



Germanica

Robert Conroy

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Best-selling alternate history master Robert Conroy returns to World War II, this time for a dangerous last stand of the Nazis in the heart of the Alps.

GERMANICA, ÜBER ALLES!

Deep in the heart of Europe's Alps in the redoubt called Germanica, Nazi propaganda master Josef Goebbels and a battalion of Nazi zealots hold out against a frantic final Allied push to end World War II. With Churchill losing his election, De Gaulle consolidating his rule over a newly liberated France, and Stalin asserting his own nefarious land-grab in Eastern Germany, only America, led by its untried new president Harry Truman, remains to face the toughest of Nazi warriors as they hunker down for a bitter fight to the last man.

Goebbels knows that if he can hold out just a bit longer, the war weary of the Western nations will back away from unconditional surrender for Germany, and he and his zealots can remain in power never to answer for their war crimes, and able prepare for the moment when their hateful Nazi ideology is ready once again to rise from its alpine grave and strike at the heart of humanity!

But there are Americans and a few stalwart Europeans just as determined to put a final stake in the Nazi heart. It is now up to heroes in the making such as newly minted O.S.S. operative Ernie Janek, commando Captain Scott Tanner, and formerly enslaved Czech "Jew" Lena Bobek, to bring down the dark Nazi menace growing like a cancer in the mountainous heart of the continent..

Germanica Details

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Author : Robert Conroy

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From Reader Review Germanica for online ebook

Not Henry G says

The final alternate history novel by Robert Conroy (rest in peace) is, I'm happy to report, excellent. The book is fast-paced, with lots of battles and skirmishes. We get to see POVs from high-ranking people like Truman and Goebbels to learn the plans for battle, as well as grunts to see those plans clash in the battles.

The characters were great, even the female ones (one of his weaknesses). This time around the women were useful in believable ways, like translators.

I want to say I have a complain, but it's really not, but it felt like the book was going to be part of a series because the last fourth or so felt a bit changed. It would have been amazing if that's what Mr. Conroy was going for, a post-war world with an existing, if small and weak, Nazi state.

I was a little afraid his last novel would be a dud like Liberty 1784 (Custer in Chains was good, but nothing great), but I'm extremely happy to inform it's a great novel with great characters and fast-paced action.

Ron says

Germanica is an alternate history take on the end of World War II that postulates that Hitler authorized an Alpine redoubt for Germany's final stand. Convoy follows his usual practice of telling the tale through just a few characters with some additional historical filler. There is a decent amount of action, but plenty of main character development to keep the reader's interest. A nice AH is what Germanica turned out to be.

Theresa says

This alternative World War II novel takes place in 1945 after Hitler's death and just prior to the bombing of Japan. The last Nazi holdouts have moved their base to the Bavarian Alps and named it Germanica. The population is rife with high-ranking officers and almost non-existent with fighting men and equipment. Through a series of character sketches, Conroy tells the stories of fascinating people on both sides of the conflict. This novel gives you a very different view of war than the newsreels and movies that were made during that time period. My only quibble is that the epilogue didn't tell "the rest of the story" for more characters. Psst...the evil Nazi general got it in the end...

Sean Smart says

It was okay, about what you expect from Conroy. Not his best but not bad. Sad he's gone now and only one more book to go

Steven Raszewski says

I always liked Conroy's stuff. Read just about everything he wrote. This one is my favorite. All his works are entertaining, plausible and realistic, and quick reads.

Pat says

A highly unlikely scenario, but the takeoff point from WW2 history is engaging and entertaining, as always with Conroy's alternate histories. Enjoyed it very much.

Kevin Thomas Barnes says

Sad to think that this could have happened. Mr. Conroy has a special gift in dreaming this stuff up. I felt the story flowed nicely and was believable.

Peter says

This author has a real bizarre way of writing AH, if he doesn't like or cannot find a reason for a country not to be apart of the story line he one sentence them away.

Matt Mitrovich says

Originally posted here: <http://amazingstoriesmag.com/2015/10/...>

The passing of Robert Conroy at the end of 2014 was a blow to the alternate history community as he was one of the most prolific authors in the genre (next to Harry Turtledove). Although some have criticized the late author for his implausible alternate histories, many people have credited him with introducing them to alternate history. Having never read any of his novels, I really couldn't comment on him as an author, but I made it a point to pick up one of his books as soon as I could since he was obviously important to many alternate historians. So when Germanica came out and it was suggested as a possible candidate for a 2015 Sidewise nomination, I decided to check it out.

