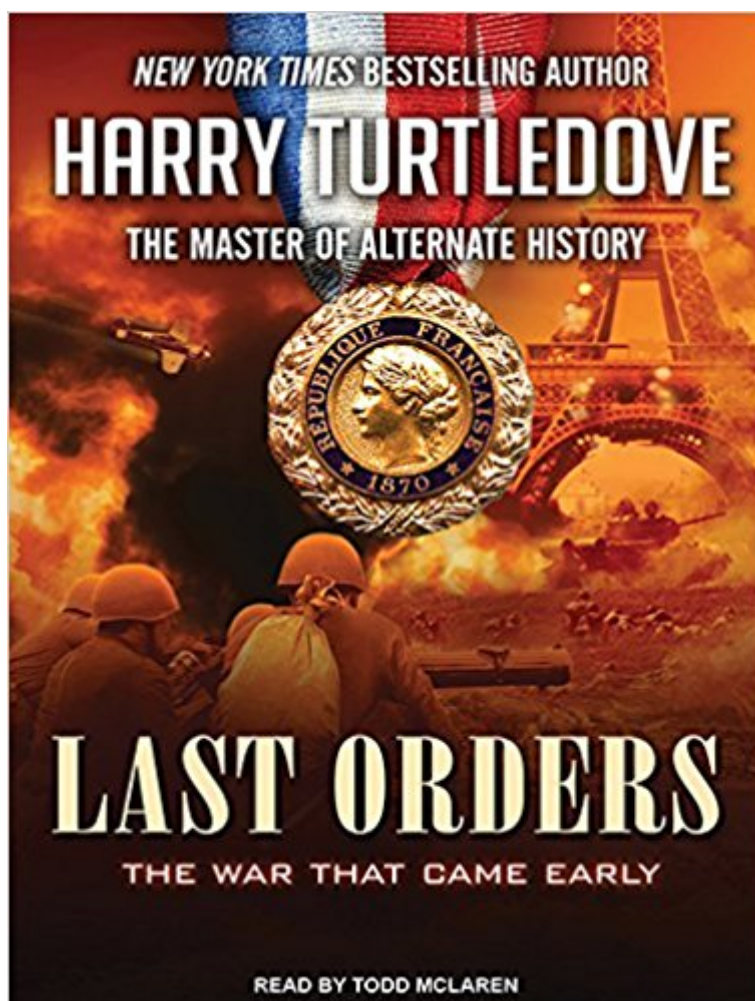


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Last Orders: The War That Came Early



Synopsis

In an extraordinary saga of nations locked in war, master storyteller Harry Turtledove tells the story of World War II, which begins over Czechoslovakia rather than Poland, eleven months earlier than it really came. Now comes the final installment in Turtledove's landmark World War II series. Hitler's Plan A was to win in a hurry, striking hard and deep into France. There was no Plan B. Now the war grinds on, and countries have been forced into strange alliances. For the United States, the only enemy is Japan. Then Hitler becomes desperate and declares war on the United States. But is it too late? His own people are rising up in revolt. The German military may have to put down the violence-even perhaps bomb its own cities. In this epic drama, real men and women are shaped by the carnage, and their individual acts in turn shape history. Drawing on the gritty, personal reality of war and on a cast of unforgettable characters, Turtledove has written an alternate history that intrigues, fascinates, and astounds.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Last Orders "From our perspective seventy years later, we're accustomed to thinking of WWII's outcome as being inevitable. Not so, says [Harry] Turtledove. . . . Disdaining broad brush strokes, Turtledove's focus on the characters serves to fill out the big picture with patient, nitty-gritty detail. It's all quite plausible. . . . Armchair warriors will have much to ponder." Kirkus Reviews
Praise for Harry Turtledove "If you like alternate histories, you're going to like this series a lot." The San Diego Union-Tribune "Turtledove is the

