

[PDF] Ivan's War: Life And Death In The Red Army, 1939-1945

Catherine MERRIDALE - pdf download free book

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Author: Catherine MERRIDALE

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Thirty million men and women served in the Red Army during WWII. Over eight million of them died. Living or dead, they have remained anonymous. This is partly due to the Soviet Union's policy of stressing the collective nature of its sacrifice and victory. It also reflects the continuing reluctance of most Soviet veterans to discuss their experiences—in sharp contrast to German survivors of the Eastern Front. Merridale, professor of history at the University of London, combines interviews, letters and diaries with research in previously closed official archives to present the first comprehensive portrait of the Red Army's fighters. She carefully details the soldiers' age and ethnic diversity, and she puts a human face on a fact demonstrated repeatedly by retired U.S. officer and Soviet military expert David Glantz: the Red Army learned from the

experience of its near-collapse in 1941, and by 1945 its soldiers were more than a match for their Wehrmacht opponents. Most poignantly, Merridale reveals that frontline soldiers increasingly hoped their sacrifices would bring about postwar reform—"Communism with a human face." What they got instead was a Stalinist crackdown—and a long silence, broken now by this outstanding book. (*Feb.*)
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From Doing research in the Soviet archives seems like a trying task, but critics revere the work Catherine Merridale did to prepare *Ivan's War*. The professor from Queen Mary, University of London, conducted over 200 interviews with Soviet veterans and visited major battle sites, but the most enlightening information came from tireless vetting of diaries, transcripts, and officers' reports. That Merridale can plait all this information into "an attempt to fathom war's meaning, effect and legacy" (*Foreign Affairs*) proves her acuity as a social historian, a skill she displayed previously with the admirable *Night of Stone* (2002). Only a curious absence of maps mars an otherwise compelling testament to these tragic, unsung warriors.

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