

Virginians at War

WWII: Battle of the Bulge

Resource Packet

Contains: Glossary, Timeline, Images, Discussion Questions, Additional Resources

Program Description: Virginians at War: Battle of the Bulge, covers the American experience during the critical Battle of the Bulge that spanned the winter of 1944-1945. Virginia veterans detail their vivid memories of the bold German offensive in December of '44 and the resulting harrowing, desperate fight during the Allied counterattack. From defending Bastogne, to the Malmedy Massacre, to surviving the harsh conditions and intense combat in the Ardennes Forest, Virginians participated in the successful campaign to defeat Hitler's last major offensive, paving the way to eventual victory in Europe.

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Length: 23:56

Streaming link: <https://vimeo.com/367057287>

Featured Speakers:

SGT Ramon E. Chalkley, Richmond
T4 Bryan C. Clatterbuck, Waynesboro
TSGT Louis T. Collins Sr., Norfolk
CPL Jesse A. Crews, Mechanicsville
LTC Robert H. Deaderick, Richmond
2nd LT Carl J. DePancis, Ashland
PFC Donald H. Flippin, Amelia
COL Frank "Foxy" Gregg, Ft. Belvoir
CPL/LT Paul Henze, Washington D.C.
COL Alan W. Jones Jr., Ft. Belvoir
COL Leo D. Jones, Midlothian
SSGT William B. Perkinson, Matoaca
1st LT Ruth Puryear, Richmond
PFC William P. Raines, Breaks
LTC Leon T. "Pat" Scarbrough, Petersburg
COL Stuart M. Seaton, Richmond
SSGT Cecil L. Webb, Virginia Beach
TSGT John D. Williams, Richmond



GLOSSARY

IMPORTANT TERMS

- **75's and 76's:** U.S. 75mm and 76mm guns, the standard gun size for American tanks during WWII
- **Battery:** an artillery subunit of soldiers, guns, and vehicles
- **C-47:** Douglas C-47 Dakota; a U.S. aircraft used to transport military personnel and equipment
- **German 88's:** 8.8cm Flak; a German anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery gun used by Germany during WWII
- **HE ammunition:** High explosive ammunition
- **Panzer division:** a German unit of armored tanks during WWII
- **Reconnaissance:** The surveying and observation of an area to aid in developing military strategy, or to locate an enemy
- **Stars and Stripes:** an American military newspaper that delivered news about the U.S. Armed Forces; while this newspaper was based out of Washington D.C., it was often produced and distributed near the front lines during WWII to spread information quickly

IMPORTANT PLACES

- **Antwerp:** a port city in the north of Belgium; German forces aimed to recapture this city, which led to the Battle of the Bulge
- **The Ardennes:** a stretch of forest that goes through Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, and into France; German troops came from Germany through the Ardennes into Luxembourg and Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge
- **Baugnez:** a small town just outside of the city of Malmedy; this was the actual site of the Malmedy Massacre
- **Luxembourg:** a European country bordered by Belgium, Germany, and France; Luxembourg was occupied by Germany during WWII until Allied forces began to liberate the country in 1944
- **Malmedy:** a city in Belgium, near Luxembourg; when German troops captured American prisoners of war and killed them near Malmedy, leading to the name "Malmedy Massacre"
- **Wiltz:** a town in northwestern Luxembourg and site of much of the fighting during the Battle of the Bulge

