The literature of the Second World War has emerged as an accomplished, moving, and challenging body of work, produced by writers as different as Norman Mailer and Virginia Woolf, Primo Levi and Ernest Hemingway, Jean-Paul Sartre and W. H. Auden. This Companion provides a comprehensive overview of the international literatures of the war: both those works that recorded or reflected experiences of the war as it happened, and those that tried to make sense of it afterwards. It surveys the writing produced in the major combatant nations (Britain and the Commonwealth, the USA, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, and the USSR), and explores its common themes. This book aims to supply the new reader with the essential knowledge and conceptual tools for reading the literature of World War II. With its chronology and guide to further reading, it will be an invaluable source of information and inspiration for students and scholars of modern literature and war studies.
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
THE LITERATURE OF WORLD WAR II

EDITED BY
MARINA MACKAY
Washington University, St. Louis
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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The contributors to this volume have been a pleasure to work with, and I thank them sincerely for their patience, efficiency, and good will. Sadly Dagmar Barnouw did not live to see the project completed, and the death of this unshakably principled, passionate, and humane scholar is a loss to all of us who study the war and its aftermath.

MMK
CHRONOLOGY

1918  
World War I Armistice  
Murder of Tsar Nicholas II and family  
Siegfried Sassoon, *Counter-Attack*  
Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*  
Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*

1919  
Paris Peace Conference opens  
League of Nations formed  
Amritsar massacre  
John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*

1921  
Wilfred Owen, *Poems*

1922  
Mussolini’s march on Rome  
Irish Civil War  
E. E. Cummings, *The Enormous Room*  
T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*  
James Joyce, *Ulysses*  
Virginia Woolf, *Jacob’s Room*

1923  
Nazi coup (“Beer Hall Putsch”) fails  
Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk*

1924  
Death of Lenin; rise of Stalin

1925  
Locarno Treaties reaffirm European peace  
Sergei Eisenstein, * Battleship Potemkin*  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*  
Hitler, *Mein Kampf*  
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
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| 1926 | General Strike  
Hirohito enthroned Emperor of Japan |
| 1928 | Kellogg–Briand Pact outlaws war as instrument of national policy  
British women fully enfranchised  
Edmund Blunden, *Undertones of War*  
Ford Madox Ford, *Parade’s End* (tetralogy completed)  
Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*  
D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*  
Robert Sherriff, *Journey’s End* |
| 1929 | Wall Street Crash  
Richard Aldington, *Death of a Hero*  
Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That*  
Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*  
Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* |
| 1930 | Haile Selassie crowned Emperor of Ethiopia |
| 1931 | Statute of Westminster establishes equality of self-governing dominions |
| 1932 | Salazar establishes fascist regime in Portugal  
Nazis become largest party in Reichstag  
Roosevelt wins landslide presidential election  
British Union of Fascists founded  
W. H. Auden, *The Orators*  
Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night*  
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* |
| 1933 | Hitler becomes German Chancellor  
Gestapo and first Nazi concentration camp (Dachau) established  
Germany and Japan withdraw from League of Nations  
Roosevelt’s “New Deal”  
Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*  
H. G. Wells, *The Shape of Things to Come* |
| 1934 | Austrian Civil War  
Japan invades Manchuria  
Nazi purge (“Night of the Long Knives”) |
| 1935 | Italy invades Abyssinia  
Hitler announces rearmament  
Nuremberg Laws |
Chronology

1936
Berlin Olympics
Spanish Civil War starts
Germany remilitarizes Rhineland
Rome–Berlin Axis formed
Soviet show trials begin

1937
Chamberlain elected Prime Minister
Italy leaves League of Nations
Nanking Massacre
Picasso, Guernica
David Jones, In Parenthesis

1938
12 March: Germany annexes Austria ("Anschluss")
29–30 September: Munich Agreement partitions Czechoslovakia;
Chamberlain promises “peace for our time”
9–10 November: Kristallnacht pogrom
George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia
Virginia Woolf, Three Guineas

