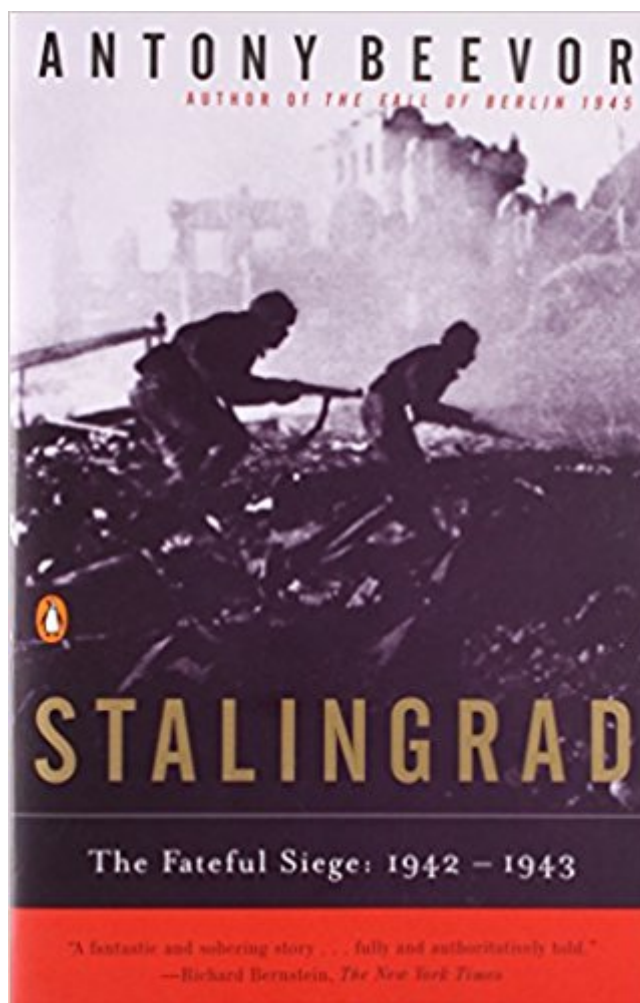


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# Stalingrad: The Fateful Siege: 1942-1943



## Synopsis

The Battle of Stalingrad was not only the psychological turning point of World War II: it also changed the face of modern warfare. Beevor's latest book *Ardenne 1944: The Battle of the Bulge* is now available from Viking Books. Historians and reviewers worldwide have hailed Antony Beevor's magisterial *Stalingrad* as the definitive account of World War II's most harrowing battle. In August 1942, Hitler's huge Sixth Army reached the city that bore Stalin's name. In the five-month siege that followed, the Russians fought to hold Stalingrad at any cost; then, in an astonishing reversal, encircled and trapped their Nazi enemy. This battle for the ruins of a city cost more than a million lives. *Stalingrad* conveys the experience of soldiers on both sides, fighting in inhuman conditions, and of civilians trapped on an urban battlefield. Antony Beevor has interviewed survivors and discovered completely new material in a wide range of German and Soviet archives, including prisoner interrogations and reports of desertions and executions. As a story of cruelty, courage, and human suffering, *Stalingrad* is unprecedented and unforgettable.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Hitler made two fundamental and crippling mistakes during the Second World War: The first was his whimsical belief that the United Kingdom would eventually become his ally, which delayed his decision to launch a major invasion of Britain, whose army was unprepared for the force of blitzkrieg warfare. The second was the ill-conceived Operation Barbarossa--an invasion of Russia that was supposed to take the German army to the gates of Moscow. Antony Beevor's thoughtfully researched compendium recalls this epic struggle for Stalingrad. No one, least of all the Germans,

could foretell the deep well of Soviet resolve that would become the foundation of the Red Army; Russia, the Germans believed, would fall as swiftly as France and Poland. The ill-prepared Nazi forces were trapped in a bloody war of attrition against the Russian behemoth, which held them in the pit of Stalingrad for nearly two years. Beevor points out that the Russians were by no means ready for the war either, making their stand even more remarkable; Soviet intelligence spent as much time spying on its own forces--in fear of desertion, treachery, and incompetence--as they did on the Nazis. Due attention is also given to the points of view of the soldiers and generals of both forces, from the sickening battles to life in the gulags. Many believe Stalingrad to be the turning point of the war. The Nazi war machine proved to be fallible as it spread itself too thin for a cause that was born more from arrogance than practicality. The Germans never recovered, and its weakened defenses were no match for the Allied invasion of 1944. We know little of what took place in Stalingrad or its overall significance, leading Beevor to humbly admit that "[t]he Battle of Stalingrad remains such an ideologically charged and symbolically important subject that the last word will not be heard for many years." This is true. But this gripping account should become the standard work against which all others should measure themselves. --Jeremy Storey --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This gripping account of Germany's notorious campaign combines sophisticated use of previously published firsthand accounts in German and Russian along with newly available Soviet archival sources and caches of letters from the front. For Beevor (*Paris After the Liberation, 1944-1949*), the 1942 German offensive was a gamble that reflected Hitler's growing ascendancy over his military subordinates. The wide-open mobile operations that took the 6th Army into Stalingrad were nevertheless so successful that Soviet authorities insisted they could be explained only by treason. (Over 13,000 Soviet soldiers were formally executed during the battle for Stalingrad alone.) Combat in Stalingrad, however, deprived the Germans of their principal force multipliers of initiative and flexibility. The close-gripped fighting brought men to the limits of endurance, then kept them there. Beevor juxtaposes the grotesque with the mundane, demonstrating the routines that men on both sides developed to cope with an environment that brought them to the edge of madness. The end began when German army commander Friedrich von Paulus refused to prepare for the counterattack everyone knew was coming. An encircled 6th Army could neither be supplied by air nor fight its way out of the pocket unsupported. Fewer than 10,000 of Stalingrad's survivors ever saw Germany again. For the Soviet Union, the victory became a symbol not of a government, but of a people. The men and women who died in the city's rubble could have had worse epitaphs than

