



Sniper Ace: From the Eastern Front to Siberia

Bruno Sutkus , David L. Robbins (Introduction)

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Throughout World War II, German snipers were obliged to carry a 'Scharfshützen Buch' which recorded every kill. Each success noted had to be verified by a witness and signed by a superior officer. The journal of Sutkus is one of only a few such books to have survived the war. It records more than 200 kills, placing him as one of the war's most successful snipers. A large part of his journal is reproduced for the first time here.

As a Hitler Youth member his skill as a marksman was quickly noted and, in July 1943, aged 19, he was drafted into the Wehrmacht. A month later he was sent on a five month sniper's course in Wilna, after which he was posted to the Eastern Front.

He was so successful that his superiors sent him to crucial positions. Despite his age, he was regarded as one of Germany's best snipers and in November 1944 he was awarded the Scharfshützenabzeichen 3 Stufe – the highest award for a sniper.

After being wounded in January 1945, Sutkus was given time to recuperate away from the Eastern Front. During this time he met a Red Cross nurse, to whom he gave all his journal.

When the war finished, Sutkus was forced to join the Red Army. He deserted to join the Lithuanian resistance fighters. After being captured again he was tortured by the KGB and deported to Siberia to endure forced labor. It was not until the collapse of the Soviet Union that he was able return to Germany and find his journal, still in the hands of the same nurse.

Introduction written by David L. Robbins.

Sniper Ace: From the Eastern Front to Siberia Details

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From Reader Review Sniper Ace: From the Eastern Front to Siberia for online ebook

Marcus says

This short volume (a bit over 200 pages, but if photographs and references are excluded, it's hardly 150 pages long) is an autobiography of a German sniper active on eastern front during the final stages of the war. The first part is dedicated to his upbringing and his wartime experiences. Those interested in the 'sniper' part of the book will probably be as disappointed as I am. Sutkus offers no detailed narrative of his experiences. Instead, the reader has to wade through an admittedly impressively long (over 200 confirmed kills), but nonetheless quite tedious list of 'this and this day i saw x and shot him at range xxx'. Here and there the author dedicates couple of lines with details about a particular event, usually about enemy's reactions to a shot he's taken. From this part of the book, one learns precious little about a sniper's life or craft on Eastern front. Most of his shots were made at a distance of between 150 and 400 meters, with few rare occasions of shots taken at 600+ meters. The only really useful information (at least to me) is provided in author's comments of the occasions when he was discovered. Considering the fact that he was a very skilled specialist, it came to me as bit of shock that he was nonetheless frequently spotted after the first shot and exposed to fire of enemy snipers. When Sutkus' narrative is seen in its whole, it gives some insight to the extension of use of sniper, the level of their training and sniper counter-measures taken by both sides. Second part of the book describes the life of the author after the war. Due to his Lithuanian background and, surprisingly, for reasons other than his activities during the war, he was deported to Siberia in 1948 and was kept there until 70-ies. This part of the book is really a tirade of an old, bitter and quite self-righteous man. Still, it provides an at times fascinating insight into a life of an 'enemy of the state' during these years as well as of Soviet quite frequently Kafkaesque bureaucracy machine. In summary, this is a book that is only marginally interesting to a WWII buff or a reader interested in art of military sniping. The author is either unable or unwilling to provide deeper insight into his experiences at the frontline. The book is also clearly tainted by bitterness caused by the hardships of author's life as well as by author's remarkable lack of acceptance of his own side's role in the conflict. The fact that it's mercifully short is really the only thing that makes it readable.

Renat N says

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Karl Jorgenson says

Sniper Ace is a simple, unpretentious after-action report for a Bruno's life. A simple farmhand in eastern Prussia, he turned 18 in 1943 and was drafted into the Wermacht, where they discovered he could really shoot. They made him a sniper, and for the next two years as the Russian armies shredded the German defenses and advanced on Berlin, he killed Russian officers, commissars, snipers, machine gunners, and

other soldiers at ranges up to 800 yards.

The first half of the book is a series of log entries with little detail: 'Dec. 3. Shot a Russian officer at a range of 300 meters when he emerged from a bunker.'

The war ends and we come to the second half of the book, where Bruno, trying to avoid prison or execution for having been on the losing side is exiled to Siberia where he survives for decades through superhuman effort. This part provides an interesting, if summary view of Soviet bureaucracy.

The final takeaway from this book is the German view of the war: Bruno repeatedly bemoans the destruction and barbarity of the invading Russian hordes. As a lowly corporal who joined the war in 1944, he can be excused for not knowing the details of the Nazi's atrocities 'im ost'. But writing in the 21st century, he can not be allowed to ignore them.

Michael Lavin says

The eastern front was just hard to believe.

Marc says

In modern warfare, the role of sniper holds a special place: a singular soldier who has one but one purpose, and that is to kill enemy combatants. Bruno Sutkan was one such soldier, serving in the German Wehrmacht during World War II against the Russians on the Eastern Front. While I was hoping this book would be a personal account of his combat career and shed some insights into the life of a sniper, it came up short.

The first part of the book covers his combat career and recounts his over 200 confirmed kills. However, the recounting is really just like reading from a list with very few extra details added, so it's pretty dry. It's the second part of the book which is a bit more interesting as Sutkan becomes a "banishee" to Siberia after the war. The recounting of life in Siberia, first as just an ordinary soldier and then later as an infamous sniper, makes up more than half the book and is fairly interesting. It is very hard to imagine living and surviving in such an environment for 50 years, yet that is what Sutkan did.

The narrative of the book is translated from German and is generally pretty good, with only a few spots where the phrasing gets a little confusing. However, there's a definite inconsistency in the amount of detail provided and the narrative skips several years at a time in some places. Is this a good book? Yes, but if you keep your hopes in the middle of the road you'll probably enjoy it more than I.

Janis Gramatins says

Excellent though chilling account of war then grim survival in the Soviet system. Not an easy read but recommended for all who are interested in Eastern Europe history.

No says

Amazing story of a talented sniper killing 209 commies and his story of surviving the gulags, camps, and

mines. His logbook of confirmed kills was one of the few to survive the war. Sutkus, a true bad ass.

"When he argued that we had wanted 'to conquer the world', I pointed out that the United States had helped the Russians slaughter us in our efforts to save Europe from the Red menace. The Americans had betrayed us, costing millions of lives. The United States was interested only in the financial benefits war brought: they had helped the Red lice and now they would have to deal with them." - Bruno Sutkus (Sniper Ace, Pg.111)

•Gefreiter Matthäus Hetzenauer (German Wehrmacht sniper, 345 confirmed kills)

Thor Longus says

This is one heck of an autobiography.

Besides his amazing war record killing Communists, Sutkus was captured and forced to live under brutal conditions in the most remote parts of Siberia. His story shows just how cruel, anti-human, and ultimately self-destructive the Jewish Communist rule of Russia was. He stayed strong through it all, never betraying the Germany he loved or the family he sacrificed so much for.

Peter Tkačenko says

Tých 209 odstrelů vás rychle přestane bavit, to zaujímavé přijde v druhé části, když je Bruno vo vyhnanstve na Sibíri. Plus, samozřejmě, je to další zádušný zrníčko na tému, či můžeme (nesmírně "úspěšného") vojáka Wehrmachtu považovat za respektovatelnou lidskou bytos?

Čiže dobre.

creig speed says

Very compelling story

This is quite a journey. This guy really had a great and terrible life. Many times one questions his choices.
