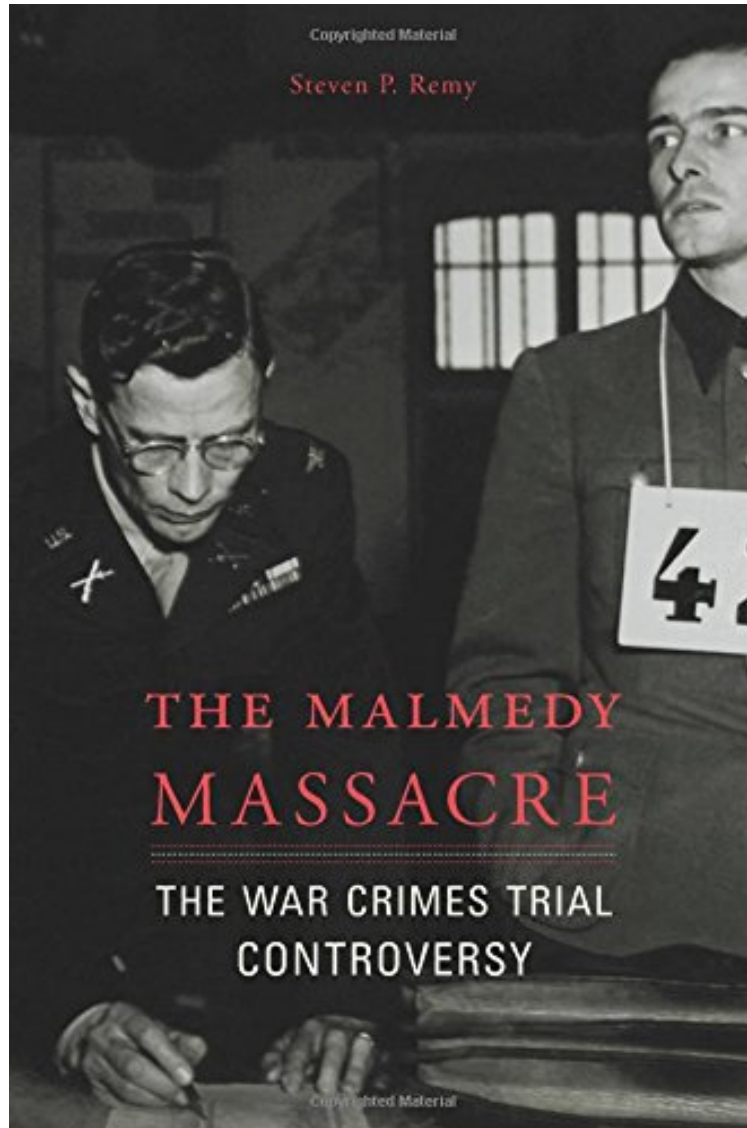


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# The Malmedy Massacre: The War Crimes Trial Controversy

Steven P. Remy

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**Steven P. Remy : The Malmedy Massacre: The War Crimes Trial Controversy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Malmedy Massacre: The War Crimes Trial Controversy:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great read - I would recommendBy mmmThis was a great read. The book gave a unique perspective on a horrible event. I had never gone into this much detail on this event, but it was worth it!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Joseph BrogdenGood book8 of 10 people

found the following review helpful. Another Historian's Perspective By J. Weingartner As the author of a much earlier book on the Malmedy Massacre and trial, I read Professor Remy's study with great interest, particularly since I am mentioned not only in the end notes, but in the text as someone with whose analysis he disagrees. Fair enough. Reinterpretation and revision are necessary as new sources become available and historical perspectives change. The author deserves credit for providing new insights into the political ramifications of this controversial case. In fact, though, he and I are in agreement on a number of fundamentals. Kampfgruppe Peiper was guilty of numerous atrocities during the Battle of the Bulge, including the murders of a large number of American POWs at the Baugnez crossroads, and he and I agree that the later claims by many of the 74 German defendants of having given incriminating sworn statements as the result of fiendish tortures at the hands of American interrogators are implausible. These sworn statements are at the core of the controversy surrounding the Malmedy trial, and here is where he and I part company.. To reject claims of physical torture, as we both do, is not tantamount to accepting the sworn statements as uniformly reliable. Remy is too inclined to discount or ignore evidence that calls the sworn statements into question. An example concerns the alleged murders of American POWs -- the prosecution claimed 175 to 311 -- in the tiny Belgian village of LaGleize, to which a large number of German defendants appeared to have confessed in their sworn statements. Remy cites the defense testimony of U.S. Major Hal McCown, who was held a prisoner by Peiper for several days in LaGleize but had seen no evidence of murdered Americans. Remy follows this with a thinly veiled effort to discredit him. Remy fails to note evidence from a U.S. Brigadier General whose troops had recaptured LaGleize and who branded the alleged murders as "figments of the imagination." Nor does he note the affidavits of four residents of LaGleize to the same effect. This issue goes far beyond the narrow question of what happened or didn't happen at LaGleize, but to the overall value of the sworn statements. At the very least, the LaGleize evidence should open them to skeptical appraisal. But this is the type of interpretive disagreement that normally takes place among historians. Interpretive disagreement is appropriate; misstatement of another author's position is not. Remy misrepresents my overall judgment of the crucial sworn statements, without which the Malmedy case probably would not have come to trial. On page 276 of his book, he quotes me as saying that the defendants' sworn statements were "transparently worthless" and later on the same page claims that to be my assessment of all of the prosecution evidence.. Even a cursory reading of the page in my *Crossroads of Death* (p.148) on which "transparently worthless" occurs makes it obvious that it applies not to the defendants' sworn statements, much less to all of the prosecution evidence, but to a handful of highly unpersuasive affidavits relevant to LaGleize by two American soldiers and several German POWs who were not defendants. My overall assessment of the sworn statements appears on page 258 of *Crossroads of Death*: "This analysis does not imply that the sworn statements were entirely false. Many -- probably all -- contained partial truths. Some may have been entirely factual. War crimes had been committed and Waffen-SS troopers of Kampfgruppe Peiper had committed them. But the circumstances under which they were elicited must produce very grave doubts as to the overall truthfulness of this block of evidence...." Professor Remy is free to challenge that position, but not an imaginary one that he incorrectly attributes to me.

