

The Longest Battle
Illustrations



111-SC-443244: (Left to right) Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Dwight D. Eisenhower, 12th Army Group commander Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, and 1st Army commander Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges directed the American advance toward the Roer River. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-SC-200850: VII Corps commander Maj. Gen. J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins (left) and Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery confer during the Battle of the Bulge. Collins executed the main effort to reach the Roer River, while Montgomery was Bradley's rival in matters of strategy. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



242-MID-6308_1: *Generaloberst* Gerd von Rundstedt was reinstalled as Commander-in-Chief West as the Allies thundered toward the German border in early September 1944. (National Archives, German newsreel)



242-MID-3425_1: *Generalfieldmarschall* Walter Model, commanding Army Group B after 4 September 1944, accomplished the "miracle in the West" that staved off an immediate Allied advance deep into Germany. (National Archives, German newsreel)



111-HRB-30_4: An aerial view of Siegfried Line or West Wall dragon's teeth near Aachen, Germany. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-CB-23_1: A Sherman tank lays down covering fire while GIs dash forward to take the first Siegfried Line defenses near Aachen on 12 September 1944. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-CB-23_2: A BAR man blazes away at the foe. Much of the Siegfried Line consisted of carefully camouflaged positions that blended into the pastoral setting. The Germans built dragon's teeth only where there were no natural antitank obstacles, such as streams or forest. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



242-MID-6122_1: A hodgepodge of German troops defended the West Wall. These *Landsers* are near Stolberg. (National Archives, German newsreel)



242-MID-6122_2: German view of an American P-38 Lightning conducting strikes against ground targets near Aachen. With control of the air, Allied fighter-bombers broke up armored attacks, pounded artillery positions, and disrupted movement during daylight hours. (National Archives, German newsreel)



111-CB-23_3: American riflemen file past a newly captured West Wall bunker. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-HRB-30_5: Taking their cue from German farmers, engineers use a tank-dozer to create a road across the dragon's teeth. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-CB-26_1: A "Jumbo" assault Sherman fires at a target in Aachen during the pre-attack bombardment of the city in early October 1944. The Jumbo carried much thicker armor than a standard Sherman and could withstand more punishment. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-CB-26_2: Aachen shutters under the American bombardment. The cathedral is left of the center. This photo illustrates the commanding view of the city enjoyed by American troops as they captured ever more of the high ground surrounding Aachen. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-CB-26_3: The 1st Infantry Division enters Aachen the hard way in mid-October 1944. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-SC-195638: Riflemen from Company M, 26th Infantry Regiment, work with tanks to clear a street in Aachen on 15 October 1944. The 1st Infantry Division developed tactics for patiently securing each building as the troops advanced through the city. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-CB-26_4: American troops fire a 57mm antitank gun during street fighting in Aachen. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



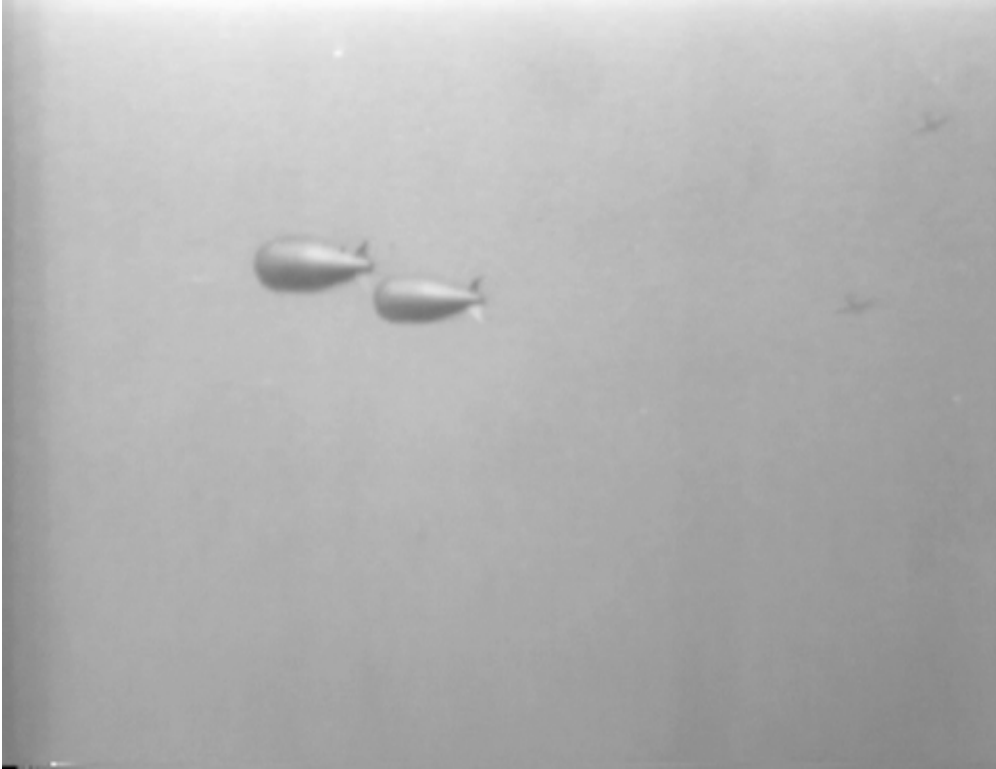
242-MID-3445_3: The Germans, who were now fighting for their homeland, defended every city, town, and village from Aachen to the Roer River as a fortress. (National Archives, German newsreel)



