



**When the Japanese Bombed the Huertgen Forest:  
How the Army's Investigation of Pearl Harbor  
Influenced the Outcome of the Huertgen Forest,  
Major ... T. Gerow and His Command of V Corps  
1943-1945**

*U.S. Command and General Staff College*

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In September of 1944, Major General Leonard T. Gerow, the V Corps commander was relieved of command in combat to return to the United States and testify before the Army's Investigation Board on Pearl Harbor. The board found General Gerow partially responsible for the American defeat at Pearl Harbor. After testifying before the board he returned to Europe where he resumed command of V Corps. The timing of the board, the nature of its findings and its effect on him disrupted his confidence and capability to command. In the month he was absent from the overall Allied situation had changed. The Allied armies were logistically culminated; short of trained combat personnel and facing determined German resistance. The findings of the board also stung him personally and affected his relationship with superior officers. His embarrassment coupled with mute resentment towards the investigations findings would prove disastrous in the coming month. Less than three weeks after his return from testifying, V Corps initiated a series of attacks to secure the Ruhr River dams in western Germany. His tactical effort during this offensive was his poorest performance of the war. He was uncharacteristically remote from his subordinates, micromanaging, and physically absent from the battlefield. The battle for the Huertgen was a dark blemish on an otherwise distinguished career. The timing of the Pearl Harbor Investigation and his terrible performance in the Huertgen was not a coincidence. His unsatisfactory accomplishment during the Huertgen was related to the investigation. Less than a month after his failed attack, the Germans launched their final counter-offensive of the war. The Ardennes Offensive was his moment of redemption. Gerow was one of the first leaders to recognize the nature of the Nazi attack. During the battle he was energetic, resourceful and very effective in blunting the German assaults. He was present on the battlefield when needed, he was quick and adamant about requesting support and he made rapid and inventive decisions that greatly contributed to the corps success and the ultimate Allied victory.

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