this sympathetic treatment. Agent: Andrew Nurnberg. History Book Club main selection; BOMC alternate selection; foreign sales to the U.K., Germany and Russia. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Another solid effort from Antony Beevor. If one is interested in when, where and how the Nazi's were neutered, no need to look further. I absolutely love seeing how a series of circumstances -- each one minor in and of itself -- create the final outcome. I love seeing how this history plays out. Could Hitler have defeated Stalin if he'd not split his forces to the point they were unable to achieve objectives and denied them the concentration to deal a knockout punch? Would a less megalomaniac commander-in-chief have recognized the dangers posed by the lightly armed and more lightly committed foreign troops on the Wehrmacht's flanks and realized the danger of a Soviet counterattack in those sectors? We'll never know those answers for sure. What is certain is that after Stalingrad the Nazis were toast. It became a war of production and materiel that Germany could not hope to win. Also, when this realization got through to enough of the Nazis they went to Plan B, or rather Zylkon B.

How anyone could rate this book as less than 5 stars is beyond me. I've read at least 100+ books about WWII and this is at the very top. Beevor manages to tell the full story of the battle and still includes all the personal, individual soldier experiences. My brother bought me one of his other books, Ardennes 1944 - Hitler's Last Gamble, and I ordered this one hoping that it would be as good. It is. This would make a perfect present for a relative or friend who has an interest in the Second World War. One warning perhaps, this story is not for the faint of heart. This is war told in its brutal human sense, so if you have trouble detaching from your emotions, you might want to consider carefully before you plunk down your cash.

It took me a little longer to read this book than anticipated, but it's because of personal reasons. The book is very descriptive and makes you feel like you're actually there. I learned a lot from this book. Anthony Beevor put a lot of time and research into this, especially with the countless translations. Some things are a tad repetitive, but looking past that, it's a great book and I appreciate the time, effort and research into it. Much of the book is exciting. However, it was sad to learn that Russia actually lost the Battle. - I'm a fan of Russian History. I'm looking forward to purchasing the D-Day book later this year.

“Stalingrad” is a well-researched, riveting account of the horrific battle that ultimately led to the failure of Hitler’s offensive in Russia. Antony Beevor’s book examines the experience of combatants and non-combatants on both sides of the struggle. Eyewitness accounts and soldiers’ letters richly capture the mood on both sides. Beevor is balanced in his treatment of the two sides, contrasting both German and Soviet points of view. While excellent, Beevor’s account is not for the faint of heart. The conditions endured by both troops and civilians were unrelentingly horrific, unlike anything I’ve encountered before.

This is a very good read for the victory of the 62nd Soviet Army at Stalingrad. Lots of interesting stories make it easy reading while still detailing the factual history. Stalingrad battle was the turning point for the Nazis in their Russian adventure and for that matter made the invasion of Europe less costly to the Allies than had it not succeeded. There are numerous histories written of this battle and this one provides lots of details as to why the Germans lost and the Russians finally succeeded.

Anthony Beevor wrote a solid well researched history of The Battle of Stalingrad. Many historians correctly argue that the Battle of Stalingrad was "the turning point" of WW II in Europe. While Hitler and Stalin made miscalculations and blunders during the German invasion of the USSR (June 22, 1941) known as Operation Barbarossa, Hitler was the one whose egomania was fatal to the Germans and his own political power. Or, as the adage goes, "Pride goes before the fall" which Hitler & co. realized too late. Beevor correctly wrote (page 33) that Hitler was so over confident that early during the German invasion of the USSR, Hitler refused to prepare the Germans for total war re the German economy and all-out war. Hitler and his advisers demeaned the Russians and other Slavic peoples as inferior and subhuman. Such arrogance was enhanced by easy German victories. Yet, some German commanders were uneasy with the invasion, and von Ribbentrop had a premonition of potential when negotiations collapsed leading the war. As Beevor and other Russian/Soviet historians noted, von Ribbentrop told the Soviet foreign minister, Molotov, to apologize to Stalin for the upcoming war. As an aside Burton Klein’s book titled GERMANY’S ECONOMIC PREPARATIONS FOR WAR illustrated Hitler’s refusal to prepare for total war until the war was brought to the Germans in 1944. Among the major blunders committed by Hitler and his commanders was the brutal mistreatment of Slavic people and Jewish people. One German commander who had a conscience, commander Groscurth, wrote to his wife that with such calloused brutality that the Germans should not be allowed to win the war. A few other German

