



Toward the Flame: A Memoir of World War I

Hervey Allen

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Considered by many to be the finest American combat memoir of the First World War, Hervey Allen's *Toward the Flame* vividly chronicles the experiences of the Twenty-eighth Division in the summer of 1918. Made up primarily of Pennsylvania National Guardsmen, the Twenty-eighth Division saw extensive action on the Western Front. The story begins with Lieutenant Allen and his men marching inland from the French coast and ends with their participation in the disastrous battle for the village of Fismette. Allen was a talented observer, and the men with whom he served emerge as well-rounded characters against the horrific backdrop of the war.

As a historical document, *Toward the Flame* is significant for its highly detailed account of the controversial military action at Fismette. At the same time, it easily stands as a work of literature. Clear-eyed and unsentimental, Allen employs the novelist's powers of description to create a harrowing portrait of coalition war at its worst.



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