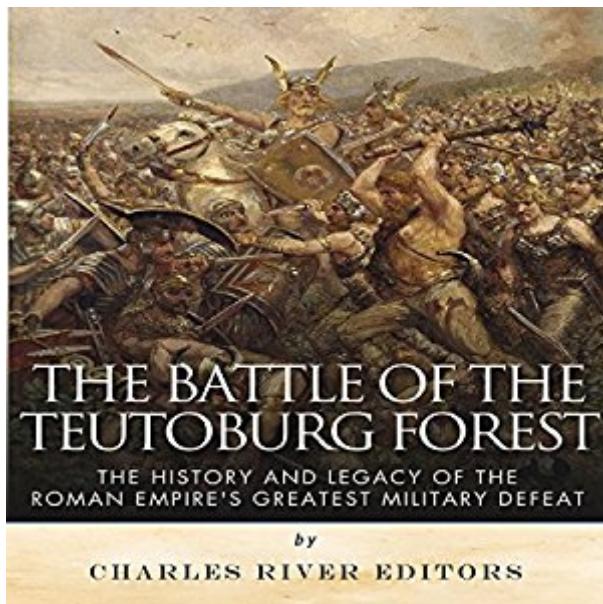


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The Battle Of The Teutoburg Forest: The History And Legacy Of The Roman Empire's Greatest Military Defeat



Synopsis

Every great nation or empire has had at least one horrific military loss or disaster in their history, and the Roman Empire, perhaps the greatest empire that ever existed in the Western world, was no exception to this rule. While Rome certainly suffered defeats and outright massacres over the course of its long and storied history, none of them were as disturbing for the Empire as the battle of the Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE. This battle, which took place in Germany, is also known as the Varian disaster, named after the governor of the Roman province, Germania Publius Quintilius Varus. Varus was not only the Roman governor of the Roman controlled sections of Germania, he was also the highest military authority, being able to make decisions as to the who, what, where, when, why, and how of military maneuvers and operations. It was Varus, then, who was in direct command of the Roman legions destroyed in the battle. The battle remains pertinent not only to military historians and archeologists but also to modern military officers around the world as well. As recently as 2009, the United States of America's Army Command and General Staff College published a work that focused upon the Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest. This work was an examination of the battle in order to help understand the failures made by Varus, and how to avoid them. While it may seem unusual for a modern military to examine the mistakes of the past, it isn't; the Army used the battle as an example of how a theoretically inferior force, the Germanic warriors, were able to defeat a superior force in the Roman legions. Indeed, the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest featured some of the finest fighting forces in the world - the Roman legionaries - and a group of people whom the Romans didn't consider human at all - the Germanic tribes. Nonetheless, the battle between these two forces, in the narrow confines of the Teutoburg Forest, would be a turning point in the histories of both nations. Never again would Rome seek to establish a colony and create a functioning province out of the Germanic area; in fact, the Romans never ventured east of the Rhine River after the disastrous expedition. For the Germanic tribes, while they would later suffer from punishment excursions by various Roman legions following the battle of the Teutoburg Forest, they proved that they could hold their own against the might of the Roman Empire and that their land was indeed their own.

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Customer Reviews

I thought this book about the battle of Teutoburg Forest was interesting especially because the training of the Roman legions played a major part in the disaster. According to the book, Roman legionnaires were severely punished for cowardice and any type of major infractions which forced the widely scattered units to attempt to fight when possibly running might have saved the bulk of the legions. Of course I will not forget Arminius who persuaded the Roman governor Varus to trust him while he led the Romans to ruin. The most interesting thing to me about the story is that Arminius was never able to unify the German tribes under his rule. I guess the best thing about this battle from the German perspective is that Rome never tried to conquer and annex Germany into a Roman province again.

This was a very concise and interesting work. Shows that no matter how good you are, there's always some one who's a little better. The Legions had trod very heavy footed just about everywhere they went, but the Forest showed the world (such as it was) that they were able to be beaten. The Germanic tribes that did unite were more than enough to decimate three legions.

This is a very interesting summary of the loss of Varus' legions under Augustus' reign, a loss of eagles, legend has it, he never got over. Some good photos of contemporary sites and a clear narrative of the situation with Varus and the empire at the time of this military disaster -- yes, Rome could be beaten from time to time, and, in this case, didn't really push much more into the land east of the Rhine, at least not till that later mini-Caesar joined the Axis Pact in the 1930's -- how did that one work out?

FABULOUS BOOK, VERY HELPFUL

Found out a part of the Roman wars with their neighbors that I did not know about.

Like all Charles River publications, this one is brief but as thorough as the length allows. Most importantly, it seems to be current with the latest scholarship on the battle. Definitely recommended for anyone looking for an easy-to-read overview.

Most interesting piece of Roman history. A smaller force of Germanic tribesmen, considered barbarians by their Roman counterparts, inflicted a most humiliating defeat upon three mighty Roman legions, killing them to the last man.

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