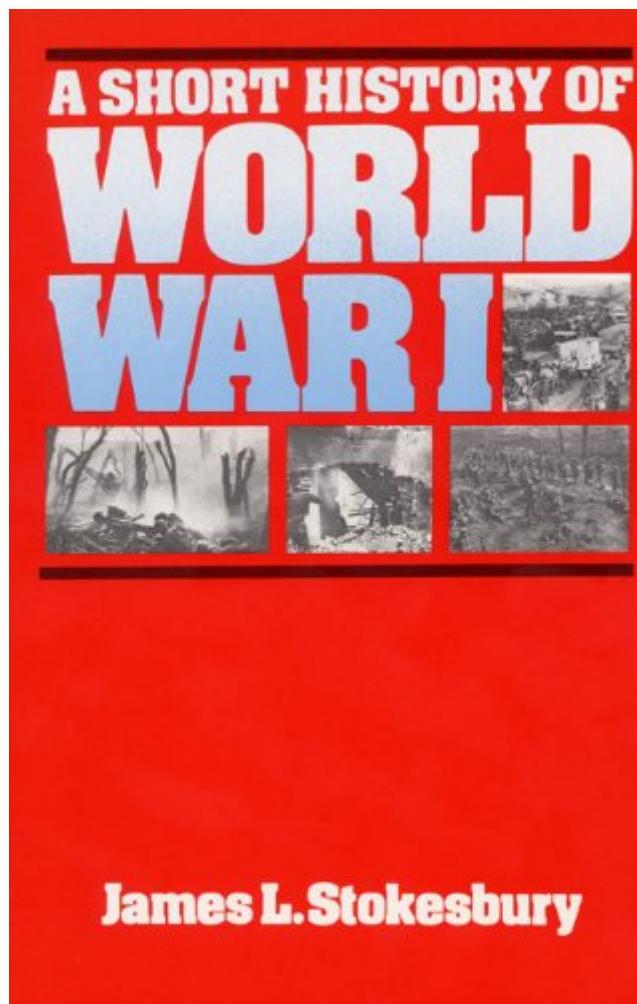


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A Short History Of World War I



Synopsis

World War I was a bloodletting so vast and unprecedented that for a generation it was known simply as the Great War. Casualty lists reached unimagined proportions as the same ground -- places like Ypres and the Somme -- was fought over again and again. Other major bloody battles remain vivid in memory to this day: Gallipoli and the Battle of Jutland are but two examples. Europe was at war with itself, and the effect on Western civilization was profound, its repercussions felt even today. World War I saw the introduction of modern technology into the military arena: The tank, airplane, machine gun, submarine, and -- most lethal of all -- poison gas, all received their first widespread use. Professor Stokesbury analyzes these technological innovations and the war's complex military campaigns in lucid detail. At the same time he discusses the great political events that unfolded during the war, such as the Russian Revolution and the end of the Hapsburg dynasty, putting the social and political side of the war into the context of modern European history. A Short History of World War I is the first history of this war to be written in twenty years. It incorporates recent research and current thinking about the war in a highly readable and lively style.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm a history buff (not an expert by any means, just enjoy it) and realized a few years ago that my knowledge of The Great War was almost zero. However, I wasn't quite ready to tackle a tome, like Shelby Foote's Civil War masterpiece, or even Tuchman's *Guns Of August*. I wanted a well-written, high-level account that explained the important events, and their context, without getting into what the Kaiser had for breakfast. This is it! I bought the Kindle edition on BookBub-dot-com for \$1.99. It's incredibly well-written, the narratives are coherent, covers all the major campaigns, provides the strengths and flaws of the major leaders and the icing on the cake is Stokesbury's sense of humor. It's almost as though I took a dose of medicine that went down like biscuits and gravy. Highly recommended as a good introduction to this conflict. My only grumble is this: in the Kindle edition, the maps are so small and faint as to be useless. Lucky for me I found the US Military Academy web page devoted to maps of WW1.

It seems terribly late in the game to write a review of this book, but I found my old copy while visiting my mother for Thanksgiving and started re-reading it. Given the mountain of historiography that has appeared since Stokesbury published this volume in 1981, I was astonished how sharp his analysis is and how much of the story he seems to have gotten right. It is also very well written and in no way afraid to speak directly from the author's opinion/perspective. Stokesbury was particularly prescient in his understanding of the independent role Austria played in 1914, and in dismissing the "it was all a German plot hatched in 1912" nonsense that was so popular back then. The author sees plenty of blame to go around and isn't afraid to lay it where he thinks it belongs. His information on the Royal Navy of that era is dated, but it would have been hard for anyone but a deep expert to see past the image of a hidebound, Blimpish institution that pervaded popular and academic writing in those days. We are still in the process of reconstructing the thoughts and plans of the Royal Navy in that period, so Stokesbury can be forgiven his misleading portrait of the pre-1914 Royal Navy. Overall, this is still a wonderful introduction to the First World War which I would highly recommend.

This is probably the best book regarding the Great War that gives you maximum information and minimal length -- yet remains highly readable. World War I is daunting. Unlike WWII, the First World War has a Eurocentrism inherent to the tangled alliances leading to the disasters beginning in 1914. Stokesbury's style does not have the stilted modern textbook approach designed to suck the life out of the fascinating material. He also infuses the historical with interesting observations and opinions which gives this book a quality more akin to a fascinating series of lectures. There are

other very good books on WWI out there (including Tuchman's Pulitzer Prize winning *Guns of August*), yet this one actually does exactly what it sets out to do: provides "a short history of World War I" in an amazingly informative and readable manner. Highly recommended.

Mr. Stokesbury has done an outstanding job of reviewing World War One. The fighting on the Western Front, the war at sea, the diplomatic intrigues, the financial struggle, and much much more are all included in a pity yet very readable book on what was probably the most important event of the 20th Century. A Short History of World War I pulls no punches and open exposes the excesses of all sides as well as the overt stupidity of various leaders; however, the brilliance of a few men, Gen. Rawlinson for example, is also covered. Like all histories the book needs more maps, but I think the best option is to purchase the West Point History Series *Atlas of the Great War* which has full page sized maps of the entire conflict which are helpful, to say the least. AD2

I have read extensively about WW I, and consider Stokesbury's to be far and away the finest account and analysis I've ever read. He writes beautifully, organizes and presents all the byzantine history of the war in an incredibly clear and readable way, and injects subtle critiques of the major actors. For anyone with the slightest interest in WW I, this book is a must. Outstanding!

Clearly and intelligently written, this book is the ideal introduction to the War to End All Wars. The campaigns are lucidly described, the leadership fairly evaluated, with attention paid to the political problems the generals contended with and the terrible deprivations suffered by the families of soldiers and the population at large. You will need a good atlas showing the railroad system in Belgium and northern France.

Great narration with excellent prose full of witty remarks on nearly every page. This makes it exceptionally fun to read in spite of how sad the war was. Highly recommended!

This book was a required textbook for a history class. I found it to be a captivating and interesting, which is saying a lot for a text book.

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