

Soldier, Sailor, Frogman, Spy, Airman, Gangster, Kill or Die: How the Allies Won on D-Day By Giles Milton

We're often introduced to characters with what becomes a tired cliché: Soldier X found the war much more exciting than his job as back home only to witness them cut down a moment later. The German side of the invasion is also covered in detail as Milton introduces the reader to German soldiers like Franz Gockel and Josef Shroder whose weapons would meet the allied invaders. The arrogant and exceptional Panzer Commander Colonel Hermann von Oppeln-Bronikowski is introduced as he tries to drive a wedge with his tanks as he saw an opening between British troops on Sword Beach and Canadians on Juno. He lives in London where he is a member of the Hakluyt Society which is dedicated to reprinting the works of explorers and adventurers in scholarly editions some of which he uses in his research. He lives in London where he is a member of the Hakluyt Society which is dedicated to reprinting the works of explorers and adventurers in scholarly editions some of which he uses in his research. Apparently he began researching the life of Sir John Mandeville for his book *The Riddle and the Knight* after Mandeville's book *Travels* literally fell off the shelf of a Paris bookstore in which he was browsing.

com 2007 {site_link} A ground-breaking gripping account of the first 24 hours of the D-Day invasion told by a symphony of incredible accounts of unknown and unheralded members of the Allied - and Axis - forces by one of the world's most lively historians. An epic battle that involved 156000 men 7000 ships and 20000 armored vehicles the desperate struggle that unfolded on 6 June 1944 was above all a story of individual heroics - of men who were driven to keep fighting until the German defenses were smashed and the precarious beachheads secured. Giles Milton's bold new history narrates the day's events through the tales of survivors from all sides: the teenage Allied conscript the crack German defender the French resistance fighter. From the military architects at Supreme Headquarters to the young schoolboy in the Wehrmacht's bunkers *Soldier Sailor Frogman Spy Airman Gangster Kill or Die* lays bare the absolute terror of those trapped in the front line of Operation Overlord. This vast canvas of human bravado reveals 'the longest day' as never before - less as a masterpiece of strategic planning than a day on which thousands of scared young men found themselves staring death in the face. That being said Milton exercised great editorial restraint in keeping this project to a reasonable page count and I would recommend it for those who want a different perspective on a much-covered event. The story greatest seaborne invasion and one of the greatest airborne operations in history combining to break the Atlantic Wall is known from an overview perspective but the story of D-Day from a personal perspective really brings home the events of the first 24-hours of D-Day. Giles Milton covers the first 24-hours of the invasion of Western Europe in *Soldier Sailor Frogman Spy Airman Gangster Kill or Die: How the Allies Won on D-Day* from both the Allied and German sides. From the Allied (mostly American) paratroopers landing all over the place confusing themselves as well as the Germans to the mistake by the Allied Supreme Command of not properly bombing the beaches and the struggle on Omaha the things that could have undermined the Allied invasion are brought out and highlighted. Milton shifts the narrative from West to East in the landing zones to detail the Allied experiences on each as well as South as German defenders and French civilians experienced the firepower of massive invasion as well chronologically (as well as can be expected) to really bring to the forefront how touch and go that day was. If you are familiar with the film *The Longest Day* than some of these eyewitnesses will be familiar given the events that Milton chronicles if not for that I would have gotten lost several times throughout the book. *Soldier Sailor Frogman Spy Airman Gangster Kill or Die: How the Allies Won on D-Day* is an ambitious undertaking by Giles Milton that unfortunately does not really come together as a whole. The author takes the events surrounding D-Day the massive attack that turned the tide of World War II and recounts them from the perspectives of those that were there both on the Allied side as well as on the Germans'. Though the narrative flows in a congenial tone it represents a smallish amount of research stretched and padded and the result is a smattering of important information that's already been conveyed in a million other sources most of which he doesn't cite and a great deal of trivial information provided by bystanders which he does. The author draws to some extent upon stories garnered through his German wife's family but a lot of it comes across as the sort of long-winded

