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# Siege At Jadotville: The Irish Army's Forgotten Battle



## Synopsis

In September 1961, another chapter in Irish military history should have been written into the annals, but it is a tale that lay shrouded in dust for years. The Irish soldier has never been a stranger to fighting the enemy with the odds stacked against him. The notion of charging into adversity has been a cherished part of Ireland's military history. In September 1961, another chapter should have been written into the annals, but it is a tale that lay shrouded in dust for years. The men of A Company, Thirty-Fifth Irish Infantry Battalion, arrived in the Congo as a United Nations contingent to help keep the peace. For many it would be their first trip outside their native shores. Some of the troops were teenage boys, their army-issue hobnailed boots still unbroken. They had never heard a shot fired in anger. Others were experienced professional soldiers but were still not prepared for the action that was to take place. Led by Commandant Pat Quinlan, A Company found themselves tasked with protecting the European population at Jadotville, a small mining town in the southern Congolese province of Katanga. It fell to A Company to protect those who would later turn against them. On September 13th, 1961, the bright morning air of Jadotville was shattered by the sound of automatic gunfire. The men of A Company found their morning mass parade interrupted, and within minutes they went from holding rosaries to rifles as they entered the world of combat. This was to be no Srebrenica; though cut off and surrounded, the men of Jadotville held their ground and fought. This is their story.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In telling the full story for the first time, former soldier Declan Power does the brave men of A

Company a great service.” --Irish Times (Dublin) ”Siege at Jadotville lifts the lid on one of the most controversial episodes in Ireland’s UN service.” --Sunday World (Dublin) ”A fine book, well-written and expertly researched. It offers a clear insight into a period of Irish history endangered of being forgotten.” --Western People (Ballina, County Mayo, Ireland)

Declan Power is a working journalist who specializes in security and defense reporting. He was a career soldier who served in the three combat arms of the Irish Army, attended military college, and served within the higher echelons of Defense Headquarters.

Watch the NetFlix movie and then read the book to know why this happened. Almost all the background is lacking in the film and the necessary compression of time and space in the film gives the impression this was a "Zulu" type defense when in fact it was suburban, not rural . A Coy was inexperienced, but had been in-country for months and this was not their first action in the Congo. The entire UN operation was a fraud and UN troops were put in places they should not have been and had to fight their way out of them. The film is great for the defense. The book puts it in context. The action is justly celebrated in the Irish Army albeit only in the past few years.

Declan Power has written an interesting short work on a little known battle fought by an Irish infantry company during the Katanga War early in the history of a recently independent Republic of the Congo. The book, made popular by the recent Netflix production, *Siege of Jadotville*, is definitely worth the read. The majority of the book focuses on the context for the battle “the recent independence of the country and a United Nations working to increase its role in international crises. Power moves on to the battle itself which is the focus of the Netflix production. Although an interesting book its primary use would be to see a tactical example of how the United Nations works, or doesn’t, in a politically volatile environment where the use of the military, even with the best of intentions, is muddled, controversial, and often without clear goals.

This remarkable report, written by a U.N. soldier, gives us not only a detailed description of the siege at Jadotville ( as seen on Netflix ) but also, and more importantly, a rare insider look at U.N. motivations and priorities. For a deeper insight on that subject, I recommend " A fearful Master - A Second Look at the United Nations " by G. Edward Griffin, extremely well documented, and also available on .

Siege at Jadotville is the story of the remarkable group of soldiers who made up A Company, 35th Irish Infantry Battalion, and the intelligence, bravery, and skill they exhibited under dire circumstances in the Congo in 1961. Declan Power provides an excellent analysis of the tangled United Nations and African politics in the early 60s that led to a brutal and avoidable ambush of the Irish UN forces. In an untenable situation, with their fate determined by ignorant and arrogant politicians several continents away, these soldiers, under the leadership of an outstanding group of officers and non-comms, fought to the end with an unwavering sense of duty. With Siege at Jadotville, Power brings this exceptional group of men some of the historic justice they so richly deserve but were denied for fifty years.

Quick read but a good read. Highly recommended if you are an aficionado of military or African history. Also a good companion piece for the associated film. Detail oriented and to the point writing paints a clear picture of the situation and scenario faced by the Irish company and the conditions in which they were forced to fight. Highly recommended.

While I have vague memories of the Congo during the early sixty's, this gave great background to the Siege. Easy to read.

A number of lessons here: the rise of the UN, the Irish UN forces (and some other nations), the deployment of mercenaries, Africa's transition from Colonial rule and American political silence. An accounting of what should have been a peaceful show of United Nations diplomacy turns into an encounter of improbably survival against one-side odds.

Fantastic account of the dedication and bravery of a band of Brothers. Cut off with nothing but themselves and their traditions to see them through an impossible time.

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