

# WORLD WAR II

## *Love Stories*

*At a time of global conflict  
and upheaval, the true stories of  
14 couples who found love*



*Gill Paul*

Introduction by  
Andrew Roberts

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藏书章

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**Ivy Press**

*For William Boag Paul, the uncle I never met, who was one of the last men  
out of Dunkirk; and his son Jim, who is one of the nicest men I know.*

First published in the UK in 2014 by

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French fashion designer Coco Chanel's affair with an aristocratic German attaché was fiercely controversial and led to her arrest at the war's end.

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William and Kathleen's unyielding love for each other helped him to survive imprisonment in Colditz.

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Romantic Bill went AWOL so he could spend his first wedding anniversary with his wife, Norma.

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Desmond and Louisa's love blossomed after a chance encounter, and this love would save his life on two occasions.

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Married barely a month after they met, Étienne and Violette tragically had very little time together.

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Mary's affair with Allen, a spy, was unconventional, thrilling and potentially dangerous.

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Betty wrote 300 letters to GI Hudson and always hoped he'd come back to marry her.

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Bob was unhappily married and when he met cheerful, friendly Rosie he knew he had found the true love of his life.

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Raymond and Lucie were intrepid members of the Resistance, willing to risk all for their country's freedom.

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Hedley and Dorrit were opposites in every way, except the fact that they were both outsiders in a foreign land.

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Roy and Pill had an intense Pacific island romance, and both hoped that they would spend the rest of their lives together.

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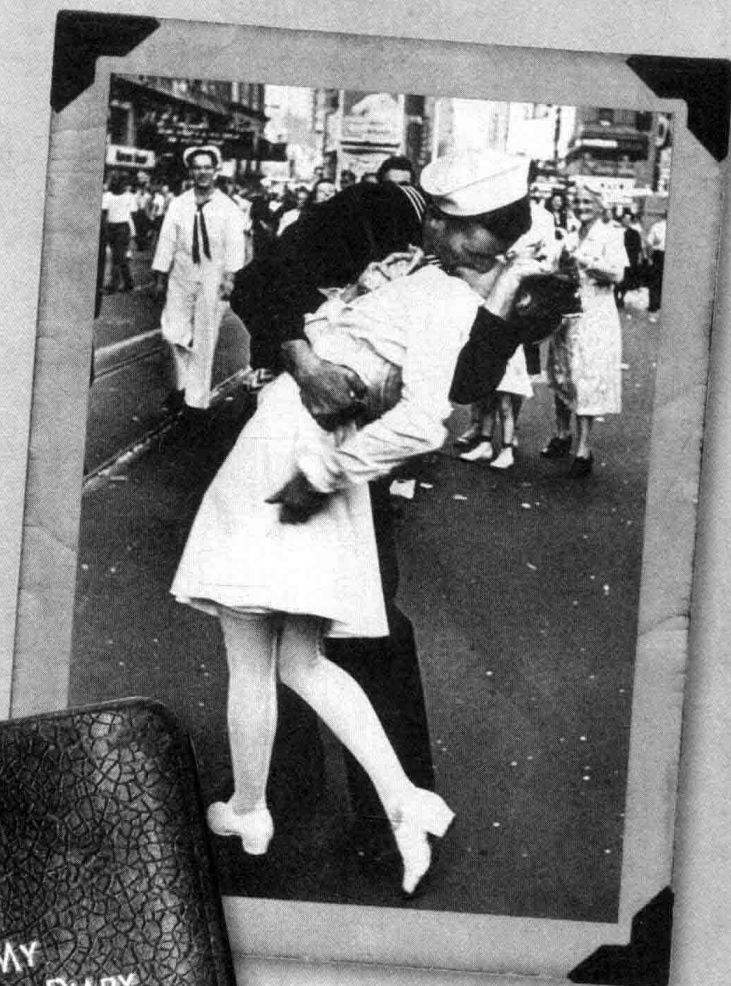
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# *Introduction*

by Andrew Roberts



## The Nazi Threat

**W**hen Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933, few people predicted that this event would lead to a second world war by the end of the decade.

World War I—the Great War—had ended less than 15 years earlier, and no one believed that someone who had himself served in the trenches of the Western Front would seek to provoke another conflict on such a terrible scale. Yet the program of Hitler's National Socialist ("Nazi") Party was one of pure aggression, born of resentment at Germany's ill-treatment at the Versailles Conference that had formally brought World War I to an end. Germany rearmed, and within three years her industrial and military might allowed Hitler to force the Western Powers—mainly Britain and France, along with the United States—into a series of humiliating diplomatic defeats.

Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland in March 1936 (flouting the terms of the Versailles Treaty), forced Austria into Anschluss (union) with his Third Reich in March 1938, and threatened to invade the German-speaking areas of Czechoslovakia (called the Sudetenland) in September of that same year, while also

BELOW  
*Hitler receives an enthusiastic ovation at the Reichstag after forcing Austria into Anschluss in March 1938.*



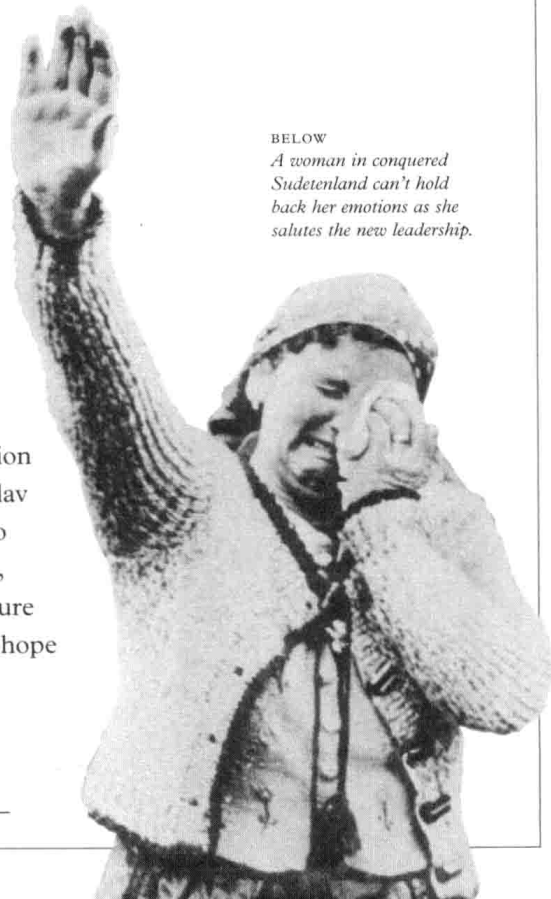
supporting the efforts of two fellow fascists: Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War, and Benito Mussolini in the invasion of Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia). Meanwhile, Germany withdrew from the League of Nations, the ineffectual forerunner of the United Nations.

In each of these cases, and in many other areas of diplomacy, Britain and France permitted the Nazis to get what they wanted, believing that Germany had been ill-treated by the victorious powers at Versailles. They hoped that by appeasing the Third Reich, its anger and bitterness would diminish. Instead, the lesson Hitler drew from his successes was that the Western democracies were inherently feeble and would let him get away with further territorial inclusions. In March 1939, he invaded those parts of Czechoslovakia—principally Bohemia and Moravia—that were not German-speaking, while the government-controlled German press began making threats against Poland.

On March 31, 1939, the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, told Parliament of his pledge to the Polish Government that if the Germans invaded Poland, Britain would immediately go to war on her behalf. It was more of a gesture, a bluff, than a workable guarantee, as there was little that Britain could practically do to protect Poland if Hitler decided to attack. Then, on August 22, 1939, in one of the most cynical diplomatic coups in history, the Nazi foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, traveled to Moscow to conclude a non-aggression pact with his Soviet opposite number, Vyacheslav Molotov, the following day. Thus Poland was to be divided between the two totalitarian powers, Nazi and Communist, in a deal that would ensure the outbreak of war a matter of days later. The hope of world peace would soon be dashed.



ABOVE  
*"The alliance between Italy and German is not only between two states or two armies ... but between two peoples." Speech by Mussolini in Rome, February 23, 1941.*



BELOW  
*A woman in conquered Sudetenland can't hold back her emotions as she salutes the new leadership.*

## Europe Overwhelmed

World War II began shortly after dawn on Friday, September 1, 1939, when two German Army groups thrust eastward, deep into Poland. Supported by Junkers Ju87 “Stuka” dive bombers, and employing the tactic of Blitzkrieg, or “lightning war,” the Wehrmacht raced forward, enveloping and capturing Polish forces that had been placed too far west to be of defensive use.

What happened next was, well, very little. The “Phony War” or “Sitzkrieg,” lasted seven months as the Nazis occupied Poland and moved their forces northward and westward, but there was no fighting on any western front. The war at sea, however, was fought aggressively on both sides.

These months of uneasy waiting ended suddenly on April 9, 1940, when Hitler covered his northern flank by simultaneously invading Denmark and Norway. British and French expeditionary forces were rushed to the Norwegian coast to try to contest the German invasion, and some moved further inland, but they were pushed back and eventually forced to evacuate altogether on May 3rd. This humiliation brought down Chamberlain’s government after a tumultuous debate in the House of Commons, and on May 10, 1940, Winston Churchill became prime minister. Three days later, in his first appearance in the Commons in that role, he warned the British people to expect nothing but “blood, toil, tears, and

sweat,” in the first of many morale-boosting speeches of his wartime premiership.