recounting that causes even loving family members to inch toward their coats and make noises about how late it's getting to be. Long passages of direct quotations pass without a citation and then later there are citations but they aren't well integrated and almost nothing has more than a single source provided. Why is it that when a war ends and enmities cool the folks that are invited back into the fold by the UK and USA are always Caucasians? Brits and Americans wax sentimental now alongside Germans none of whom belonged to families that liked the Fascists yet the Japanese fighters of World War II never make it back into the family so to speak. In addition the anniversary has produced a plethora of new books to go with the classic works that have been written in the past including; Cornelius Ryan's *THE LONGEST DAY* Max Hasting's *OVERLORD* John Keegan's *SIX ARMIES IN NORMANDY* Carlo D'Este's *DECISION IN NORMANDY* Anthony Beevor's *D DAY* and Stephen Ambrose's *D DAY: JUNE 6TH 1944*. New books published in the last two months include *COUNTDOWN TO D DAY: THE GERMAN PERSPECTIVE* by Peter Margaritis *NORMANDY '44: D DAY AND THE EPIC 77 DAY BATTLE FOR FRANCE* by James Holland *SAND AND STEEL: D DAY AND THE LIBERATION OF FRANCE* by Peter Caddick-Adams *THE FIRST WAVE: THE D DAY WARRIORS WHO LED THE WAY TO VICTORY IN WORLD WAR II* by Alex Kershaw and *SOLDIER SAILOR FROGMAN SPY AIRMAN GANGSTER KILL OR DIE: HOW THE ALLIES WON ON D DAY* by Giles Milton. What sets the book apart from the others is that he approaches events from a different perspective by focusing on the stories of survivors from all sides including; a teenage Allied conscript the crack German defender and the French resistance fighter among many others. Bradley the most senior American commander at D-Day and Nazi Field Marshall Erwin Rommel who Hitler placed in charge of preparing and thwarting any allied invasion across the English Channel. The strength of Milton's book is how he conveys the experiences of allied soldiers who bore the brunt of the carnage and eventual success of the invasion but also French civilians who were caught in the crossfire between allied bombing and German artillery. In addition Milton gives voice to many individuals who have not been heard before; the Panzer Commander's wife the chauffeur to the General Staff women who worked in in Southwick the nerve center for Operation Overlord and those teenagers forced into service as nurses at Portsmouth caring for German prisoners of war. The narrative explores the difficulties in organizing such a massive undertaking that involved transporting 23 million acres of material across the Atlantic 6939 vessels including 4000 landing craft 200000 service personnel and close to 10000 aircraft. Milton has an excellent eye for detail be it weather forecasting the personalities involved the strategies employed by both sides and in particular those stories that we do not necessarily think of when examining the insanity of war. In this case Milton describes the experiences of paratroopers behind German lines who wound up caught in trees serving as a shooting gallery for German snipers the mission of Howard Vander Beek who commanded an LCC 60 a small boat designed to lead American safely toward the beaches or Wally Blanchard an eighteen year old frogman whose job was to defuse the minefield that Rommel's forces laid in front of Gold beach. Milton's work is chocked full of stories of heroes individual acts of courage and remarkable examples of bravery on the part of allied soldiers as they confronted Rommel's Atlantic Wall as they hit the beaches and were subject to German artillery and mortars. Men like James Rudder and his unit would be successful in knocking out the big German guns situated on top of Pointe du Hoc where six 155mm cannon could lob huge shells a distance of 25000 meters covering Omaha and Utah beaches. Others include General Norman "Dutch" Cota and Colonel Charles Canham would help break the deadlock that existed on Omaha Beach or Simon Fraser a Highland Chief and the 15th Lord Lovat "the mad bastard" would lead his men to link up with John Howard an Oxford shire policeman's unit to save the Benouville Bridge that was a key to allied advance after the landings. " The vivid description of death is difficult to deal with at times and in the end 37000 allied soldiers died with 209000 casualties and roughly 17 Hitler and commanders on the ground is related and if they would have been in better sync with each other the importance of the allied success resulted in ultimate victory against the Nazi war machine. English This is a story of such magnitude that it cannot be contained in one volume and represent all parts of the story equally and yet that is exactly what Giles Milton has done. There is still plenty of gruesome

and barbaric warfare and the loss of so many lives is staggering but you can't help yourself from having a better understanding of what happened through these eyewitness accounts. It starts with specific stories on the night before the invasion then proceeds through the airborne drops on each side of the beachhead the initial wave of sea landing across all five beaches then the advance inland a German counterattack and finally nightfall. Needless to say and especially at Omaha Beach the account gets grisly and no matter how many books on D-Day you have read the extreme sacrifice made by those US units in the first wave is unforgettable:

With the only warning to the residents being air-dropped pamphlets delivered the morning of D-Day, The fact that much of the technology fails when needed was also an interesting side to the story, The largest problem was it tried to cover the events from far too many perspectives: Only a select few characters recur and those parts work the most since I felt more invested in them, I imagine this was intentional to make the deaths more surprising.

