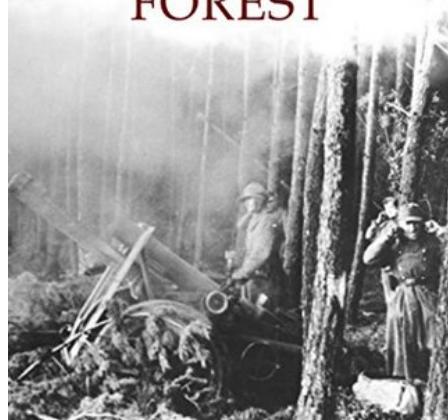


CHARLES WHITING

THE BATTLE
OF HURTGEN
FOREST



The Battle of Hurtgen Forest

Charles Whiting

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The Battle of Hurtgen Forest

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The Battle of Hurtgen Forest Charles Whiting

It was the longest battle ever fought by the US Army,

Thirty thousand American GIs were killed or wounded.

A battle that has been ignored for more than fifty years - and one that should never have been fought.

From September 1944 to February 1945, eight US infantry and two US armoured divisions were thrown into the 'green hell of Hurtgen': fifty square miles of thick, rugged, hilly woods on the Belgian-German border, full of German soldiers in a deadly network of concrete bunkers.

The butcher's bill was high; casualty rates ran to 50 per cent and more for most rifle companies.

The High Command, from the relative comfort and security of their headquarters, miles away from the forest, refused to admit there had been a mistake. Careers, and the pride of the army, were at stake.

More troops were poured in and the slaughter continued, to capture an objective that had long since lost any real purpose.

The Battle of Hurtgen Forest is a classic account of the price fighting men must pay for the prideful blunders of their commanders.

'A classic account of a terrible battle.' - Tom Kasey, best-selling author of 'Trade Off'.

Charles Whiting (1926-2007) was one of Britain's most prolific military writers, with over 300 books to his credit. He saw active service in the Second World War, serving in an armoured reconnaissance regiment attached to both the US and British armies. His books therefore possess the insight and authority of someone who, as a combat soldier, actually experienced the horrors of the Second World War.

Charles Whiting is the author of numerous history books on the Second World War. Under the pen name of Leo Kessler he also wrote a series of bestselling military thrillers, including 'Guns at Cassino' and 'Valley of the Assassins'.

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From Reader Review The Battle of Hurtgen Forest for online ebook

Michael Wood says

The Secrets That Could Have Cost the War

Charles Whiting has performed a heroic task in uncovering the the hidden secrets of World War II, and exposing the leadership failures and negligence that lead to many of the Allied deaths and losses in that war. He doesn't uncover everything, he merely reports some of the true stories of the Battle of Hurygen Forest. These true stories explain not only the failures of World War II, but also Vietnam and other wars since. I was dismayed to learn of the failures and clay feet of some of my lifelong personal heroes, but my fact checking leads me to conclude that Whiting's story is correct. For those without a background of reading military history, this will no doubt be a shocking story. I had read of certain aspects of the story prior to reading this book, and it could have gone much further if it were a simple accusation or indictment. Instead, the author has written an honest history, without embellishment. Highly Recommended

David Brown says

This is a wonderful book about a terrible story. Hurtgen Forest is an unnecessary battle that the US Army spent 4 months fighting and lost during the second world war. I'll bet you never heard of it? That is because the US does not like to talk about losses. The author creates an environment where you feel you are there. You suffer the pain and loss with the infantrymen. More sadly, you also visit the Supreme Command HQ where the generals were concurrently enjoying golf, champagne, women, completely oblivious to the horrors of their soldiers.

Rick Colburn says

Learning experience

I didn't realize that two great battles were so close to each other and only separated from each other by only one open field between them.

The battle of the Hurtgen forest would take place in summer and fall of 1944 and the battle of the bulge that started on my birthday ten yrs. before I would be born the only battle that is most known about ie most famous would be the battle of the bulge the the battle of the Hurtgen Forest would be swept under the rug and not make it to the pages of history because of the huge loss of life to our WWII soldiers.

I highly recommend this book if you want to know what really happened in those two great battles of WWII

Jack says

I would have given this book 5 stars except for the author's obvious dislike of senior officers which bordered

on hatred. He writes about actions of many general officers as if those actions were based on facts. He would have been better served if he had stuck to the battle and spent less ink on his obvious bias against senior officers.

Geraint Jones says

The Hurtgen Forest campaign was not one I had prior knowledge of - as a campaign with no real winner, that shouldn't come as a surprise.

Whiting's walkthrough, whilst detailed and clear, too often felt like an 'us vs them' diatribe - with the top brass as his villains. He presents the Hurtgen campaign in a vacuum, with no reference to the wider strategic context, which feels a little disingenuous.

