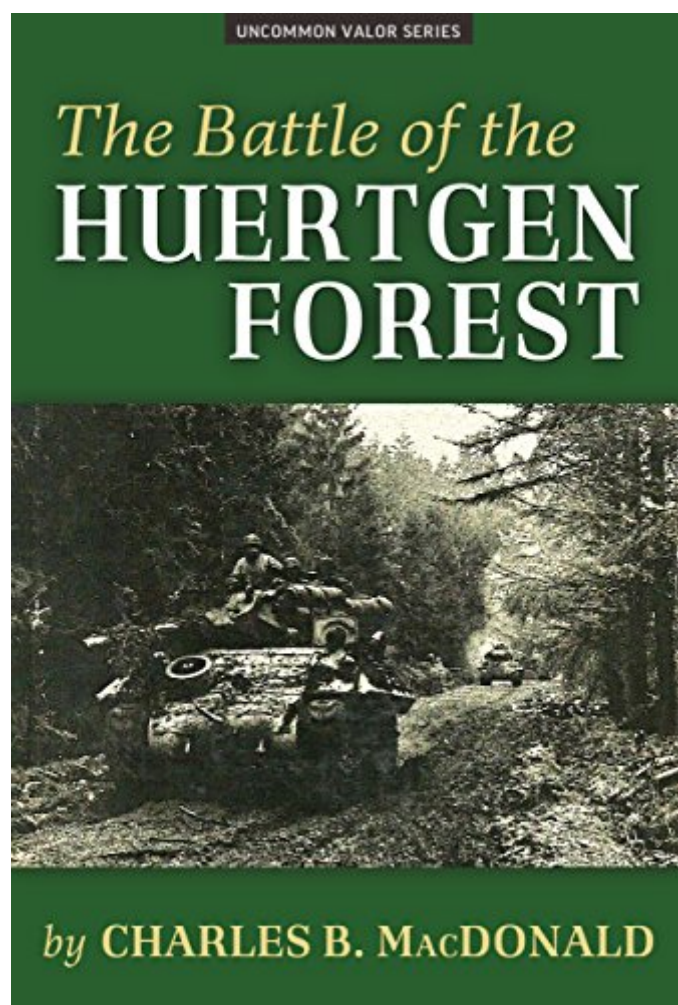


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The Battle Of The Huertgen Forest



Synopsis

The Battle of the Huertgen Forest, first published in 1963 and written by Official Department of the Army Historian Charles B. MacDonald, recounts the story of one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. In September 1944, three months after the invasion of Normandy, Allied armies prepared to push German forces back into their homeland. Just south of the Belgian city of Aachen, elements of the U.S. First Army began an advance through the nearly impenetrable Huertgen Forest. Instead of retreating, as the Allied command anticipated, the German troops prepared an elaborate defense of Huertgen, resulting in intense battles involving tanks, infantry, and artillery. The battle for the forest ended in December, when a sudden German offensive through the Ardennes to the south forced Allied armies to fall back, regroup, and start their attack again ("The Battle of the Bulge"), and which eventually culminated in the collapse of the Nazi regime in May 1945. The Battle of the Huertgen Forest provides a well-documented overview of the disposition, strengths, and weaknesses of American and German forces, as well as personal vignettes from both officers and foot-soldiers. With a depth of knowledge based on his own combat experiences, MacDonald, a captain in the U.S. Army at the time and a participant in the battle, portrays the American and German troops with empathy and demonstrates flaws in the American strategy and how the costly battles of Huertgen Forest could have been avoided altogether. Includes 3 maps.

Book Information

File Size: 1011 KB

Print Length: 222 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Uncommon Valor Press (June 5, 2014)

Publication Date: June 5, 2014

Language: English

ASIN: B00KSS7DRW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #40,935 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #19 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Americas > United States > Military History > Veterans #44

Customer Reviews

The late Charles B MacDonald served as an officer of infantry in World War II and later became a civilian historian in the U.S. Army's historical division. His memoir, *Company Commander*, has enjoyed classic status. He also contributed three volumes to the Official History of the U.S. Army in World War II, commonly known as the "Green Books." This work, first published in 1963, still holds a valued place in World War II historiography. Although such recent authors as Gerald Astor (*The Bloody Forest*, 2000), Edward G. Miller (*A Dark and Bloody Ground*, 1995) and Robert Sterling Rush (*Hell in Hurtgen Forest*, 2001) have contributed new studies that take advantage of the latest sources, they all owe a debt of gratitude to MacDonald. MacDonald was the first to argue that the American planners failed to appreciate the importance of the Roer River dams as a primary objective of the Huertgen Forest campaign. He was also the first to state the Huertgen Forest was a wasteful squander of American lives and should have been avoided. Again, he was the first to criticize the American leadership for not fully comprehending the detrimental affects of the rugged terrain, the staunch German defence, and the harsh weather conditions that was indicative of the slaughter in the Huertgen Forest. These three basic themes would provide a basis for Astor, Miller, Rush, and others attempting to provide any future analysis of the campaign. MacDonald places the initial probes into the forest in September, 1944; the failure of the 9th Division in October; the decimation of the 28th Division in early November; and the final breakout in late November in overall perspective.

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