000 deaths in the air: They could not believe the bloodshed they were causing as they were picking off allied soldiers as they hit the beaches: Rommel's headquarters is also explored in addition to his surprise when the invasion took place - he was visiting his wife in Germany: The disagreements between Nazi higherups.

The task for allied soldiers would have been much more difficult and the resulting casualty figures much higher. Milton has skillfully woven a very complex narrative that allows the general audience to understand the violence and utter devastation that occurred on June 6th, He has written a remarkable account through the eyes of the participants providing the reader with insights and an experience that is not always conveyed as well by historians, After reading Milton's account one but one cannot escape the fact of the willingness of so many on both sides to fight to the death: In the end despite the the difficulties involved.

British writer and journalist Giles Milton was born in Buckinghamshire in 1966, He has contributed articles for most of the British national newspapers as well as many foreign publications and specializes in the history of travel and exploration, In the course of his researches he has traveled extensively in Europe the Middle East Japan and the Far East and the Americas: Knowledgeable insatiably curious and entertaining Milton locates history's most fascinating—and most overlooked—stories and brings them to life in his books, He wrote most British writer and journalist Giles Milton was born in Buckinghamshire in 1966, He has contributed articles for most of the British national newspapers as well as many foreign publications and specializes in the history of travel and exploration. In the course of his researches he has traveled extensively in Europe the Middle East Japan and the Far East and the Americas, Knowledgeable insatiably curious and entertaining Milton locates history's most fascinating—and most overlooked—stories and brings them to life in his books, He wrote most of Samurai William in the London Library where he loves the huge reading room large Victorian desks and creaking armchairs, At home and while traveling he is ever on the lookout for new untold stories: Seventy-five years have passed since D-Day the greatest seaborne invasion in history: The outcome of the Second World War hung in the balance on that chilly June morning: If Allied forces succeeded in gaining a foothold in northern France the road to victory would be open. But if the Allies could be driven back into the sea the invasion would be stalled for years perhaps forever. This authentic human story - Allied German French - has never fully been told: It also gives voice to those who have hitherto remained unheard - the French butcher's daughter the Panzer Commander's wife the chauffeur to the General Staff. It is drawn in its entirety from the raw unvarnished experiences of those who were there. Soldier Sailor Frogman Spy Airman Gangster Kill or Die: How the Allies Won on D-Day This was an interesting book very ambitious in scope. I also appreciated the inclusion of the German and French civilian perspectives as I haven't read about that as much. For example I didn't realize that French coastal towns were bombarded heavily and I did feel that the overall atmosphere of indiscriminate slaughter was

