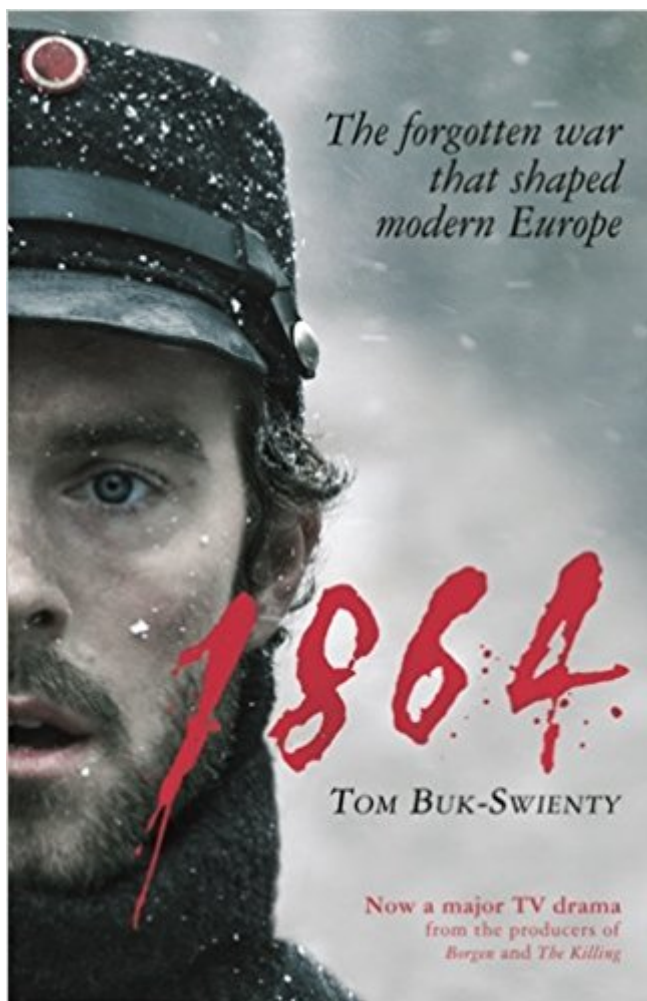


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# 1864: The Forgotten War That Shaped Modern Europe



## Synopsis

The Battle of Dybbøl, 1864. Prussian troops lay siege to an outpost in the far south of Denmark. The conflict is over control of the Duchy of Schleswig, recently annexed by Denmark to the alarm of its largely German-speaking inhabitants. Danish troops make a valiant attempt to hold out but are overrun by the might of the Prussian onslaught. Of little strategic importance, the struggle for Schleswig foreshadowed the same forces that, fifty years later, would tear Europe apart. Prussia's victory would not only rejuvenate its nascent militarism, but help it claim leadership of the new German Empire. Told in rich detail through first-hand accounts, Tom Buk-Swienty's magisterial account of the Schleswig conflict tells the story of this pivotal war. 1864 shows how a minor regional conflict foreshadowed the course of diplomacy that led to the First World War and brutally presaged the industrialised future of warfare. But most of all, in its human detail, from touching letters between husbands and wives to heartbreaking individual stories of loss, 1864 is a gripping, epic human drama that shows the effect all wars have on the soldiers, on families and on the individual men and women who must live its realities.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Tom Buk-Swienty tells a story packed with vivid incident and intriguing characters, and which crackles with narrative energy -- Christopher Silvester \* Financial Times \* An irresistible read \* Times \* Excellently written \* Morning Star \*

Tom Buk-Swienty is a Danish journalist and history writer. He has been the US correspondent for

several major Danish newspapers, is a former fellow at the Cullman Center of the New York Public Library and now teaches at the University of Southern Denmark. The Danish editions of 1864 have sold over 150,000 copies locally and formed the basis for the biggest Danish TV production in history.

This book tells the story of an important, but little known conflict between Denmark, Prussia and the Austrian Empire over the Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein. The book ably and concisely describes the political tensions over the Duchy which led to the first war of German Unification and Otto von Bismarck's amazing political career. The book is written mainly from letters, diaries, reports, and other first-hand accounts. It is slightly from the Danish point of view, but the author is entirely critical of the Danish Government's decision to adjust the status of Schleswig-Holstein. Indeed, in the frenzied diplomacy prior to the war, the splitting of Schleswig-Holstein into its component linguistic parts was discussed but rejected by Denmark. After WWI of course, the Duchy did split and the situation in Northern Europe is very peaceful because. As far as critical thinking, I was really surprised that the Union Army in 1864 didn't adopt the Dreyse Needle Gun. I can only speculate that American Gun Manufacturers had already made the jump to fixed metallic cartridges, as seen in the Henry Rifle and there was no reason to do such a massive switch. All in all this is a really enjoyable book.

Great detail on a battle that few in the U.S. know about. And I do mean battle, not war. There is excellent detail on the personalities and the soldiers who would be lost to history if not for the other, but it focuses on almost exclusively on the events leading up to and the Battle of Dybbøl. That's fine. That is the pivotal battle of the Second Schleswig War, but there were a couple of later battles that are brushed over. Also, and a minor nit to pick, I wish the author had not revealed the fates of some of the soldiers early in his book. It would have been more interesting, as you went along, to not know what would happen to this person or that person.

A very good book on a small war in 1864 in Europe created by ignoring prior agreements with the big European powers. Denmark made big mistakes by taking on both Prussia and Austria. Both of these nations could easily win battles and war with Denmark. Denmark failed to get support from England and France because Denmark ignored prior treaties.

Whatever ended on the 8th/9th of May 1945 or on the 3rd of October 1990 began in 1864 on the

18th of April at Dybbøl. This is the beginning of the rise of Germany into a military power that at the time was largely ignored. Buk-Swienty takes us to the battle fields and the parlor rooms to help us understand that the disconnect between those eager for war and those burdened with fighting it is nothing new.

Best history book ever. Every person of Danish descent should read this.

Interesting conflict. Author's narrative account of many lives intersecting at this disastrous juncture made for a highly readable account. Det var en god bog!

Raw!

Look I read a lot of NF a difficult book to read because very little exist regarding this war.

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