During the Battle of the Bulge, Waffen SS soldiers shot 84 American prisoners near the Belgian town of Malmedy the deadliest mass execution of U.S. soldiers during World War II. The bloody deeds of December 17, 1944, produced the most controversial war crimes trial in American history. Drawing on newly declassified documents, Steven Remy revisits the massacre and the decade-long controversy that followed to set the record straight. After the war, the U.S. Army tracked down 74 of the SS men involved in the massacre and other atrocities and put them on trial at Dachau. All the defendants were convicted and sentenced to death or life imprisonment. Over the following decade, however, a network of Germans and sympathetic Americans succeeded in discrediting the trial. They claimed that interrogators some of them Jewish migrants had coerced false confessions and that heat of battle conditions, rather than superior orders, had led to the shooting. They insisted that vengeance, not justice, was the prosecution's true objective. The controversy generated by these accusations, leveled just as the United States was anxious to placate its West German ally, resulted in the release of all the convicted men by 1957. The Malmedy Massacre shows that the torture accusations were untrue, and the massacre was no accident but was typical of the Waffen SS's brutal fighting style. Remy reveals in unprecedented depth how German and American amnesty advocates warped our understanding of one of the war's most infamous crimes through a systematic campaign of fabrications and distortions.

A first-rate book. Remy's superb analysis shows how virtually every element of the standard narrative on the Malmedy trials is wrong. (Devin O. Pendas, author of *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965*) Steven Remy's *The Malmedy Massacre* is an important read for anyone interested in the politics of international justice. Using a broad array of investigative and intelligence records, he reconstructs and then dispels the enduring myth that upright German soldiers were tortured into false confessions a fiction born of lingering antisemitism, Cold War politics, and an international effort to rewrite the Nazi past. (Norman J. W. Goda, author of *Tales from Spandau: Nazi Criminals and the Cold War*) An impressive and important book. Remy demolishes a lot of the mythmaking surrounding the Malmedy massacre and tells a story that makes the early years of the Cold War in Germany and America look very different and

often very surprising. This highly readable and engaging account should fascinate anyone interested in World War II and its aftermath. (Benjamin Carter Hett, author of *Burning the Reichstag: An Investigation into the Third Reich's Enduring Mystery*) [The] definitive new study of the Malmedy trials *The Malmedy Massacre* does an especially sensitive job at picking apart the psychological factors involved. Remy lays out those facts with eloquent clarity and displays a commendable impatience throughout his book at the persistence of the alternate narrative itself. This is as much a story about the battle for history as it is about one set of atrocity trials. The names Remy stitches together in his account will be unfamiliar to readers, but the account itself is one for the permanent collection. (Steve Donoghue *Open Letters Monthly* 2017-04-19) The story of how a massacre of U.S. soldiers came to be remembered as an instance of American abuse of defenseless Nazis is the subject of Steven Remy's rigorously researched new book, *The Malmedy Massacre: The War Crimes Trial Controversy*. Remy is hardly the first historian to write about the Malmedy affair. But whereas previous histories have largely accepted the myth of U.S. malfeasance, *The Malmedy Massacre* convincingly corrects the record. In so doing, Remy offers a timely study of the process of historical mythmaking: how false and distorted accounts come to constitute their own durable reality. *The Malmedy Massacre* is a solid account of history that current events have contrived to make exceptionally relevant. Remy could not have researched and written *The Malmedy Massacre* in anticipation of U.S. President Donald Trump's politics of misinformation, yet he has delivered a sustained exploration into the creation, circulation, and ultimate acceptance of alternative facts. What makes this story particularly poignant is that Remy is not really telling us anything new. As he makes clear, the record had already been corrected by the Baldwin committee report nearly 70 years ago. What he documents, then, is the tenacity and durability of fake history. To those who subscribe to the pleasing shibboleth that the truth will always come out, Remy has delivered a disturbing counterexample. (Lawrence Douglas *Foreign Affairs* 2017-06-17) About the Author: Steven P. Remy is Associate Professor of History at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York.