

***The Last of the Seven* by Steven Hartov**

The Last of the Seven by bestselling author Steven Hartov, released this year, is a fictionalized account of German Jews joining Allied forces in World War II. The novel is a fast read, beginning in North Africa after a desert attack by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and progressing to Germany. Hartov's style, sparing extraneous verbiage mostly, presents descriptions vivid enough to almost feel raindrops falling through camouflage netting or hobbling through bombed structures. Dialogue is sparse, but advances the story.

Only a few characters are fleshed out in the 360 pages. Hartov's protagonist is a German Jew who wishes to get revenge on all Nazi Germans for the deaths of his family. His almost impossible journey through the desert burns the desire for vengeance deeper into his soul. In a literary twist, his rescue comes from someone who delivers ice to wounded soldiers in her hometown.

Some minor characters and the final scene seem to be drawn from war movies. Hartov claims many of the locations, events, and amalgamations of characters are based in reality. As such, he is forgiven for not wandering far from the truth that others may have previously fictionalized. The ending, as rapid as it comes, is satisfying with a touch of humor.