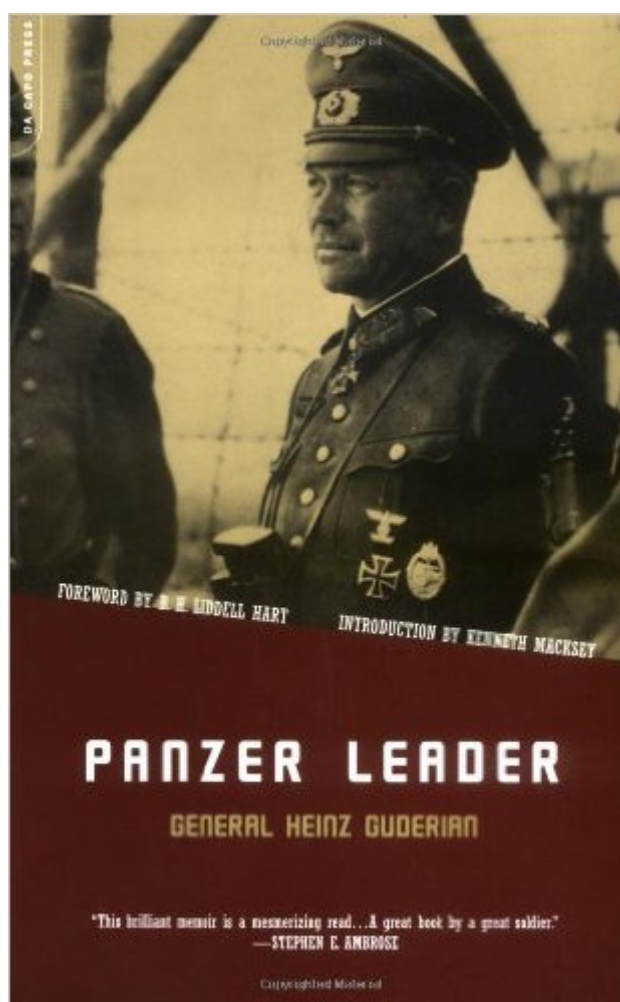


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Panzer Leader



Synopsis

General Heinz Guderian's revolutionary strategic vision and his skill in armored combat brought Germany its initial victories during World War II. Combining Guderian's land offensive with Luftwaffe attacks, the Nazi Blitzkrieg decimated the defenses of Poland, Norway, France; and, very neatly, Russia; at the war's outset. But in 1941, when Guderian advised that ground forces should take a step back, Hitler dismissed him. In these pages, the outspoken general shares his candid point of view on what would have led Germany to victory, and what ensured that it didn't. In addition to providing a rare inside look at key members of the Nazi party, Guderian reveals in detail how he developed the Panzer tank forces and orchestrated their various campaigns, from the breakthrough at Sedan to his drive to the Channel coast that virtually decided the Battle of France. *Panzer Leader* became a bestseller within one year of its original publication in 1952 and has since been recognized as a classic account of the greatest conflict of our time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you were to make a list of the truly outstanding commanders of the Second World War, Heinz Guderian's name would have to be on it. He was a bold and energetic leader of armor who won many of Germany's most brilliant victories in Poland, France and Russia. More than that, however, he was a pioneer of tank warfare, almost single-handedly responsible for the creation of Hitler's legendary panzer arm, and a tireless proponent of its proper use. If he had never been born, it is entirely possible that WWII would have unfolded in a completely different manner than it did. How many other generals can make that claim? *PANZER LEADER* is Guderian's account of his long

career as a soldier - first for the German Empire during WWI, second during the Weimar period, and last under the Third Reich. Since the story of Guderian and the story of the panzers are interwoven, he traces the evolution of the tank arm from its humble beginnings after 1918 (outdated armored cars used as flour trucks) to the height of its success during the conquest of France in 1940, and the "cauldron" victories in Russia in 1941, with his own fortunes rising at the same time. Likewise, the failure to defeat the USSR marks the end of Guderian's combat career; sacked by Hitler, he languishes for a year before being recalled as "Inspector General of Armored Troops." This in turn paves the way for his appointment as Chief of the General Staff (No. 2 in the Army hierarchy under Hitler) in 1944, a post he held until the near-end of the war, which gave him a "God's-eye view" of the Eastern Front. PANZER LEADER is more entertainingly written than many German memoirs, superior in readability to the works of Manstein or Kesselring, and certainly easier to digest than the War Diaries of Bock or Halder.

"Panzer Leader," written by a former Colonel-General of the Wehrmacht, Heinz Guderian, is a fascinating book. It is fascinating in its own right in that it describes Guderian's efforts to create and operate effective all-arms formations including armor, armored infantry and towed (later self-propelled) artillery in spite of the opposition from the more traditional elements of the Wehrmacht. With Hitler's keen interest and help, Guderian succeeded in creating such formations in "Panzerdivisionen" - armored divisions. The subsequent successes which Guderian had as a commander of such formations in Poland, France and Russia make an exciting and informed reading. However, the book is also fascinating because of the falsehood contained in it. Principally, there are two major "untruths" which often escape notice from the casual reader. The first falsehood is the credit which Guderian attributes to the late Sir Basil H. Liddell Hart as the "founder" of Blitzkrieg "doctrine." Guderian was jailed after the Second World War by the Allied authorities in the West, and it was Sir Liddell Hart who championed his (and other jailed German generals') cause. He brought them gifts and attempted to convince the authorities to free them, and eventually became the editor of their memoirs in the West. Sir Liddell Hart had been indeed an innovator of military doctrine in the 1920's, but he had, by 1930's, rejected the concept of armored warfare as viable. In any case, his reputation had fallen during the war, and this he attempted to salvage rather successfully with the help of the grateful ex-German generals after the war.

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