



Eyewitness to History: World War II

Stephen W. Sears

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". . . the greatest war of all time told as it is best told - by the people who lived it." - The Washington Post

All first-person accounts of great events have their own fascination, but the editors of American Heritage have discovered that people writing about World War II seem to tell their own story with particular passion and eloquence. That is one reason American Heritage has published so many of them - and why noted military historian Stephen W. Sears has selected the most compelling.

The result of his search is a uniquely moving and valuable anthology - a series of personal histories that, marshaled together, become an intimate history of the Second World War.

Here is Edward Beach, the highly decorated submarine skipper and author of *Run Silent, Run Deep*, recalling what it was like to be sent into hostile waters with torpedoes that didn't work; Charles Cawthon recounts the landing at Normandy Beach in a restrained and poetic narrative whose quiet humor does nothing to blunt the savagery of the experience; General James Gavin tells of the jump into Sicily and of a battle fought that never should have been fought; Hughes Rudd watched the war from overhead in a flimsy spotter plane, his "Maytag Messerschmitt; and William Manchester remembers a particularly audacious and hilarious scam that a reckless Marine buddy played on the entire army.

Some of the stories are heartbreaking, some amusing, some horrifying, but every one of them - whether told by the women who hammered fighter planes together or the men who flew them - glows with hard-won experience.

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