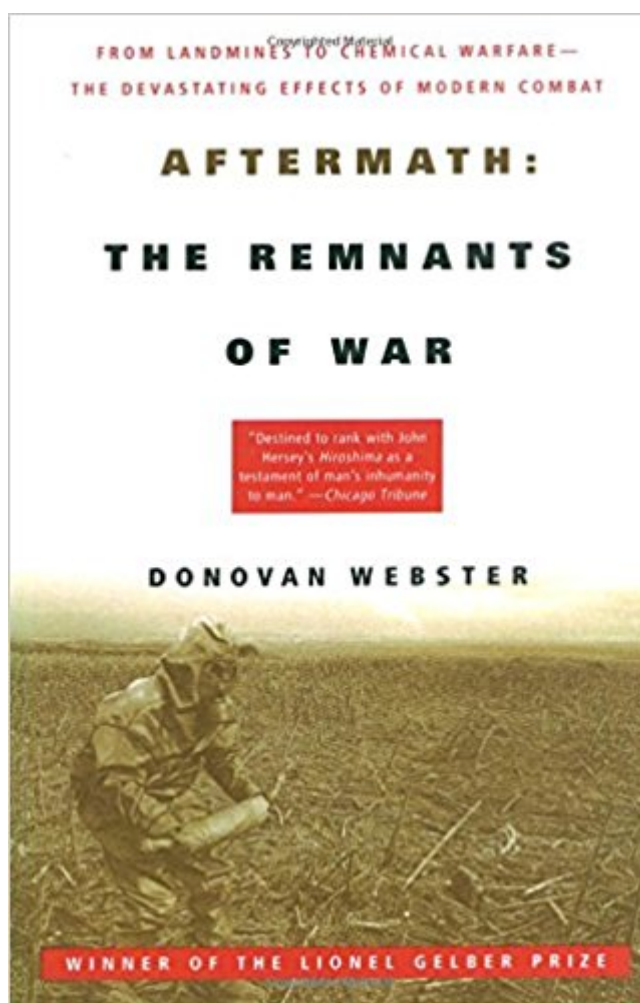


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Aftermath: The Remnants Of War: From Landmines To Chemical Warfare--The Devastating Effects Of Modern Combat



Synopsis

In riveting and revelatory detail, *Aftermath* documents the ways in which wars have transformed the terrain of the battlefield into landscapes of memory and enduring terror: in France, where millions of acres of farmland are cordoned off to all but a corps of demolition experts responsible for the undetonated bombs and mines of World War I that are now rising up in fields, gardens, and backyards; in a sixty-square-mile area outside Stalingrad that was a cauldron of destruction in 1941 and is today an endless field of bones; in the Nevada deserts, where America waged a hidden nuclear war against itself in the 1950's, the results of which are only now becoming apparent; in Vietnam, where a nation's effort to remove the physical detritus of war has created psychological and genetic devastation; in Kuwait, where terrifyingly sophisticated warfare was followed by the Sisyphean task of making an uninhabitable desert capable of sustaining life. *Aftermath* excavates our century's darkest history, revealing that the destruction of the past remains deeply, inextricably embedded in the present.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Donovan Webster, a former editor at *Outside* magazine, has written an eyewitness account of the impossible tasks involved with removing armaments that continue to kill after war has ceased. Between 110 and 120 million land mines are planted in the soil of more than 64 countries. The exponential numbers point to the staggering difficulties *Aftermath* details: each year more than 5 million new land mines are laid, and only 100,000 are cleared; a new mine costs \$3, but removing one costs between \$200 and \$1,000. In Angola, there are more than 15 million mines, two for every

citizen. Webster traces the deadly legacy from the French battlefields of World War I to Vietnam and the Persian Gulf, describing the work of sappers in a compelling story that brings to light the horrifying legacy of warfare. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

