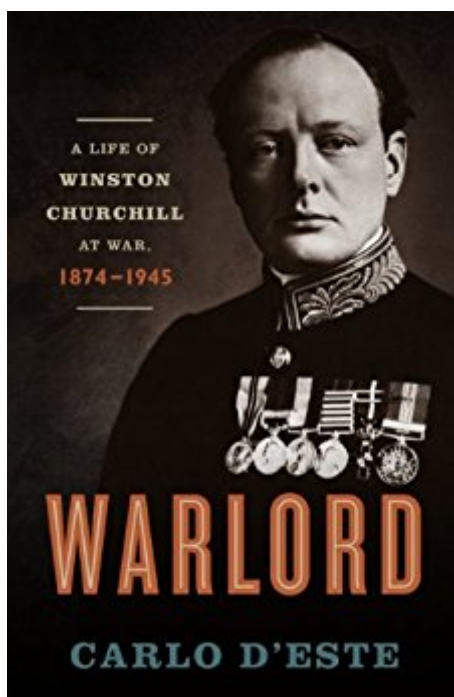


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Warlord: A Life Of Winston Churchill At War, 1874-1945



Synopsis

As riveting as the man it portrays, Warlord is a masterful, unsparing portrait of Winston Churchill, one of history's most fascinating and influential leaders. Carlo D'Este's definitive chronicle of Churchill's crucial role in the major military campaigns of the 20th century, Warlord uses extensive, untapped archival materials to provide a very human look at Churchill's lifelong fascination with soldiering, war, and command. • (Washington Post)

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Customer Reviews

A retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel, Carlo D'Este has had a second career as a historian. Using his military background, he has picked a narrow topic: the U.S. Army in the European theater of World War II and written some of the most informative and readable accounts of the war in print. His biography of General George S. Patton, Jr. is a work that anyone thinking of taking up this art form should read as an example of how to do it right. With "Warlord," D'Este has moved into new territory, British military history. The readers should know that the story that unfolds on these pages is

primarily European in nature. Although over half of this book is about World War II, the author is examining the British experience and that is a different topic from what he has done in the past. Pearl Harbor does not take place until page 556 (out of 700 of text) and even then, only as a dependent clause. D'Este's research is extensive and creative. He has looked at Churchill's student records at Harrow and examined the papers of Lord Moran, the Prime Minister's personal physician. In between, he hits all the important archives. The quality of coverage that comes from this exploration of the historical record is uneven, though, ranging from brilliant to merely adequate. The book is extremely weak on the World War I years. Serious Churchill buffs/fans/students will be disappointed. With that point made, most Americans know little of World War I and the discussion of the Great War should be more than adequate for general readers. D'Este also builds on this material.

Carlo D' Este states clearly that his purpose in writing this biography is to explore Churchill the warrior. The book, he says, "is less about events and more about Churchill the man -- his leadership, his triumphs, and his failures." D'Este succeeds in this goal. D'Este describes Churchill as in company with men "born for war," such as Frederick the Great, Oliver Cromwell and his own famous ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough. Churchill, D'Este maintains, cannot be understood if one approaches him as a politician or statesman who was destined to conduct a war but rather must be understood as a warrior who realized that politics forms a part of the conduct of war. Men "born for war," including Patton, the subject of another excellent D'Este biography, never lose their romantic and self-centered approach to war--even after confronting its most horrible conditions. Most men who experience war hate it. Men like Patton and Churchill never lose their love for it. D'Este shows that Churchill was deeply conflicted about his feelings for war. Having experienced the horrors of war first hand, he empathized deeply with the soldiers and sailors (and their families) who bear the full brunt of the horrors of war. Yet because he personally loved the danger and fighting, he wondered if he could ever forgive himself for his love of war. D'Este goes into great detail about Churchill's relationships with his generals and admirals in WWII. Churchill tended to try to micromanage his military leaders. Sometimes that was helpful, but with a good commander it made relationships very rocky.

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