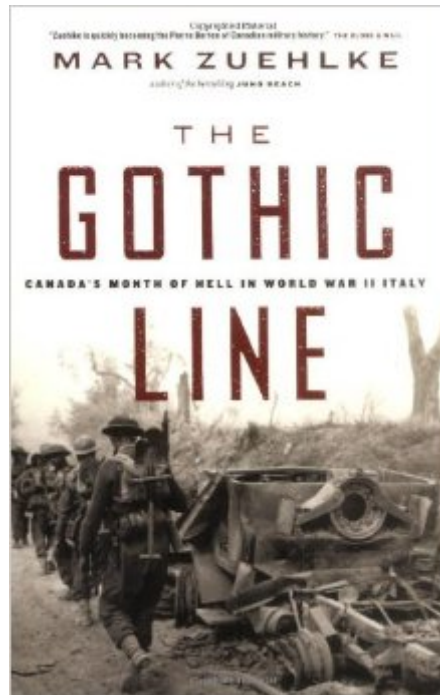


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The Gothic Line: Canada's Month Of Hell In World War II Italy



Synopsis

Like an armor-toothed belt across Italy's upper thigh, the Gothic Line was the most fortified and fiercely defended position the German army had yet thrown in the path of the Allied forces. On August 25, 1944, it fell to I Canadian Corps to spearhead the famed Eighth Army's major offensive, intended to rip through it. The 1st Infantry and 5th Armored Divisions advanced into a killing ground covered by thousands of machine-gun, antitank gun positions, and pillboxes expertly sited behind minefields and dense thickets of barbed wire. Never had the Germans in Italy brought so much artillery to bear or deployed such a great number of tanks. For 28 days, the battle raged as the Allied troops slugged an ever deeper hole into the German defences. The Metauro River, the Foglia River, Point 204, Tomba Di Pesaro, Coriano Ridge, San Martino, and San Fortunato became place names seared into the memories of those who fought there. They fought in a dust-choked land under a searing sun which by battle's end was reduced to a quagmire by rain. But they prevailed and on September 22 won the ground overlooking the Po River Valley, opening the way for the next phase of the Allied advance.

Book Information

Paperback: 551 pages

Publisher: Douglas & McIntyre; First Trade Paper Edition edition (October 18, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1553650689

ISBN-13: 978-1553650683

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 6.4 x 1.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,567,237 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) [#223 in Books > History >](#)

[Americas > Canada > 20th Century](#) [#381 in Books > History > Military > Canada](#) [#447](#)

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Customer Reviews

I enjoyed all three books (Ortona, Liri Valley being the others) in the series, however there are some sloppy errors such as referring to the Carleton and York Regiment as "English-speaking Nova Scotians" (pg. 232) when the regiment was from New Brunswick (In Ortona, pg. 363, Zuehlke even states that the regiment "hailed from New Brunswick"). Another occurs on pg.182 where talking about Cape Breton Highlanders Private Alphonse Hickey "of Whitney Pier, New Brunswick".

Whitney Pier is a neighbourhood in Sydney, Nova Scotia. In Liri Valley there are numerous references to ".75 millimetre" and ".88 millimetre" guns. Overall, I enjoyed the books and would recommend them, as I think they give a fairly comprehensive look at the major Canadian operations in Italy, which is what I wanted when I bought them.

Another good, solid book by Mark Zuehlke. Like the two other books in this series, it consists in a mix between anecdotes and factual research, which makes for a pleasing read. However, "Ortona" was slightly better than this one. By the last 100 pages, it gets tiresome to read endless combat reports at platoon or company level - no matter how well written they are. Still, I highly recommend the book and salute Mr. Zuehlke for his overall GREAT work.

This is another outstanding read about Canadian efforts during the Italy campaign. All the books in this series explain the plan and the effects in a way that makes you extremely proud of the efforts of our young men, and the wonder of how anyone survived not only the defence by the German soldiers, but the plans of the officers calling the shots. What is really wonderful is, that as you are reading along all of a sudden you are reading about someone you know from your community or that you have heard about, like Sgt. Fred Cederberg.

Another great history completed by Mark Zuehlke. As always, very readable and understandable. It flows well and the chapters are short so you can read it fast. I have enjoyed reading all of his work and will continue to do so.

I have not yet read this book. I am trying to read the Zuehlke books on WWII in chronological order.

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