

## FALL OF HITLER'S FORTRESS CITY: The Battle for Königsberg 1945

by Eric Christianson,  
IPMS # 42218

**Battleground -  
FALL OF HITLER'S  
FORTRESS CITY: The Battle  
for Königsberg 1945**

**Author: Isabel Denny**

**Publisher:**

**Casemate**

**Binding: Softcover**

**Pages: 256**

In the same vein as other recent books published concerning the conflict on the Eastern Front (Endgame 1945 (Stafford, 2007), Armageddon – the Battle for Germany 1944-1945 (Hastings, 2004), 'The Fall of Hitler's Fortress City – the Battle for Königsberg, 1945' (Isabel Denny, 2007) pulls from information just recently made available. As such, 'Fortress City' makes compelling reading indeed for those of us weaned on books like 'The Last Battle' by Cornelius Ryan.

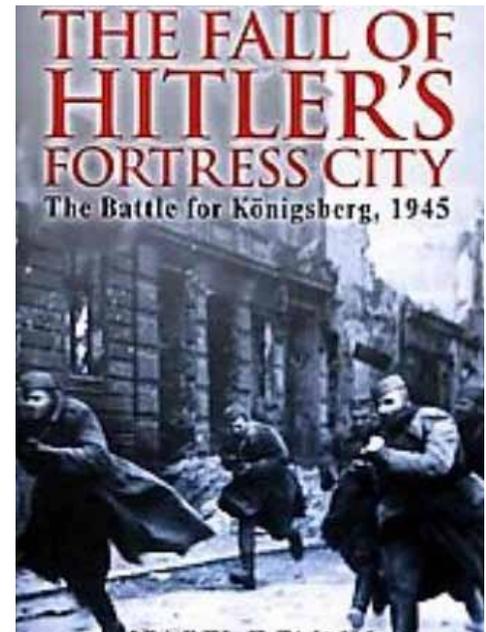
Following World War One, a Polish land-corridor to the Baltic Sea was established, effectively splitting Germany into two parts. Historically, East Prussia was home to Germany's proud Teutonic elite, with Königsberg as its crown jewel. Reunited with the rest of Germany following Hitler's push through Poland in 1939, East Prussia remained, apart from several visits from

Bomber Command, relatively untouched throughout most of the war.

In October of 1944 all of this changed. Reeling from the horrific treatment under the pogrom instituted during Germany's brief occupation of Eastern Europe, the advancing Soviets were keen for revenge and retribution. So much so that barbaric treatment of the German civilian population became part of Soviet doctrine, even if unofficial. It was time for repayment. And East Prussia was the first German soil visited by the Soviets.

'Fortress City' is at times a difficult book to read. Readers of wartime non-fiction are accustomed to vivid depiction of wartime atrocity; and this book pulls few punches along those lines. The use of indented format to distinguish first-hand accounts from the background analysis steels the reader for each grisly scene – much like in the '70's movie 'The Exorcist', when the flicker of the stairway lights readies the audience for yet another chilling session in Linda Blair's bedroom – time to hide your eyes.

In addition to the many anecdotes and first-hand accounts, Isabel Denny provides a very well-written and readable synopsis of 20th-



century Königsberg wartime history. A story about a city's secluded inhabitants caught up in a reckoning that was never foreseen yet should have been obvious to all.

Included is a detailed chronology that spans the years of 1255 through 2005, a list of place names and their native translation, two maps and thirty black and white photographs. It is these photographs that initially grab the potential reader and military modeler. Many of the images accurately depict the German and Russian armor employed during the hopeless battle for the city. One image in particular shows a desperate field modification of what looks like a Jagdpanzer IV/70(V) suspension that would make a great modeling project.

Isabel Denny's 'Fortress City' is a compelling read for those interested in late-war history, and serves to remind the reader that total war is something to be avoided.

My thanks to CASEMATE for the review copy.

---