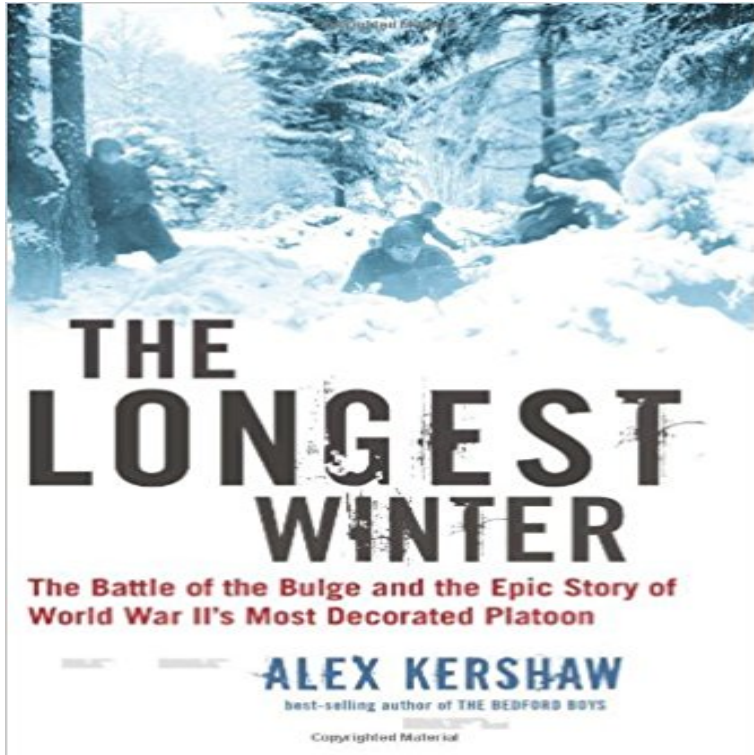


The Longest Winter: The Battle of the Bulge and the Epic Story of World War II's Most Decorated Platoon



From the author of the best-selling *The Bedford Boys* comes this epic story of courage and survival in World War II. On a cold morning in December, 1944, deep in the Ardennes forest, a platoon of eighteen men under the command of twenty-year-old lieutenant Lyle Bouck were huddled in their foxholes trying desperately to keep warm. Suddenly, the early morning silence was broken by the roar of a huge artillery bombardment and the dreadful sound of approaching tanks. Hitler had launched his bold and risky offensive against the Allies - his last gamble - and the small American platoon was facing the main thrust of the entire German assault. Vastly outnumbered, they repulsed three German assaults in a fierce day-long battle, killing over five hundred German soldiers and defending a strategically vital hill. Only when Bouck's men had run out of ammunition did they surrender to the enemy. As POWs, Bouck's platoon began an ordeal far worse than combat - survival in captivity under trigger-happy German guards, Allied bombing raids, and a daily ration of only thin soup. In German POW camps, hundreds of captured Americans were either killed or died of disease, and most lost all hope. But the men of Bouck's platoon survived - miraculously, all of them. In vivid, dramatic prose, Alex Kershaw brings to life the story of America's most decorated small unit, and some of little-known heroes who played parts in this inspiring story.

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