The story begins with the Battle of the Bulge. Once it became clear that Germany would be unable to force the Allies to the negotiating table, Hitler orders the construction of the Alpine Redoubt as a last ditch attempt to save the Third Reich. Albert Speer works his magic and creates tunnels in the German Alps to house the elite of Hitler's government and the last of the Germany army to defend them. The plan is simple, hold out long enough until the Allies become tired of war and negotiate peace, allowing for the Nazis to retake control of Germany again in the future. Joseph Goebbels, as the highest ranking Nazi officer at the redoubt, finds himself the new Fuhrer after kills himself and declares a "Republic of Germanica" that announces its independence from Germany. Meanwhile, American politicians and generals fear that they may not be able to take the redoubt as they only have inexperienced troops nearby to attack who are more interested in going home than risking their lives. Meanwhile, there is a growing anti-war movement in America, while Switzerland is warning the Allies not to bomb near their borders. From the eyes of Americans, Germans and others, we get a glimpse at the alternate lead-up to VE-Day.

In terms of alternate history, Germanica is rather weak. From what my preliminary research can tell, things like the Alpine Redoubt and Werwolf (which is also carried out in this alternate history) were more propaganda than real military plans. The purpose of the Alpine Redoubt it seems was just to divert Allied forces from other fronts (and it was successful in doing that) and never really had the support of the Nazi high command who considered talk of such a program as defeatism. Werwolf did get off the ground...sort of. The werewolves were originally planned to be highly trained commandos who would cause chaos behind enemy lines, but as soldiers and equipment were needed elsewhere, they became nothing more than Hitler Youth members instructed to kill themselves and take as many enemies as they could with them.

How numerous the werewolves were is debatable. Some historians liken them to the Iraq insurgency while others argue most of the attacks credited to them were probably just diehard Nazis working alone and not part of any post-war organized resistance. So its unlikely the Nazis ever took either of these ideas seriously and even if they did, I find it implausible that they could have made realistic attempts to carry them out as late as January 1945. Furthermore, Germanica focuses mostly on the short-term changes of such a desperate attempt to stave out utter defeat, without looking into the mid- to long-term consequences of how history could change (except for the implication that a few more Nazis were either captured or made it to Argentina).

What really bothered me about Germanica, however, was how badly it was written. For example, take a look at this quote:

Ernie Janek had gone for an evening's walk. He was take a break from the intense physical training at the embassy and decide that a beer was in order. Previously he'd gone to a tavern a few blocks away, and decided that a visit to a new one was in order.

I can think of a few English teachers who would knock a few points off for using such a repetitive phrase and their were many instances of that and other grammar/spelling errors throughout the book that I won't bore you all by showing. I will say though that this wasn't a review copy. I purchased this book, which is being sold right now as is, so Germanica can't hide behind the "its a review copy" typo defense.

There are other of odd bits of writing to talk about, such as:

Each young man had a strange patch on his shoulder. It was a stylized animal face with flaming red eyes..."I sincerely hope I'm wrong, but it sure looks like a nightmare version of a werewolf."

That is kind of a stretch isn't it? The only thing the reader was told was that it was an "animal face with flaming red eyes". Why would the character jump to the conclusion that it is a werewolf instead of just a wolf? If it was a wolf-like creature on hind legs, then yeah, I would see a werewolf too, but if the only thing I see is the face I'm going to go with it being a wolf. Also why "nightmare version of a werewolf"? Is there a happy-go-lucky version of a werewolf I am not aware of?

There were also plenty of the dreaded "As You Know, Bob" moments. Take this scene, for example, where Goebbels promotes a loyal SS officer:

"It has occurred to me that you do not have enough rank to do your job properly. Therefore, I am promoting you to the temporary rank of SS-Brigadefuhrer. I understand it is equivalent to being a brigadier general in the American army."