standard-bearer for alternate history.â•â "USA Today Â Coup d'Etat Â âœThis is what alternative history is all about.â•â "Historical Novel Society Â The Big Switch Â âœThe Hugo Award winner continues to delight in exploring the world of â^what if?â™â•â "Library Journal Â West and East Â âœThereâ™s plenty to satisfy fans of military strategy, tactics, and armaments.â•â "Publishers Weekly Hitlerâ™s War Â âœTurtledove is always good, but this return to World War II . . . is genuinely brilliant. . . . The characterizations in particular bring the book to extraordinary life.â•â "Booklist --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Harry Turtledove is an award-winning and bestselling author of science fiction, fantasy, and historical fiction. His alternate-history works include *How Few Remain* (winner of the Sidewise Award for Best Novel), *The Man with the Iron Heart*, the *Worldwar* saga, the *Colonization* books, and the *Settling Accounts* series. Todd McLaren was involved in radio for more than twenty years in cities on both coasts. He left broadcasting for a full-time career in voice-overs, where he has been heard on more than 5,000 TV and radio commercials, as well as TV promos, narrations for documentaries on such networks as A&E and the History Channel, and films.

I really have to disagree with those who call Turtledove the "Master of Alternate History". Writing a large quantity of books does not, IMO, qualify you for that title. He takes 7 or 8 books to prolong a story that could be told in one or two books. He concentrates on everyday people to the point that, for me, they blend together and lose their identities. We rarely, if ever, actually see the real characters of history - those who are actually influencing history, those whose decisions are the ones that change and make history. This book was the last of this series, and like all the rest of his series, it ends with a whimper, unsatisfying. While I am not expecting everything to be wrapped up with a nice bow, I should be left with a desire for more. I will probably continue to read his work, as I am an ardent fan of the genre. But I am much more a fan of other writers, like Robert Conroy.

Disappointing throughout, the first two thirds of this book is the same repetitious scenes of the life of a soldier from many viewpoints over and over until all of the characters start to blend into the stereotype 'sarge' who is tough enough to get the job done or die trying. Then the last 50 pages just whimpers down into a close, without actually resolving much of anything. I read the first three books of this series when the third one was published, and the twist in the third book was a great new way of looking at the potential differences in how the war could have played out if a small number of changes had cascaded the right way. Sadly the fourth book is spent undoing all the changes

possible from the third book which made me so angry I shelved the four novels and have not gone back to them. Recently I got the new Bombs Away novel for my birthday and decided I should go back and finish The War That Came Early. Book five was a total waste, all the same repetition that got so trying in book Four combined with static lines for the military so that virtually nothing has changed between the start and finish of book five. Book six continued the trend of not much happening until the mid point, then events pile up rapidly. Even with all the rapid fire changes that take place in the last 150 pages of the series however most of the issues are left hanging, as if there was a Book Seven waiting to be written. Spoilers from here on out. The Japanese got lucky a few times in the first few books and took Midway while sinking much of the American navy at sea where the ships can not be recovered. That is a serious twist, but barely a sideshow in this book series. Unbelievably three years of fighting Japan alone and the USA has only managed to retake Midway from the Japanese? I am sorry but that is implausible beyond belief, in our actual history the USA was fighting both Germany and Japan and still advanced through multiple island campaigns in the Pacific. By 1943 American radar was allowing combat air patrol fighters to be vectored in on Japanese aircraft long before they got within reach of targets either on land or at sea. At first they still pushed through, but the attrition rate for their pilots was so high they started losing air combat at a steadily increasing rate. With the USA facing Japan without the distraction of the North Africa campaign of 1942 nor having active combatants in the European Theater the advance through the Pacific should have been greatly accelerated, not badly delayed as portrayed in these novels. Admiral Yamamoto feared taking on the USA because our industrial capacity was several times the capacity of the Japanese, and he knew that very well. Somehow Mr. Turtledove seems to have forgotten that fact. What is even worse in my honest opinion, with the USA fighting a very poor series of battles in the Pacific and facing the humiliation of Japanese bombing raids hitting Hawaii with night time bombing raids there is no political fall out for President Roosevelt. The mid term election in 1942 should have been a massive turnover with a straight majority of Republicans gaining control of the House of Representatives. Baring a miracle which did not take place in the book President Roosevelt should have refused to run for re-election or have lost the election if he did run in 1944. Nowhere in any of the novels to my recollection do any of the sides introduce effective night fighter aircraft to attack the night bombing raids practiced by the British and French against Germany, Germany against France or the Japanese against the USA/Hawaii. The US Army Air Corp ordered its first radar equipped night fighter, the P-70, in 1940. The improved P-70A began production in 1943 OTL. Yet these aircraft never make an appearance in any of the books even though the Japanese are routinely conducting night bombing attacks on Hawaii every week or so.

