



The Ardennes, 1944-1945 (Hitler's Winter Offensive)

Christer Bergstrom

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In December 1944, just as World War II appeared to be winding down, Hitler shocked the world with a powerful German counteroffensive that cracked the center of the American front. The attack came through the Ardennes, the hilly and forested area in eastern Belgium and Luxembourg that the Allies had considered a “quiet” sector. Instead, for the second time in the war, the Germans used it as a stealthy avenue of approach for their panzers.

Much of U.S. First Army was overrun, and thousands of prisoners were taken as the Germans forged a 50-mile “bulge” into the Allied front. But in one small town, Bastogne, American paratroopers, together with remnants of tank units, offered dogged resistance. Meanwhile the rest of Eisenhower’s “broad front” strategy came to a halt as Patton, from the south, and Hodges, from the north, converged on the enemy incursion. Yet it would take an epic, six-week-long winter battle, the bloodiest in the history of the U.S. Army, before the Germans were finally pushed back.

Christer Bergström has interviewed veterans, gone through huge amounts of archive material, and performed on-the-spot research in the area. The result is a large amount of previously unpublished material and new findings, including reevaluations of tank and personnel casualties and the most accurate picture yet of what really transpired.

The Ardennes Offensive has often been described from the American point of view; however, this balanced book devotes equal attention to the perspectives of both sides. With nearly 400 photos, numerous maps, and 32 superb color profiles of combat vehicles and aircraft, it provides perhaps the most comprehensive look at the battle yet published.

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