1939
15 March: Germans march into Prague
1 April: Fascists win Spanish Civil War
7 April: Italy invades Albania
23 August: Nazi–Soviet non-aggression pact
1 September: Germany invades Poland
3 September: Britain and France declare war on Germany
17 September: USSR invades Poland
30 November: USSR invades Finland
17 December: Admiral Graf Spee scuttled
Cyril Connolly founds Horizon
W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, Journey to a War
Christopher Isherwood, Goodbye to Berlin

1940
9 April: Germany invades Denmark and Norway
10 May: Germany invades France and the Low Countries
10 May: Churchill becomes Prime Minister
14 May: Netherlands surrender
20 May: Germans reach English Channel
27 May–4 June: BEF evacuated at Dunkirk
28 May: Belgium surrenders
10 June: Italy declares war on France and Britain
chronology

14 June: Fall of Paris
22 June: French sign armistice
28 June: De Gaulle recognized as leader of Free French
3 July: Britain sinks French fleet
10 July–15 September: Battle of Britain
23 July: USSR annexes Baltic States
7 September: Blitz begins (until May 10, 1941)
27 September: Germany, Japan, and Italy sign Tripartite Pact
28 October: Italy invades Greece
11 November: RAF attacks Italian fleet at Taranto
November: Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia join Axis

The Great Dictator, dir. Charlie Chaplin
Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls
Arthur Koestler, Darkness at Noon

1941
6 January: Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms” speech
1 March: Bulgaria joins Axis
11 March: Lend-Lease Act
29 March: Battle of Cape Matapan
6 April: Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece
6 April: Italy surrenders Ethiopia
13 April: Japan and USSR sign non-aggression pact
17 April: Yugoslavia surrenders
21 April: Greece surrenders
10 May: Hess undertakes unofficial peace mission
20 May: Germany invades Crete
24 May: German battleship Bismarck sinks HMS Hood
27 May: Bismarck sunk
22 June: Germany invades USSR
12 July: Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance
14 August: Atlantic Charter outlines Anglo-American objectives
17 August: Fall of Kiev
4 September: Roosevelt authorizes naval “shoot on sight” policy
8 September: Siege of Leningrad begins (lifted January 27, 1944)
2 October: Final German offensive on Moscow begins
17 October: Tojo becomes Japanese Prime Minister
14 November: Germans sink HMS Ark Royal
December: Britain declares war on Finland, Hungary, Romania
7 December: Japan attacks Pearl Harbor
8 December: USA declares war on Japan
8 December: Japan invades Malaya, Hong Kong, Thailand, Philippines
11 December: Germany declares war on USA
11 December: Japan invades Burma
22 December: Japanese take Manila
25 December: Hong Kong surrenders

Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children*
Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts*

1942
11 January: Fall of Kuala Lumpur
20 January: Wannsee Conference formulates “final solution”
8 February: Fall of Rangoon
15 February: Fall of Singapore
19 February: Japanese–American internment authorized
19 February: Japanese bomb Darwin, Australia
22 February: US leaves Philippines
27–29 February: Battle of the Java Sea
2 March: Fall of Batavia
18 April: US bombs Tokyo
23 April: “Baedeker raids” on historic English cities begin
6–8 May: Battle of the Coral Sea
30 May: “1000 bomber raid” on Cologne
4 June: Heydrich assassinated
4–7 June: Battle of Midway
1–27 July: First Battle of El Alamein
7 August: Battle of Guadalcanal begins (ends February 1943)
19 August: Allied Dieppe Raid fails
13 August: Battle for Stalingrad begins (ends February 2, 1943)
23 October–4 November: Second Battle of El Alamein
11 November: Germans occupy Vichy France
31 December: Battle of the Barents Sea
chronology

Manhattan Project established to build nuclear weapons
Beveridge Report outlines postwar British welfare state
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Flight to Arras*
*Casablanca*, dir. Michael Curtiz
*In Which We Serve*, dir. Noel Coward and David Lean
*Mrs. Miniver*, dir. William Wyler
*Prelude to War*, dir. Frank Capra, first of seven “Why We Fight” films

