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Editorial

Skorzeny's Men

When it became evident that the war which he had started would end in his own defeat, Hitler decided upon a desperate gamble: the Ardennes Offensive, better known as the Battle of the Bulge.

The plan contrived by Hitler's feverish mind, though brilliant for its audacity and imaginativeness, was nevertheless rejected by all his generals. But since all final decisions were his, this was no problem.

This offensive consisted of a lightening thrust through the Ardennes that would split the U.S. Third and First armies. Antwerp would be retaken, thus depriving Eisenhower of a strategic port through which the bulk of his supplies were entering.

A key figure in this operation was a lieutenant colonel by the name of Otto Skorzeny. A resourceful, highly intelligent, fearless young man, he had distinguished himself as a master executor of daring projects, one of which was rescuing Mussolini in a small plane from a remote mountain prison where he was being held captive.

For the Ardennes Offensive, Skorzeny organized a special brigade of two thousand English speaking German soldiers. These were carefully trained to disguise themselves as American soldiers and infiltrate the area before the actual fighting began. Fortunately for the Allied armies, only seven jeeploads of these pseudo-American soldiers managed to sneak through the lines and carry out their diabolical work. Even so, these few men were successful far beyond expectations.

Wearing American uniforms, driving American jeeps and speaking perfect English, these men went about clipping telephone wires and communications cables, disrupting vital lines of communication. They switched road signs around, sending troop convoys off in the wrong direction. Some began directing traffic at busy intersections, creating massive confusion.

The greatest success of Skorzeny's unit, however, was totally unplanned. When one