



To the Gates of Stalingrad: Soviet-German Combat Operations, April-August 1942

David M. Glantz, Jonathan M. House (Contributor)

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The confrontation between German and Soviet forces at Stalingrad was a titanic clash of armies on an unprecedented scale--a campaign that was both a turning point in World War II and a lasting symbol of that war's power and devastation. Yet despite the attention lavished on this epic battle by historians, much about it has been greatly misunderstood or hidden from view--as David Glantz, the world's foremost authority on the Red Army in World War II, now shows.

This first volume in Glantz's masterly trilogy draws on previously unseen or neglected sources to provide the definitive account of the opening phase of this iconic Eastern Front campaign. Glantz has combed daily official records from both sides--including the Red Army General Staff, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the German Sixth Army, and the Soviet 62nd Army--to produce a work of unparalleled detail and fresh interpretations. Jonathan House, an authority on twentieth-century warfare, adds further insight and context.

Hitler's original objective was not Stalingrad but the Caucasus oilfields to the south of the city. So he divided his Army Group South into two parts--one to secure the city on his flank, one to capture the oilfields. Glantz reveals for the first time how Stalin, in response, demanded that the Red Army stand and fight rather than withdraw, leading to the numerous little-known combat engagements that seriously eroded the Wehrmacht's strength before it even reached Stalingrad. He shows that, although advancing German forces essentially destroyed the armies of the Soviet Southwestern and Southern Fronts, the Soviets resisted the German advance much more vigorously than has been thought through constant counterattacks, ultimately halting the German offensive at the gates of Stalingrad.

This fresh, eye-opening account and the subsequent companion volumes--on the actual battle for the city itself and the successful Soviet counteroffensive that followed--will dramatically revise and expand our understanding of what remains a military campaign for the ages.

To the Gates of Stalingrad: Soviet-German Combat Operations, April-August 1942 Details

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Stormcloud1950 says

I look forward to reading the rest of this trilogy. I want something understood about the four star rating. If not for the maps I would have easily given the book five stars. The scope of the story of Germany's invasion of Russia is almost impossible to comprehend. The writing was good but the number of Corps and Divisions listed in the text tend to get in the way and make the reading difficult if you do not love the subject. (which I do) To anyone who is interested in the history of World War Two, it is a must read.

Maku Sato says

I read David M. Glantz because I am curious. I am curious as to why I read David M. Glantz. As a military historian, his prose is technical, dry and exacting. This book would be a gold mine for statisticians. Detailed troop movements, cryptic hand drawn maps, lack of historical context, it reads like an dictionary or day-to-day journal of troop movements without the context of the larger strategy. It wasn't until I read THE THIRD REICH AT WAR that I realized that his hundreds of pages devoted to endless Red Army attacks on the Nazi column North of Stalingrad were designed to slow down the Nazi attack, rather than to actually repulse it. Mind numbing.

John Gordon says

Operation Blau - the German offensive on the Eastern Front in 1942 is the focus of this book. Being extremely detailed this work breaks down the campaign to a level I have never experienced before. The author had access to recently available sources both Soviet and German, and he consequently provides a more factual, and realistic account than previous efforts.

I found the book fascinating, the Wehrmacht was able to achieve so much that Hitler felt they could do anything - his overall divergent offensive plan was risky in the extreme. Supply issues and a lack of infantry were felt over and over again. The Russians meanwhile gradually improved their combat and organisational prowess.

It was such a struggle even to get the 6th Army to Stalingrad and that is where this work ends (Volume 1 of a trilogy).

It looks like I will need to purchase the next instalment in this magnificent opus.

Tim says

I love a book with longer footnotes than text.

Crunknor says

Meticulously researched, but too much of a slog for casual reading. Could have benefited hugely from better-designed, more readable maps.

Marty Weghorn says

Exhaustively detailed and thorough, this is a very dry read. A paucity of maps make it difficult and confusing to follow the numerous battles and skirmishes.

Mark says

The narrative is here is classic Glantz - dry, heavy with formation names and locations, but I still learned a lot about the pace and timeline of the campaign that reached the city.

John says

I'm glad I read this, and I'll continue on to the next book in the trilogy (probably after a bit of a break), but there was definitely room for improvement.

The dry recitation of facts is the kind of thing I expect from military history at the operational level. That's a big part of these kinds of histories. Detailing exactly which units did what and when they did it. The missing part here is why they did it. There is some analysis of overall events at the end of each chapter, but not nearly enough to make sense of it all without further study of other sources.

Then there are the maps. The maps are simply awful. Did no one proof the maps? Most are all but unreadable, and none of them are very useful in helping to visualize things because of the poor quality of their reproduction. The maps alone dropped this from liking the book to just being OK.

Edit: I'm tempted to raise this a star after reading this volume for a second time, but I think all my points still stand, especially the terrible maps, which still end up keeping me from raising this to three stars.

Michael Hayes says

Excellent beginning to Glantz & House's (five book) Stalingrad trilogy. Some may find the prose a bit dry, but it did not detract from this volume. The often-confusing maps, on the other hand, are a different story; because of that, I would rate this 4.5 stars if Goodreads allowed it.

Averell says

The sheer amount of information makes this series the ultimate reference for Stalingrad in English language

Stephen says

A very detailed account of the German advance in the summer of 1942. Author presents new data from Soviet archives that sheds new light on what was thought to be a cake walk to the Volga. While there are many maps, they have been reduced to fit the book so they can be rather crowded. Historians and wargamers will find lots of data.

Todd Farman says

Once again Glantz sets the standard for in-depth operational studies of the Eastern Front. On to Vol 2!

Grant says

Definitive!

Cliff Hare says

Objective and superbly researched - this work will become the definitive text on the most decisive battle of the 20th century.

Mitchell says

This was a great book for a serious student of the eastern front of WWII - though I wouldn't recommend it to anyone else. Glantz is terrific for unveiling previously unrecognized records and using them to critically revisit assumptions of key periods of the summer of 1942 in the southern USSR... Though unfortunately, it suffers from his habit of hurling dense, dry loads of numbers, statistics, dates, horribly bad maps, and comparatively minimal amounts of analysis in between the barrages of raw data... It changed my opinion of the period and left me wanting to know more -- preferably from an author who writes better...