However - it is a good book about a horrible series of battles that brings balance to the western front narrative from an allied perspective. Worth a read.

Charlie Shaw says

There is so much WWII history in this book that I have never heard about before. Senseless slaughter of American troops caused by upper echelon commanders who never visited the battlefield yet insisted on total victory. The area fought over was insignificant yet caused the death of thousands in a needless cause. If you are a student of military history you need to read this book.

Nick says

Required reading for anyone who buys into the whitewashed version of WW2, where the "Greatest Generation" did no wrong and kept the world safe for Democracy and Freedom. Superb book that opened my eyes, eyes that I thought were already open!

Mr Neil Fleming says

Excellent Military History book - Recommended

Excellent book about an important WW2 battle. Forgotten not because it was unimportant or minor but solely because it didn't fit the desired political/military narrative.

Would be 5 stars were it not for a lack of maps to give a better sense of the ground over which events transpired.

Randy A says

My dad lost his brother in this battle. A real life account of one of the most tragic (and seldom talked about) battles of WW2. Excellent book for those wanting to know the truth.

Ryan Driskell says

Fascinating and tragic battle. This book would have been better had we not been beaten constantly with the author's repeated exclamations on how this was a battle that shouldn't have happened and his very low opinion of "The Top Brass". While wading through the book you would get some good pieces that described the battle but they are few and far between.

Hank Hoeft says

The Battle for Hurtgen Forest was a difficult book to finish, not because the subject matter (the bloodiest and most futile American campaign of the war in Western Europe) was so disheartening, but because the book is so poorly written. I was unaware of author Charles Whiting before, and after reading just a few chapters, I did a little research to find out just who he was—I downloaded this book for free from Amazon.com, and I wondered if this was a first effort by an amateur writer and wannabe historian. I was surprised to read that his Wikipedia biography labels him a "military historian." He was also a prolific writer of trashy suspense and thriller novels, but that I could believe, as much of the book's prose was lurid and more befitting a cheap paperback throwaway than a work of military history. I had difficulty following the flow of the four- or five-month battle due to Whiting's disjointed narration, and was often annoyed by the frequent digressions that had nothing to do with the battle, and were usually just opportunities for Whiting to go off once again about how much the American leaders sucked. This vitriol about the American army—especially about Eisenhower—was for me the most annoying aspect of the book. I have never given a book a one-star rating before—if the book is that bad, I usually put it down and pick up another—and for the life of me I don't understand why I persisted in reading this book through to the end. Maybe it's because of the subject—I was hungry to learn more about the Battle of the Hurtgen Forest, and I kept wading through Whiting's turgid account hoping to glean some information and understanding. But mostly what I got was a desire to read a better book on the subject.

G L Meisner says

This was an OK history. Whiting however spent a lot of time repeating himself and attacking the military commanders rather than telling the whole story. He constantly repeated how bad the generals in charge of the war were, and rather than telling us of what they did in a specific situation he went off about several things each time it came up.

Jemma says

Having never heard of this campaign, I thought I might learn something about it. This book does give you an idea about this somewhat pointless campaign but is incredibly repetitive and the language is off putting. I read a review when I downloaded this book which complained that Whiting had a chip on his shoulder about officers because he kept calling them "top brass" in a derogatory manner. My conclusion was that the reviewer was one of the type who can't take criticism of the upper strata of society.

Such people are common in military history, especially in WWI accounts where they maintain that the generals could've done little else. Such notions are a false revisionism - given that the generals had 50 years of experiences to draw from and were trained in Napoleonic methods - so I ignored the criticism. In this instance, the critic was right though - Whiting's visceral hatred of authority really gets in the way of telling this story.

Sadly, the main casualty of this approach is the story Whiting wants to tell. You start to not care. Indeed, this book would probably only get one star but for the tale of the incredibly hard done by Eddie Slovik (the first American to be shot for desertion in nearly 100 years) and the shrewd observation that Hurtgen is Vietnam in miniature. Indeed, Eisenhower and particularly Westmorland were to have significant roles in that later conflict. If only Whiting could stick to the narrative, which brings out such tales and cut the unnecessary diatribes, we might have a good chronicler of the untold history.

Mike says

In depth look at a battle that I knew very little about. It's an account given with the perspective of the impact to the regular GI in mind. Seemingly well researched and with great effort to "paint the truly horrific picture" it is decidedly a very sad tale.

The author's perspective is very present in his writing, I prefer an approach where facts are presented and I can draw my own conclusions. Maps would have also helped but it was easy enough to follow using google or any other theater map.

Overall I walk away wiser for the tale.

Vikas Datta says

Again a warning about the difficult task of fighting in forests and the immense toll that pride takes in battles which have no strategic use
