



Case Red: The Collapse of France

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Even after the legendary evacuation from Dunkirk in June 1940 there were still large British formations fighting the Germans alongside their French allies. After mounting a vigorous counterattack at Abbeville and then conducting a tough defence along the Somme, the British were forced to conduct a second evacuation from the ports of Le Havre, Cherbourg, Brest and St Nazaire. While France was in its death throes, politicians and soldiers debated what to do – flee to England or North Africa, or to seek an armistice.

Case Red captures the drama of the final three weeks of military operations in France in June 1940, and explains the great impact it had on the course of relations between Britain and France during the remainder of the war. It also addresses the military, political and human drama of France's collapse in June 1940, and how the windfall of captured military equipment, fuel and industrial resources enhanced the Third Reich's ability to attack its next foe – the Soviet Union.

Case Red: The Collapse of France Details

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From Reader Review Case Red: The Collapse of France for online ebook

Mark Frederick says

Excellent Operational Account

Case Red shows that France fell because of poor leadership, planning, and political opportunism. Despite that, French troops fought to the bitter end and retained the honor that their leaders lost.

Fernando D says

Dr. Forczyk combines not only a PhD in military history, but also served as a tank officer in the US Army. This gives him a wonderful perspective of not only what happened, but why things happened - and the unique capabilities and limitations of armored forces that make his works into tank warfare during the Second World War so powerfully insightful. Dr. Forczyk is not for the the casual reader: he goes into a considerable amount of detail and the less engaged might be turned off by the vast number of battalions, regiments, divisions and corps that one needs to keep track of, in both French and German. Dr. Forczyk also has strong opinions: no one is going to mistake his stance on the performance of General Weygand or Petain, de Gaulle or de Lattre de Tassigny, or Guderian, Rommel and Rundstedt on the German side. You might feel offended and feel that Dr. Forczyk strays from "historical objectivity" in this regard, but I personally don't feel that it is a problem: all authors display a bias in their works and Dr. Forczyk unapologetically keeps his out front and in the open, which makes it easier to recognize and deal with.

If you are interested in a highly detailed, thoughtful and readable account of armored warfare in the Second World War, Dr. Forczyk is preeminent.

Heinz Reinhardt says

This is the first book I have come across that offers any detailed narrative on the second half of the Fall of France in 1940. Normally anything post the first Brexit, at Dunkirk, is glossed over in sometimes as little as a single sentence. However, Case Red finally brings to light the fierce fighting, operational and tactical gambits, and the personalities involved in the French nightmare of 1940.

Dealing with far more, however, than just Case Red, the author does an excellent job of showcasing how both the French and British were ludicrously ill prepared for a new war. All the while, the National Socialists in Germany were making very ominous, and obvious, preparations for precisely that.

The works focus is on the French side of the tale, and this is the best way by which one can fully comprehend why the victors of the First World War, lost so completely in the opening rounds of the Second.

The French were no strangers to utilizing military force between the wars. In Syria and North Africa they used brute military force to stamp out two Muslim insurgencies (proving that with enough will power, and logistics, you really can kill enough adherents to a dangerous ideal to make them say uncle) and spent a fortune on not just building the technological marvel that was the Maginot Line, but also the Navy.

Even so, much like the current US and NATO, French insistence on focusing on counterinsurgency operations, and in technological marvels would damn them to the nightmare to come.

The French were incapable of forming a coherent doctrinal plan for mechanized warfare prior to the outbreak

of war, and their efforts to improvise one post hostilities came up short in practice. The French also fell behind in the aerial arms race, with the Luftwaffe being significantly superior on a technological level to the French Air Force the AdA.

France's greatest mistake, however, was also one that both the United States and NATO seem to be making on a routine basis. France was utterly convinced of the benefits of collective security. As such she wasted years, resources, and ultimately lives in her quest to build a cordon sanitaire around Germany, composed of weaker states too far away from France for any reasonable strategic cooperation. France's misplaced faith in collective security, her adherence to pacifist thinking and the misguided notion that the abhorrence of war would prevent an outbreak of one doomed not just her, but ultimately the entire world, to the hell of the Second World War.

Once the war and invasion did occur, however, the author goes to great lengths to point out the heroic resistance offered by the much despised (even by her own citizens) French Army and Air Force. He also showcases the at best lackluster and at worst criminally negligent way in which the British routinely failed to aid their continental ally. That said, he also does an excellent job at pointing out how the British were the least prepared for war of all the major powers, and couldn't have contributed much at the outset anyway.

German reliance on far more flexible junior leadership (genuine leadership, too, as opposed to management and administration; clearly history bears out which is the Superior methodology), as well as heavier organic firepower per unit helped ensure victory over a troubled, yet heroic French military.

Overall, this is an excellent look at a sad fall of a once great power. A great power brought down largely by it's own victors guilt, willful lack of preparation, and inability to show the right kind of ruthlessness at the time it was most needed.

