his Timeline-191 decalogy), and left me with the impression that he is just going through the motions at this point.

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### **Nachman Kataczinsky says**

Typical Turtledove. Everything is from the point of view of the little guys and written, purportedly, in their language. This is not too bad.

The inexplicable history is extremely annoying. I still can't see why the Japanese would attack the Soviets - there is nothing they really need in Siberia - and how the Soviets didn't beta them up, which they did easily in reality.

Why id the U.S. contending with biological warfare and not taking Midway. I reality the Japanese experimented with biologicals but never dared using them.

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### **Georgy\_kovacs says**

This is the book I liked more from the series, although I feel Turtledove ran out of ideas at the end... The final chapters seem disconnected and it seemed to me they were a missed opportunity. Without spoilers, let me just say that the fate of Japan is left unfinished, and that the style of telling the story through their protagonist seriously limited the story. Turtledove painted himself into a corner. Although he made the most of it - a good story, but it did not reach its full potential.

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### **Jim says**

I have read A LOT of Harry Turtledove as I have been a long-time fan of alternate history. And the "what-if" here is a good one. What if WWII started a year earlier-over Czechoslovakia rather than Poland? But Turtledove is so plodding in developing the story, it got painful. He had a dozen different characters when it should have been more like six. Overall, disappointing and not up to the level of his other series. Anyway, he winds up the story in a very rushed manner after dragging it out over 5 books- or was it 6? Guess I'm a real fan, as I stuck it out!

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### **Steven Lee says**

Oh Harry Turtledove...

Harry Turtledove was one of my favourite authors for many years. I am a voracious reader and a good deal of the credit goes to him. When I was in middle school I picked up one of his books and since then I've been reading his books and spread to other series.

As I became a more sophisticated reader Turtledove's shortcomings as a writer became more obvious. As the sixth and final book in the series we pick up largely where we left off. The French and British are bogged down in France/Belgium. The Russians are inexorably pushing forward. Japan is gradually losing ground to the Americans as the juggernaut moves towards them.

The series plodded along with somewhat uninteresting twists, but the last half or third of this novel was genuinely interesting, in my opinion. Tensions within Germany explode into civil war between the Nazis and a coup led by the officer corps. Hitler and senior Nazis are killed or arrested. The civilian population, after years of unsuccessful war, are not so enamored with their one-party state. The civil war ends relatively quickly and leads to a peace process and a very different Europe. Likewise the Spanish Civil War ends with a leftist victory for better and for worse.

The world events and ideas are interesting and kept me turning pages at the end, but the characters and

writing remained dismal at worst and adequate at best. The characters all have their own cliches that Turtledove revisits again and again. The life of a front line soldier isn't so different... and not so interesting after six of these books (and many similar others). Turtledove needs to focus on characters. I can rarely offer distinctive features of a given character outside of their nation, rank and service branch. This is probably just a product of him pumping out two of these books a year. The concluding section was far better than most of the middle books of this series. I am not sure I could recommend it for anyone but the most diehard of Turtledove fans.

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### **Dazz says**

As a huge fan of alternative history, I have looked forward to getting my hands on some of Turtledove's work. Perhaps this was a weird one to start with, but I'm not really sure what I am reading? The writing is well crafted, but it just seems like an aimless meandering hodgepodge. Like a dozen miniature versions of AQotWF woven together. For mine, Alternative history has to be about the "Big Picture." Using it as vehicle to explain that war is hell nomatter who you're fighting, just seems pointless.

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### **Karen Ford says**

Solid conclusion to the war in Europe in the alternate history of the conflict told through this series of novels. The final one follows the formula of keeping up with several (actually a pretty full cast) characters as they fight and sometimes are killed on both sides of several conflicts and on the home front. Most of the action takes place in Europe, where England and France face Germany in the West and Russia takes on the Nazi regime in the east. The United States, meanwhile, has its hands full in the Pacific as they try to retake islands captured by Japan, who have launched a revolutionary tactic - germ warfare - against Hawaii. There is also the nasty civil war in Spain that has dragged on through the start of war between the major powers.

The author has followed this formula through several series, and I have enjoyed seeing what happens to the characters as they go from book to book and sometimes not, as it is pointed out, in war people die.

Recommended for both history and alternate history fans alike.

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### **Jeff Chase says**

The final entry in a six volume set that could have been told in two or three.

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### **Ronald Tobin says**

This was a disappointing end to a disappointing series that really had a lot of promise. Turtledove is capable of great works in alternate history, however this one was not even close. It starts with Germany now clearly on the ropes. The civilian population is growing restive, with outright revolts happening in some cities. The Russian Front is tottering and the Hungarian and Romanian troops are not proving to be effective allies. So,

Hitler's 'great plan' to reinvigorate the war effort is to declare war on the United States, who up until now have only been fighting the Japanese. When the book starts the Japanese still have Midway and still drop disease vectors on Oahu on occasion. The US Marines finally take Midway back, but then the garrison cannot leave or be reinforced because of the existence of said germ warfare. The book ends with these poor saps still being there.

The ending of the war in Europe is somewhat predictable. Suffice it to say a cabal of German generals get fed up with Hitler and do away with him. The negotiated peace may sound far fetched, but in this alternate reality I could see it.

A few reviewers are mentioning the possibility of one more book in this series to wrap up Japan. I hope that doesn't happen. It is time for this series to close.

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## **Christopher says**

### World War 1.5

War is hell. And sloooooowwww. Turtledove's final volume in his "War That Came Early" series began with the premise of Hitler launching a preemptive strike into Czechoslovakia to take the Sudetenland (rather than it being given to him at Munich). After a couple of odd twists (France and England switching sides to JOIN Hitler against the Soviets and a military coup in England to bring things back to "normal") we're finally at the end.

The book ends with a whimper rather than a bang. Several of the conflicts are either still ongoing (Japan/Soviets) or just kind of peter out (Spanish Civil War). Even the major European conflict against the Nazis ends in a less than dramatic fashion.

While there's a coup against Hitler, we learn of it secondhand over the radio and it removes nearly all the dramatic tension.

That's been my biggest problem with this series is that that's just no tension. HT boxes himself in by writing almost exclusively from the POVs of common soldiers against whom events happen. It makes them feel less like actors than billiard balls being bounced around a table.

One problem is that they don't bounce very far...the books read and FEEL like stalemates where no real movement across fronts happen. Hence it's more like WW1.5 rather than WWII.

As another reviewer mentioned, a six book series that could/should have been told in 3.

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