



Ardennes 1944: The Battle of the Bulge

Antony Beevor

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The prizewinning historian and bestselling author of *D-Day* and *Stalingrad* reconstructs the Battle of the Bulge in this riveting new account

On December 16, 1944, Hitler launched his 'last gamble' in the snow-covered forests and gorges of the Ardennes in Belgium, believing he could split the Allies by driving all the way to Antwerp and forcing the Canadians and the British out of the war. Although his generals were doubtful of success, younger officers and NCOs were desperate to believe that their homes and families could be saved from the vengeful Red Army approaching from the east. Many were exultant at the prospect of striking back.

The allies, taken by surprise, found themselves fighting two panzer armies. Belgian civilians abandoned their homes, justifiably afraid of German revenge. Panic spread even to Paris. While some American soldiers, overwhelmed by the German onslaught, fled or surrendered, others held on heroically, creating breakwaters which slowed the German advance.

The harsh winter conditions and the savagery of the battle became comparable to the Eastern Front. In fact the Ardennes became the Western Front's counterpart to Stalingrad. There was terrible ferocity on both sides, driven by desperation and revenge, in which the normal rules of combat were breached. The Ardennes—involving more than a million men—would prove to be the battle which finally broke the back of the Wehrmacht.

In this deeply researched work, with striking insights into the major players on both sides, Antony Beevor gives us the definitive account of the Ardennes offensive which was to become the greatest battle of World War II.

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