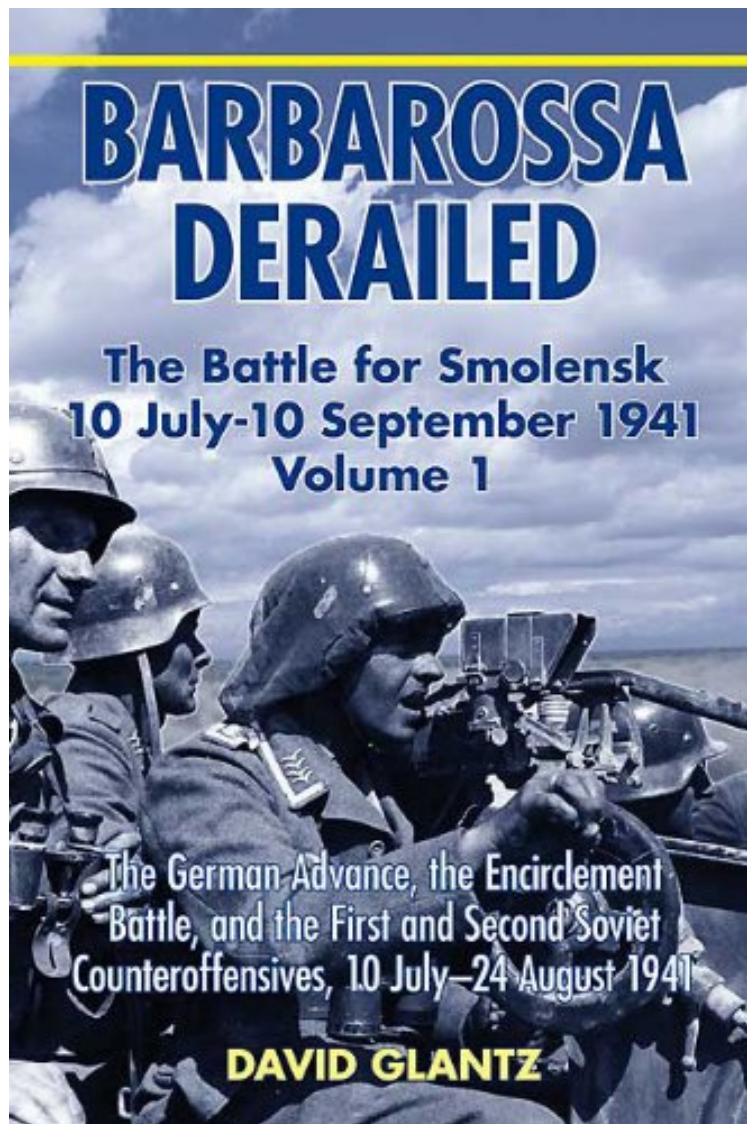


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Barbarossa Derailed: The Battle for Smolensk 10 July-10 September 1941, Volume 1: The German Advance, The Encirclement Battle, and the First and Second Soviet Counteroffensives, 10 July-24 August 1941

Von David M. Glantz

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Barbarossa Derailed: The Battle for Smolensk 10 July-10 September 1941, Volume 1: The German Advance, The Encirclement Battle, and the First and Second Soviet Counteroffensives, 10 July-24 August 1941*:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Killer Angels at Smolensk Von Dr. Christian Stadler Essentially composed of exhaustive citations of Soviet army orders and reports the book covers the first two months of the dramatic battle around Smolensk, from mid of July to mid of September 1941. Some documents were processed early e.g. by removing names of leaders that fell in disgrace later. But they show how off the point the assessment of the situation was at army level and up beyond, how aggressive and ruthless the Soviet military leaders fought the war right from the beginning. But as the situation at the front differed in many aspects from this higher level point of view the actual fighting is covered only in a more sketchy way ' the focus is on the operational level. The German side of the hill is depicted with less details, coming mostly as diary entries by Halder or Bock and Fuehrer orders. I suspect that many documents composed by divisions or corps of Army Group Centre were lost or captured by the Soviets and were simply not available to the author. It is also difficult track down the actual losses of the formations The author proofs that the cauldron around Smolensk was never shut closed by the Germans and one Soviet army escaped in bad shape and a second as a mere skeleton force. And the story of ID 161 and PzD 7 is exemplary how quickly some thoughtful Soviet leaders (Konev) learned to fight the Wehrmacht. Good maps are essential to follow the details in orders and reports and although the maps give a good picture of the overall situation on an nearly daily basis they are not detailed and good enough to locate on them each village or trigonometric point mentioned in the documents. In conclusion, the books contains a wealth of new and unknown data from the Soviet side, clarifies issues of historiography but is not an exhaustive and comprehensive treatment of the subject.

KurzbeschreibungAt dawn on 10 July 1941, massed tanks and motorized infantry of German Army Group Center's Second and Third Panzer Groups crossed the Dnepr and Western Dvina Rivers, beginning what Adolf Hitler, the Fhrer of Germany's Third Reich, and most German officers and soldiers believed would be a triumphal march on Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union. Less than three weeks before, on 22 June Hitler had unleashed his Wehrmacht's [Armed Forces] massive invasion of the Soviet Union code-named Operation Barbarossa, which sought to defeat the Soviet Union's Red Army, conquer the country, and unseat its Communist ruler, Josef Stalin. Between 22 June and 10 July, the Wehrmacht advanced up to 500 kilometers into Soviet territory, killed or captured up to one million Red Army soldiers, and reached the western banks of the Western Dvina and Dnepr Rivers, by doing so satisfying the premier assumption of Plan Barbarossa that the Third Reich would emerge victorious if it could defeat and destroy the bulk of the Red Army before it withdrew to safely behind those two rivers. With the Red Army now shattered, Hitler and most Germans expected total victory in a matter of weeks. The ensuing battles in the Smolensk region frustrated German hopes for quick victory. Once across the Dvina and Dnepr Rivers, a surprised Wehrmacht encountered five fresh Soviet armies. Despite destroying two of these armies outright, severely damaging two others, and encircling the remnants of three of these armies in the Smolensk region, quick victory eluded the Germans. Instead, Soviet forces encircled in Mogilev and Smolensk stubbornly refused to surrender, and while they fought on, during July, August, and into early September, first five and then a total of seven newly-mobilized Soviet armies struck back viciously at the advancing Germans, conducting multiple counterattacks and counterstrokes, capped by two major counteroffensives that sapped German strength and will. Despite immense losses in men and materiel, these desperate Soviet actions derailed Operation Barbarossa. Smarting from countless wounds inflicted on his vaunted Wehrmacht, even before the fighting ended in the Smolensk region, Hitler postponed his march on Moscow and instead turned his forces southward to engage "softer targets" in the Kiev region. The 'derailment" of the Wehrmacht at Smolensk ultimately became the crucial turning point in Operation Barbarossa. This groundbreaking new study, now significantly expanded, exploits a wealth of Soviet and German archival materials, including the combat orders and operational of the German OKW, OKH, army groups, and armies and of the Soviet Stavka, the Red Army General Staff, the Western Main Direction Command, the Western, Central, Reserve, and Briansk Fronts, and their subordinate armies to present a detailed mosaic and definitive account of what took place, why, and how during the prolonged and complex battles in the Smolensk region from 10 July through 10 September 1941. The structure of the study is designed specifically to appeal to both general readers and specialists by a detailed two-volume chronological narrative of the course of operations, accompanied by a third volume, and perhaps a fourth, containing archival maps and an extensive collection of specific orders and reports translated verbatim from Russian. The maps, archival and archival-based, detail every stage of the battle.PressestimmenWith *Barbarossa Derailed*, Glantz has provided the specialist on the Soviet-German War with an excellent study of this early conflict that served as an incubator for Soviet victory. Canadian Slavonic Papers 'Here's a case of something doing what it says on the tin. This is a very focused book, exclusively looking at the battles that took place during the tiatnic struggle for Smolensk and its key

strategic position atop the highway to Moscow. Overall, there's a lot of good information in this book and I would cautiously recommend it to a gamer or military history buff.' -- Guy Bowers Wargames, Soldiers, and Strategy

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