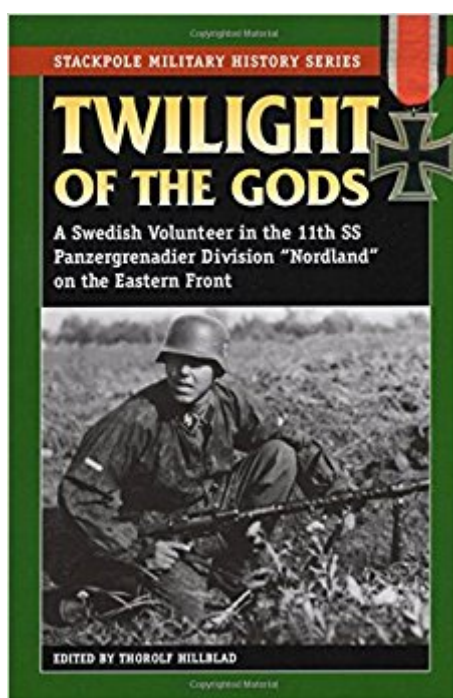


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Twilight Of The Gods: A Swedish Volunteer In The 11th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Nordland" On The Eastern Front (Stackpole Military History Series)



Synopsis

Rare account of a non-German who fought in the elite Waffen-SS New information on the 11th SS Panzergrenadier Division No-holds-barred narrative of the Eastern Front This is the story of Erik Wallin, a Swede who volunteered for the Waffen-SS, serving in the panzer reconnaissance battalion of the 11th SS Panzergrenadier Division, a unit composed mainly of volunteers from Scandinavia. The division saw combat in the Courland Pocket, along the Oder River, and in Berlin.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thorolf Hillblad lives in Idaho.

If you wanted to see what life was like in the Waffen-SS, this will give the best first hand account yet. Well written with feelings of how the volunteer felt when joining and how it was throughout the fighting. One of the better books regarding training and fighting in the Waffen-SS by a survivor. Intense and exciting it is very well written and gives a close up personal account of the war on the Russian front and into Germany at the end. Lots of crisp photos and one of the best war books I have read.

Twilight of Gods is a memoir any serious WWII buff should have in his library. Erik Wallin is a Swede volunteered to join the SS. He started fighting the Soviets in Finland, and then soon after

joined the SS. However, the book covers only the last three months of the war. It starts out in the Courland pocket but soon his unit is transferred to Germany. He is involved in trying to prevent the Soviets from crossing the Oder, and then of course eventually trying to prevent the Soviets from taking Berlin. The following items were covered in this book that I found very interesting and not covered in any of the many German Army memoirs I have read: Wallin was in a mortar platoon with halftracks. They always had ammo for their machine guns, mortars, machine-pistols, and for those people that have read a bit about the German side of the war, often you come across the troops having shortage of ammo. Was it because they were SS that they were better supplied? Also, they did not have a fuel shortage problem, which is again interesting for the same reason as the abundance of ammo. Remember this is the last 3 months of the war. He covered some of the operational side of a mortar platoon. Sometimes he had to be the forward observer - which was definitely a very dangerous job to have. Other times he was one of the mortar crew, or other times he was in a foxhole with a machine gun. He wrote briefly about his motivation to fighting the "Bolsheviks", which is to be appreciated because so many German memoirs, the author does not even give the reader a crumb on what are his personal views. The author also covered how it was possible for the soldiers to keep fighting with GOOD morale, despite not having slept, eaten or drank water for days. Having seen so many of their comrades torn to pieces in combat, and of course things looking bleak as far as stopping the Soviets. Still morale was high. Crazy. The author also shed light on the whole concept of the veteran soldier so many times having a close call with death, yet making it through. He explained how it was simply luck - nothing else. There was one scene with a close call where the guy with him simply started laughing how they lived while others died just because they dismounted a halftrack seconds earlier. I have read elsewhere that many Soviet soldiers were Asiatic from the far eastern part of the Soviet Union, but it was interesting to read that here again. This author felt that the Ukrainian and Russian divisions simply had been bled to death, and that is why there were so many Mongols. There was a very interesting battle where Erik was in an observation position and saw the German troops pull out below, leaving 3 soldiers behind with Panzerfausts as rear guard. 5 Russian tanks came and Erik watched the whole thing unfold. A very unique story. You will have to read the book to find out what happened. Erik was involved in the battle for Berlin, where he was side by side the Hitler Youth. He said that these kids very quickly had the look in their faces just like the veterans of many many battles. It was one of the many sad parts of the book. He wrote how these kids with unbelievable determination would dart out with a panzerfaust, trying to stop a Soviet tank. The author described how the country side of Germany changed to the far out suburbs of Berlin, to immediate suburbs, to downtown Berlin. He

wrote about what the farms looked like, then the homes, stores, and then the posh districts of Berlin. Fighting the whole way. When he was finally captured by the Soviets, it is a very interesting story on how he got out of the clutches of the Soviets. He was SS, and he had to hide that fact or instant bullet in the neck. I won't give it away, but escape had many close calls, and he had to do it with a bad leg. There was plenty of combat described, in which many of Erik's comrades are slaughtered, as well as simply unknown soldiers and civilians. In the end it is stuff that is depressing and I do wonder why I read War memoirs. If you are a serious WWII history buff, this book is a must read. There were many details I have not read elsewhere, and overall the book will take you to the last months of the war and all of its slaughter and destruction. I read a few of the reviews, and some wanted more combat scenes covered in detail, and general troop movement. My eyes glaze over when I have to read what unit went where on what day for more than a sentence. Furthermore, there was plenty of combat, and those reviewers who wanted more combat scenes are not interested in any other aspect of war other than simply how many tanks did the author blow up and how.

Again a great read point of the eastern front from the first person point of view, from a Swedish SS volunteer. Especially interesting is the author's experience during the fall of Berlin. Definitely a unique book with invaluable historical military information. The author very infrequently, at times, hints at his opinions regarding the Soviets and perhaps persons of non-Germanic culture, and some readers may find these unpalatable. However overall it is an objective view of a Nazi soldier in the later part of World War II, and well written and easy to read.

very good read

Another story by a Swedish volunteer, very fine

Great book

Fascinating story, I wish it was longer

Excellent military history read. Excellent.

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