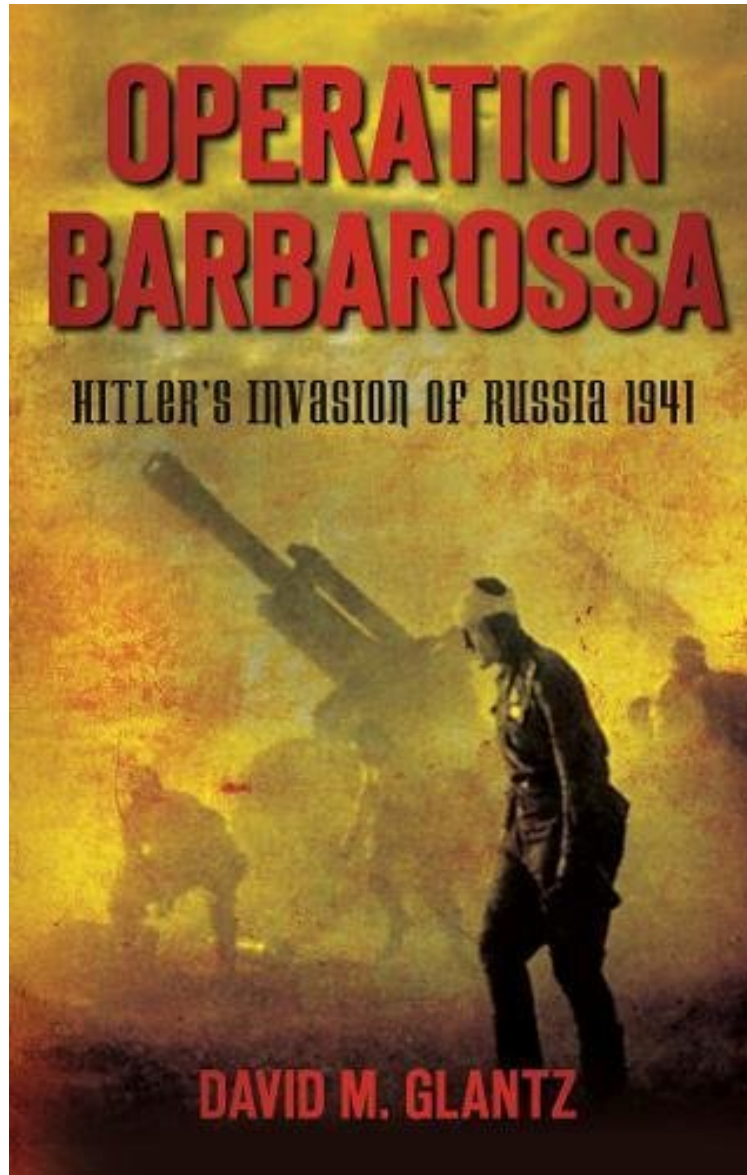


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Operation Barbarossa: Hitler's Invasion of Russia 1941

David M. Glantz

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David M. Glantz : Operation Barbarossa: Hitler's Invasion of Russia 1941 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Operation Barbarossa: Hitler's Invasion of Russia 1941:

52 of 54 people found the following review helpful. A high level, well researched book written primarily for the specialist By YodaGlantz's approach in his book is from a high-level strategic perspective (i.e., corps and division level as opposed to battalion, company or platoon). There is very little discussion of tactical operations or any activities on

