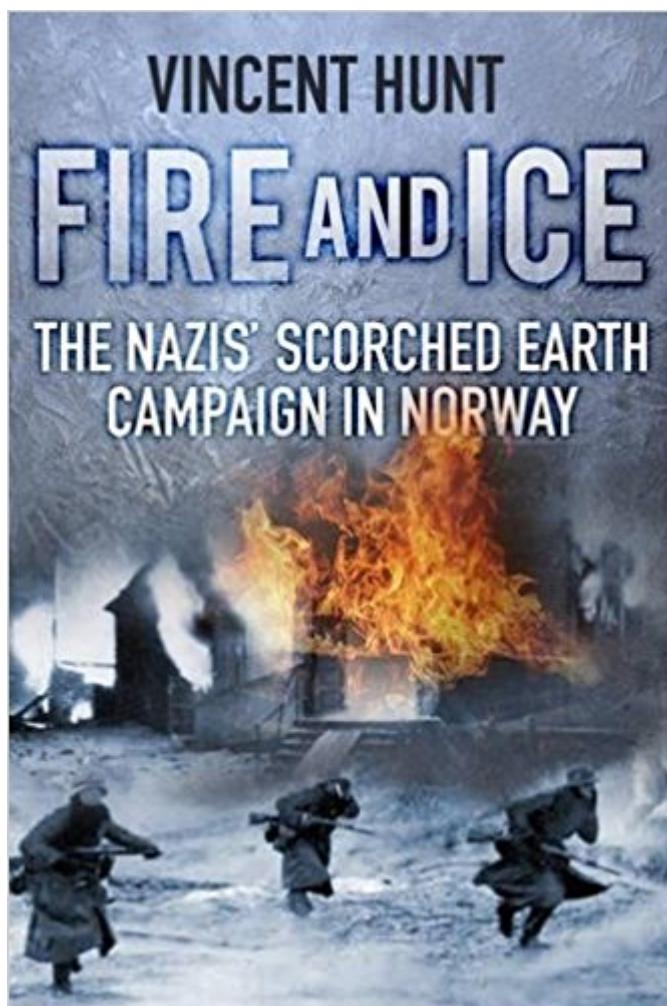


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Fire And Ice: The Nazis' Scorched Earth Campaign In Norway



Synopsis

When Hitler ordered the north of Nazi-occupied Norway to be destroyed in a scorched earth retreat in 1944, everything of possible use to their Soviet enemy was destroyed. Harbours, bridges and towns were dynamited and every building torched. Fifty thousand people were forcibly evacuated – thousands more fled to hide in caves in sub-zero temperatures. High above the Arctic Circle, the author crosses northern Norway gathering scorched earth stories: of refugees starving on remote islands, fathers shot dead just days before the war ended, grandparents driven crazy by relentless bombing, towns burned to the ground. He explores what remains of the Lyngen Line mountain bunkers in the Norwegian Alps, where the Allies feared a glorious last stand by fanatical Nazis – and where starved Soviet prisoners of war too weak to work were dumped in death camps, driven in some cases to cannibalism. With extracts from the Nuremberg trials of the generals who devastated northern Norway and modern reflections on the mental scars that have passed down generations, the reader is taken to the heart of a cruel and brutal conflict set in a landscape of intense natural beauty through stories never told before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"well worth reading." – "Norwegian American Weekly, April 8, 2016 issue

Vincent Hunt is a journalist and documentary maker who has won many awards in a 25-year career with the BBC and worked across America, Europe and Africa interviewing important figures in social and musical history. He travels across the Arctic gathering compelling and often shocking personal

stories of the scorched earth destruction of northern Norway by the Nazis.

This is a compassionate, thoughtful, and extensively researched look at a little-known episode of WW2, during and after the German occupation of Norway. In this highly readable account, Vincent Hunt deftly weaves together three threads: transcripts of the Nuremberg trials, the stories of people who witnessed what was happening in northern Norway in their own words, and his own travels through the country as he met and interviewed the people of Finnmark, whose history was snuffed out when the retreating German army burned and bombed thousands of buildings and forcibly evacuated the people from the land of their heritage--leaving virtually nothing. Some of it is shocking. There's the desperate plight of Soviet prisoners, dying in their thousands as the Nazis forced them to build a defensive infrastructure in Norway; children playing with and being killed by live ammunition decades later; the accounts of murders and executions of Norwegian citizens that are inevitable in a book covering wartime atrocities; the way Norway treated Norwegian-German children after the war. But Hunt doesn't take sides. He approaches the story as a journalist and documentary maker, rather than as an academic, and he focuses on the people. He explores what is a complex history, unfolding it and following the stories regardless of where they take him. He gives a voice to the people of Finnmark who survived and then returned to their destroyed land to begin again. Especially if you're interested in social history, wartime Europe, or even in how people survive terrible events, this is an excellent book. If you get the Kindle version, go right to the end (past where it tells you that you've finished the book) to read appendix material and also see the photographs, which are included at the back.