accurate conveyed: English I received Advanced Reader's Edition of this book through LibraryThing's Early Reviewers program for an honest review: Milton sets the "scene" by describing how the Allies planned the invasion and how the German planned to stop them, Once the narrative turns to the invasion Milton begins following a multitude individuals—some of whom he returns to a few times—over the course of those first pivotal 24 hours. However the successes such as the total surprise of the invasion are also brought to life through many perspectives from the retelling by soldiers: While Milton certainly constructed a very intriguing historical narrative in covering a 24-hour period from the viewpoint of a multitude of eyewitnesses this was also the book's downfall. The use of so many eyewitnesses resulted in not really establishing familiarity with those that he returns to over the course of the book. While the use of a multitude of eyewitnesses can be applauded to create the narrative unfortunately it didn't work out given the large number Milton used. Frogmen! Spies! Thanks go to Net Galley and Henry Holt for the galley which I expected to love. Though I am disappointed I would have been more so had I paid the cover price for this fast-and-loose pop history, In all fairness I have to admit that it's bad luck on the author's part to have his work released so soon after *Spearhead* which is brilliant and meticulously documented, On the other hand this is no debut and though I haven't read the author's other work I can't imagine that he doesn't know he's cut corners here. Then there's the other thing an elephant in the room that isn't entirely this author's fault. And in this Milton has a vast amount of company but this is where it is most obvious so this is where I'll mention it, English Next month will be the 75th anniversary of the allied landing in Normandy: As with most major historical commemorations people will flock to the beaches off the French coast. It is important to remember that each book mentioned has made an important contribution to the growing historiography related to the allied landing in June 1944, Milton's approach is very anecdotal as he introduces numerous characters. Some are important historical figures like General Dwight David Eisenhower the Supreme Allied Commander General Omar T, It was of immense importance that the German guns be knocked out so the landing zones could be built up to support the invasion, The stories that Milton conveys are chilling as events unfolded on June 6th as death became a game of chance. The author points out that "for most the landings were petrifying for a few it was intoxicating. This is not your typical history book overflowing with mindnumbing facts and figures: Instead the author has taken this heroic Herculean effort of so many people and countries and made it personal. Every chapter is riddled with stories and actual accounts from the men and women on both sides of the trenches: It makes what should be a reading challenge much more readable: You are left in awe of what they accomplished grateful for your family members who served and hope that never again will so many perish in this way, English The title is a bit deceptive making one think you are going to read some secret never-before-revealed history of D-Day: Instead you get a somewhat newish spin on the D-Day story by focusing on specific individuals (mostly non-famous) on both sides and their endeavors on that fateful day. Chapters are relatively short and focus on a few individuals at a given place and time. The book regularly switches viewpoint from the Allied to the German side to the French civilians. The landing craft ramps drop the soldiers splash out and then they're killed almost immediately. There are three excellent maps at the beginning of the book that pinpoint each individual's (or unit's) story with a map callout, In some ways this is a modern day revision of *The Longest Day* by Cornelius Ryan who amassed hundreds of interviews many not used by Ryan but used by Milton: Nits?I would have liked to have read about some of the other participant types at D-Day as after a while I got a bit tired of all the infantry accounts: For example - crews of the Funnies the impressed Russian soldiers the quartermasters but I'm sure space was the issue, This book is not a comprehensive general's eye view of the battle (i. not an operational history) but Milton provides sufficient context for a reader not familiar with the battle to follow along. Nor is it a Normandy campaign history as it ends on the 6th of June 1944, A good complementary book on the campaign would be Antony Beevor's *D-Day The Battle for Normandy*. English This is the best most engaging book on D-day that I have ever read, The author tells a great story and weaves in quotations from both Allied and German combatants. If you like your military history to be about people and not overburdened with the movements of

battalions corps and divisions you'll like this book: There's thousands of individual stories that came out of June 6th 1944. While we all know about the pair of shoes General Rommel picked up for his wife's birthday I never new that they didn't fit, That little vignette says a lot about the kind of luck he would have that day. If the Allies weren't pushed back into the sea immediately the war would be lost. You can put this book on the shelf between Stephen Ambrose and Cornelius Ryan. English Wow! What a book! The story of the WWII D-Day landings told through the eyes of soldiers from the Axis and Allied armies: The stories of the horror and heroism of that day recounted by the soldiers sailors and pilots that took part is riveting stuff: A marvelous book! English Excellent addition to the canon of D-Day books. {site_link} Copyright BookBrowse. It was fairly inconsistent but overall worth reading. The aspects I enjoyed most were the exciting action scenes. Many of the skirmishes are rendered really well. Nonetheless it made it challenging as a narrative. English My attention was riveted on the title. So there is the research—or mostly there isn't. In other words it's sketchy stuff that cannot pass muster. So there it is. It's for sale now if you still want it. For this review I will focus on Milton's new narrative. What they experienced firsthand becomes our shared experience. My thanks to the publisher for the advance copy. land-air-sea are all covered. The writing style is crisp and evocative.e. English Be prepared to meet a lot of characters. This captures a lot of them. Rommel knew what everyone wanted to deny. I enjoyed it. Scheduled to be published on the 75th anniversary. Well researched and the book includes an excellent bibliography. English

