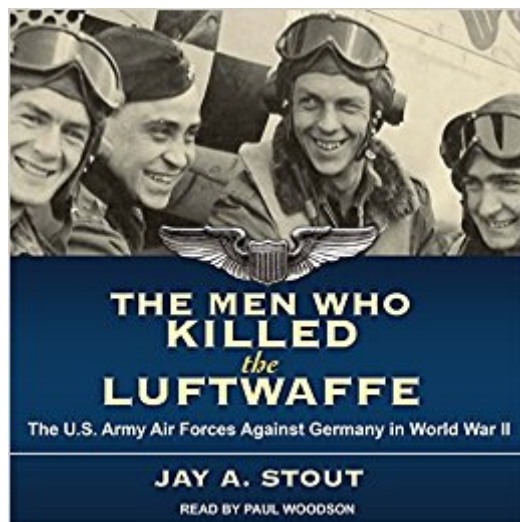




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The Men Who Killed The Luftwaffe: The U.S. Army Air Forces Against Germany In World War II



Synopsis

In this dramatic story of World War II, Jay A. Stout describes how the U.S. built an air force of 2.3 million men after starting with 45,000 and defeated the world's best air force. In order to defeat Germany in World War II, the Allies needed to destroy the Third Reich's industry and invade its territory, but before they could effectively do either, they had to defeat the Luftwaffe, whose state-of-the-art aircraft and experienced pilots protected German industry and would batter any attempted invasion. This difficult task fell largely to the U.S., which, at the outset, lacked the necessary men, materiel, and training. Over the ensuing years, thanks to visionary leadership and diligent effort, the U.S. Army Air Force developed strategies and tactics and assembled a well-trained force that convincingly defeated the Luftwaffe.

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Tantor Audio; Unabridged edition (January 31, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1515917657

ISBN-13: 978-1515917656

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.1 x 5.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 99 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,135,438 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #87 in Books > Books on CD > History > Europe #242 in Books > Books on CD > History > Military #376 in Books > Books on CD > History > United States

Customer Reviews

"A marvelously written work! Stout . . . offers stirring firsthand accounts of the strategies and doctrines that won the air war over Europe." ---Col Walter J. Boyne, (Ret.), USAF, Former director of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum

When World War II began, the U.S. Army Air Corps numbered only 45,000 men and a few thousand aircraft--hardly enough to defend the United States, let alone defeat Germany's Luftwaffe, the world's most formidable air force. Yet by the war's end, the Luftwaffe had been crushed, and the U.S. Army Air Forces, successor to the Air Corps, had delivered the decisive blows. *The Men Who Killed the Luftwaffe* tells the story of that striking transformation--one of the marvels of modern

warfare--while simultaneously thrusting readers into whirling, heart-pounding accounts of aerial combat. The Allies couldn't defeat Hitler's Third Reich without destroying its industry and taking its territory, but before they could do either, they had to neutralize the Luftwaffe, whose state-of-the-art aircraft and battle-seasoned pilots stood ready to batter any attackers. Great Britain's Royal Air Force was only barely holding the line, and the might of the United States was needed to turn the tide. Almost from scratch, the United States built an air force of more than two million men. Thanks to the visionary leadership of Henry "Hap" Arnold, Carl "Tooe" Spaatz, Ira Eaker, James Doolittle, and others, the USAAF assembled a well-trained and superbly equipped force unlike any ever fielded. And thanks to the brave Americans who crewed, maintained, and supported the aircraft, the USAAF annihilated the Luftwaffe as it pounded targets deep inside Germany and elsewhere. A stirring tribute to these men as well as an engaging work of history, *The Men Who Killed the Luftwaffe* vividly describes World War II in the skies above Europe. At the same time, it captures the personalities of the men who won it, whether on the ground or in the sky. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Well done book with details that make it come alive for the reader. This is the story of how the US Army Air Force, as it was then, went from a small force of 45,000 men at the start of WW II to over two millions at the end and defeated the excellent German air force the Luftwaffe. The Army Air Force leaders were Henry "Hap" Arnold, the highest ranking general, and commanding the Army Air Force and ably assisted by Carl "Tooe" Spaatz, Ira Eaker, James Doolittle, and others in the US and European theaters. The capabilities and efforts of the highest commanders are addressed. He addresses many issues including building the air force which was a monumental challenge as most of the men were civilians before the war, and had to be inducted into the armed services and trained for their new jobs. He touches on the training aircraft used, however he devotes most of his aircraft discussions to the combat aircraft, heavy bombers in particular, and the fighters. He addresses pilot training and training establishment which essentially had to be invented, including aircraft, trainers, some civilians for basic, and aircraft spread across the country. The pilot training effort was a monumental effort, but very successful in turning out thousands of pilots every month with over 300 hours flying, including time in the aircraft that they would fly in combat. He contrasts the US training effort in the latter part of the war with the German effort where they only had about 100 hours flying total before they were sent to combat. The German training was inadequate in numbers trained, and quality of pilots graduated. The excellent point is made about the training establishment producing enough personnel that it was possible to rotate men home after a number of missions, originally 25,

