



LAST RALLY: The German Defence of East Prussia, Pomerania and Danzig, 1944-45, a Photographic History

Ian Baxter

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Drawing on a superb collection of rare German and Russian photographs, this sequel to 'Battle in the Baltics 1944-45' covers the last battles fought by the Wehrmacht and their SS counterparts in East Prussia, Pomerania and the West Prussian city of Danzig.

Those German forces that had survived the constant Soviet artillery barrages, the onslaught of the tank armadas and mass infantry assaults, had streamed back westwards, through East Prussia and beyond, where they continued fighting vicious defensive battles until units either ran out of ammunition or were killed.

The book provides an absorbing insight into this long, bitter and least known Eastern Front campaign. It reveals how the remnants of Hitler's once-vaunted forces were hurled out of the Baltic States and ordered to wage an unprecedented war of attrition against an overwhelming foe. Here in East and West Prussia, Pomerania and the ancient city of Danzig, the Germans stood on the fringes of the Reich and fought a series of colossal battles, being bled white in a desperate attempt to hold together their disintegrating front. Through the use of a large selection of previously unpublished images accompanied by in-depth captions, the author reveals how the Germans were slowly driven from their decimated positions and forced to fight further west. However, Hitler persisted with a blind obsession in the belief that fanatical aggression could hold back the enemy, and endeavored to pour the last of his resources into these areas in an attempt to win time.

'The Last Rally' is a unique study of a struggling German Army trying in vain to avoid being sucked into a maelstrom of destruction. It was the final desperate attempt by the German forces to hold onto land conquered by the Reich during its conquest through Poland five years earlier. Now, as tension, turmoil and tragedy reached its peak in the ruined villages, towns and cities, the ethnic Germans, or so-called Volksdeutsche, fled their homes to avoid the Red Army's advance. What followed was a mass exodus of men, women and children intermingled with withdrawing German troops trying to stave off defeat.

This is a horrendous story of defeat and survival, and one of the most important visual records of Germany's demise between the Reich and the Baltic States.

REVIEWS

"Another superb book from Ian Baxter....a fascinating book on an ever popular subject..."
Military Machines International, 09/01/2010

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