

The Allied Forces decided to launch a massive attack on the small coastal town of Ortona in Abruzzo, in central Italy, convinced that victory would rapidly be theirs. But the Germans were waiting for them...

*What terrible secret does the Battle of Ortona conceal?
Why does no one want to remember?
What really happened?
The true story of the bloodiest and most mysterious battle of the Second World War in Italy*

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS **ORTONA 1943**



Produced by
sd cinematografica

A documentary of 52 minutes
by **FABIO TONCELLI**

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

ORTONA 1943



The **Battle of Ortona** is not a name that resonates like The **Siege of Stalingrad** or The **Normandy Landings**, but it was just as crucial for the Italian campaign in the Second World War. The terrible violence of the conflict and the lack of a ceasefire on Christmas Day make it a painful and dramatic event that has left deep scars on the souls of the survivors and has given rise to some uncomfortable questions.

In December 1943, Allied forces made up of **Canadian infantry regiments**, advanced up the peninsula, while **German divisions** tried to hold their position. A battle was inevitable and disastrous for both sides, as well as for the civilian population. The soldiers fought street by street, destroying everything in their path, while the Italian civilians took refuge in caves, cellars and the town hospital. After many days of fighting, the Germans finally pulled back. The fighting had claimed the lives of 867 Germans, 1,372 Canadians and 1,314 Italian civilians.

The total figure is shocking and out of proportion for an objective that was not considered of vital importance.

So why did the battle take place?

Why did the German troops make such an effort to defend a town of no strategic importance? Why did the Canadians want to conquer Ortona at all costs? Why did so many Ortona veterans among the Canadian troops need counselling when they returned home, despite the fact that they were the victors?

The remains of those who fell in battle are still being found. The presence of so many bodies in the countryside and in the city has raised calls for the creation of a German cemetery.

It is important to reconstruct the battle in order to understand what really happened. The survivors of the appalling battle are the witnesses who will guide us through the inferno that was the city of Ortona. Through them, we reconstruct events and relive the emotions they felt during those dreadful days of war.

Reconstructions and re-enactments, an extraordinary, incredibly realistic model of the war-torn town, as well as Italian, German and Canadian experts and historians help us to place the battle in its historic and human context. Exclusive interviews with the survivors guide us through the inferno that was Ortona during the battle. Incredible audio, video and photographic archive material, seen for the very first time, will be our window into the past.

RUNNING TIME _____ 52 minutes
FORMAT _____ HD Cam

Produced by:

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