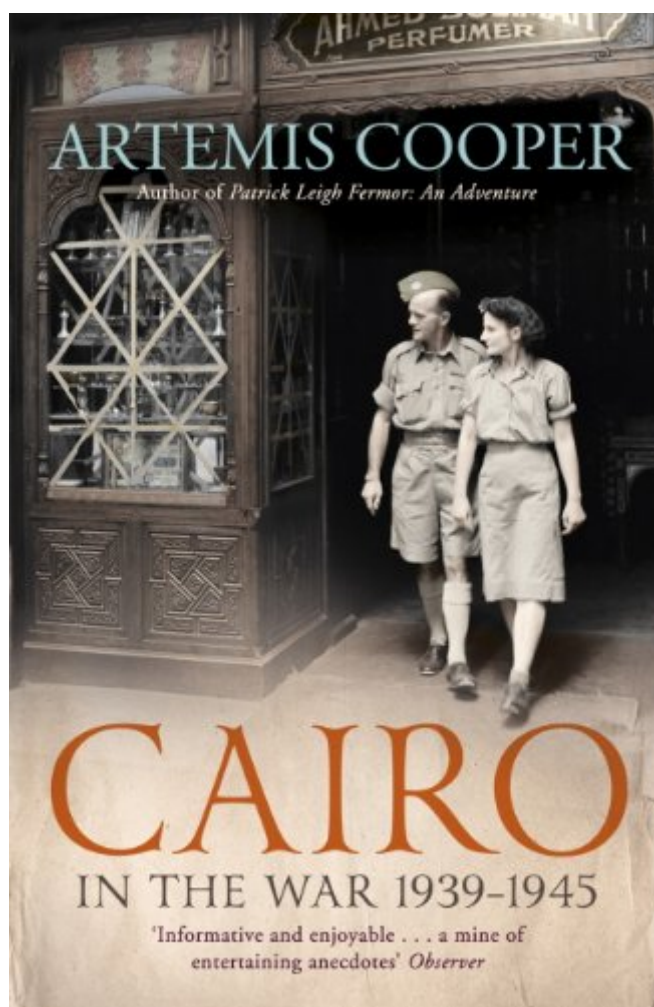


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# Cairo In The War: 1939-45



## Synopsis

For troops in the desert, Cairo meant fleshpots or brass hats. For well-connected officers, it meant polo at the Gezira Club and drinks at Shepheard's. For the irregular warriors, Cairo was a city to throw legendary parties before the next mission behind enemy lines. For countless refugees, it was a stopping place in the long struggle home. The political scene was dominated by the British Ambassador Sir Miles Lampson. In February 1942 he surrounded the Abdin Palace with tanks and attempted to depose King Farouk. Five months later it looked as if the British would be thrown out of Egypt for good. Rommel's forces were only sixty miles from Alexandria - but the Germans were pushed back and Cairo life went on. Meanwhile, in the Egyptian Army, a handful of young officers were thinking dangerous thoughts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Artemis Cooper's *Cairo in the War: 1939-1945* provides a compelling account of privileged foreign society in Egypt leaving no wonder as to why the British Crown held so tightly to the country as a colony. Flitting about from private clubs to exclusive restaurants, the Cairo high society carried on as if no war existed at all. Worlds away from the thundering bombs of night raids on London, the elite class of soldiers and aristocrats knew nothing of wartime rationing either. Shops were packed with butter, sugar, eggs and paraffin. When good Champagne ran out at the famous

Shepherd's Hotel in 1943, there was no shortage of Algerian, Palestinian or South African wine. As the nightlife raged on, Cairo saw no shortage of promiscuity; from overworked prostitutes, the Egyptian King Farouk's married girlfriends, and untold numbers of broken marriages, Cooper exposes Cairo's bed hopping and sexual scandals. Everything about elite life in Cairo proved exciting and Cooper's book reads like a who's who of wartime society: Vivien Leigh and Josephine Baker performed in the Opera House while Lawrence Durrell, Olivia Manning, and Christopher Sykes chatted at Groppi's Café. The Hungarian Count Almásy, King George of Greece, and King Peter of Yugoslavia, all took their residences in Cairo. From time to time, however, the realities of war intruded on Cooper's Cairene high society reminding them of the constant threat from German troops under Field Marshall Rommel as he waged battle after battle from the desert perimeters across North Africa. Cooper tells a captivating story of the War in Cairo through people who were close to the great events and whose names will be remembered in history.

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