

Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East (Cambridge Military Histories)

By David Stahel

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Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, began the largest and most costly campaign in military history. Its failure was a key turning point of the Second World War. The operation was planned as a Blitzkrieg to win Germany its Lebensraum in the east, and the summer of 1941 is well-known for the German army's unprecedented victories and advances. Yet the German Blitzkrieg depended almost entirely upon the motorised Panzer groups, particularly those of Army Group Centre. Using archival records, in this book David Stahel presents a history of Germany's summer campaign from the perspective of the two largest and most powerful Panzer groups on the Eastern front. Stahel's research provides a fundamental reassessment of Germany's war against the Soviet Union, highlighting the prodigious internal problems of the vital Panzer forces and revealing that their demise in the earliest phase of the war undermined the whole German invasion.

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Editorial Review

Review
"... thought-provoking and valuable. It dispels any illusions that the first months of Operation Barbarossa were a pushover for the Wehrmacht; Stahel documents in detail, from German war diaries and letters, the heavy fighting and the high casualties."
Evan Mawdsley, The English Historical Review

"... a thoroughly researched, comprehensive, and convincing analysis of Barbarossa ... Any still-lingering notions of a German 'genius for war', as opposed to skill in some aspects of warmaking, is unlikely to survive this intellectually disciplined, archivally documented analysis of one of history's most misbegotten, mistakenly executed campaigns."
Dennis Showalter, Journal of Military History

"Stahel paints a convincing portrait of a Germany army whose shape edge was already well into the process of being blunted during the first weeks of the fighting ... This is a serious book and a welcome contribution to the military debate over Operation Barbarossa."
Robert M. Citino, Central European History

"The author's research is impressive ... Stahel's clearly written and accessible account convincingly questions the competency of the German planning for Barbarossa ... all will profit from reading this fine work."
Howard D. Grier, The Journal of Modern History

"Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East will undoubtedly stand as a standard work on the first phase of Operation Barbarossa for a long time to come ... The staggering amount of detail offered ensures this is an invaluable addition to Eastern Front literature and Operation Barbarossa in particular."
Yan Mann, Global War Studies

"... interesting and well researched."
Michael Jabara Carley, Canadian Journal of History

"... a thrilling book that no military historian can afford to ignore ..."
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About the Author
David Stahel is an independent researcher based in Berlin.

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