



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

*Alex Kershaw*

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On the morning of December 16, 1944, eighteen men of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon attached to the 99th Infantry Division found themselves directly in the path of the main thrust of Hitler's massive Ardennes offensive. Despite being vastly outnumbered, they were told to hold their position "at all costs." Throughout the day, the platoon repulsed three large German assaults in a fierce day-long battle, killing hundreds of German soldiers. Only when they had run out of ammunition did they surrender to the enemy. But their long winter was just beginning. As POWs, the platoon experienced an ordeal far worse than combat-surviving in wretched German POW camps. Yet miraculously the men of the platoon survived-all of them-and returned home after the war. More than thirty years later, when President Carter recognized the platoon's "extraordinary heroism" and the U.S. Army approved combat medals for all eighteen men, they became America's most decorated platoon of World War II. With the same vivid and dramatic prose that made *The Bedford Boys* a national bestseller, Alex Kershaw brings to life the story of these little-known heroes-an epic tale of courage, duty, and survival in World War II and one of the most inspiring episodes in American history. *The Longest Winter* is an intensely human story about young men who find themselves in frightening wartime situations, who fight back instinctively, survive stoically, and live heroically.



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