Even worse, the biggest advantage the USA had against Japan was Radar in ground installations and on all the large ships of the Navy. Sending in night bombing raids that are not detected until just before the bombs get dropped and not chasing after them with radar equipped night fighters would cause military leaders to be replaced immediately with someone who had some clue how to fight at night. It seems as if Mr. Turtledove picked up a book about the 20 most popular aircraft of World War II and completely forgets the USA produced over 30 completely different designs on its own, as well as the British having a couple dozen and the Germans and Japanese and even the Italians also having a dozen or more designs. Given our relationship with France leading up to World War II there would have been a rapid flow of information from France to the USA about German weapons, if not complete information on their own forces letting us know what the weak spots in German machinery and tactics were, at least from the French POV. In our actual history after the fall of France in 1940 the United Kingdom gave us every bit of information they could, and once we joined the war they shared even their own secret research gladly with us. Yet in these books France and the UK have their overseas colonies over run by the Japanese, who are also in a war with the USA, and they do not share information? In the past Harry Turtledove was one of my favorite authors, but the last several books of his I have read have become increasingly unsatisfying. This book is a fairly quick read for some summer entertainment, but it doesn't have the kind of meat you can sink your teeth into an ponder his earliest alternative history books had. Guns of The South is a favorite and I have reread it several times. I really loved the Warworld and Colonization series and enjoyed even the finale set on the alien home world. How Few remain the the USA/CSA World War I series were good books, but not as good as those that came before. The Crosstime Traffic collection were a lot of fun and I was always hoping for more stories set in that venue. Sadly the Hitlers War series has been more of a disappointment than a joy to read.

You would think that Harry Turtledove's 4th installment of The War Came Early would be the final installment of a rising climax. But you'd be wrong. While Turtledove meticulously develops his characters in this book, his development of the plot is frustratingly the opposite. Turtledove crafts an interesting plot but then turns away at the last second. For example, when Germans start rebelling against Hitler. Characters get sent to the offending city, Hitler goes to the city, but then Hitler gets assassinated on the RADIO? Turtledove actually writes out an entire paragraph of the characters staring at the radio! RIDICULOUS!!! It would have been better for a climatic struggle personified in a bloody gunbattle at the classic Nazi stadium rally. But that doesn't happen. Also at the end, one character reveals that the Atomic Bomb Project has been cancelled due to cost.

Einstein himself appears out of nowhere to personally chat with a character whom he has no reasonable connection. Einstein then sez "Oops, I shouldn't have talked to you." That's ridiculous because multiple historic figures have said the US was willing to pay any cost to attain the bomb. In other instance, a U-Boat Captain is shown the type 21 sub (a superweapon which really existed but was never used). Two people then discuss how much fun it would have been to have that weapon during the actual war. This entire series has been typified with the patient metering out of a slight inkling of interest. Whenever the plot gets too hot, too audacious; it is quickly pulled back to and the heat killed. The entire series is a well-written snore. Save your money. I would only buy this if you were interested in trying to determine how to keep a plot alive over 2000 pages of text.

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