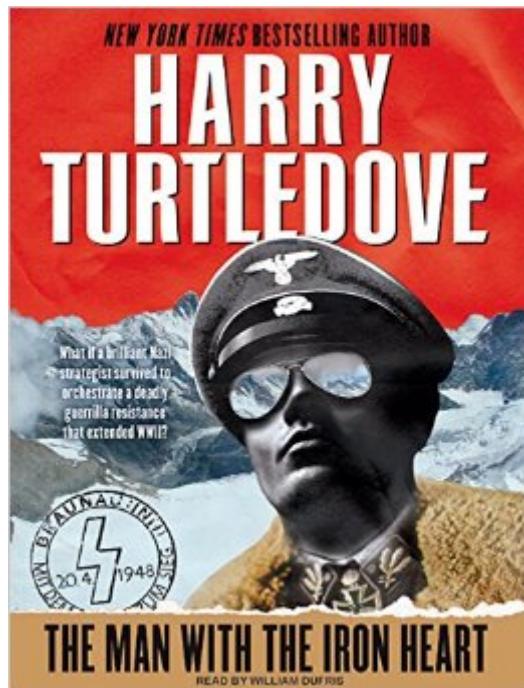


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The Man With The Iron Heart



Synopsis

In the real world, Reinhard Heydrich-the number-two man in the SS and an architect of the holocaust-was assassinated in Czechoslovakia in May 1942. Eulogized by Hitler himself as "The Man with the Iron Heart," Heydrich-also known as "The Butcher" and "The Hangman"-was one of the most ruthless and calculating of the Nazi elite. In *The Man with the Iron Heart*, Heydrich survives that fated assassination attempt only to hatch an insurgency as insidious as anything conceived by Osama bin Laden, designed to keep the German battlefield alive long after the supposed end to hostilities. The Allies thought the war was over, but their problems are just beginning. *The Man with the Iron Heart* is the gripping story of the hunt for Reinhard Heydrich and of the effort to suppress urban guerrilla warfare sixty years before we really run into it in Iraq. Powerful and compelling, Turtledove has never been better.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For the past decade, the summer has been the occasion of another entry in Harry Turtledove's "Southern Victory" alternate history series. In it, he explored the eighty years after a Civil War in which the South had won its independence, his last volume, *In at the Death* (*Settling Accounts*, Book 4), saw the Confederacy defeated and dissolved after their version of the Second World War. Having apparently finished with the series, Turtledove has moved on to this book. In it, he takes the "Werewolf" resistance movement devised by the Nazis before the demise of the Third Reich and puts it in the hands of Reinhard Heydrich, whom is spared his assassination by Czech partisans

during the war. Benefiting from better planning and more ruthless leadership, the Werewolves unleash a fearsome terrorist campaign against the Allied occupation forces. Soldiers are murdered and mutilated, truck bombs explode, and leading commanders targeted by rocket launcher-equipped fanatics. Readers of Turtledove's earlier series will find his depiction of this similar to that in his earlier novels, when he envisioned disaffected Mormons becoming suicide bombers and conquered Confederates waging a diehard resistance against occupying U.S. forces. But whereas in the earlier novels these elements were only part of the storyline, here they take center stage and form the basis of the action. When reading the book, it soon becomes apparent that Turtledove draws many of his ideas from the American experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, both in terms of the occupation and the reaction to it on the home front.

The analysis of the American political scene that Turtledove provides in this book seems accurate: The GOP of 1945-1948 seemed hellbent on opposing Truman's policies no matter how sensible they proved to be. A reading of Cherney's excellent (real) history Candy Bombers shows this. Still, much of the rest of the book was problematic: 1. I have a hard time believing Heydrich could have squirreled away so many weapons, munitions, slave laborers, and built up a huge underground infrastructure without Himmler et alia catching on to it and executing him for defeatism. 2. I also have a hard time believing the Germans would have adopted kamikaze tactics on such a widespread basis, especially when they were not being funded by Heydrich as Al Qaeda has been doing with its followers. 3. By 1948, Truman resoundingly won over the American public on his very unpopular foreign policy. Would the same have happened in Turtledove's Germany? Perhaps. 4. The overt comparisons with Iraq were annoying. Germany had a tradition of parliamentary government, though, and Iraq didn't. This led to huge differences in what did/would happen to both countries post war. Another big diff: Hitler declared war on us (if he hadn't, the GOP probably would have just approved the fight against Japan), while Iraq was a war we started. The differences between post "mission accomplished" Iraq and postwar Germany make the comparisons interesting, but Turtledove overplays them. I was disappointed with Turtledove's closing comment about that nutty California Senator who made a nutty statement. Yeah, you can find nuts who say nutty things all the time.

I've been a fan of Turtledove since I first came across Great War: American Front, and I can honestly say that, as a history fanatic, I find much of his work to be one thrill ride after another. With Man with the Iron Heart, I once again enjoyed the plethora of characters he creates, and laughed

uproariously at the subtle (and not) commentaries and connections he made with the Iraq War/occupation. Nonetheless, I did find several parts somewhat off-putting, and on one or two occasions I found myself wondering out loud how idiotic and shortsighted some of the characters were. Some of the biggest problems I describe below (WARNING: Here be Spoilers):1) The Cindy Sheehan-esque antiwar character Diana McGraw; I can understand why Turtledove would place such a character in this story to further illustrate his Iraq commentary, but I find it hard to believe that she would not be able to grasp the idea of the Nazis returning with ICBM-like rockets (which WERE on the drawing boards at the time), or that the Russians wouldn't just roll on to the Rhine if they even caught a whiff of Nazism reappearing. I did enjoy, however, the GOP congressman who essentially hijacks her movement to get his party back in the majority; typical move there. I also enjoyed (and didn't immediately catch) the subtle jab at 1940s American anti-Semitism, with the remarks between McGraw and a couple of her supporters after a heated conversation with a returning Jewish veteran (pg. 440)2) The return of the German physicists to the occupied zones. Given what happened with Operation Paperclip in our history, I find it absurd that the British or the US would allow men with such knowledge to return to their former lives in Germany with such an insurgency as Turtledove describes running rampant.

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