

The Moroccan Goums: Tribal Warriors in a Modern War (Contributions in Military Studies)

Edward L. Bimberg

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Bimberg provides a military history of the Moroccan Goums, the knife-wielding irregular troops who distinguished themselves, fighting under French command in Tunisia, Italy, France and Germany during World War II. Recruited from the hill tribes of Morocco's Atlas Mountains, the Goums were garbed throughout the war in the traditional djellaba of their homeland and were armed with long sharp knives, in addition to rifles, machine-guns and mortars. They terrified the enemy not only by their ferocity, but by their odd appearance. Their particular skill in mountain warfare prompted General Patton to request their participation in his Sicilian campaign, and they fought brilliantly in this and many other key campaigns.

This account follows these forces from their native North African mountains across the battlefields of World War II to their final triumph in the Austrian Alps. It recounts their tactics and their strange traditions, as remarkable Beau Geste type French officers led them into battle. In Italy, 12,000 strong, they swarmed over the forbidding Aurunci range, which no one thought could possibly be penetrated by any sizable force under combat conditions, to spearhead the French forces in turning the German flank in Operation Diadem, the final drive on Rome. Their later exploits in the capture of Marseilles, in the Vosges Mountains, and on the drive to the Rhine were equally sensational.



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