



The Struggle for Europe

Chester Wilmot

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Chester Wilmot's *The Struggle for Europe* is the most highly regarded single-volume history of the Second World War in Europe. The pattern of post-war Europe, he maintains, was determined during the fighting; he sees the shaping of events through a study of wartime diplomacy and strategy and the impact on wartime policies of the personalities of the statesmen and generals with whom the decisions lay.

The Struggle for Europe Details

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From Reader Review *The Struggle for Europe* for online ebook

Badger says

A brilliant book that sparked my lifetime's interest in the history of the Second World War. I was probably fifteen when I read it (first published in 1952) and I was thrilled by how exciting history could be.

The title is a little misleading, since it is only concerned with the preparations for D Day and the progress of the war in Western Europe up to the German surrender, but my goodness, this is how history *should* be written.

One of my all time favourites.

Michael says

A must-read if you want to understand WWII in Europe

Andrew Dagleish says

A full story of the second world war in Europe from before the start to after the end. Detailing all the events and strategies as they seemed at the time as well as with how they appeared shortly after the war. I won't spoil the ending for anyone who hasn't read it though.

Keith says

More than 60 years ago war correspondent Chester Wilmot wrote this, a book still regarded as among the best one volume treatments of this horrendous conflict. There are certainly details that are passed over quickly but this is an excellent starting point from which to grasp the origins and ultimate outcome of World War Two. Recommended.

Shaun Appleby says

A reliable, balanced and comprehensive history of Allied military activities in North Europe from D-day to VE Day, Wilmot's engaging and readable account benefits from first-person access to a wide variety of significant actors in near real-time to the events he narrates. Notably Wilmot takes on the sometime role of public defender for Montgomery's reputation and makes a credible argument for the Field Marshal's claim to a share of the Normandy breakout victory rather than approbation for heavy losses at Caen. Wilmot's cautious advocacy for Montgomery's subsequent operations on the Rhine, however, and his balanced and insightful account of the often acrimonious competition for resources among Allied commanders does little to enhance anyone's reputation save that of the beleaguered Eisenhower; which goes a long way toward

explaining the Supreme Commander's subsequent political apotheosis.

Wilmot has a gift, enhanced in the original edition by excellent and detailed maps, for forensic examination of the critical military operations where events hinged on a single engagement or decision; competent narratives with varied and impressive sourcing and ample footnotes. One feels a satisfying sense of the actual ebb and flow of events on the field at important turning points.

An essential volume on the European theatre it is also a ripping good yarn in Wilmot's capable hands.

Jamie Campbell says

Probably the grand daddy of all such books that followed. Wilmott's maps are first class. His conclusions are sound. The narrative is also a breeze compared with Bradley, Eisenhower, Montgomery et. al.

His analysis of Eisenhower's broad front cf Montgomery's thrust is interesting. Wilmott doesn't go as far as Broke goes (in calling Montgomery out); but to my mind he comes down against Eisenhower.

Post B of B we are over run by small unit books.

I was glad to have read Wilmott first; and some years prior to B of B - as it helped to place the personal narratives in B of B, and other of its ilk, within the wider scope of the west.

Carl says

An excellent, if a little outdated, account of the Allied invasion of Europe

AskHistorians says

A detailed account of the European theater during World War II, starting with the allied preparations for D-Day, subsequent invasion of Normandy, and major battles / strategies of the rest of the war.

William says

Trying to describe WWII in one volume is like trying to pack 10 pounds of substance into a five-pound bag. Chester Wilmot pulls it off, surprisingly offering a comprehensive examination of WWII in Europe less than 10 years after the conflict ended.

American readers may find Wilmot's analysis off-putting, given its anglo-centric focus. To gain a good understanding of the war, one cannot limit reading to just those books with an American viewpoint. The war

would be a struggle for the allies to develop a decisive superiority focused against a portion of the German line, obtain a breakthrough, then exploit through the gap to hasten Germany's defeat. That this strategy was not done under Field Marshall Montgomery's guidance is a tragedy, according to Wilmot.

Realistically, it is politically impossible to argue for the British strategy, given the preponderant contribution the US made on the western front. But that does not discourage Wilmot from sticking to his guns. His stubborn defense of Montgomery's approach, vs. Eisenhower's broad front strategy, illuminates the logic behind the British position, showing its rationality where Americans perceive Churchillian churlishness.

Geoffrey Macharia says

One of the best books I have ever read, Its narration of military history is perfect. It is both intriguing as well as entertaining. It is forthright and well-researched. It is in a league of one.
