



The Longest Winter: The Battle of the Bulge and the Epic Story of World War II's Most Decorated Platoon

By Alex Kershaw

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From the author of the best-selling *The Bedford Boys* comes this epic story of courage and survival in World War II. On a cold morning in December, 1944, deep in the Ardennes forest, a platoon of eighteen men under the command of twenty-year-old lieutenant Lyle Bouck were huddled in their foxholes trying desperately to keep warm. Suddenly, the early morning silence was broken by the roar of a huge artillery bombardment and the dreadful sound of approaching tanks. Hitler had launched his bold and risky offensive against the Allies - his "last gamble" - and the small American platoon was facing the main thrust of the entire German assault. Vastly outnumbered, they repulsed three German assaults in a fierce day-long battle, killing over five hundred German soldiers and defending a strategically vital hill. Only when Bouck's men had run out of ammunition did they surrender to the enemy. As POWs, Bouck's platoon began an ordeal far worse than combat - survival in captivity under trigger-happy German guards, Allied bombing raids, and a daily ration of only thin soup. In German POW camps, hundreds of captured Americans were either killed or died of disease, and most lost all hope. But the men of Bouck's platoon survived - miraculously, all of them. In vivid, dramatic prose, Alex Kershaw brings to life the story of America's most decorated small unit, and some of little-known heroes who played parts in this inspiring story.

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Editorial Review

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The author of *The Bedford Boys* [BKL My 1 03] limns another group portrait of a band of similar World War II soldiers, this time the intelligence and reconnaissance platoon of the 394th Infantry Regiment, 99th Infantry Division. That green division came squarely in the path of the *Wehrmacht* during the Battle of the Bulge, and that platoon was one of many small units that fought tenaciously to the bitter end. The whole platoon was captured, but only after they had held a crucial road junction long enough to seriously delay Joachim Pieper's SS battle group. More miraculously, all those captured, even the grievously wounded, survived the war; indeed, most were alive to receive decorations in 1980. The narrative moves from the GIs' combat experience at the Bulge to their POW experience until the closing days of the war, and Kershaw handles both combat and internment skillfully and respectfully. A good read for observing the sixtieth anniversary of the Bulge. *Roland Green*

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Review

"A concise and winning account...Those interested in military history will find much here that is pleasing and heretofore uncelebrated." -- *San Francisco Chronicle* 1/3/05

"A heroic, inspiring story that deserves to be told." -- *Washington Post Book World* 6/5/05

"A riveting read." -- *USA Today* 1/19/05

"A well-written book detailing the individual exploits of both American and German combatants." -- *Curled Up With a Good Book* 12/14/04

"America's enemies would do well not to underestimate this [platoon's] sense of courage and duty." -- *Wall Street Journal* 12/7/04

"Gripping and unsentimental....shows that valor comes in many forms." -- *New York Sun* 12/14/04

"Kershaw is a fantastic storyteller.... Anyone who enjoyed [his earlier book] *The Bedford Boys* would like this [too]" -- *Army Magazine* 12/04

"Kershaw recounts the story of the I&R Platoon in dramatic fashion...[and] puts a personal face on the action." -- *Military.com* February 2005

"The most intimate and detailed account yet published of eighteen men who stopped Hitler's last major offensive of the war." -- *Manchester Journal* 12/17/05

"This book is a must-read for anyone who wants a renewed sense of patriotism." -- *Roanoke Times* 12/05/04

An excellent read that gives a new perspective on the Battle of the Bulge. The heroic actions of this platoon and their strength that got them through their capture by the Germans is remarkable. They were the most decorated platoon of WWII. Check out this story. --By Donald H. Hessenflow (San Antonio)

Gripping and riveting story... about a group of G.I.'s from across this country, trained together in the summer of '44 in the blistering heat of Texas then thrown in to one of most pivotal battles of WWII, during one it's worst winters on record....great story telling, made this grown man cry! --By NscaleMike

From the Back Cover

"Hitler's last desperate gamble - the Battle of the Bulge - might have changed history if not for the do-or-die heroism of eighteen brave American boys. General Eisenhower called their actions 'the most outstanding tactical maneuver in World War II.' *The Longest Winter* is their incredible tale. I highly recommend this moving story of uncommon valor." (James Bradley, author of *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Flyboys*)

"*The Longest Winter* is a gripping saga about raw courage and superhuman endurance. Alex Kershaw recounts what it was like to fight against Nazi aggression at the Battle of the Bulge. A truly heroic book." (Douglas Brinkley, Director of the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at the University of New Orleans, and author of *Tour of Duty*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Arthur Dickison:

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many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors these days always try to improve their talent in writing, they also doing some research before they write for their book. One of them is this *The Longest Winter: The Battle of the Bulge and the Epic Story of World War II's Most Decorated Platoon*.

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