


# The Battle of the Tanks: Kursk, 1943

*By Lloyd Clark*

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On July 5, 1943, the greatest land battle in history began when Nazi and Red Army forces clashed near the town of Kursk, on the western border of the Soviet Union. Code named “Operation Citadel,” the German offensive would cut through the bulge in the eastern front that had been created following Germany’s retreat at the battle of Stalingrad. But the Soviets, well-informed about Germany’s plans through their network of spies, had months to prepare. Two million men supported by 6,000 tanks, 35,000 guns, and 5,000 aircraft convened in Kursk for an epic confrontation that was one of the most important military engagements in history, the epitome of “total war.” It was also one of the most bloody, and despite suffering seven times more casualties, the Soviets won a decisive victory that became a turning point in the war. With unprecedented access to the journals and testimonials of the officers, soldiers, political leaders, and citizens who lived through it, *The Battle of the Tanks* is the definitive account of an epic showdown that changed the course of history.

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## Editorial Review

From Booklist
An experienced and literate military historian gives us a stellar account of the Battle of Kursk in 1943, one of the more obscure of WWII's decisive battles. The Germans hoped to cut off the Kursk salient, and thereby envelop and destroy a fatally large portion of the Soviet Army. The Russians prepared formidable fixed defenses, and when the massive German armored spearheads had ground to a halt, the Russians'desperate counterattacks turned a stalemate into a crushing victory. The German Panzer forces on the Eastern Front never recovered their offensive capabilities, and the author has shown why in vivid, sometimes harrowing, detail, making extensive use of Russian sources only recently made available. A major addition to the literature of the Eastern Front, the decisive land theater of WWII. --Roland Green

Review

**Praise for *The Battle of the Tanks***

"Mr. Clark has a reputation for both his deep knowledge of military history and his ability to make it accessible to a substantial reading audience. That reputation is well deserved. While the tank battle at Kursk is the centerpiece of his work, Clark realizes, as would any good historian, that it did not take place in a vacuum. He places the great battle in its context, relating it to the events that preceded, and those which followed. … It is in the telling of this dramatic tale that author Clark excels. … In The Battle of the Tanks, it is the men who fought there who tell the story of the great and fateful encounter."—*The New York Journal of Books*

*"His narrative is both moving in its use of testimony of ordinary soldiers and insightful in its interpretation of the generals' strategy." —The Sunday Times* (UK)

"A comprehensive analysis of WWII's greatest land battle and one of history's greatest armor engagements. [Clark] blends archival research, participant interviews, and professional insight in presenting the genesis, conduct, and consequences of the Battle of Kursk. Particularly effective is his integration of foxhole and tank-crew perspectives with broader discussion of the course of a headdown slugging match that decisively tipped the Eastern Front's balance in favor of a resurgent Red Army. … With this account, Clark confirms his reputation as one of Britain's outstanding scholars of operational military history."—*Publishers Weekly*

"A leading British military historian reconsiders the events of World War II—this time, on the decisive yet less-trammeled Eastern Front. In this deeply informed overview, Clark offers an authoritative appraisal of the "total war" engulfing both Germany and the Soviet Union. … Vigorous depictions of German and Soviet military leaders alternate with the words of ordinary soldiers and richly described specifications of military hardware." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"An experienced and literate military historian gives us a stellar account of the Battle of Kursk in 1943, one of the more obscure of WWII's decisive battles... The German Panzer forces on the Eastern Front never recovered their offensive capabilities, and the author has shown why in vivid, sometimes harrowing, detail, making extensive use of Russian sources only recently made available. A major addition to the literature of the Eastern Front, the decisive land theater of WWII."—*Booklist*

“Lloyd Clark belongs to a new generation of British military historians who appeal to both scholars and general readers; he has written successful works on Anzio and the British Rhine campaign of 1944–45. This offering is no less solid: well researched and well written, it integrates frontline narratives and operational analysis. . . . What sets this work firmly apart, however, is Clark’s recognition that while Kursk was a ‘battle of the tanks,’ it was above all a soldiers’ battle. . . . Men, not machines, were the deciding factor.”—Dennis Showalter, *WWII Magazine*

About the Author

Lloyd Clark is a senior academic in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and Professorial Research Fellow in War Studies, Humanities Research Institute, at University of Buckingham. One of the UK’s leading military historians, he is the author of *Anzio* and *Crossing the Rhine*.

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