

Twelve Turning Points of the Second World War by P.M.H. Bell.  
Yale University Press 2011.

The scholarly and lay interest in the Second World War, which ended nearly seventy years ago and occurred in the last century, shows no sign of abating. Fine works continue to be written, focussing both on specifics and taking an overarching view: P.M.H. Bell, the eminent historian, in *Twelve Turning Points of the Second World War*, takes an approach which combines elements of the two.

Some may see his choice of twelve as being wholly agreeable, others may disagree in one or two specifics, but the twelve he has chosen certainly strike the reader as persuasive having finished the book.

Sandwiched between an introduction and conclusion are twelve chapters, one for each turning point, and they are: Hitler's Triumph: The Collapse of France, May-June 1940; 'Finest Hour': the Battle of Britain, July-September 1940; Operation Barbarossa: The German Attack on the Soviet Union, 1941; Pearl Harbor, December 1941: The War Becomes a World War; The Battle of Midway, 4 June 1942; The Battle of Stalingrad, July 1942-February 1943; Convoy and Wolf Packs: Decision in the Atlantic, March-May 1943; 'The Proper Application of Overwhelming Force': The Battle of the Factories; The Tehran Conference, 28 November -1 December 1943: Turning Point for the Grand Alliance; D-Day and the Battle of Normandy, June-July 1944; 'A Fateful Conference':Yalta, 4-11 February 1945; The Defeat of Japan and the Atomic Bombs, 1945.

Some chapters are longer than others but all are excellent summaries of the events they describe and act as a perfect springboard to those who wish to investigate them in greater detail. To this end there is an excellent section at the end of further reading suggestions.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh