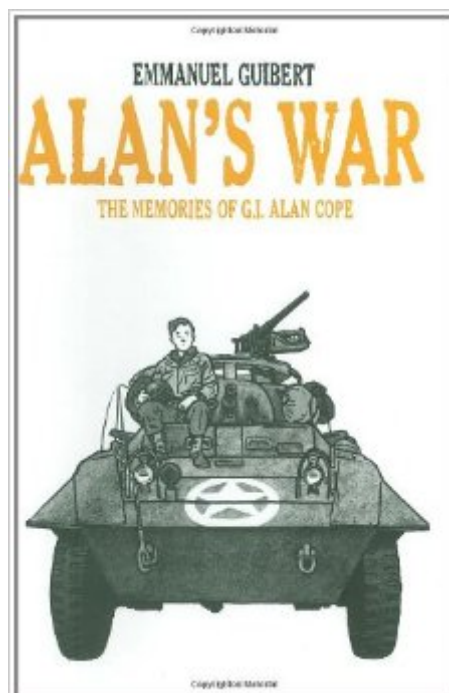


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Alan's War: The Memories Of G.I. Alan Cope



Synopsis

"When I was eighteen, Uncle Sam told me he'd like me to put on a uniform and go off to fight a guy by the name of Adolf. So I did." When Alan Cope joined the army and went off to fight in World War II, he had no idea what he was getting into. This graphic memoir is the story of his life during wartime, a story told with poignant intimacy and matchless artistry. Across a generation, a deep friendship blossomed between Alan Cope and author/artist Emmanuel Guibert. From it, *Alan's War* was born — a graphic novel that is a deeply personal and moving experience, straight from the heart of the Greatest Generation — a unique piece of WWII literature and a ground-breaking graphic memoir.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As modern day North Americans, we cannot appreciate the experiences soldiers had. Even with our technically superior computer generated, the memories and emotions that real soldiers lived through cannot be equalled. Alan Cope and Emmanuel Guibert met by happenstance, and the collaboration that resulted is marvelous. Alan Cope tells us through Emmanuel's art his life as a soldier. Drafted at age 18, he joined the army to fight a guy named Adolph. His travels through France, Switzerland, Germany, California, and all points Europe are fascinating. This book is his journal, rendered in charming art that brings to life significant events and people that changed him from naive youth to wisened veteran. It is clear that war changes people. While there are no atheists in foxholes, after the experience can turn believers into atheists or scar them forever. Alan was changed. His friends

Gerhart and Vera were changed. Jako was changed. Landis changed. In the end, each went on with their lives based on their previous experiences. As a reader, I was entranced by the simple narrative tone of the book. It was almost like Private Alan Cope was right beside me as I lived his life from training to his final years. While we could not smell the smells of the Alps as he hiked on Sundays, or the fresh dew of the French countryside, or the smell of German cooking, we can feel the effect on Alan. We cannot feel the horror of war, or the physical exhaustion his training, the pain at losing friends, but we can feel the effect on Alan. One thing about this book that I loved was the sheer variety of 'famous' people that Alan (or his close friends) knew. I also loved the depth of his relationships with his fellow soldiers, and his determined effort to not let his friendships die.

Memory is a tricky thing. Decades later, looking back at a time when you were young, in a foreign land and under fire, you can be forgiven if you mistake a few things. In the case of Alan Cope, former U.S. soldier in World War II, there are only a few stumbling blocks in his recollections, but illustrator Emmanuel Guibert has wisely left them intact in *ALAN'S WAR*. They are few and far between, it seems, and they only serve to render Alan's story all the more human. To provide just a short background: Guibert met Cope in the mid-'90s by chance, when Guibert asked him for directions. A native of France, Guibert was intrigued by Cope, an American expatriate now living in France. Cope was born in a coastal town in California and drafted into the war immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He did his job, like millions of other men in the greatest generation, and saw the world. He did so without fanfare, and some 50 years later, he still didn't expect any. Cope passed away in 1999, but over their five-year friendship, Cope shared many of his war stories with Guibert, a talented artist who would draw those stories under Cope's guidance. The stories were printed in France, where they were warmly received. Now they've been released here in the United States. Cope, despite being incredibly open in the sharing of his war stories, was nonetheless a very private man, and Guibert respects that. He recorded their conversations and uses Cope's own words to narrate *ALAN'S WAR*. It makes it even more personal and renders this long-ago era even more immediate to see Cope's words on the page. There's an innocence at the beginning of the book that speaks to the nature of the world at the time, yet there's also a universality to what Cope experiences that translates through the decades.

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