Why did he say that? Goebbels and the officer should know that, so there was no reason to say it. Even if the SS officer did not know that, who cares? It was completely unnecessary. The reader may not know it, but that's no excuse for such clunky dialogue. In fact a lot of the dialogue in Germanica was weirdly stilted ("I have other reasons for going with you and they are important and personal") and not what I would expect from an award-winning author.

Then there was the odd sex scenes scattered throughout the book, including many brutal acts against women or descriptions of them. It was actually kind of uncomfortable and not handled well. The worst scene, however, was just a discussion of rape between a son and his parents who were hiding out at the Redoubt. Here are a few choice lines.

“And don’t forget, I did rape and enslave that Jewess, Lena. If she’s still alive, she could testify against me.”

“By the way, Father, how was she?”

Gustav laughed harshly. “Inert and as passionate as a large piece of meat. You didn’t miss much...”

“Yes, and by the way, what does your sister think about this?”

Anton laughed. “My precious little sister is too busy screwing her brains out with that Hans Gruber boy who think he’s a Werewolf”.

Who the hell talks like that to their parents or their kid? I know there Nazis and the bad guys, but this doesn’t seem realistic at all. These are comic book villains, not real people. It was just ridiculously silly. I couldn’t even take it seriously.

Because I know Conroy has a lot of fans I just want to state I am not trying to attack the author personally. Germanica did have its moments. The aforementioned Lena character was likable and had a good story arc, while I thought Conroy did a good job capturing the personality of Harry Truman. Additionally, while I did feel the story had a lot of similarities with Harry Turtledove’s *The Man with the Iron Heart*, it lacked the Iraq War political metaphor, so it gets points for that. More importantly, this reads more like a rough draft of a story that hasn’t been looked at by an editor. To be fair, maybe that’s exactly what this book is. It came out after Conroy’s death and the editors at Baen could have been unable or unwilling to make changes to the copy they had. If that’s the case, shame on them for publishing something with Conroy’s name on it that wasn’t ready to be published. If not, then I really don’t see the appeal of Conroy.

Perhaps my first foray into the works of Robert Conroy should have been a book other than *Germanica*. Many people have recommended some of his earlier works to me, but it may be a while before I take a look at them. So my final thought on *Germanica* is that it’s a bad book, but I was entertained by it in a “so bad, it’s good” kind of way. Although there were plenty of times I wanted to stop reading, I felt compelled to finish just to see what crazy thing Conroy would write about next. So if you want to read a really absurd alternate history, check out Conroy’s *Germanica*, but I can think of several other books I would rather you read first instead.

Bookwraiths says

Originally reviewed at [Bookwraiths Reviews](#).

This final alternate history novel from the now deceased Robert Conroy is built around the Third Reich having a National Redoubt at the end of World War II. The idea (as actually proposed by Heinrich Himmler but rejected by Hitler in real world history) was for an Alpine Fortress to be constructed in an area encompassing southern Bavaria and western Austria, so that if the tides of war went against the Nazis, then the government and armed forces could retreat there and attempt to hold out against all comers until a resurgence of National Socialism could take place. And as a theme for an alternate history novel, this really

held a lot of promise.

The action starts right away with Hitler dispatching Josef Goebbels, numerous Nazi zealots, and German military forces (mainly SS-type troops) to the National Redoubt after the Battle of the Bulge. With the Russian advance growing closer to Berlin and plans already in place for Nazis to begin committing suicide, Goebbels is delighted to be sent away to keep the flame of National Socialism burning brightly.

Meanwhile, the Allies immediately become aware of the unusual movement of troops and material away from the north and into the Alps. This activity setting off alarms with Dwight Eisenhower, who realizes that he must change tactics to keep the Nazis from actually bunkering down in the Alps, where their removal would be terribly difficult and horribly expensive in casualties. A potential crisis made more pressing since the Allied populations are war-weary and the United States must still deal with the Japanese.

Even as Goebbels and Eisenhower make decisions and take actions that will either extend or shorten World War II, numerous normal grunts are caught up in it all. Heroes like new O.S.S. operative Ernie Janek, commando Captain Scott Tanner, and Jewish Czech Lena Bobek. Each of these people doing their individual part in trying to destroy the menace of the Nazis before it can hide itself in the Alps and begin to fester in the rugged heart of the European continent.

Like all Conroy's novels, this story uses a blend of historical figures like Josef Goebbels and Dwight Eisenhower, regular military grunts, and some war-time romances to move the plot forward from beginning to its ultimate end. There is tons of military action; most of it plausible and well thought out. And, for military history enthusiasts, this is a serviceable and entertaining novel, but it does have problems.

My main criticism of *Germanica* is that it lacks any real suspense and has a cast of cardboard cutout characters. The narrative progressing from point a to point b just as you'd expect with the good guys doing good things at just the right time to save the day and the bad guys doing bad things at the wrong time to help cause their inevitable defeat. That sort of simple story isn't a bad thing necessarily – if the author provides a few twists to liven things up. Conroy, however, does not do that, and the story suffers for it.

To sum up, as his final alternate history work, this isn't Conroy's best, but it is well worth savoring by his fans – if for no other reason than to pay respects to a wonderful writer taken too soon from this world.

I received this book from Baen in return for a honest review. The opinion you have read has not been influenced by anyone and is my opinion alone.

Allen McDonnell says

When I learned just two days ago that one of my favorite authors, Robert Conroy, died of cancer December 30, 2015 I was shocked. I had looked forward to many more novels from him though I had little time to read over the last few months. When I learned of his loss I went to Amazon and read the reader reviews of his last few novels and this one had the best rating.

I really enjoyed this novel, though it bogged down for a chapter around the three quarters mark. Fortunately it picked back up and finished strong. I only wish I had read it sooner, but life got in the way.

The characters are well developed. There are enough viewpoints to give a full picture of the events in the main plot, but not so many that they all start blending together and lack depth. This scenario is plausible though obviously history took a different turn in the real world. My only complaint about the historic backdrop is that events outside the main plot proceeded exactly as they did in history, unaffected by the changed circumstances developed in the story. It seems unlikely to me that historical figures were predestined to die on the same dates, and that lucky accidents of war like the failure of the Ramagen bridge sabotage still take place exactly as they did historically weeks and months after the changes caused by the main plot.

The book was a quick read for me, starting early morning on the 16th and finishing early this morning just 48 hours later. Highly recommended for fans of Robert Conroy or World War II fiction.

Ryan H. says

Great imagination

This book has the author's usual grammatical mistakes, but overall I enjoyed it. I have now read all of Conroy's books and must find another author that I enjoy.

Nigel Brand says

An entertaining 'what if'

I have enjoyed many of Robert Conroy's books. In a sense he is like a younger Harry Turtledove or WEB Griffin, but more concise.

Germanica assumes that the German High Command established a redoubt in the Alps, from which to continue the war after the fall of Berlin. The Allies feared exactly this although the Germans historically dismissed the idea as impractical. The book has some interesting characters, including a Jewish woman enslaved by a middle-class German family distinguished only by their ordinariness; an appropriately nasty SS officer; and a variety of Americans led by a fighter pilot who becomes an OSS agent after being shot down over Switzerland.

I wondered if the author had played a strategic WW2 game which outlined the action.

The politics involved in dealing with the neutral Swiss are interesting and ring true. Discussions in the White House seem less convincing. Anti-war sentiments in the US were quite strong for much of the war, but news about them was censored, for obvious reasons.

A couple of maps would have been helpful. I know publishers hate them and they are tiresome to draw but, given geography is central to the plot, it would have helped.

This book will appeal to many fans of alternate historical fiction.

Nick says

I picked this ARC up on the basis of a weakfish recommendation from a colleague, and now I understand why the recommendation was weakish. It is technically well-crafted, and the fictional characters central to the story are interesting and well-developed. There were a few clichéd moments, including one character who is blatantly introduced in order to die dramatically a few pages later, but the death is so off-hand that it barely registers. Still, the character interactions are generally good.

It's the alternate history aspect of the story that is weak.

The basic premise is that the Nazis use various means to drag out the end of the war in Europe, based on things that they were actually working on at one point or another.

As a reader, my problem was that at several points in the book, the Nazi hierarchy went into hand-rubbing glee over some new twist in their plans to which I, as a reader, had an immediate reaction of "but that won't work." In each of those cases, it didn't. For a good "what if" scenario, there has to be some convincing reason why the changes might work, and that the results might matter. Here, they didn't.

