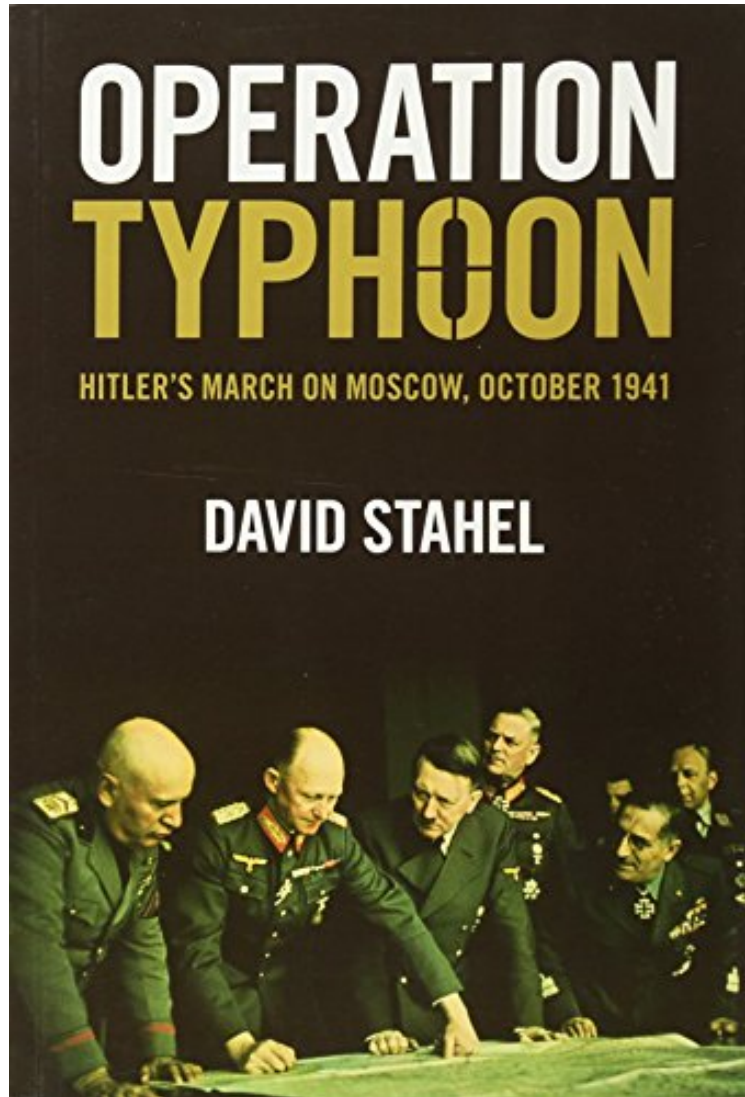


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Operation Typhoon: Hitler's March on Moscow, October 1941

David Stahel

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David Stahel : Operation Typhoon: Hitler's March on Moscow, October 1941 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Operation Typhoon: Hitler's March on Moscow, October 1941:

25 of 26 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book, his best yet! By Koba The title of this book is somewhat misleading. It is really about the Battle of Bryansk-Vyazma in October 1941, a gigantic double encirclement battle which was the second biggest German victory of the war, after the Battle of Kiev in September.

