

Book Reviews for Porschephiles

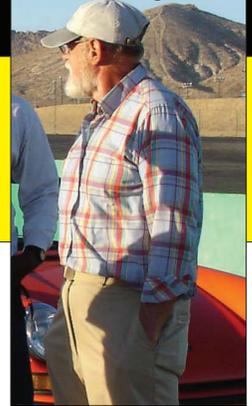
by Bruce Herrington, Orange Coast Region

PROFESSOR PORSCHE'S WARS, the secret life of legendary engineer Ferdinand Porsche who armed two belligerents through four decades

by Karl Ludvigsen

Published in 2015 by Pen & Sword Books, Ltd, South Yorkshire, England

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Most Porschephiles will recognize Karl Ludvigsen's name as the author of many detailed and accurate books on the technical aspects of Porsche automobiles. Many will recognize the frontispiece photo of Professor Porsche looking down through a steering wheel. This book covers a period of Professor Porsche's life glossed over by books dealing with Porsche sports cars, most of which were built after the Professor's death.

The very readable narrative contains an immense amount of specific detail with many pictures inserted into the text, some of which come from WWI and earlier. Included are some surprising pictures of Professor Porsche with Hitler and a picture of Hitler's Luftwaffe Chief, Hermann Goering, being taught (by Ferry Porsche) how to drive his gift 'VW' with Professor Porsche in the back seat.

PROFESSOR PORSCHE'S WARS does not show a new *facet* of Porsche's life. It does deal with a not well known *period* in the life of an ingenious and very thorough design engineer. New insight is given into the beneficial original intentions of the VW program and the corruption behind the imprisonment of Porsche by the French.

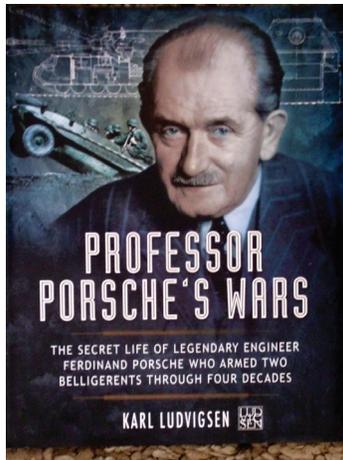
Porsche is never shown as a warrior but instead as a technically focused, possibly even anti-military, design engineer. In WWI he did design tug vehicles intended to haul heavy guns but his aircraft engine was designed for civilian flight even if it did become the dominant engine of the air war. Along the way he designed his own carburetor to ensure consistent mixture regardless of the plane's climb/descent/banking orientation. Those were different times – Porsche's redesigned inline 6 aircraft engine, hailed as an achievement in lightness, weighed 'only' 640 pounds while producing 185HP.

For WWII Porsche did design many tanks and artillery weapons but he designed to spec, e.g., a tank to carry a specified gun, at a specified speed, for a specified range, with

a specified ammo capacity. There is an interesting thread of 'palace intrigues' over wartime contracts. Porsche was in charge of the VW works and, if no VWs were to be built, he had to find some product to keep his 6,000 workers paid. Of course other companies wanted the same contracts.

PROFESSOR PORSCHE'S WARS portrays the Professor as clearly indifferent to the practicality of the equipment he designed, as applied to the military's needs in combat. Similarly, Hitler is shown as having a particular fascination with the design and development of military equipment, as distinct from the design and development of an effective military strategy.

One 'secret' described is the personal rapport between Porsche and Hitler. This created resistance and animosity in the companies and officials with whom Porsche dealt but resulted in numerous personal awards from The Third Reich. One honorarium, which was to haunt him later, was a rank in the SS.



All in all, this book gives a very detailed and comprehensive description of Porsche's design, development, and managerial work during the period including both World Wars. It is a most interesting narrative of design challenges as well as his interactions with competitors, the military establishment and government bureaucrats. The breadth of Porsche's design efforts is particularly amazing considering that he had very little formal technical training and that had been focused on electricity. A must for Porschephiles interested in Porsche as more than just the designer of modern sports cars.

PROFESSOR PORSCHE'S WARS consists of 286, 8-1/2 x 11 inch pages, with many black & white illustrations. There is a bibliography of well over 100 entries and 7 two-column pages of index. It should be available for \$60 from your favorite bookseller (ask for it) or from <http://www.amazon.com/books>

