



The Battle For France. 1940: Six Weeks Which Changed The World

Philip Warner

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Philip Warner has produced here a gripping account of the turbulent months of May and June 1940 and a story of courage, confusion and drama. With the perspective of history it interweaves a mass of new material, much of it revelatory, with the dramatic stories of those in the thick of action – who, regardless of rank or nationality, were taken by surprise at the speed and turn of events. Warner clarifies and personalises this crucial stage of the war, drawing on the personal accounts of ordinary people who knew only too well what was happening around them, and of those in authority – who often did not. We learn of the bizarre events that characterised this period: how the Allies captured (and ignored) the detailed plans for the invasion of Belgium and Holland – while the Germans decisively changed their strategy; how the German command halted Guderian's tanks twice because they could not believe their success – unwittingly assisting in the evacuation of Dunkirk; and how the British planned a re-invasion of France in the midst of their troops withdrawal. Contrary to popular belief, the battle of France did not end with Dunkirk. For the next three weeks there were fierce rearguard battles and another 209,000 soldiers were later evacuated. Ultimately this is a story of extraordinary bravery, the courage of ill-equipped and under-trained British forces and the unsung contribution of parts of the French forces. Warner makes sense of these events in an international and historical context too. He discusses the new role of tank divisions and dive bombers, fluctuating morale and reputations lost and won. He shows how the German victory mistakenly convinced Hitler that Russia would be as easily won, how Anglo-French relations were seriously damaged by the British destruction of the French Navy and the huge repercussions in Indo-China which eventually led to the Vietnam war.

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