Worse, the greatest suspenseful moments of the story HAD NO PAYOFF!!!

The V-1 launch, the mysterious disappearance of Dr. Heisenberg and other such things had disappointing resolutions, if any.

Worse, the V-1 sequence seemed very contrived, since a V-1 just launching should have been VERY interceptable by the American fighters as described. Many of the V-1s were shot down by much slower planes.

So, excellent characterization, and a few good action segments, and some fun stuff involving Allen Dulles and the O.S.S.

Bjoern says

If this had stayed purely with the military side of things, this could have been an outstanding book. I mean the formula works well (fans of the genre will know what i mean... multiple PoV characters playing roundrobin to let us see as many as possible theaters / decisions / important moments as possible... but this is also a disguised espionage novel and there the shortcomings begin... the german anti-espionage effort is handed pretty early on to a maniacal SS colonel/brigadier (Conroy refuses "for clarity" to use the SS name scheme with Sturmbannführern and such things and also uses english titles for german army ranks fwiw) which leads to very ugly scenes and a lot of hateful diatribes being vented throughout the books 450 pages... And the american efforts to spy on the Alpine redout out of Switzerland take up a lot of space while ending up a lot like Hogan's Heroes or similar low brow television depictions of spywork... I liked the characters, but their actions were awfully amateurish and unbelievable in front of the historical background. I can't say much about their spy leader, Allan Dulles of later CIA fame, but i fear he has been pretty butchered and drawn into the grotesque for his handling of this "spy network"...

Then we've got the american Captain and intelligence analyst for the Division commander tasked with crossing the Rhine, cutting off german troops from the alps and in the End attack and conquer the main bridgehead / capital city of the remaining redoubt (Bregenz at the shore of Lake Constance/ Bodensee) who suffers from barely healed trenchfeet and is advised to not get his feet wet, only to end up in every single amphibian maneuver of this phase of the war... Bravo, that's coincidentally funny... maybe. Sometimes. For certain people. On the german Side, to reduce a bit the impact of our "dear" BDSM-enthusiastic SS general, the NSDAP Party Bonze spouting flaming rhetoric about "the cause" and a weird young boy "dying" to become one of the Werewolf Partisans all together heaping up a giant slaughterbill of disgusting statements

and ideologically colored actions, we end up with a couple of Landsers enjoying to talk about surrendering but never really coming around to it until the war is over anyway. In the beginning that wasn't even bad, but halfway through their storyline their superior joins them in seditious talk and from then on it's handled as if it were comedic relief... which feels a bit ... awkward. After all it's only being shot in the back of your head that may lurk behind the next meeting with any upright Nazi as "reward"...

And then there is the timing question... At the beginning it starts out solidly and even concentrates mostly on "real war issues" showing the end of the Battle of the Bulge and then going on with the Rhine Crossing (not Remagen but south of Freiburg at the Upper Rhine almost adjacent to Switzerland), after that we see a lot of refugees and retreating troops. After Germanica (the name for the Alpine Redoubt to distinguish it from "occupied Germany") is established things slow down a lot, with the focus going over to a shot down pilot who after being shot down over Swiss territory is interred and then hired by the OSS. And then, after maybe 2/3 of the story it suddenly starts to get hurried and just ticks off things until it very hastily ends in a confusing description of a big final battle so all could be brought to an end still in 1945... basically the development of Suspense is at first a nice solid EKG graph only to then after 70% to get a stroke and jump erratically all over the place... Which probably deserves the title of biggest disappointment in this story. Everything else is kind of forgivable... weak moments for some characters, pointless PoV chapters ending nowhere and adding little to the realism or storytelling of the novel and a weird mix out of gory Nazi horrors and misplaced humor all at least have SOME good things, but the timing of the story arc simply is bad. Giving up on the two worst cul-de-sac pov chapters (the Tank commander and the Landing boat guy that only gets one appearance and is next mentioned to lie dying on his boat's floor) and using that to better balance the middle to end bits so it doesn't feel like space to tell it properly was missing and as if the Author suddenly remembered he had had a fixed end date for his story in mind all the time but never got around to tell it to us before that moment, would have vastly improved on that front. Or maybe not making the "spies" in Switzerland quite so soap opera like and more like actual OSS adventures in real WW II ?
