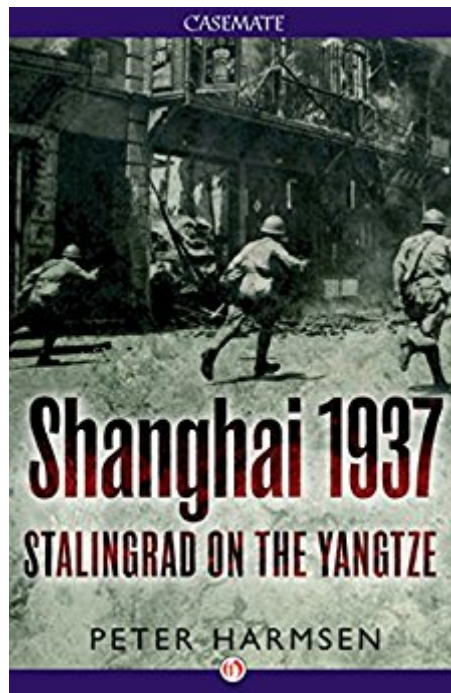


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Shanghai 1937: Stalingrad On The Yangtze



Synopsis

The New York Times's "bestselling depiction of the Battle of Shanghai" the beginning of a conflict that would echo throughout World War II and the entire twentieth century. At its height, the Battle of Shanghai involved nearly a million Chinese and Japanese soldiers while sucking in three million civilians as unwilling spectators—and often victims. It turned what had been a Japanese imperialist adventure in China into a general war between the two oldest and proudest civilizations of the Far East. Ultimately, it led to Pearl Harbor and to seven decades of tumultuous history in Asia. The Battle of Shanghai was a pivotal event that helped define and shape the modern world. In its sheer scale, the struggle for China's largest city was a sinister forewarning of what was in store only a few years later in theaters around the world. It demonstrated how technology had given rise to new forms of warfare and had made old forms even more lethal. Amphibious landings, tank assaults, aerial dogfights, and "most important" urban combat all happened in Shanghai in 1937. It was a dress rehearsal for World War II—or, perhaps more correctly, it was the inaugural act in the war, the first major battle in the global conflict. Actors from a variety of nations were present in Shanghai during the three fateful autumn months when the battle raged. The rich cast included China's ascetic Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his Japanese adversary, General Matsui Iwane, who wanted Asia to rise from disunity, but ultimately pushed the continent toward its deadliest conflict ever. Claire Chennault, later of "Flying Tiger" fame, was among the figures emerging in the course of the campaign, as was First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. In an ironic twist, Alexander von Falkenhausen, a stern German veteran of the Great War, abandoned his role as a mere advisor to the Chinese army and led it into battle against the Japanese invaders. Shanghai 1937 fills a gaping chasm in our understanding of the War of Resistance and the Second World War.

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Customer Reviews

It is popularly believed that WWII began in September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland but the author believes the beginning was actually in August 1937 when the Chinese Army was forced to attack the Japanese who were escalating their buildup on the mainland to free itself from the ever increasing menace of foreign domination. After you read this intriguing book you may agree with the author. Mr Harmsen, a foreign correspondent in China and the Far East for twenty years, has done a splendid job in recreating the events leading up to as well as the key events of this little known battle. This overview presents not only the strategic but also the tactical and human interest aspects of this nearly three month campaign that pitted the larger Chinese force against a well defended and motivated enemy with superior air and artillery support along with technological advantages. The Japanese also had a more coherent battle plan that along with the other advantages just mentioned would inflict huge losses on Chiang Kai-shek's best divisions and force them to give up on trying to retake this key city though partisan actions would continue, giving the Japanese little rest while they controlled the city. This battle story is infused and enhanced with many first hand accounts of leading officers, front line soldiers and civilians who were caught up between the warring sides. These individual accounts add to the appeal and truly enhance the overall readability of the story. I would have preferred greater tactical details on the order of a David Glantz presentation, yet I was still impressed with this book.

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