Highly recommended.

solo says

have *you* always wondered what a specific French tank (crew names supplied) of the 41e BCC of the 3e DCR was doing around half-past eight on the evening of June 12, 1940? if so, then this book is for you!

because there are almost 300 pages of such [presumably meticulously researched] blow-by-blow accounts, often down to the individual tank platoon or even a single tank, with times, dates, places, weather, what's for dinner, etc. in this book, to cover roughly *six weeks* of fighting. handy if you're in the business of stamping out cookie-cutter expansion packs for turn-based strategy games, otherwise - mind-boggling.

on the positive side, title notwithstanding, Case Red is not just about Fall Rot. it covers all of Battle of France and only gets to Fall Rot about half-way through the book. and yes, there are also a couple of chapters of higher-level how-s and why-s, some background info, brief discussion of the equipment of each side, a helping of politics and a side dish of author's 20/20 hindsight and opinions. but the important stuff tends to get drowned in minutiae.

granted, this is Forczyk and it's Osprey (who'da thunk, right?), but i'd say this time they went overboard with the padding.

Andrew Tollemache says

Of the several books I have read over the years covering the May-June 1940 Battle of France I have to say that Forczyk's "Case Red" is my favorite. Many books on the subject do as good of a job detailing the run up to the start of WW2, the different plans, strategies, POVs and armaments of the opposing powers and do as

good of a job covering the first phase of the Battle of France up until the evacuation at Dunkirk. "Case Red" does a much better job at the the second phase of the German invasion of France and how vigorously (and vainly) the French tried to fight the German onslaught.

Many readers in the US and UK have long considered the French effort half hearted and feebly contested. Forczyk makes a case for while French leadership was a muddled mess and some like Petain were craven and treasonous, the French forces threw themselves against the German tide and lsuffered 250,000 casualties with almost 100K dead in 45 days of fighting. It would be years later, if ever, before US and UK forces faced those type losses in comparable time frames as what the French suffered.

Also surprising is given how much is made of the Dunkirk evacuation, how feckless the British effort was in the early Summer of 1940.

Nishant Pappireddi says

Excellent book that details the Battle of France after Dunkirk.

Michael Romo says

I am a historian of the French Army and in my opinion this book breaks new ground (for history written in English) in that it covers the latter phase of the Battle for France in WWII. Most histories of this battle concern themselves with military and political events leading to evacuation of the British Army at Dunkirk. Case Red presents what happened after Dunkirk on the ground and in the air. Political and diplomatic efforts also are covered here.

Dave Cheeney says

Extensive details about Hitlers first big gamble: the invasion of France, Belgium & Netherlands in May 1940. I'm a big WWII history buff, but this was a hard slog in some places due to the lack of maps. The author should have included at least 10+ maps that followed and supported the narrative. I had to flip back and forth to an atlas to follow the fight.

Jonathan says

A well-researched, energetically-written and much-needed history of the fall of France in the summer of 1940, with the emphasis on the second half of the campaign, dubbed Case Red by the Germans. The French may have made many mistakes in May and June 1940 (not the least of which was entrusting their army to a pair of incompetent and defeatist commanders: Gamelin and Weygand) but the number of casualties they both suffered and inflicted on their enemies proves that they fought hard. But they were outclassed at the tactical and operational levels. German units tended to have much greater firepower, and they fought as a more effective combined arms team than the French could usually do. The brilliant "Sichelshnitt" stroke in the Ardennes and across the Meuse destroyed almost 1/2 the French Army, but Case Red put the issue away. Much of the book is devoted to debunking the various myths and mistruths that have grown up around it, especially those spread by English-speaking authors. Generally speaking, French military technology in 1940 was equal to or even better than German tech: both French tanks and anti-tank guns tended to be superior to

German models. German artillery, on the other hand, was both more modern and had larger calibres than their French counterparts. The French just barely managed to produce a modern fighter that could match the Messerschmitt 109 - there were many problems with French military industries between the wars - and not enough attention was paid by the French to field anti-aircraft guns, motorizing their combat engineers, and producing quality crew-served infantry weapons.

Despite having lost the cream of her army in the north, the French fought hard during Case Red; the breakthrough battles that the Germans had to fight were tough and bitter, given their numerical and aerial superiorities. The French army was actually prepared to fight it out for Paris, but Weygand's arbitrary decision to declare it an open city robbed the French of the chance of slowing down the Germans and tying up a good portion of their infantry in an urban battlefield. All in all, there is much to ponder here, and Colonel Forczyk has done a man's job filling in the important gaps in our knowledge of the 1940 summer campaign in France, especially the battles south of the Somme and the Aisne. The maps could have been better, a general map of Case Red was especially lacking, but they are easy to find in other sources. All in all, an important addition to one's World War I library.

Mark Merritt says

Good book. Provides coverage of the last campaign in France 1940 that saw the final defeat of France. This is usually just a footnote in other histories but was certainly no footnote to those that fought it. Very sad....