The book's title should really have called attention to that fact, because there are very, very few books in English on Bryansk-Vyazma. The book thus fills an important gap in the literature. I criticized his previous book, on Kiev, for not being tightly focused on its subject, and for having poor maps. I am happy to say this book does NOT have those problems. He sets the stage in his first tightly written chapter by describing what happened in the USSR from June to October, and the majority of the book focuses on October. The maps, once again from David Glantz, cover the battle of Bryansk-Vyazma in close detail (eleven maps for a four week period!) and are of high quality. Some other reviewers write that Stahel is continuing the same themes from his previous books. This is true to some extent, but there is actually no reason to expect the same Army, under the same leadership, to be radically different in October than it was in August and September. Even given that his view of the fundamental problems of the German Army is much the same in this book as the previous ones, there is certainly enough new material in here on the actual operations in October to justify a new book. Stahel concludes that the Germans won a tactical and operational victory but could not translate this into strategic success. The German Army won a battle, but could not win the war. He also notes that the Soviets were preparing a defense-in-depth of Moscow itself, meaning that if the Germans had reached the city in October or November, they would not have taken it easily, but would have been bogged down in protracted, draining urban combat. He notes the German propaganda campaign in October, which announced that "Russia is beaten, and the Red Army is annihilated", only set up the German population for a huge disappointment when the Wehrmacht did not take Moscow after all, and the war continued. Finally, although the main perspective of the book is that of the strategic and operational commanders, he includes perspectives from the front line soldiers (which mainly serves to indicate that the higher headquarters were living in a fantasy world). In conclusion, this is Stahel's best one yet, and a worthy addition to any collection of books on the Eastern Front.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Key Turning Point in Operation Barbarossa By Burkean Bibliophile An excellent and incisive assessment of the operational, tactical, and strategic failures which resulted in the failure of this German military operation to capture Moscow. Stahel covers familiar territory such as dogged Soviet resistance as the Wehrmacht got closer to Moscow, overextended German supply lines, and the Germans failure to plan for the ferocious Russian winter. He goes beyond this to show that poor German preparation also had adverse effects on their supply lines, including the significant role played by horses in this effort and how poor sanitation in Soviet homes and in German cleanliness standards had deleterious effects on the health of German soldiers. The Soviets do not come off much better in this portrayal. Considerable emphasis is placed on the incompetence of many Soviet leaders including Stalin which enabled the Germans to advance so far into Russia. The sadistic brutality and incompetence of both sides is emphasized even though there were occasional glimpses of humanity by both sides such as some localized ceasefires. Nevertheless, Operation Barbarossa remains the bloodiest military conflict in human history which did not result in the use of weapons of mass destruction. The legacy of this war remains with us over seven decades later. We face a resurgent Russia under Vladimir Putin who seeks to resurrect Orthodox Russian nationalism and an Eurasianist ideology which a secularized and pacifistic west still, for the most part, does not comprehend.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding Piece of Work By J. Koch Operation Typhoon, by David Stahel, is I believe the first of a two or three part study of the Battle for Moscow. Unlike other studies of Barbarossa in general, and the Battle of Moscow, Operation Typhoon a reflection on military strategy taken as a whole and how the vaunted Wehrmacht blew it. Stahel begins the book with a short recount of the historical problems that past invaders faced when confronting Russia. Its vast spaces, difficult terrain made supplying large armies almost impossible. Both Sweden and France learnt this the hard way. But, Peter the Great also suffered the same problems in reverse when facing the Turks in Moldavia. The Germans believed that technology had solved the forces to space ratios through the employment of motorized formations and air craft. The author, however, spells out in some detail how the problems of Russia (terrain and vast spaces) exasperated these timeless problems. By September, the vaunted panzer waffen suffered such high losses (in many cases they lost more tanks through wear and tear than Soviet guns) that they could not deal with their original operation goals. To make matters worse, instead of rest and refitting the panzers of Army Group Center, Hitler ordered them to assist in the operations on the wings (namely Leningrad and Kiev). Not only did this add to the German losses, but it also wasted 30 perfectly good campaigning days. Operation Typhoon begins on 1 October. What's still amazing is that it begins only a week before the onslaught of the infamous Russian "autumn rasputitsa" or rainy season. As the reader will see, the rainy season arrived earlier than they wished. It should also be pointed out, that David Stahel does not write some dry account filled with map movements. He uses a plethora of dairies (both official military and personal) to present the reader a detailed account of the battle as it unfolded. He adds an underlying theme of strategic error on the part of the Germans, as well as a cool understanding of strategic opportunities on the part of the Soviet commander, Zhukov. In between these 2 sides a race was on, which the Germans obviously lost. Much of the book covers the day to day operation accounts of the encirclement of Vyazma and Briansk, followed by the slogging attacks eastward by German forces as they slowed to a virtual stop. In my opinion, the author does better than most writers on delivering dry factual data with the drama and the unimaginable suffering that occurred during this critical battle. Stahel also gives credible evidence that the Wehrmacht's hands were much dirtier than many Western historians realized concerning the war crimes. Nearly 700,000 Russians would eventually die because of the German Army's

