

with valuable material, are difficult to follow. They go back and forth in time and put a strain on the reader's ability to follow the story.

These criticisms aside, Stephan deserves credit for a powerful case in support of the Soviet counterintelligence effort. As with many works on military intelligence, Stephan has difficulty in showing the actual effect of intelligence efforts on the battlefield. To his credit, he does not overreach. His greatest claims concern the number of German agents arrested (or killed) and the vast extent of the Soviet effort against its own citizens in order to prevent Russian people from giving information to the Nazis. Stephan is more circumspect concerning the benefits of these efforts. His modesty in such claims is a virtue often missing in today's historical writings. In sum, the author strongly concludes that the Soviets won the war among agents, but cautiously argues that this victory helped the Soviet fight on the ground.

Finally, Stephan's work argues that pervasive Soviet government control of its own society provided a great protection against outside intelligence. In short, Stalin's system already suspected its own citizenry before the war, and had no problem in arresting thousands in order to find the occasional spy. This observation is well documented, but also disturbing. Thankfully, such distrust of its own people was an integral part of the Soviet Union's own eventual downfall, even if effective in the short term, counterintelligence war. In any case, Stephan provides a powerful view of Soviet counterintelligence efforts—the best we are likely to see for some time to come.

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The Longest Winter: The Battle of the Bulge and the Epic Story of World War II's Most Decorated Platoon. By Alex Kershaw. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2004. ISBN 0-306-81304-1. Maps. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. x, 326. \$25.00.

Alex Kershaw scored a popular hit with *The Bedford Boys* (2003), and appears to be doing it again with his latest book, *The Longest Winter: The Battle of the Bulge and the Epic Story of World War II's Most Decorated Platoon*. The historical centerpiece of *The Longest Winter* is the Battle of Lanzerath (16 December 1944), in which eighteen soldiers of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I&R) Platoon, 394th Infantry Regiment, 99th Infantry Division staged a miraculous defense against the numerically superior 1st Battalion, Fallschirmjäger Regiment 9 (temporarily assigned to the 1st SS-Panzer Division). Although two men of I&R/394th were killed and the remainder captured, their actions at Lanzerath delayed the main effort of the Sixth Panzer Army for the better part of 16 December. As Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) John R. Finch and Major George J. Mordica II wrote in 1992: "The I&R Platoon's action exemplifies the determination of the American soldier and what he can do when properly prepared, motivated, and led" ("Miracles: A Platoon's Heroic Stand at Lanzerath" in *Combined Arms in*

Battle Since 1939 [Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1992], 171).

While the actions of I&R/394th merit telling, *The Longest Winter* is not its first recounting. That honor belongs to John S. D. Eisenhower's *The Bitter Woods* (1969). Unfortunately the retelling of the Battle of Lanzerath in *The Longest Winter* (pp. 77–111) is simply that, a retelling providing little new information or insight. In an apparent attempt to create a lilting broad-perspective story, Kershaw has devoted considerable text to the discussion of well-known events and people not directly connected to I&R/394th. Yet, more often than not this merely serves to distract the reader from the central story. As an example, the book is peppered with references to and quotations from author Kurt Vonnegut, a veteran of the 106th Infantry Division. While such allusions to Vonnegut add a recognizable personality to the story, they are historically unnecessary. Equally disappointing are the numerous errors of fact. For instance, despite citing George Stein's authoritative *Waffen-SS* (1984) in his bibliography, Kershaw misstates two SS-related items on p. 54 alone: (1) the Leibstandarte-SS "Adolf Hitler" is referred to as a component of the 1st SS-Panzer Division when in fact they were one and the same; and (2) the 1st SS-Panzer Division is referred to as the original "Death(s) Head" unit responsible for running the concentration camps, which it simply was not.

Fortunately, two portions of the book present fresh material. The first describes the formation and training of I&R/394th, and their time spent on the European continent prior to the battle (pp. 1–57). The second discusses the platoon's captivity, liberation, and postwar recognition (pp. 174–285). Actions of the parent 99th Infantry Division are also discussed in these sections. However, these have been chronicled before, in Major General Walter E. Lauer's *Battle Babies: The Story of the 99th Infantry Division in World War II* (1951).

On balance, Kershaw has crafted an engaging book that will thrill neophytes and leave more seasoned students of World War II history feeling somewhat frustrated.

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Endkampf: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Death of the Third Reich. By Stephen G. Fritz. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004. ISBN 0-8131-2325-9. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. xvii, 382. \$35.00.

Stephen Fritz's book explores how the closing chapter of World War II in Middle Franconia shaped attitudes among Germans, Displaced Persons (DPs), and American soldiers there during the immediate postwar months. Fritz's general conclusion is that the unnecessary resistance, destruction,