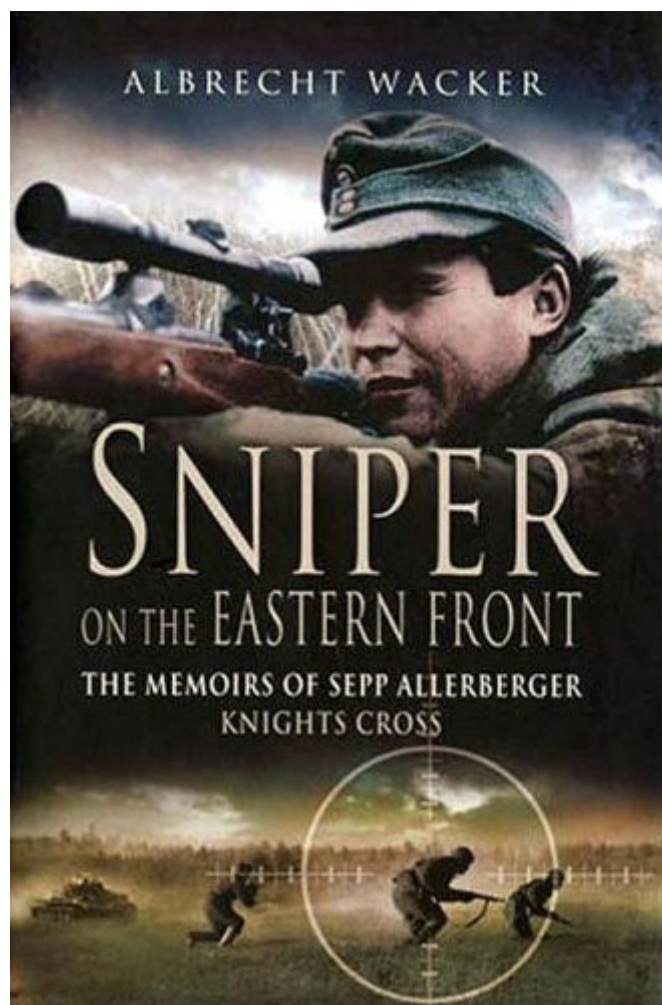


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Sniper On The Eastern Front: The Memoirs Of Sepp Allerberger, Knight's Cross



Synopsis

Josef Sepp Allerberger was the second most successful sniper of the German Wehrmacht and one of the few private soldiers to be honoured with the award of the Knight's Cross. An Austrian conscript, after qualifying as a machine gunner he was drafted to the southern sector of the Russian Front in July 1942. Wounded at Voroshilovsk, he experimented with a Russian sniper-rifle while convalescing and so impressed his superiors with his proficiency that he was returned to the front on his regiment's only sniper specialist. In this sometimes harrowing memoir, Allerberger provides an excellent introduction to the commitment in fieldcraft, discipline and routine required of the sniper, a man apart. There was no place for chivalry on the Russian Front. Away from the film cameras, no prisoner survived long after surrendering. Russian snipers had used the illegal explosive bullet since 1941, and Hitler eventually authorised its issue in 1944. The result was a battlefield of horror. Allerberger was a cold-blooded killer, but few will find a place in their hearts for the soldiers of the Red Army against whom he fought.

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book out of curiosity. After having read the book I decided to review it in two parts. If I

have missed something in the book that has sent me off in the wrong direction please forgive me but I have looked over the story line in the book twice and I am sure of my findings. Firstly the book didn't disappoint me, it was an interesting read and a fascinating recounting of the life of a German sniper on the Eastern Front in 1943-44 and the entering into Romania/Hungary during 1945. The book is not for those who don't like reading about torture, death and the descriptions of same. They are graphic. It is written in the same style as that of the 1970's published books author 'Sven Hassel'. Actually I thought that I was reading another Sven Hassel story, it was that close, except differing characters. Anyway an interesting read. I won't say entertaining in these types of books in that the descriptions of the death of soldiers and civilians can never be entertaining. Secondly and the most controversial part of my review: It wasn't until I finished the book, which I read in faster than usual time, and went over it a second time that I found some interesting points. The author is an Albrecht Wacker, an arms dealer and photographer who allegedly got the story from an ex-sniper who was on the Eastern Front and wrote this book based on his accounts. Okay so far, but what got me thinking was what was written in the prologue. The author protects himself by explaining that the subject of the book 'Josef Sepp Allerberger' is fictitious as are most of the identities named throughout the book. Although he does say that this has been done to protect the true identity of the sniper from repercussions, from whom is not explained.

Americans in general know shockingly little about the kind of fighting that took place on fronts other than their own in World War II (or other wars for that matter). It is therefore extremely important to have the opportunity to read first person accounts of the experiences of soldiers on those other fronts, especially when as in this case it is the Russian front where Germany was essentially defeated, and the memoir is written by a soldier who fought with the competition as it were. This book, essentially a series of interviews of an aging veteran of the 3rd Mountain (Gebirgsjager) Division, woven together to give us a more or less continuous narrative of two years experience on the Russian front, is outstanding in every important way. The author gives one a view of life in the trenches not often discussed in books on a 'higher' level, i.e. the experience of combat, fear, panic, rage, confidence, loyalty, cynicism and resignation. The discomfort of waiting immobile under a tank for hours; the horror of having to watch comrades in arms be tortured mercilessly by the enemy; the helplessness of witnessing rapes and civilian murders; and the foreboding of disaster. It is utterly human, and utterly inhuman at the same time. Besides the front-line duty which takes up much of the book, there is some good material on the technical aspects of marksmanship, of the Russian and German equipment utilized, and of the training a sniper would go through. It is also

quite a valuable record, if an anecdotal one, of the kind of men the Soviet enemy fielded. Germans and Nazis committed plenty of crimes in the east against civilians and soldiers alike, but they were by no means the only perpetrators, and held no monopoly on evil.

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