War scars land as well as people. That is the truth that Webster, a former senior editor of Outside magazine, explores in his evocative first book, expanded from an article he wrote for the Smithsonian magazine. Webster proceeds by examining the physical legacies of 20th-century conflict. In France, the legacy consists of unexploded shells and bombs?12 million of them at Verdun alone. At Stalingrad, there are the bones of 300,000 German dead. In Nevada, Webster surveys the results of a decade of open-air nuclear testing, and of disposal sites poisoned for the next 12,000 years by stored nuclear waste. Vietnam, devastated by high explosive and chemical defoliants, continues to pay war's price in mutilated adults and malformed children. The author finds that the deserts of Kuwait are sown with seven million land mines left behind by the armies of Desert Storm and that, in Utah, the U.S. seeks to destroy chemical agents no less toxic for being obsolete. Webster tours these sites himself, personalizing his narrative. He describes their origins and introduces the people who seek to mitigate their effects. More than many academic analyses, this finely written work provides a compelling story of what humanity is willing to do to its world?and itself?in the name of national interest. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is not your typical history book. After all, the author makes it his quest to find out what remains of some of history's bloodiest conflicts. He visits Verdun and is allowed to see sections of France that are uninhabitable more than 100 years since the conflict started. He visits places where people are prohibited to walk because of munitions and the unearthed remains of the fallen. He visits the Ossuary of Verdun and humbly witnesses the devastation brought upon the degradation of human spirit in the war. I am particularly grateful for the information he provides in this section of the book. It truly shows the hellacious nature of the conflict and the results of man's inhumanity to man. The author then travels to Stalingrad with a guide who can tell you where units of both Russian and German armies camped at the height of the battle. In an astonishing moment the guide stops and informs the author that he found the artifacts and remains of Italian and Romanian units in this area assigned to the German 6th army. These units were annihilated, some historians even use the word vanished, to describe what happened to them in the soul crushing Soviet counter attack. And in many places the land cannot be used again as the munitions found there are still dangerous.

Those who do continue to farm stack bones high as the Earth slowly reveals its history. The book continues to Vietnam to the place where one of my great mentors served: Khe Sanh. His descriptions of land that was once part of a French plantation are vivid. We are gone. But Khe Sanh is still there. They live it every day. At this point, I'll let you find out where the author goes next. You might be quite surprised by some of the locations. The author makes a hell of a point about how we treat each other and ultimately the land where these events take place. Excavations of battlefields from the past seldom reveal the carnage of the 20th century. Ultimately, I think this was the purpose of this book. Normally, I end these reviews with a suggestion for another book. I'm going to do something different and suggest listening to Dan Carlin's excellent pod cast on the history of World War One, Blueprint for Armageddon. I will also suggest reading Guy Sajer's book, The Forgotten Soldier. If you're interested in World War one Ernst Junger's Storm of Steel is an excellent read. For Vietnam I recommend The Hill Fights: The first battle of Khe Sanh.

I re-read this every couple of years. Amazing history.

Donovan Webster's writing style is rich in observational detail. He paints vivid and evocative word pictures as he leads the reader through the battlefields of France, Russia and Vietnam examining the dangerous and tragic remnants of war. Things slow down when he turns his attention to the legacies of America's nuclear and chemical weapons programs. I blew through this book in a couple of sittings - partially because it's an easy read and also because it's fascinating stuff for a military buff. Fortunately, he keeps the "man's inhumanity to man" hand-wringing to a minimum and gives us mostly straight reportage. I read this on the recommendation of history podcaster Dan Carlin and, like Carlin's other recommendations, it didn't disappoint. I guarantee you'll find interesting stuff you didn't know if you read this book. The information is more than a decade old, but it's still worth the price of admission.

I wish everybody would read this book. It's an interesting and collection of interviews, observations and insight about what's been left of the most intense wars of the century, which is probably a lot more than you imagine.

As the title would suggest, Aftermath deals with the consequences of war ordinance in every day life. I was particularly interested in the lingering effects of World War I, a war fought nearly 100 years

ago. There are amazing accounts of the bomb clearing squad searching uninhabitable areas of the French countryside and turning up thousands of live and/or unexploded shells from battles fought in 1918. The stories of the millions of people slaughtered in the great wars of Europe is unsettling in and of itself, but the descriptions of Russian fields that are still strewn with the bones of these soldiers is unfathomable. The details of more current events puts a more contemporary perspective on the aftermath of conflict and makes one realize that the technology may change, but the mess still remains. Aftermath is an easy and engrossing read for anyone interested in history, military or otherwise.

Very enjoyable read, but the can sometimes get too winding and circuitous. One can conceivably squeeze all the material in this book into a book rough two thirds as long.

This is one of those books that I have gone back and read again and again. It is well written, thought provoking and interesting.

This book was recommend by another Impressionist. And I was quite impressed in the way the author spoke of the horrors of old ordnance left behind and how even today it imperils the people in their country. Spoiler: The one thought about the Germans who died in Russia- so many lost and so many left and still there.

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