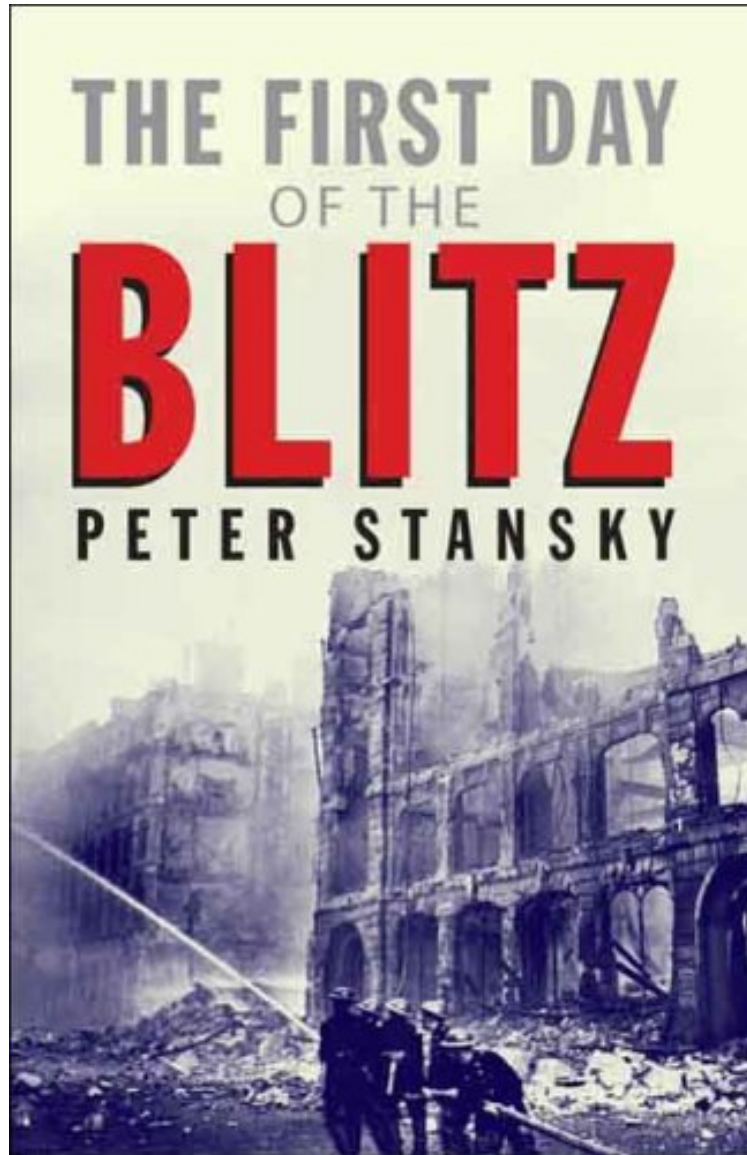


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The First Day of the Blitz: September 7, 1940

Peter Stansky

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Peter Stansky : The First Day of the Blitz: September 7, 1940 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The First Day of the Blitz: September 7, 1940:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. About the BlitzBy goodfruitDisappointing, this subject held so much potential but is so pedantic as to be almost un-readable. There is no fault here with the research or the information, just with how its written up and presented.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. cultural history of a military eventBy ConcordThis book goes beyond other histories of the Blitz that I have read. It is essentially a history of how

the British people--well, Londoners really--reacted to the first massive bombing raid of the Blitz that targeted the city of London. As such, we don't get up in the air with the RAF and the Luftwaffe, but instead see how the people on the receiving end dealt with--successfully or less bravely--a massive case of terror bombing. The book, therefore, raises interesting questions about the ability of any terror campaign to successfully cow a broad population. The events of September 2001 are not far from Stansky's mind here, and I think his conclusions are persuasive and relevant to today. In the end, I think that the author strikes a sound balance between heroic narratives that have previously suggested that Londoners reacted with universal aplomb and the more recent suggestions that all of that was patriotic twaddle and that the "real" story was of cowardice and looting. Londoners here come through as real people, with understandable reactions. One more point. Finally, someone has suggested to me a plausible answer to why Britain turned to Labour and ousted Churchill in the 1945 elections. Stansky's answer is too subtle for me to give fully here, but for me that was the real kicker of the book: the Blitz essentially made people realize both the worth of all classes of people and also the need for a central government to manage affairs correctly and smoothly. Yes, there are parallels there to hurricane Katrina, and Stansky talks briefly about them. A really good, quick read.

On September 7, 1940, the long-feared and anticipated attack by the German Luftwaffe plunged London into a cauldron of fire and devastation. This compelling book recreates that day in all its horror, using rich archival sources and first-hand accounts, many never before published. Eminent historian Peter Stansky weaves together the stories of people who recorded their experiences of the opening hours of the Blitz. Then, exploring more deeply, the author examines what that critical day meant to the nation at the time, and what it came to mean in following years. Much of the future of Britain was determined in the first twelve hours of bombing, Stansky contends. The Blitz set in motion a range of responses that contributed to ultimate victory over Germany and to a transformation of British society. The wave of terror, though designed to quash morale, instead inspired stoicism, courage, and a new camaraderie. The tragic London bombing can reveal much of relevance to our own violent times, Stansky concludes: both the effectiveness of modern terror and its ultimate failure are made powerfully clear by the events of September 7, 1940.

"Stansky makes well-judged use of eyewitness accounts to highlight the reality behind the myth. Nick Rennison, *The Sunday Times* 'He offers a vivid account of how Londoners withstood attack. Recent events have shown how that resilient spirit lives into our own day. William Hay, *Literary* 'There is no shortage of books about the Blitz, but Peter Stansky's is up there with the best.' John O'Connell, *Time Out*" About the Author Peter Stansky is Frances and Charles Field Professor of History, Emeritus, Stanford University.