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978-0-521-88659-8 - The German Army and the Defence of the Reich: Military Doctrine and the Conduct of the Defensive Battle, 1918-1939

Matthias Strohn

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The German Army and the Defence of the Reich

Historical research on the German army of the interwar period has concentrated on the development of the so-called 'Blitzkrieg'. However, Matthias Strohn shows that until just a few years before the outbreak of the Second World War the German army, restricted by the terms of the Versailles Treaty, was too weak to launch an offensive war or even effectively repel an invader. Accordingly, the army focused instead primarily on planning a defensive war against superior enemies, especially France and Poland. Making extensive use of German archival sources, Strohn explores the development of military thought and doctrine for the defence of Germany and shows how these ideas were tested in war games and staff rides. His findings comprehensively revise our understanding of the German army in this period, shedding new light on the ideas of leading figures in the German military and how events, such as the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923, influenced military planning.

MATTHIAS STROHN teaches military history to army officer cadets and officers at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. He currently holds the rank of Captain in the German armed forces (*Bundeswehr*) reserve and is attached to the German staff college where he lectures on military history to international staff and German general staff officers.

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Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page vii
<i>List of maps</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
Introduction and Definitions	1
Part I: The foundations of defensive warfare in the interwar period	17
1 Defence doctrine before the First World War	19
2 The lessons of the First World War	36
3 Military planning in the aftermath of the First World War	63
Part II: The Seeckt era: Years of ignorance	87
4 Hans von Seeckt and the rebirth of the offensive	89
5 The manual <i>Führung und Gefecht der verbundenen Waffen</i> and the conduct of the defensive battle	107
Part III: Adapting to reality 1923–1933	131
6 Military thought after the occupation of the Ruhr	133
7 Civil–military co-operation	171
8 The manual <i>Truppenführung</i> and the increased importance of defence	185

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88659-8 - The German Army and the Defence of the Reich: Military Doctrine
and the Conduct of the Defensive Battle, 1918-1939
Matthias Strohn
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

vi	Contents	
	Part IV: Defensive warfare in the Third Reich 1933–1939	203
9	Political ideology versus military reality: Defensive warfare 1933–1936	205
10	The rebirth of offensive warfare 1936–1939	219
	Conclusion: The defensive battle in the Second World War and beyond	245
	<i>Appendix: Structure of Reichswehr ministry (army only) 1921–1935</i>	253
	<i>Bibliography</i>	254
	<i>Index</i>	275

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88659-8 - The German Army and the Defence of the Reich: Military Doctrine and the Conduct of the Defensive Battle, 1918-1939

Matthias Strohn

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of illustrations

2.1	The early days of trench warfare: Resting in a German trench near Ypres in 1915. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 183-R34686.	page 44
2.2	The reality of trench warfare that led to the defence in depth and the 'emptiness of the battlefield': Mount Kemmel in the Ypres salient in 1918. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 183-R05942.	53
6.1	The occupation of the Ruhr in 1923: French cavalry in the streets of Essen. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 183-R06992.	134
6.2	'No! You don't force me!' Poster calling for passive resistance during the Ruhr occupation. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. Plak 002-012-036.	136
6.3	<i>Reichswehr</i> exercise in Thuringia in 1925: Hans von Seeckt (second from right), Werner von Blomberg (fourth from right), Joachim von Stülpnagel (fifth from right, with cigarette). Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 136-B1049.	140
6.4	German tank dummies during an exercise in 1926. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 183-S51506.	159
6.5	An anti-tank gun dummy 'securing' a road during the 1932 <i>Reichswehr</i> exercise near Frankfurt/Oder. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 102-13869.	169
7.1	Reichswehrminister Wilhelm Groener (third from left) with his staff during the ' <i>Große Rahmenübung</i> ' exercise in Bavaria and Thuringia in 1930. On the far left is Kurt von Schleicher. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 146-2009-0098.	184
8.1	Ludwig Beck at his desk: photograph taken between 1930 and 1935. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 146III-286.	187

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88659-8 - The German Army and the Defence of the Reich: Military Doctrine
and the Conduct of the Defensive Battle, 1918-1939
Matthias Strohn
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	List of illustrations	
8.2	Soldiers of the 6th Company/73rd Infantry Regiment in in-depth defensive positions during the 1937 <i>Wehrmacht</i> exercise in Mecklenburg and Pomerania. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 136-B3491.	193
9.1	German infantry on the march during an exercise near the town of Brandenburg in 1934. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 102-03851A.	207
9.2	Pioneers establishing a roadblock during the exercise of the VI Army Corps on Lüneburg Heath in September 1935. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 102-17129.	209
10.1	Roadblock during the exercise of II Army Corps in 1936. The original caption slightly optimistically called this a ‘heavy roadblock against tanks’. Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv picture no. 183-S19539.	225

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88659-8 - The German Army and the Defence of the Reich: Military Doctrine
and the Conduct of the Defensive Battle, 1918-1939
Matthias Strohn
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

List of maps

Map 1	Germany and its territorial losses after the First World War.	<i>page</i> xii
Map 2	The German army and its administrative structure: The <i>Gruppenkommandos</i> and <i>Wehrkreise</i> .	xiii
Map 3	The disposition of German forces for an attack on Czechoslovakia according to the final plan from September 1938.	240

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88659-8 - The German Army and the Defence of the Reich: Military Doctrine and the Conduct of the Defensive Battle, 1918-1939

Matthias Strohn

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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978-0-521-88659-8 - The German Army and the Defence of the Reich: Military Doctrine and the Conduct of the Defensive Battle, 1918-1939

Matthias Strohn

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

xi

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Map 1 Germany and its territorial losses after the First World War.

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[More information](#)



Map 2 The German army and its administrative structure: The Gruppenkommandos and Wehrkreise.