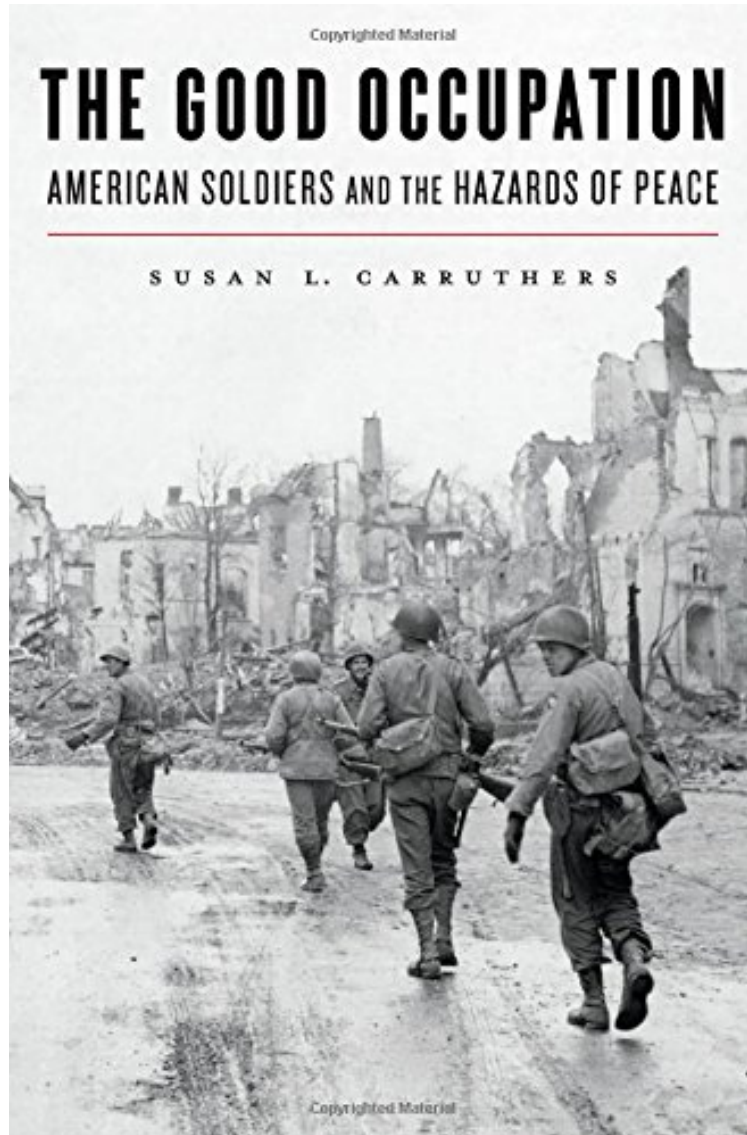


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# The Good Occupation: American Soldiers and the Hazards of Peace

*Susan L. Carruthers*

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**Susan L. Carruthers : The Good Occupation: American Soldiers and the Hazards of Peace** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Good Occupation: American Soldiers and the Hazards of Peace:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A very good read gives an aspect of the occupation seldom visitedBy buskermanThe authors presentation of American occupation of Germany and Japan / Okinawaare excerpts

of letters by the occupiers with narratives by the author fill in the blank spaces. The letters seem to make the occupiers the unhappy bunch and exploited ones where Rank Has Its Privilege (RHIP) as something new. There were no mentions in the excerpts from the letters of the American Occupiers being as bad or worse than the Nazis. That the occupiers tortured the occupied to get confessions they were Nazis or how they starved to Germans, with Eisenhower saying let them starve. Americans dumping unused food from mess halls outside the wire of compounds housing starving prisoners. Seems the letters and narratives make Patton out as a jerk. First thing Patton did was stop the torture by American Soldiers forcing ordinary Germans to confess to being Nazi's - He visited a prison where almost a 100% of the prisoners had crushed testicles, compliments of the interrogators. Patton also ran his part of Germany exactly like MacArthur did Japan, using the people who ran local governments during the war to keep things running then weeding out the Nazis as things went along. Read the book "After the Reich" to get accurate idea of the occupation. This is not the only book on the subject but I find it one of the best. As far as the occupation of Japan a good book to read as how Japan was governed and why it emerged as it did is "Allied Occupation of Japan". Written by Eiji Takemae well researched, does not go into abuses of the occupation just how Japan became what it did. MacArthur in all his arrogance did a good job of governing Japan, choosing not to starve the Japanese. He let them govern themselves at the point of the American bayonets. The description of the Japanese Surrender in Tokyo Bay is the best I have read. The meticulous detail into the how and why things were done with the psychology behind every orchestrated part. A very good read gives an aspect of the occupation seldom visited. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Too much emphasis on sex. By Delta D. Ambrose Bierce said "To be a Frenchman abroad is to be miserable. To be an American abroad is to make others miserable." This book, whilst dealing with a vitally important topic - i.e. what is the appropriate form of conduct for a victorious country occupying its defeated enemy post-war - seems too intent on exemplifying Bierce's remark. There's much to admire in this book - including the marked contrasts between occupation of Germany and the occupation of Japan - but there is too much description of the bad aspects of the two occupations and little space given to how this might have been improved. In particular, the processes of sexual gratification of the occupying forces - rape, formal prostitution, informal prostitution (i.e. attracting women with candy and cigarettes) and genuine affection - are given enormous prominence and I'm not convinced that this is the biggest takeaway from the the occupations. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Occupation - The Dark Side By Fleeced. As I started reading this book, I was struck by the challenge and complexity of winning the peace after the brutal simplicity of war. The biases, foibles, and injustices effected by occupation forces are exemplified herein. However, by the time I was halfway through it was clear that the author had biases of her own. No mention or acknowledgement of any noble, positive, or humanitarian intent or manifestation is credited. Not a single American individual or action cited in this book had the slightest merit. I was disappointed to find that a promising study of a critical topic turned out to be so negatively one sided.

