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Storm Of Steel: (Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition)



Synopsis

One of the great war memoirs, published here in a stunning Deluxe Edition for the centenary of World War I and the Battle of the Somme – and featuring a foreword by the New York Times bestselling author of *Matterhorn* – A worldwide bestseller published shortly after the end of World War I, *Storm of Steel* is a memoir of astonishing power, savagery, and ashen lyricism. It illuminates not only the horrors but also the fascination of total war, as seen through the eyes of an ordinary German soldier. Young, tough, patriotic, but also disturbingly self-aware, Ernst Jünger exulted in the Great War, which he saw not just as a great national conflict but also – more importantly – as a unique personal struggle. Leading raiding parties, defending trenches against murderous British incursions, simply enduring as shells tore his comrades apart, Jünger keeps testing himself, braced for the death that will mark his failure. His account is ripe for rediscovery upon the centennial of the Battle of the Somme – a major set piece in *Storm of Steel* – and a bracing read for fans of *Redeployment* and *American Sniper*. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Ernst Jünger's memoirs of his service as a junior officer with the 73rd Hannoverian Fusilier Regiment on the Western Front are different than any other war memoirs I've read. Jünger provides a cold, insightful, yet evenhanded view of the war in the trenches. He respects the English soldiers he's up against, hears funny stories about pre-war Cambrai from the elderly French couple in whose house he's been quartered, and is invited along with his comrades to share bountiful suppers with Flemish farmers. While passionate about the honor he must uphold as a soldier and his support of the "idea", he refuses to demonize his enemy. His descriptions of the fighting are horrific. At Guillemont, during the battle of the Somme as they are digging out their foxholes, he notices that the "earth" is composed of layers, representing each company that had been fed into the furnace, annihilated, ground to bits only to be replaced by the next company and the next. . . . Whole units disappear without a trace. For Jünger the battlefield has its metaphysical element: Gas mask-clad pickets become demons that he converses with, fields of dead and dying exude a sweet smell that drives the living giddy, men disappear for no apparent reason and are never seen again. Yet for Jünger even though 10 out of 12 soldiers fall, the desolation of war emphasizes and even spiritualizes the joy produced by the noble drive to endure and overcome battle. The fire of war produced over the four years of his service an ever purer and nobler warrior ethos. For this description alone is perhaps the book worth reading, since it provides us with a link to an aristocratic/military ideal which put service to that ideal above everything else, even one's own survival.

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