111-HRB-30_6: Atrocious weather already afflicted the front in early November 1944, which complicated work to build up supplies for the Roer River offensive. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-HRB-30_3: Crewmen install grousers or "duck bills" on the track of a Sherman tank. The extenders better distributed the tank's weight and improved the its traction in mud and snow. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-HRB-30_8: British barrage balloons mark First Army's front line to protect American troops from accidental airstrikes by the bombers winging overhead during Operation Queen on 16 November 1944. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-HRB-30_9: A British bomber flies eastward over Düren on 16 November only seconds before fragmentation and incendiary bombs turned the city into an inferno. The Roer River is visible in the lower left corner of the image running roughly left to right. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



NUSA1: A slagheap near Mariagrube attacked by the 30th Infantry Division on 16 November. These man-made hills were common in the mining country facing Ninth Army, and German troops often fortified them. (U.S. Army photo)



111-HRB-30_10: A machine gunner with the 104th Infantry Division fires at fortified houses in Stolberg as the offensive begins. The white beam is a tracer round captured in this frame of film footage. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-HRB-30_11: Tanks from the 3d Armored Division fire in battery on Stolberg to soften up the defenses. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-HRB-30_15: GIs from the 47th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Infantry Division, move out through the forbidding Hurtgen Forest toward Gressenich on 16 November. The men would spend nearly three weeks fighting through terrain like this. (National Archives, signal Corps film)



IHF_1: Royal Tigers from the *506th Schwere Panzer Abteilung* (left) and *9th Panzer Division* Panthers prepare for the damaging counterattack against the 2d Armored Division near Puffendorf beginning 17 November. The Tigers carried the dreaded 88mm gun, and their thick armor could deflect most shots from American tanks. (German newsreel, courtesy of International Historic Films)



NUSA2: Tankers from the 743d Tank Battalion knocked out this *Sturmgeschütz* III in Warden on 18 November. This was the most common of several types of turretless armored vehicles lumped together as "assault guns", and a battalion or more of these typically supported a German infantry or panzergrenadier division. The 75mm gun could easily handle the Sherman tank. (U.S. Army photo)



111-HRB-30_19: Fourth Infantry Division riflemen come under fire as they try to advance toward Grosshau in the Hürtgen Forest on 18 November. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-SC-198841: One of the GIs receives attention from the medics after being hit. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-HRB-30_18: First Infantry Division riflemen walk through Hamich, the scene of bitter fighting at the start of the November Roer offensive. One of at least three *Panzerjäger* IV tank killers destroyed during fierce counterattacks here sits in the middle of the street. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



IHF_2: A camouflaged German artillery piece fires at the Allies near Geilenkirchen. There was no shortage of guns or ammunition until December. (German newsreel, courtesy of International Historic Films)



111-CB-32_1: A combat engineer near Geilenkirchen removes one of the ubiquitous wooden-box *Schü* mines. The mines were undetectable by electronic minesweepers, and the half-pound of explosives they contained was enough to blow off a man's foot or leg. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