Waged for a just cause and culminating in total victory, World War II was America's good war. Yet for millions of GIs overseas, the war did not end with Germany and Japan's surrender. The Good Occupation chronicles America's transition from wartime combatant to postwar occupier, by exploring the intimate thoughts and feelings of the ordinary servicemen and women who participated often reluctantly in the difficult project of rebuilding nations they had so recently worked to destroy. When the war ended, most of the seven million Americans in uniform longed to return to civilian life. Yet many remained on active duty, becoming the after-army tasked with bringing order and justice to societies ravaged by war. Susan Carruthers shows how American soldiers struggled to deal with unprecedented catastrophe among millions of displaced refugees and concentration camp survivors while negotiating the inevitable tensions that arose between victors and the defeated enemy. Drawing on thousands of unpublished letters, diaries, and memoirs, she reveals the stories service personnel told themselves and their loved ones back home in order to make sense of their disorienting and challenging postwar mission. The picture Carruthers paints is not the one most Americans recognize today. A venture undertaken by soldiers with little appetite for the task has crystallized, in the retelling, into the good occupation of national mythology: emblematic of the United States role as a bearer of democracy, progress, and prosperity. In real time, however, winning the peace proved a perilous business, fraught with temptation and hazard.

A disturbing look at the experiences of the after-army: the American service-people who stayed on active duty after the Second World War, charged with rebuilding the places they had helped to destroy. Frank, often harsh voices from letters, diaries and memoirs serve up inconvenient truths: the armed forces caste system and racism; casual cruelty and venality trumping conscience; fraternisation (and prostitution and rape) with blowsy frauleins and anxious to please Japanese maids. (Times Higher Education 2016-11-17) Based largely on previously unseen diaries and letters, the book poses the question: was the good war followed by the good occupation of the book's title? As ever, there is no easy answer and from Carruthers's lucid and elegantly written account, a picture emerges of muddled thinking and ill-thought out policies as often well-meaning men and women struggled with the conundrum that the people they were trying to help were representatives of countries they had only recently been attempting to destroy. (Trevor Royle The

Herald 2016-11-26)With characteristic brilliance, Susan Carruthers has written a critical history of military victory. Using letters and memoirs, she illuminates the interior life of American occupiers in Europe and Asia, showing the way military governance came to be imagined as a form of altruism. Highly recommended. (Mary L. Dudziak, author of *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences*)It is a book for the reader who enjoyed the notion of a greatest generation but may well be ready for a more complicated understanding of that period. (Marilyn B. Young, author of *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*)Susan Carruthers asks how the legend of the beneficial American military presence in Europe and Asia after World War II was created despite contemporaries observations of destruction, confusion, despair and hopelessness. Based on impressive and enlightening archival researches, this lively book urges us to add a permanent question mark to the phrase, the good occupation. (Werner Sollors, author of *The Temptation of Despair: Tales of the 1940s*)Carruthers brings together the American experiences of occupying both Germany and Japan as no other historian. In this lively, superbly researched account, we see not the magnanimous, square-jawed GIs and officers we recall today, but rather war-weary, bewildered Americans who confronted bombed-out cities and millions of hungry displaced people. To these very human occupiers, the successful rehabilitation of the enemy that we now celebrate appeared closer to Mission Impossible. (Sheldon Garon, author of *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life*)The Good Occupation dives directly into those controversies, mining a wide array of first-hand documents to create a vividly detailed picture of thousands of U.S. troops denied the neat conclusion to their wartime service that they dreamed about during the years of fighting. Carruthers doesnt shy away from the rapes, the looting, and the black market violence that cropped up in the Allied occupation as they have in every military occupation in the history of mankind. The venality of a significant number of U.S. occupiers (and their commandersGeneral George Patton is quite dispassionately raked over the coals) is exposed in chapter after chapter of meticulous research and austere lovely prose. (Steve Donoghue *Open Letters Monthly* 2016-12-08)[Carrutherss] book vividly illustrates the tumultuous period between 1945 and 1948, when Americans raised as isolationists suddenly found themselves in control of large swathes of the world and were ill-prepared to handle the mission at handHer archival research into the diaries and letters of the occupierslays bare the rapidly shifting attitudes that members of the Greatest Generation held toward the occupied, the military and Americas new place in the world. (Nicholas M. Gallagher *Wall Street Journal* 2016-12-27)About the AuthorSusan L. Carruthers is Professor of History at Rutgers UniversityNewark.