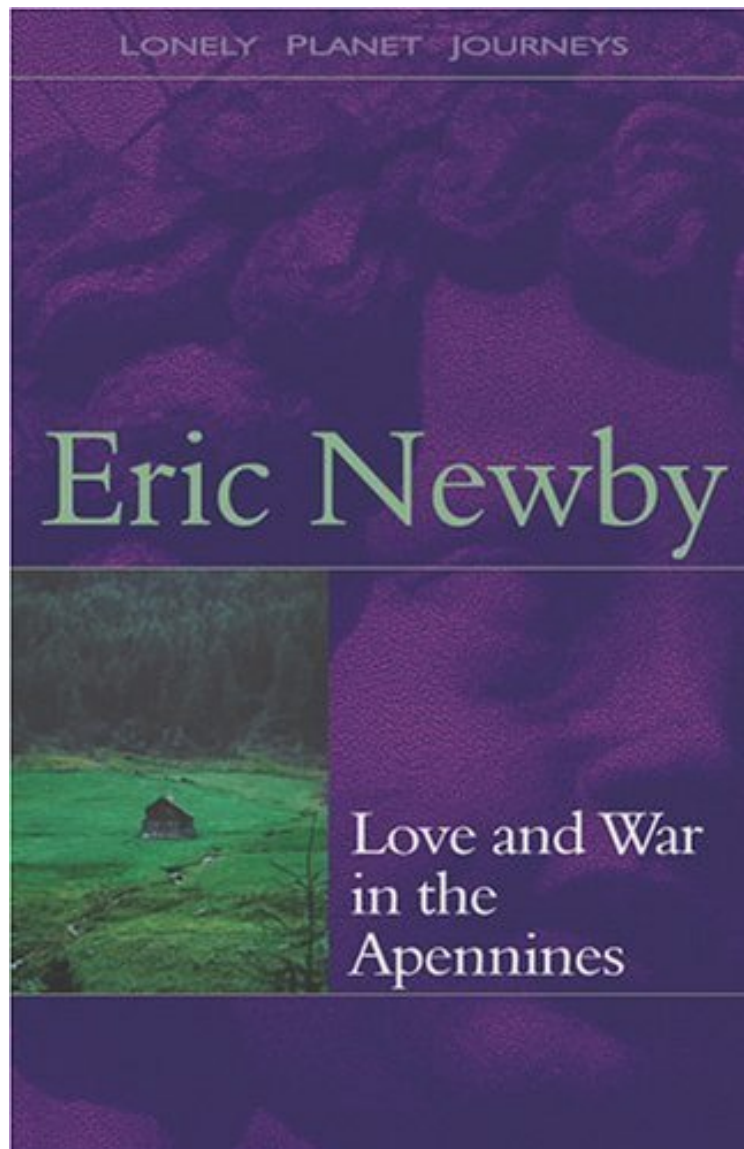


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## Love And War in the Apennines

*Eric Newby*

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**Eric Newby : Love And War in the Apennines** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Love And War in the Apennines:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A bit more to think about than your usual NewbyBy Peter MonksNewby applies his usual deft touch to recount his largely involuntary travel throughout northern Italy while held as a POW, and subsequently on the run, throughout late 1943. The Newby talent for observing places and mannerisms, and the heartfelt manner in which he illustrates the essential decency of those Italians he encounters en

route (including his helpers, those too afraid or indifferent to assist him, and even his original captors) make this a book well worth reading, and three aspects of the book in particular gave me food for thought. The first chapter recounts Newby's capture during an ill-fated mission to sabotage a German airfield on Sicily. While the author downplays his role for comic effect, it is clear that not only was there little prospect of returning home safely, poor planning and inadequate resources (other than a reliance on the bravery and initiative of those involved) ensured the mission had almost no chance of success. How many other young men were asked to throw away their lives for objectives that may have been important but clearly unattainable? Newby's description of life in the POW camp and the emergence of an informal elite (which he terms the 'OK people') based largely on social status - and definitely not on military rank or prowess - is a fascinating pen portrait and reminiscent of my own experience in an officer training institution and as a junior officer (like Newby, I was occasionally entertaining to my own 'OK set' at best and definitely not of them!). 'Ho paura' (I have fear) is a phrase Newby gets to hear a great deal - and with good reason. It is a marvel that people with no hope of monetary reward or protection from brutal reprisal were willing to run such enormous risks on behalf of Newby and so many others like him. The author certainly wrestled with the question - equally valid today - of how much cooperation a soldier can reasonably expect from a civilian population he is unable (or unwilling) to protect from violence. Fans of Newby's will delight in the usual wit and acute eye of his work, and in this case may - as I did - find something further to think about than his usual amusing and diverting travelogue.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A humble genius

