



Victory in Europe 1945: From World War to Cold War

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At the end of World War II in Europe, peace had finally come but at a terrible price: its cities and countryside were devastated, 35 million lay dead, and those who did survive faced extreme economic hardship and the threat of starvation. Ending the war was more than a matter of defeating the German army; it was about a new world order emerging in fits and starts from the smoldering ruins of a continent.

In this provocative collection, eleven senior scholars explore the transition from war to uneasy peace. Authorities such as Warren Kimball, Randall Woods, and Garry Clifford examine how and why the war ended as it did, whether a different resolution was possible, and what the victors actually won. They also consider whether the circumstances surrounding war termination made inevitable the ensuing Cold War.

Some examine the often-tragic results of actions taken to deal with such immediate circumstances as the food crisis. Others assess the roles of key players, such as the joint chiefs of staff, during the transition from shooting war to cold war. Still others explore issues that have preoccupied scholars and policy makers since 1945 regarding the chaotic termination of the war, such as Eisenhower's decision to stop at the Elbe.

Here readers will relive VE Day from the perspective of Soviet-occupied Poland and neutral Ireland, get a glimpse of Russian society at war's end, and experience Holland's brutal "hunger winter." The authors also re-examine ties between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and show how such factors as inept diplomacy, mutual anxieties, Stalin's heavy-handedness, and Truman's bravado led to decades of standoff.

We always know more about how wars begin than how they end, and five decades after this important event many questions about the end of World War II remain unanswered. *Victory in Europe 1945* offers a case study in war termination that examines choices made and opportunities lost as it considers the transition from coalition cooperation to mutual suspicion in the face of new political realities. It brings to life a pivotal moment in history with new insights for specialists, students, and general readers alike.

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