1943

23 January: Allies take Tripoli
2–4 March: Battle of the Bismarck Sea
19 April–16 May: Uprising and extinction of Warsaw Ghetto
13 May: German and Italian forces surrender in Tunisia
16 May: Dambuster raids
10 July: Allied invasion of Sicily
24 July: Hamburg firestorm
25 July: Mussolini deposed
3 September: Italy surrenders
15 September: Mussolini founds Salò Republic
23 September: Italy signs armistice with Allies
6 November: USSR retakes Kiev
28 November–1 December: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin meet in Tehran

T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*
Henry Green, *Caught*
Graham Greene, *The Ministry of Fear*
*Fires Were Started*, dir. Humphrey Jennings
*Five Graves to Cairo*, dir. Billy Wilder

1944

4 January–18 May: Battle of Monte Cassino
22 January: US landings at Anzio
22 February: US takes Eniwetok
4 June: Fall of Rome
6 June: D-Day landings
13 June: Germans deploy V1 rocket against London
9 July: Allies take Caen
20 July: Assassination attempt against Hitler
24 July: Liberation of Majdanek
1 August: Warsaw Uprising (crushed October 2)
23 August: Romania surrenders
24 August: Liberation of Paris
8 September: German V2 rocket used against London
11 September: Allied troops enter Germany
25 September: Allies defeated at Arnhem
28 October: Bulgaria signs armistice
16 December: Germany begins Ardennes counteroffensive
(“Battle of the Bulge”)

Deaths of war poets Keith Douglas and Alun Lewis

1945 20 January: Hungary signs armistice
27 January: Red Army liberates Auschwitz
4–11 February: Yalta Conference
13–14 February: Dresden firestorm
19 February–16 March: Battle of Iwo Jima
9–10 March: Tokyo firestorm
April: Liberation of Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, Dachau
1 April–21 June: Battle of Okinawa
12 April: Death of Roosevelt
28 April: Execution of Mussolini
30 April: Hitler commits suicide
2 May: Fall of Berlin
7 May: Germany signs unconditional surrender
8 May: V-E Day
5 June: Allied Control Council takes over Germany
26 June: UN Charter signed
16 July: Atomic bomb tested
26 July: Churchill loses election
26 July: Potsdam Declaration demands unconditional surrender of Japan
6 August: Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima
9 August: Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki
15 August: V-J Day
2 September: Japan signs instrument of surrender
20 November: Nuremberg Trials begin
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<td>NATO formed&lt;br&gt;Partition of Germany&lt;br&gt;People’s Republic of China proclaimed&lt;br&gt;USSR tests atomic weapons&lt;br&gt;Audie Murphy, *To Hell and Back&lt;br&gt;George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four&lt;br&gt;Jean-Paul Sartre, <em>The Roads to Freedom</em> (trilogy completed)&lt;br&gt;<em>Sands of Iwo Jima</em>, dir. Allan Dwan</td>
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1951  
Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*  
James Jones, *From Here to Eternity*  
Herman Wouk, *The Caine Mutiny*  

1952  
US detonates hydrogen bomb  
Pierre Boulle, *The Bridge over the River Kwai*  
Evelyn Waugh, *Men at Arms*  

1953  
Death of Stalin  
Eisenhower becomes president  
Rosenberg execution  
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*  
Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*  
*From Here to Eternity*, dir. Fred Zinnemann  
*Stalag 17*, dir. Billy Wilder  
*The Desert Rats*, dir. Robert Wise  

1954  
Algerian War of Independence begins  
US Senate censures McCarthy  
William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*  

1955  
Warsaw Pact signed  
*The Dam Busters*, dir. Michael Anderson  
*Night and Fog*, dir. Alain Resnais  

1956  
Soviet troops crush Hungarian uprising  
Krushchev denounces Stalin’s excesses  
Britain and France forced to withdraw military response to Egyptian nationalization of Suez Canal (“Suez Crisis”)