Yet more strategic disasters would follow Norway as, on the very day that Churchill took office, Hitler unleashed his Blitzkrieg on the Low Countries and France. Through a brilliant naval operation, supported by brave Royal Air Force (RAF) sorties against the Luftwaffe, no fewer than 224,000 British and 95,000 French troops were

BELOW  
*A group of children whose house was destroyed during the Blitz: East London, September 1940.*





evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk and other ports, evading what had looked like inevitable capture. Soon afterward, France, led by General de Gaulle, appealed to Hitler for an armistice, and on June 22nd, a peace treaty was signed.

The undisputed master of the Continent, Hitler began drafting plans to invade and subjugate Great Britain. To achieve this, he needed command of the skies, and thus it fell to Hermann Göring, commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe, to set in motion the aerial struggle that became known as the Battle of Britain. From July to the first half of September 1940, the Luftwaffe fought with the RAF for supremacy of the skies. Famously, the RAF defeated the stronger force, so that by the end of October, the Luftwaffe had lost a significant amount of its fighting strength.

The bombing of London and many other British cities after September 7, 1940, in what is now called the Blitz, was to cost the lives of nearly 60,000 British civilians. It brought the war home to ordinary Britons in a way that the overflying Zeppelins of World War I had not really succeeded in doing.

BELOW

*On Sunday, September 29, 1940, as incendiary devices rained down on London, Churchill gave orders that St Paul's Cathedral must be saved at all costs for the sake of the country's morale.*

## BRITAIN'S WAR LEADER

Winston Churchill had long been opposed to Chamberlain's policy of appeasing Hitler, so he wasn't first choice for a wartime cabinet role, but nine months into the war it was recognized that they required his military experience and he was appointed first lord of the Admiralty. On May 8, 1940, the House of Commons began to debate the country's war strategy, and on May 10th, when Hitler invaded the Low Countries and France, Chamberlain had no choice but to resign. Lord Halifax declined to take over and Churchill stepped up and rallied the nation with his inspiring rhetoric.





## At the Borders of Europe and Beyond

Although the RAF's Bomber Command responded by bombing Germany, and the Royal Navy blockaded Germany and attempted to sink raider battleships and U-boats, for a while after the Battle of Britain there was nowhere for the Allies and the Wehrmacht to clash on land, since the Axis powers controlled the European Continent, and thus any attempted invasion was judged to be suicidal. But in Libya, Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, and along the North African littoral, the British Army under General Wavell was able to score several significant victories over Marshal Graziani's Italian troops, despite being heavily outnumbered.

These advances were not to last, however, as in February 1941, Churchill ordered forces to be diverted to protect Greece, just as the brilliant German commander General Erwin Rommel arrived in Tripoli to take command of the German Afrika Korps. Having also suborned Romania and Hungary onto its own side, on April 6th, Germany invaded Yugoslavia, which fell in a mere 11 days. Soon afterward, British forces had to be evacuated from Greece to Crete, only for a German force of some 22,000 airborne troops under General Kurt Student to stage a daring landing on the island. After eight days of fighting, here, too, the British were forced to leave.

BELOW  
*Conditions in the desert were harsh, with fierce daytime temperatures and severe cold at night, as well as sandstorms that could blow in at any moment. Here a German bomb lands close to an American truck.*



The war was not going well for the Allies, but that same month, June 1941, Hitler made a disastrous error in launching Operation Barbarossa, a surprise invasion of the USSR. This set in motion a four-year struggle between the German Führer and the Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, which would turn the tide of the war.

Meanwhile, the war in North Africa surged back and forth between Cairo in Egypt and Tobruk in Libya. Wavell was replaced by



LEFT  
Russian soldiers, enduring sub-zero temperatures, defend a factory during the Battle of Stalingrad. The German officers in command wanted to win the city as a Christmas present for Hitler, but were unable to prevail.

General Claude Auchinleck, who was himself supplanted by General Bernard Montgomery. Montgomery defeated Rommel, convincingly so, in a well-planned battle at El Alamein in Libya between October 28 and November 4, 1942. On November 8th, Allied forces under the American commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower landed in French North Africa, and before long the Germans were in full retreat. Tobruk had been taken by Rommel in June, but was back in British hands just five months later.

Simultaneous with the broiling desert war, thousands of miles away on the River Volga, the Battle of Stalingrad was being contested in grim sub-zero temperatures between German and Russian armies. Here, too, German forces were finally routed, so that after four months of bitter struggle the German Sixth Army under Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus surrendered to the Red Army command. That month, Hitler bowed to the military realities and sanctioned the withdrawal westward of much of the rest of his forces, beginning a retreat that would continue until the Russians took Berlin in May 1945. Although the losses suffered by the Red Army numbered in the millions, their determination to rid the Russian motherland of the Nazi invader never wavered. Hitler had captured Stalingrad, had come within 20 miles of Moscow, and subjected Leningrad to a torturous thousand-day siege, but through all these trials the spirit of the Russian people never broke.