242-MID-3168_1: Tiger tanks enjoyed a tremendous advantage when they could engage across wide open spaces with their high-velocity 88s and superior optics. (National Archives, German newsreel)



111-HRB-30_16: 3d Armored Division M5 light tanks and armored infantry advance on 19 November toward Werth across terrain ideal for German antitank gunners. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-HRB-30_17: GIs evacuate the commander of the lead tank, who has been wounded by German fire. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-HRB-30_12: Timberwolf Division doughboys ride a 750th Tank Battalion Sherman into Eschweiler on or about 20 November. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-HRB-30_13: Flushing out snipers in Eschweiler. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



242_MID-3445_1: Exhausted panzergrenadiers (probably from the hard-fighting *3d Panzergrenadier Division*) roll toward yet one more counterattack against the advancing Americans. (National Archives, German newsreel)



111-SC-197423: British crocodiles with the 2d Armored Division. Their appearance at Merzenhausen on 22 November had an "electric effect" on the German defenders. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-HRB-30_14: Combat engineers bridge the Inde River near Frenz on or about 25 November. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



242-MID-3445_2: A German 120mm mortar fires on the advancing Americans. Because of the concussion, the crew sometimes ran from the firing pit after loading each round, and the weapon was triggered by a lanyard. (National Archives, German newsreel)



111-SC-197307-S: German prisoners taken at Jüngersdorf about 27 November display the exhaustion felt by riflemen on both sides. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-SC-197299: Shermans from the 771st Tank Battalion form up before the next attack toward Linnich in 29 November 1944. The tanks carry logs to put under the tracks for traction should a tank bog down in the mud. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



IHF_4: A medic (white helmet) and grenadiers, probably from the *10th SS Panzer Division* near Linnich, tend to a wounded comrade. (German newsreel, courtesy of International Historic Films)



Misc1: A Sherman tank sits in front of the castle in Merode, the town in which two companies of men from the 1st Infantry Division were cut off and overrun in late November-early December. (Copyright Prince de Merode)



111-SC-197540: View from a spotter plane of an artillery barrage blasting German defenses at Barmen on 1 December. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-SC-197587: GIs enter Lucherberg, the scene of fierce fighting beginning 3 December because it occupied strategic high ground west of the Roer. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-HRB-30_20: A Sherman from the 750th Tank Battalion supports Timberwolf doughs near Lucherberg on 10 December, the day the 104th Infantry Division launched its final drive to the Roer River. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



242-MID-3445_4: German panzergrenadiers in one of the zig-zag trenches that were widely used on the Roer plain. (National Archives, German newsreel)



111-HRB-30_21: Shermans from CCR, 3d Armored Division, roll toward Geich on 12 December to support the 9th Infantry Division's push to the Roer. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



IHR_3: A German soldier fires a panzerfaust somewhere west of the Roer River. The rocket could easily knock out a Sherman tank. Because of the weapon's short range, this was often as dangerous for the gunner as for the target. (German newsreel, courtesy of International Historic Films.)



111-HRB-30_22: Mortars pound Gürzenich during the 83d Infantry Division's advance on 13 December. (National Archives, Signal Corps film)



111-SC-198028: Riflemen from the 83d Infantry Division fight from house to house in the outskirts of Düren, only yards from the Roer River. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-HRB-30_23: GIs root out the last defenders in Gürzenich.
(National Archives, Signal Corps film)



IHF_5: By mid-December, the Germans were looking at the west bank of the Roer from positions on the eastern side, such as this one. (German newsreel, courtesy of International Historic Films)



78thID_1: GIs haul extra ammunition on sleds as they ready to attack Eicherscheid on 30 January 1945 during the 78th Infantry Division's drive toward the Roer River dams. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



78thID_3: Aerial view of the Schwammenauel Dam issued to the 78th Infantry Division. Cratering from bombing raids is visible on the dam's face. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-SC-199745: View of Urfttalsperre dam from a 9th Infantry Division OP, 5 February 1945. Craters from aerial bombing are visible below the dam, and water spills over a portion of the top damaged in an air raid. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-SC-201168: 84th Infantry Division riflemen prepare to cross the Roer River near Linnich on 23 February 1945 as mortar rounds drop nearby. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)



111-SC-201161-S: The doughs paddle across the Roer in their assault boats. (National Archives, Signal Corps photo)