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# The German Army 1939–45 (1): Blitzkrieg (Men-at-Arms)



## Synopsis

On 1 September 1939, when Germany attacked Poland, the Wehrmacht numbered 3,180,000 men. It eventually expanded to 9,500,000, and on 8-9 May 1945, the date of its unconditional surrender on the Western and Eastern Fronts, it still numbered 7,800,000. The Blitzkrieg period, from 1 September 1939 to 25 June 1940, was 10 months of almost total triumph for the Wehrmacht, as it defeated every country, except Great Britain, that took the field against it. In this first of five volumes examining the German Army of World War II (1939-1945), Nigel Thomas examines the uniforms and insignia of Hitler's Blitzkrieg forces, including an overview of the Blitzkrieg campaign itself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Packed with specially commissioned artwork, maps and diagrams, the Men-at-Arms series is an unrivalled illustrated reference on the history, organisation, uniforms and equipment of the world's military forces, past and present.

DR. NIGEL THOMAS is an accomplished linguist and military historian and is currently a Senior Lecturer in charge of the Business Language Unit at the University of Northumbria, Newcastle. His interests are 20th century military and civil uniformed organisations, with a special interest in Germany, Central and Eastern Europe. He was recently awarded a PhD on the Eastern Enlargement of NATO.

Good I guess if you are into the minutiae of various German uniforms during the war, but I bought this thinking it was more of a general background of the Germans during WWII just to add some "fluff" to my games of Bolt Action, but this is probably more appealing to history buffs than gamers.

Interesting book.

info

This book focuses on the early war period, this is my favorite one. The illustrator is the best illustrator out of all the Osprey books. Highly recommended.

This work is a splendid example of the new emphasis of the publisher on producing comprehensive works in a handy cheap format compared with the earlier broad brush treatments which covered too much in too little detail. The new emphasis is on sets covering various national armed forces in as much detail as is available, consistent with the current purpose of the works in the series, which have evolved from an original emphasis on serving the military miniature maker market into works intended to enlighten the general reader in enough detail to satisfy the merely curious and to point the way to further reading. Most of us, including myself, have little need for, or the patience to read, voluminous studies, often in foreign languages, covering many eras and nations. My main interest is in the US forces, their allies and their enemies in the twentieth century. That said, these works should be purchased as presented, in sets within the series. Since they are produced as a set, the volumes cover only relevant parts of the general history and the clothing and individual equipment is covered as it appears in each period. The French Army, US Army, British Army, and Italian Army series all have three volumes, covering the major theatres and time periods of the war. The German set has five. The German Army set should be read in conjunction with many other individual volumes covering their allies and opponents and the other German fighting forces such as the Waffen SS, and the Parachute units, which were part of the German Air Force, the Luftwaffe. If you want an introduction to the fascinating variety of clothing and equipment of the forces covered, this set is for you.

This book is the first of five (so far) from the Osprey's Men-At-Arms Series on "German Army". The other four are:- MAA 316 The German Army 1939-45 (2) North Africa & Balkans; MAA 326 The German Army 1939-45 (3) Eastern Front 1941-43; MAA 330 The German Army 1939-45 (4) Eastern

Front 1943-45; MAA 336 The German Army 1939-45 (5) Western Front 1943-45. These books basically cover the German Army uniform and rank insignia of specific time and place during WW2. Each book includes 30 to 40 b/w photographs of German soldiers in different types of uniform. There are also 8 pages of colour-plates in each book depicting the uniforms in colour. Since I own all five books, I observed that the drawing skill of Stephen Andrew improving gradually over the years. These books are by no means a comprehensive account of the uniform of the German Army during WW2. However, the contents (text, photos and colour-plates) are excellent source of reference materials for modelling enthusiasts focusing on WW2 German Army. This review applies to all five books.

I'll make specific comments regarding volume 2 of this 5 part series as I hope they will be useful to prospective buyers. Aside from the obvious concentration on the time periods in the titles of these books, specific treatment of arcane subject material is also sprinkled throughout each volume, including much material not currently covered in English in recently released works. Case in point in this volume is a chart reflecting "orders of dress." Very good precis of basic uniforms, organization and history of the German Army in this period. Many photos are familiar to those who own Davis' book on Uniforms and Traditions, however, the text covers many things Davis does not, and Thomas has researched things to a much higher degree of understanding than Davis. It is great to see historical sources improve like this! Colour plates are good; my criticisms of Volume 3 still apply; I'll also add that the colours are not as subtle as they ought to be. Volstad's watercolour-looking approach is a much more subtle expression of the texture and colours of field grey woolen cloth than Andrew's neon green approach. Volstad also has more diverse and dynamic poses for his figures than Andrew attempts. Overall, though, Andrew shows a lot of variety of kit. Good overall work as far as general references go, and the table of specific information are a treat for those especially interested in the insignia side of things. For kit collectors, you will need to look at SOLDAT or some other references, as this will not show you how to wear specific things, for example. Not a drawback as that is not the aim of these books, just a warning so you aren't wasting your money buying something you are not looking for.

This book describes and displays the various uniforms of the German Heer -- but not Luftwaffe, Kriegsmarine, SS or any of the various paramilitary organizations -- from pre-war (1935) to the end of the Blitzkrieg (1940) in good detail. Be warned: The book is NOT a comprehensive catalog of uniforms and heraldry and will be of pretty limited use to the militaria collector. There are 40 b&w

photos and eight color plates along with four tables describing orders of dress, ranks, and insignia. The photos are a mix of action shots and posed portraits. The 24 full-color uniforms depicted in the color plates are accompanied by text describing the uniform and the equipment worn by the soldiers. Many service branches are represented from infantry and engineers to Panzertruppen to signals and Feldgendarmert ... It's a good deal of information at a great price. I recommend it to beginning scale modelers looking for inexpensive and accurate reference materials.

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