criminal neglect. I think the reader will also appreciate the author's detail concerning the questions of logistics and transportation. Stahel provides quite a bit of arcane information concerning everything from the use of fossil fuels and lubricants, to demand for rubber (for tires), and food and ammunition. All of these were under-resourced for Typhoon. To make matters worse, there were very few miles of usable rail-heads. Much of the supply chain depended upon convoys. And when the rains hit, the Germans were reduced to ferrying supplies in many cases by draft horses. After the first 5 days of battle, the Germans would begin to lose momentum for the simple reason that they began to rapidly draw down their logistic base. Over-all, I think the reader will enjoy this book. It only goes out to the end of October 1941, and I'm assuming the remainder of the fight before Moscow will be covered in subsequent books.

In October 1941 Hitler launched Operation Typhoon the German drive to capture Moscow and knock the Soviet Union out of the war. As the last chance to escape the dire implications of a winter campaign, Hitler directed seventy-five German divisions, almost two million men and three of Germany's four panzer groups into the offensive, resulting in huge victories at Viaz'ma and Briansk - among the biggest battles of the Second World War. David Stahel's groundbreaking new account of Operation Typhoon captures the perspectives of both the German high command and individual soldiers, revealing that despite success on the battlefield the wider German war effort was in far greater trouble than is often acknowledged. Germany's hopes of final victory depended on the success of the October offensive but the autumn conditions and the stubborn resistance of the Red Army ensured that the capture of Moscow was anything but certain.

"With a firm grasp of strategic, operational, economic, and logistical factors, Stahel has again laid bare German weaknesses and shattered the myth of the all-powerful Wehrmacht. The best sort of revisionism, Operation Typhoon dissects the material factors leading to ultimate German failure before Moscow, all the while integrating the personal aspect of the battle through deft use of the diaries and letters of German soldiers. An impressive achievement." Stephen G. Fritz, author of *Ostkrieg: Hitler's War of Extermination in the East* "David Stahel has written a detailed, carefully documented, and engaging analysis of the last great German offensive of 1941. All the elements of the German defeat are here, from macroeconomics, ideology, and criminality to logistics, intelligence, tactics, and weapons design. This is a fine complement to Stahel's works on Barbarossa and Kiev." Geoffrey P. Megargee, author of *War of Annihilation: Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front, 1941* "Stahel's third book on Germany's 1941 Russian campaign demonstrates that focus on the operational level led to ignoring strategic considerations. Emphasis on force of will encouraged overlooking material problems. Defeat in front of Moscow was a consequence not of Hitler's interference, not even of Soviet resistance, but of the vaunted German army's internal weaknesses." Dennis Showalter, author of *Hitler's Panzers: The Lightning Attacks that Revolutionized Warfare* "David Stahel's new book on Operation Typhoon is his best yet. Wedding detailed archival research, an intimate knowledge of the secondary sources, and a gripping narrative, Stahel has set a new standard for scholarship on the Eastern Front. No student of the massive conflict between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union should be without this book. A major addition to the literature." Robert M. Citino, author of *Death of the Wehrmacht: The German Campaigns of 1942* "Great detail ... Stahel succeeds in provoking some interesting new perspectives and ideas." Daniel Pilfold, The Second World War Military Operations Research Group "Stahel, as he has done with his previous two books, has fundamentally and correctly re-interpreted the latter stages of the Barbarossa campaign. It is a must-read for general and military historians." David Glantz, *Journal of Military History* "... combines strategic and economic context, statistics, operational analysis, and tactical-level accounts from individual soldiers in constructing a layered but highly readable narrative. It is a remarkable feat." Richard R. Muller, *World War II* "... a treasure trove of information regarding the late fall battles between the Germans and Soviets in 1941." Adam Koeth, *Armchair General* "Stahel incorporates in quantity the voices of German soldiers and outside observers." Evan Mawdsley, *War in History* "An in-depth new account." *Military History Magazine* About the Author David Stahel is an independent researcher based in Berlin. His previous publications include *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East* (2009), *Kiev 1941* (2011) and *Nazi Policy on the Eastern Front, 1941* (2012).