This small volume (230 pages) is meant for the WWII enthusiast who enjoys finding those niches in history that have yet to be written in English. This is certainly an example. The book covers the German/Austrian retreat from Finland to a new defensive line beginning at Lyngen. If you are looking for military action, this not the book you want. It is a deeply personal review of the tragedies experienced by the forcibly evacuated population of the Finnmark, prisoners of war, and children conceived by the occupiers. The book seems repetitive at times and facts are provided in multiple instances. After reading Geirr Haarr's excellent books for the military action, this is an introspective account of the horrors near the end of the war in the most northern reaches. Only one map is provided which lacks the locations of many of the sites described by the author. One surprise for me was the injustices endured in the north by the returning Norwegian government in 1945 and beyond.

I have read many books related to WWII and never heard about the subject of occupation suffering in Norway. I could recommend this book to anyone interested in the horrors of the third Reich. A disturbing. But interesting. History.

Very worth while! Book is in A plus condition and I will suggest to others that this is a worthwhile read!

I am very pleased with my purchase. Thank you.

Very detailed interesting book about this little known history of WWII. I am researching this exact location and time period as well as Mr. Hunt has done extensive research that has made this a compelling read. Lots of references make it an extremely valuable resource for me.

Mindblowing.

In Northern Norway 1944 is known as Year Zero. It was declared Year Zero because it was the year that all history stopped when the retreating Nazis razed it to the ground. The entire Finnmark region was reduced from thriving villages, bustling towns and burgeoning cities to little more than smoking ash and crumbling rubble. The victorious Soviet army advanced into Northern Norway and Hitler himself responded with one simple order: burn and destroy. The order was known as a Hitler command and viewed as utterly inviolable, on pain of death. A mass, forced evacuation of all Norwegian citizens was ruthlessly enforced and the population was forced to endure long death marches and hellish sea crossings, as their beloved homes, livestock, factories and farms burned all around them. Those that fled the flames and evaded the Nazi evacuation found themselves fighting an equally ruthless foe in the climate and environment itself. In ice-cold mountain caves a different kind of battle emerged: a fight for survival against a cruel Arctic winter, ravenous hunger, starvation and roaming SS assassination squads, mopping up those who escaped the march. For the thousands of Soviet prisoners of war that the occupying Germans already held, an even harsher fate awaited, and they found themselves dispatched to the nightmarish Mallintz Death Camp, to prepare for a last stand defence against the encroaching Russian army, that in the end was never mounted. They spent their final days under the Nazi lash, building the Lingen Line mountain top defences that were ultimately never used. The conditions the men were kept in were equal to the horrors of

Auschwitz and as the cold, hunger and desperation bit hard, they were forced into cannibalism. In one camp a 1000 men entered and not one man emerged alive. They were told to claw into wet clay with their bare hands if they wanted shelter “ that or sleep under the cold stars ” and to eat their boots if they required food. Those unable to work were ordered to report to a morning sickness parade where they were simply shot where they stood and rolled into the nearest hole. The only medical care offered was the merciful despatch of a bullet to the head, delivered by a Luger pistol and a blank Nazi smile. Yet war brings out the best and worst in soldiers and amidst the death and destruction there are solitary beacons of light such as the German colonel who refused the “burn order” and quietly vacated his troops on borrowed fishermen’s boats which he returned “ and the heroic Norwegian Resistance super-spy ”, Bernt Balchen, whose derring-do saved thousands of lives, as he flew scores of death-defying sorties and repeatedly volunteered for the most dangerous missions. Fire and Ice is an immensely important work that shines a piercing light on a crucial period of WW2 history that for political reasons has been grievously overlooked and ignored, because it contains painfully inconvenient truths for the Norwegian establishment and its treatment of Finnmark survivors and their descendants. The cruel fate of the Norwegian children unfortunate enough to be born of German fathers and cast into abusive care homes “ through no fault of their own ” makes for powerful and disturbing reading. Many were raised as orphans under what appears to be a semi-approved official stamp of shame, and continuously punished for the perceived sins of parents they didn’t even know. It is a dark stain and a reminder of a time that many in Oslo’s corridors of power would rather forget, but the victims of Finnmark cannot. Vincent Hunt has done the displaced survivors of Finnmark’s forced evacuation and the forgotten Soviet prisoners of Mallintz a great service with this book. He has uncovered a raw, hidden history, and I hope the Norwegian government recognizes him for this ground-breaking and scholarly work. Steven McLaughlin, Author of Squaddie: A Soldier’s Story Mainstream Publishing

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