



Crossing the Rapido: A Tragedy of World War II (Paperback)

By Duane Schultz

Westholme Publishing, U.S., United States, 2011. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. The Rapido River was the last natural barrier between General Mark W. Clark's Fifth U.S. Army and Rome. Always aware of publicity, Clark wanted desperately to liberate the Eternal City from the Germans before anyone else did--British or American. Ignoring intelligence reports that the Germans had significant forces protecting the opposite side of the river, Clark ordered the 36th Texas National Guard Division to make a nighttime crossing on January 20, 1944. The crossing of the Rapido, in the shadow of the monastery atop Monte Cassino, was one of the colossal mistakes of World War II. The 36th Division, which had been decimated by constant combat from the beaches of Salerno to the ice-bound mountains of central Italy, was sent on a mission they knew could not succeed: to beat the fast-flowing river current at night in bitter cold and face one of the strongest, most forbidding German defensive lines in Europe. Just to reach the riverbank they had to haul their boats and mobile bridges through German minefields and withering artillery and mortar fire. Once in the water, boats sank, bridges blew up, and men in...

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