later extended to 30 et. This was in contrast to the German approach of no rotation until dead or injured. He addresses the gunners and their training for the bombers. The comparative qualities of the US heavy bombers, the B 17 and B 24 are discussed. He addresses the comparative qualities of the front line fighters, for the Germans, the MK 109 and FW 190, and the US P 38, P 47, P 51 and British Spitfire. He addresses the first deployment to North Africa to support the invasion. It had its growing pains, as would be expected. He addresses the air war in the Med, and some incidents and men and crews involved so that it is more understandable to the reader. He addresses the Eighth Air Force based in England and their trials the interactions with the English. There is a chapter on things going wrong, especially the accident rate which was horrific. The chapter on the German MK 163 Komet rocket propelled fighter, and MK 262 jet powered fighter are interesting. These aircraft were much faster than anything that the US had, and we really did not have an answer. We were fortunate that they were introduced so late into the war, if they had been there a year or so sooner, they might really have affected the war. All in all, well researched and well written history which is easy to read.

I had the blessing of having Jay as a flight instructor in Beeville, Texas during Jet training in the T-2 Buckeye back in 1987. His other talent is photography as I still have a great photo he took of me in the Buckeye in south Texas. I recall another time he sat in the backseat during one of my flights singing Irish drinking songs over the intercom, which we had to leave on hot back then. His call sign was Guinness after all; appropriate. His personality comes through in his writing style, and being a former Marine Harrier pilot, it was refreshing to see a fellow Marine with such a pleasant command of the English language; we can get a reputation. History is so fascinating, and it is even more so when the writer can not only give the facts and figures, but bring the story alive with the interwoven tales of the participants in a seamless fashion. That is art. This is the second book of Jay's I have read, and I have more in the on deck circle. I highly recommend this enlightening read about an amazing time and place in this world's history.

Kept my interest all the way through. One fact that struck me was that the airmen were all volunteers. I never knew that! The details about the planes, their unique features and operational do's and don't's were well described. I continue to keep learning about my two favorite WWII single seat American fighters---P-51B and P-38---the significant role they played in America's victory AND the men who flew and serviced them. Our nation was certainly blessed in that era. Tom Minnesota

From the standpoint of a very senior citizen--me--who was a teenager during WWII, this book achieves two desirable ends: entertainment and education. In a highly readable way, it reveals to us what was happening to the men who were far away fighting the air war while we at home got only glimpses of their triumphs and tragedies through the daily radio newscasts of H.V. Kaltenborn, Lowell Thomas, and Edward R. Murrow. There were also ten-minute newsreels at the movies, and those were the major sources of our scant knowledge of the distant war. Now, through this incredibly well-researched book, Jay Stout has opened a door and invited all ages in to see and feel the danger, dedication and fear these men lived with as they willingly did their jobs to keep the fighting and destruction on the other side of the Atlantic. Now I know something of what my cousin must have felt when he manhandled a mammoth B-24 through layers of flak and German fighters to bomb Ploesti oil refineries. Or what another cousin who was almost blind in one eye (but who had memorized eye charts!) accomplished by becoming a crew chief and doggedly keeping the planes flying. Of course we've all seen dozens of movies about the war, and they help us understand much, but Jay Stout's book is the real McCoy. He brings history to life and personalizes it by interviewing dozens of men of my generation whose war-time experiences and emotions are etched in their memories. We appreciate this because the men who returned to us so long ago very seldom talked about what they had done and seen and we were left with what we had gleaned from the six o'clock radio news and the ten-minute newsreels. First hand is so much better, and even at this late date we can properly thank these men who enabled people like me to live safe and secure lives. Jay Stout is an excellent, perceptive writer whose words flow smoothly and who has performed a service to us all by writing a fine book about extremely important people and events in America's time of crisis. Read it and marvel that these men of ours who seemed so ordinary were in fact so extraordinary. It's an American tradition.

by Jean Polhamus - San Diego, CA

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