or below the division level. This is not exactly a surprise considering that he is a Professor at the U.S. Army's War College in Carlisle, PA. That is the audience that Dr. Glantz is targeting with this book. The book is very well researched. This can be seen in the fact that about 100 pages of the book's approximately 300 pages is dedicated to appendices, bibliographies, footnotes and other supporting documents. In addition, the book consists primarily of research garnered from original Russian and German language sources. Few if any secondary research sources are cited. This is definitely a scholarly work. It should also be mentioned that the book is not written for novices. The author assumes that the reader is familiar with the major German Field Marshals, Generals, Corps, Divisions and Order of Battle in general. Hence it is geared to the specialist, not the general reader. In his analysis Glantz concludes, in a convincing manner, that the German war machine was stopped, de facto, well before it either reached Moscow and that it was not deprived of victory, as commonly believed, by Hitler's decisions to change the main axis military thrust away from Moscow towards the South and then Northward again. He argues that the Wehrmacht lost, de facto, the Barbarossa campaign due to the defense it faced at Smolensk and Kiev. The Soviet resistance there doomed operation Barbarossa to defeat. It should be stressed that the book covers much more than this, however. Dr. Glantz also does an extraordinary job at presenting the situation of both side's armed forces before the campaign, their positioning and future growth plans in terms of both number and strategy. Despite the excellent research, Dr. Glantz's book has some weaknesses that prevent his reviewer from granting it a 5 star review. One weakness, that is easily corrected, is that it does not have enough maps, especially considering how important maneuver was to Barbarossa. He describes a very large number of major movement and encirclements without the many necessary maps needed to illustrate these. A second problem, one that is much more serious, is that Dr. Glantz seems to give too short a discussion of German logistical problems. This is to the point where he seems to implicitly be dismissing them as very major issue in the German Army's defeat. Many argue, with some justification (see Dr. Robert Forczyk's "Moscow 1941: Hitler's First Defeat", published by Osprey) that this was the real cause of Barbarossa's failure instead. In short, other than the problems associated with inadequate maps and shorting the logistical problems the German Army faced, an excellent book that contributes, through its original research, to our understanding of Barbarossa and the reasons for its failure.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Best one-volume account of Barbarossa that I have read. I wanted a short, compact history book on this topic that I could read on the train, and I was impressed by what I got for roughly \$3 (new) plus shipping. This book is a tremendous value, and to date the best one-volume account of Barbarossa that I have read. I have read Glantz's before, and either my tastes have changed, or this book was unlike the Glantz that I thought I knew. It's an operational military history of the Eastern Front, and by now, few, if anyone, can write these types of books on this topic better than Glantz. I found the prose descriptions very clear, and in 206 pages of narrative, Glantz covers the many battles that occurred with concision and insight. His best, most original research is on the Soviet side; that said, he covers the German side with equal balance. While his archival or Russian-language source material access is always impressive, I was a little surprised that he relied on standard accounts of the German side (Ziemke and Bauer, Seaton, with some Halder and other memoirs thrown in.). I won't recount the entire campaign here, but some highlights of Glantz's account are worth mentioning. Glantz recognizes the shortcomings of how both sides fought the war. While the Germans started strong and ended much weaker, the Soviets started weak and ended stronger (albeit perhaps only marginally so, and relative to German weakness). He blames Stalin for the purges and the unfinished reorganization that caught the Red Army flat-footed at the campaign's opening and resulted in many needless, catastrophic defeats. He also says that the constant Soviet counterattacks were "suicidal" but weakened the Germans as they got deeper and deeper into the country. Throughout, command and control was a serious issue for the Soviets, and Stalin's frequent requests for counterattacks were carried out in a seemingly haphazard fashion. His final analysis of why the campaign turned out the way it did is strikingly similar to Seaton's. Glantz seems to understand that fundamental historical question of this campaign is how much the Germans contributed to their own defeat or how much the Soviets were responsible for their victory. Surprisingly perhaps, given his closeness to Soviet sources, Glantz seems to come down in the camp that it was the German's battle to lose. As he sums it up, "Inevitably, the dull bludgeon representing the mobilized mass Soviet Army blunted the surgically precise, deadly, but fragile rapier thrusts that the German Army relied on to power Blitzkrieg War." Glantz, citing Heinrici's analysis (which I had not seen before elsewhere), says that the Germans were defeated by the terrain in a backwards country by a more brutal dictator. Glantz is not as condescending as Seaton, but the echoes are there. Originally written in 2001, one wonders if Glantz's perceptions have changed since then. He does acknowledge that the Germans ruined their chances by harsh occupation policies, which in turn sparked partisan uprisings that in turn threatened the already delicate German logistical lifelines. The Wehrmacht, he notes, was better suited to fight in Western Europe than the Soviet Union; however, this only goes so far in that the steppes were ideal for tanks while the roads were terrible for trucks. That said, he (again like Seaton) doesn't investigate why the Germans were ill-equipped for the sub-freezing winter, which resulted in pointless, probably avoidable frostbite casualties. While the Soviet's Moscow counterattack is expertly told, with a focus on blunting the German spears around Kalinin and Tula, little is made of the partisan-airborne action behind German lines, even though this is shown on a map. Somehow, these gaps didn't bother me as much, probably because Glantz investigates the Soviet side and holds up their mistakes to scrutiny. Also, he covers so

much in 206 pages that some gaps seem inevitable, and thus forgivable. Glantz also enters the debate around Hitler's decision to send troops away from Moscow to Kiev and Leningrad in August 1941. An immediate attack on Moscow at that time instead of Kiev may not have succeeded anyway. The Soviet forces in front of Moscow were stronger, at least until they counterattacked at Smolensk, where they were critically weakened. Furthermore, if the Germans hadn't destroyed Southwestern Front in the Kiev battle, those same forces could have attacked Guderian's wing when it attacked Moscow. Thus, it turns out that the Germans' best chance to take Moscow (he argues) was in October after all, when the Soviets had been worn down in the summer. In a few concise, devastating paragraphs, Glantz is able to put that particular what-if to rest. Or he at least tries to. I found the maps, which focus on armies and army groups, clear and excellent; I just wish there were more of them. For example, detailed maps at the corps or divisional level showing the fighting around Leningrad, Smolensk, and Kiev (parallel to the Moscow maps) would have helped in those chapters. His footnotes and bibliography are also informative, and I found myself flipping to them often for his asides and color commentary. Directives from OKW and Stavka also form an interesting appendix, even though key passages are quoted in the main text. All in all, I found this to be a readable, interesting, riveting description of the military events on the Eastern Front. If I had to pick one volume as a recommendation to anyone interested in the topic, this would be it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not the complete history of Barbarossa that I was looking for. By Brian Halma. This book does give an overview of Operation Barbarossa, but I think it too often gets lost in a narrative of corps movements and command changes. There is some analysis sprinkled in, but you have to wade through a fair amount to get through it. In my view, what's missing is some treatment of the tactical, operational and technological factors that enabled the German army to make dramatic gains, but also how the Soviets worked to neutralize those factors - partly with numbers and leadership, but also with closing the gaps in these areas so the German advantage was not so pronounced. The kindle version is hindered by limited maps all the way at the end of the book.

From a world expert on Hitler's war in Russia, this book on the operation that changed the course of World War II includes updated information on casualty numbers and opposing forces

About the Author David M. Glantz is a leading expert on the Eastern Front during World War II. He is the author of many books, including *Armageddon in Stalingrad*, *The Battle of Kursk*, and *When Titans Clashed*. He has served as chief of research for the U.S. Combat Studies Institute, and is the editor of the *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*. He lives in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.