Soldat: Reflections Of A German Soldier, 1936-49 by Siegfried Knappe

First Person Account Of A German Soldier, From 1939 To 1949.

Recounting his role in World War II, a German soldier describes his days in Hitlers youth labor service, his five years in a Soviet prison camp, and his reunion with his wife and children. 15,000 first printing.

Out of every war there are survivors, and it is sometimes amazing how they make it through their ordeals. This is truly a picture of just how a commanders whim, school selection or being wounded can take you out of a potentially deadly situation (or stick you right back into one!) It shows just what a crapshoot surviving combat is.

It is also a great insight into the German indoctrination process of young men and how they were eventually turned into soldiers. Another plus is the insight into the training of the German non-mechanized artilleryman (I’ve read enough about Panzers) and how the peacetime German soldier acted and thought. It is nice to read another interesting viewpoint of the last days of the Fuehrer Bunker as well. This book is also one of the very few that discusses in some detail being held prisoner by the Russians after the war.

In response to other reviews, I dont think it was Knappes goal to do any soul searching for what had happened during the war. He was an officer and a soldier. He did not allow himself to be put in questionable war crime offense situations. He treated his soldiers and prisoners with respect and dignity.

German soldier autobiographies do not need reflection, soul-searching or some kind of apology to tell how they feel now after having time to think about the war. Knappe was a soldier doing the best he could for his country, just like the men from other nations. He was not a member of the Nazi Party, or a fanatical facist, just a soldier.

Knappe did not agree with everything that Germany did, from both a tactical and philosophical standpoint, but this is a soldiers tale. He did what he had to do to complete his missions and survive.

Being a former soldier, one thing that I respect Knappe more for than anything else is that he never shirked his duties or deserted his men or family. He could have disappeared and headed to the west many times.
during the Battle of Berlin, but he stayed with his men and did his duty to the end, knowing that the end was inevitable. That is the mark of a true leader, no matter what nation he or she is from. Don't pass this one up!

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