commanders expressed similar sentiments which obviously "fell on deaf ears." This cruelty was a blunder because it engendered hatred vs. the German invaders resulted in a fierce partisan warfare behind German lines which caused intense fear in the rear of German lines. Little did the Germans know about the reactions and hatred they incited. Not only did the Germans have to face a ferocious Red Army, they had to contend with Mother Nature. Beevor argued that Hitler should have learned from the failed battle of Moscow (1941-1942) when General Winter helped defeat the Germans. Yet, the Germans renewed a drive toward Stalingrad. Beevor described the hot summer of the Russian steppe which one German commander compared to the heat in Africa. The Germans thought the hot summer temperatures would be welcomed by the Germans. However, such warm temps were a hindrance to the Germans. The heat attracted insects to attack the wound of German casualties. The heat caused exhaustion among German troops. As Beevor wrote, the closer the Germans got to Stalingrad, Soviet resistance stiffened. For example, one Red Army soldier was severely wounded and lost the use of his right arm. When medics wanted to retire him from the combat, he responded that he could throw grenades with his left arm. What amazed the Germans were the women who manned anti-aircraft guns. In spite of German bombardment, these brave women continued to man their guns in spite of the obvious danger when also impressed and encouraged their male counterparts. Further German blunders included reliance on Hungarian, Italian, and Romanian units protecting their flanks. The Romanians, Hungarians, and Italians fought bravely. However, the Soviets easily destroyed these troops. The "foreign" units known as Hiwis did not have the artillery and heavy tanks to oppose Soviet T 34 and other heavy tanks. The Germans discredited the Hiwis, but the Germans failed to mention they were not adequately supplied to repel the better equipped Soviet troops. Soviet military discipline was severe and sometimes excessive. Appropriately 13,000 Soviet troops were executed for desertion, cowardliness, and dereliction of duty. A 19 year junior lieutenant was shot because two of his men deserted from his platoon, but he had been at Stalingrad and did not know the men in his platoon. The excesses were relaxed but still severe. One of the situations that Hitler and German commanders did not want to face was street fighting in Stalingrad. Yet, German shelling bombing caused destruction and unintentionally created barricades and severe angles for Soviet troops. The Soviets had a loosely organized institution called the Stalingrad Street Fighting Academy whose troops were experts at street fighting and house-to-house combat. The fact was that the Germans did not have the manpower for protracted urban warfare. As the Germans found much to their chagrin, the Soviets were experts at camouflage. The Soviets would make images of Hitler to taunt Germans. When the Germans went to destroy these images, the images were armed with grenades. When the Germans used barbed

wire to protect them from hand grenades. The Soviet Red Army troops attached hooks to their grenades which would attach to the barbed wire. Deadly Soviet snipers, including deadly women snipers, took their physical and psychological toll on the German troops. Beevor wrote sections that as German hopes were fading, Soviet morale increased. The Soviets knew that the Germans were dying from frost bite, severe famine, infections from wounds, and the usual combat. German physicians could not handle the increase casualty lists. The Soviet intelligence network was well aware of these conditions and made every effort to increase the misery and showed no mercy. Tragically, when Red Army troops were aware of the deplorable of their own comrades as POWs, they took terrible vengeance on German troops and the German wounded. The relentless Soviet pressure re Stalingrad is illustrated by the Christmas, 1942. The Germans tried as best they could to celebrate the Holiday. However, the Soviets did not care and attacked German positions regardless of the Holiday Season. What began as a touching attempt at Christmas celebration, the Soviets did not care and were, again, relentless in finishing General Paulus' Stalingrad troops and command. Given the terrible German situation at Stalingrad, the German commanders and "rank-and-file" were bitter at Hitler, Goring, and other leaders of the Hitler regime. Promises of reinforcements, food, medical supplies, and leaves were unfulfilled. German commanders and troops were bitter at the Hitler regime for the terrible conditions suffered by both officers and NCOs. The Hitler promise of the "Phoenix rising from the ashes" was pure fantasy which the German survivors know. When von Paulus finally surrendered, Hitler, Goring, Himmler, and associates were furious. Hitler was bitter that Paulus and other German commanders did not "fight to the death." The Hitler regime whined about losing Stalingrad when these megalomaniacs were primarily responsible for the huge loss at Stalingrad. As any alert reader knows, WW II was actually won or lost on the Russian Front. Anthony Beevor's book is well done. His descriptions of the suffering and death of both the Germans and Soviets are vivid, and his statistics are as accurate as any researcher can do. Beevor along with other HONEST historians bluntly make their case that the European theater of WW II was won or lost on the Russian Front. Readers who like good research and good written expression will appreciate this book. May 19, 2016 James E. Egolf

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