By Zak What's amazing about Eric Newby is the fact that he considered himself the lesser known author of that name. There was an older English author by the same name who was considered more famous in England. And indeed judging by this Eric Newby's adventures you could say success was in the eye of the beholder. But now all American knowledge of the author by that name is this very humble Eric Newby, and better off we are for it. With this particular tale it's one of beating extreme odds. He defies capture so many times in so many ways and literally like a storybook again in the end (no spoilers). A movie script couldn't do this tale justice; CBS tried to make a TV movie out of it but it wasn't nearly so powerful as this story. Reading this story will make you understand why Eric Newby never cared whether he succeeded in making the goals of his adventures afterward, because his life was already the adventure. No doubt he learned this along with the self-perseverance in this tale. By the time he sets out from the British sub it becomes a mission impossible he dubs "operation why not" ostensibly to attack the Nazi airfield on the island of Sicily nearly single-handedly. From the beginning this book will capture you as he is captured. The love of his life he gains in this story is the ultimate time he truly beats the odds though. Wanda Newby herself is an amazing woman and the fact that she stuck with him until he passed away in 2006 is incredible given the misadventures that followed in tales like *Slowly Down the Ganges*. Eric Newby to me is the real life Tom Bombadil of JRR Tolkien's *LOTR*; down to the very canyon he hikes crawls and falls down into the gorgeous river valley and the old man he meets there with a skeleton key to his house the size of a castle lock which he forged himself. Eric Newby found meaning in life most of us cannot fathom. At least read this book and you will have catch a glimpse. Read on to his other books if you want the true dharma in the Eric Newby collection.

35 of 36 people found the following review helpful. Extraordinary

By C. Ebeling During World War II, the rural citizens of northern Italy vowed to assist Allied soldiers on the run in their mountainous region. They were operating on an informed heart, on the Golden Rule, wanting to give aid to those who opposed the hated Fascists and Nazis as they would hope someone would help their own sons. And while the Allies were protected by the Geneva Convention should they be captured, the citizens were not and they were subject to less humane punishment, sometimes torture and death, if their actions were found out. But they did it anyway. It is these people, who otherwise lived a pastoral, ancient way of life, whom travel writer extraordinaire Eric Newby profiles in his memoir, *LOVE AND WAR IN THE APENNINES*. Those familiar with Newby's other books will find his signature wit, self-deprecating humor and descriptive powers at work here, but his curiosity and appreciation of other people and cultures is in highest gear. He comes to meet the peasantry of northern Italy after fleeing a prison during the chaos following the ouster of Mussolini in September 1943. He is helped by a succession of individuals and families, including the woman who would become his wife and companion in later adventures, the estimable Wanda. The book ends with his unfortunate recapture by the Germans and in an epilogue he revisits the people who took him in ten years after. Newby is a hugely gifted writer, his sentences are knowing and clear as a bell. He orders information rhythmically, always knows when less is more and more is more. He never bows to sentimentality, never sells anyone out. He does a remarkable job of expressing the fear and dispiritedness that politics and war heave on a people, at the same time revealing their resilience. There is much to admire in this book.

Eric Newby escapes through a hospital window to become a POW on the run in Italy in 1943. With the Nazis moving in from the North and no certain way back to England, his situation appears grim. But with the help of local farmers and villagers, who risk their lives to shelter him, he survives. Hiding in shepherds' butts and even a cave, he achieves three precious months of freedom - and meets the determined and courageous young woman who would become his wife. *Love and War in the Apennines* is an intimate account of the horror and surrealism of war, and of the heroism and selflessness of those caught up in its madness. Eric Newby creates an unforgettable record of the resilience of

human nature in the face of despair, and forcefully reminds us of the pointlessness of war.

Nobody covers the world like Lonely Planet.' --New York Post, May 2004  
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