BATTLE OF THE BULGE TIMELINE

- **September 16, 1944:** Hitler announces his plan of a counterattack through the Ardennes
- **December 16, 1944:** German divisions begin moving through the Ardennes, attacking the U.S. Army VIII Corps; the VIII Corps was based out of Bastogne, but divisions were scattered throughout the Ardennes
- **December 17, 1944:** SS Commander Joachim Peiper and his unit slaughter 84 surrendering U.S. troops in Baugnez, Belgium, near Malmedy, an event known as the “Malmedy Massacre”; 43 survivors, having hidden or pretended to be dead, escape and report the incident
- **December 18, 1944:** Germans advance against the VIII Corps in two areas; one advance on the northern edge of the VIII Corps’ sector, and one advance towards Bastogne
- **December 19, 1944:** U.S. Army VIII Corps relocates to Neufchateau; 101st Airborne Division is stationed in Bastogne as Germans advance
- **December 21, 1944:** German troops bypass Bastogne while the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division blocks German advance north of the city
- **December 23, 1944:** General Patton’s Third Army moves against the southern flank of the German advances
- **December 25, 1944:** German forces surround the 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne, joining the northern and central advances and creating “the Bulge”
- **December 27, 1944:** American forces push from the south and break through to Bastogne
- **January 1, 1945:** British reinforcements move in from the west, pushing in against the “Bulge”
- **January 3, 1945:** German panzer divisions withdraw towards the interior of the “Bulge”
- **January 14, 1945:** Bodies are finally recovered from the Malmedy Massacre
- **January 15, 1945:** The “Bulge” is reduced, pushed east of Bastogne
- **January 18, 1945:** The “Bulge” is mostly returned its original state, past the Ardennes
- **May – June, 1946:** The SS Commander responsible for the Malmedy Massacre, Peiper, stands trial and is convicted of killing prisoners of war; Peiper is sentenced to death by hanging, however his trial is later reviewed and he is released from prison some years later

PROFILE OF A SOLDIER: ARCHER T. GAMMON



Rank: Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army.

Birthday: September 11, 1918.

Place of Birth: Chatham, VA.

Unit: 9th Armored Infantry Battalion, 6th Armored Division.

Date of Action: January 11, 1945.

Awards: Medal of Honor, Purple Heart.

Archer T. Gammon
(Pittsylvania County, VA)

Medal of Honor Citation: He charged 30 yards through hip-deep snow to knock out a machine gun and its 3-man crew with grenades, saving his platoon from being decimated and allowing it to continue its advance from an open field into some nearby woods. The platoon's advance through the woods had only begun when a machine gun supported by riflemen opened fire and a Tiger Royal tank sent 88mm. shells screaming at the unit from the left flank. S/Sgt. Gammon, disregarding all thoughts of personal safety, rushed forward, then cut to the left, crossing the width of the platoon's skirmish line in an attempt to get within grenade range of the tank and its protecting foot troops. Intense fire was concentrated on him by riflemen and the machine gun emplaced near the tank. He charged the automatic weapon, wiped out its crew of 4 with grenades, and, with supreme daring, advanced to within 25 yards of the armored vehicle, killing 2 hostile infantrymen with rifle fire as he moved forward. The tank had started to withdraw, backing a short distance, then firing, backing some more, and then stopping to blast out another round, when the man whose single-handed relentless attack had put the ponderous machine on the defensive was struck and instantly killed by a direct hit from the Tiger Royal's heavy gun. By his intrepidity and extreme devotion to the task of driving the enemy back no matter what the odds, S/Sgt. Gammon cleared the woods of German forces, for the tank continued to withdraw, leaving open the path for the gallant squad leader's platoon.



Map of the German push into Belgium, creating the “Bulge”

(U.S. Army)



Damage to the city of Bastogne, Belgium on December 26, 1944

(National Archives)



American troops in the Ardennes

(U.S. Army)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why were the Germans able to push so far into Belgium during 1944?
2. Why were the Germans so successful at penetrating behind American lines?
3. Why was Bastogne so critical for the Americans to protect, and for the Germans to take?
4. What was the main factor in the US victory over the Germans at the Battle of the Bulge?
5. What could have been some consequences of the US military not being able to fend off the Germans at the Bulge?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To learn more about the experiences of Virginians in World War II, view *Virginians at War: WWII Invasion of Normandy* and other films at vawarmemorial.org. Looking to do more research? Check out the links below.

- Overview of the battle from the US Army. [Link](#)
- National archives records from WWII. [Link](#)
- Veterans speaking about their experiences at the Battle of the Bulge. [Link](#)
- Interactive timeline of the Battle of the Bulge. [Link](#)
- Britannica article on the Battle of the Bulge. [Link](#)