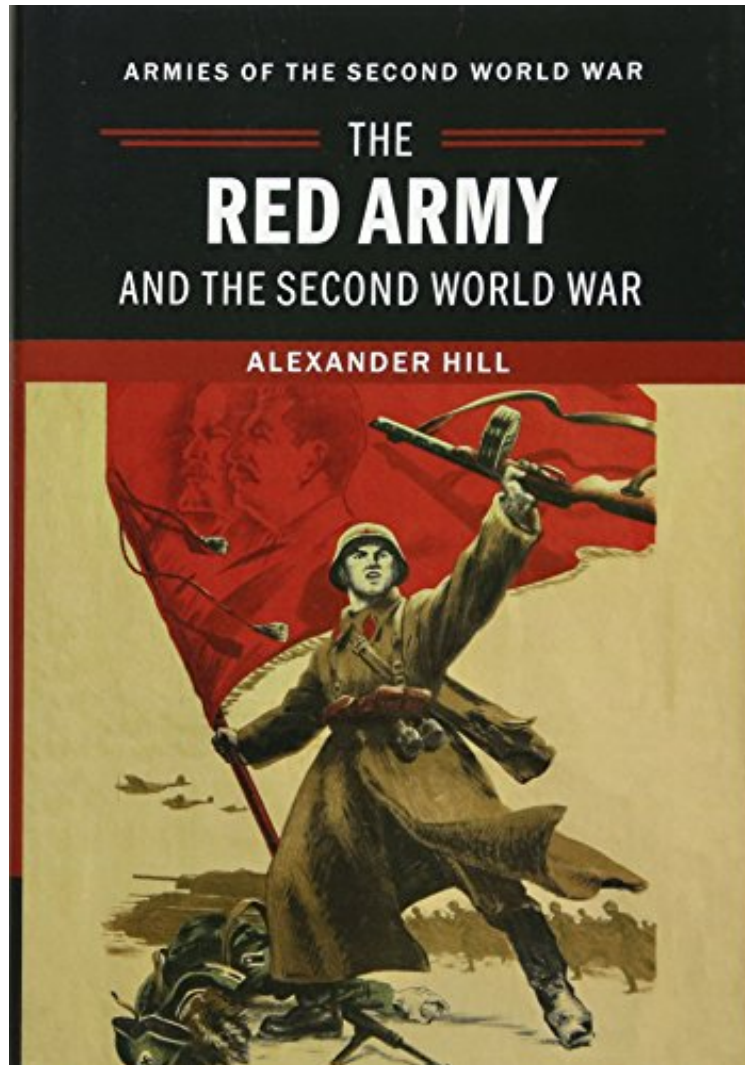


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The Red Army and the Second World War (Armies of the Second World War)

Professor Alexander Hill

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Professor Alexander Hill : The Red Army and the Second World War (Armies of the Second World War)

before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Red Army and the Second World War (Armies of the Second World War):

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Full of Facts and FiguresBy Thomas ReiterThis book has been out for a few months now, so I'm surprised that there are no reviews yet...I just finished reading it, so thought that I would rectify that situation.From reading the book's description, it should be obvious that this book is not really a history of

the campaigns on the Eastern Front, but rather the history of the Red Army as an institution. The author begins with the post-Civil War period before covering the tumultuous thirties, including the purges, the Spanish Civil War, doctrinal disputes, the invasions of Poland and Finland, etc. This part of the book was quite good, and chock-full of interesting facts and figures. Moving into the war itself, there again lots of interesting facts and figures, although the author seems to lose his focus a bit covering the vast scope of the war. Ranging from the effectiveness of antitank weapons to the merits of various German and Soviet fighter planes, to sniper training, to the range of radio sets, to the number of women soldiers... Again, rather interesting, but kind of all over the map. Speaking of "maps", I don't recall seeing many (if any?) maps in the book, although given that the book is not intended as a campaign history maps would probably not add much to the book. So basically I enjoyed this book as a large grab-bag of interesting facts and figures; the author seems to have done lots of research, the bibliography is extensive, and footnoting is well done. I didn't give the book five stars because of the following issues: 1) As mentioned above, the book is a bit unfocused, especially when in the sections about the war. Chapters cover a wide range of seemingly random--albeit interesting--topics. 2) While the book is generally quite easy to read, there are a surprising number of minor grammatical syntax errors and oddly-worded sentences. Nonetheless, the book flows well and is not boring. As an aside, the book includes a fair number of interesting photos. Finally, I should mention that I bought the kindle version of this book, although for some reason it is called an "e-textbook"...while I had never bought an "e-textbook" before, as far as I could tell it was exactly the same as a standard kindle book, so no problems there. Overall, an interesting, generally well-written book which I recommend for anyone interested in the Red Army during WWII.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Very good and detailed book regarding the Red Army. By Andrew Owens Beamer. I've never written a review for any books I've read. However, as time goes on and I rely on the reviews to find good reading material I figured I would try my hand. What I can say is this book was very good and gave a very thorough yet understandable direction to the Red Army prior to WW2. While the parts dealing with the War are good they are not why I'm giving this book five stars. I was very happy with reading about the army in the 30s including the weapons and problems with production and material. This is a oft neglected area but of such importance that to understand what came after without it is hard to say the least. I was very happy with the book and believe that anybody interested in the Red Army or eastern front would get a lot out of it.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very good. Examines the evolution of the organization and performance of the Red Army. Mediocre to poor editing, unfortunately. By Bayard B. A very good book that for the most part examines the organization of the Red Army, and its performance in WW II, from an overall strategic and operational level. For example, the author discusses the evolution of the Red Army's Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence (C3I) and training from 1941 through 1945: awful in 1941, poor but improving in 1942, reasonably good and effective in 1943, and very good in 1944 and 1945. Its command structure was probably never as sophisticated as those of the German, British and American armies but it was sufficiently effective to triumph in 1944 and 1945. Similarly, the author discusses the improvements in the overall strategic and operational planning at the level of Stalin and the General Staff over time. Other issues such as the development and distribution of radio sets (both in terms of quality and quantity), improvement in the army's supply and distribution system, and improvements in field reconnaissance are also discussed. There is also much discussion of the overall lack of initiative at mid- and lower-grade levels, which was only partly due to Stalinist / Communist rigidity. Soviet lower level officers and Soviet society in general simply lacked the education level, military knowledge, and personal characteristics to make reasonably good independent decisions. The Great Purge of 1937 – 1940 didn't help inculcate such characteristics. The book sometimes does get bogged down in more trivial subjects (I thought) such as details of the Partisan behind-the-lines-movement, individual cavalry attacks, and individual aerial fighting. In my opinion, the book's greatest weakness is the evident lack of a really professional editor. The author evidently loves the words "however," "nonetheless," and "certainly." Sometimes they are all used in the same sentence. There are several instances where "however" is used twice in the same sentence, and at least one example where it was used three times in the same sentence. I had to read those sentences three or four times before I was reasonably sure I understood what the author was trying to state. There are also several examples of incredibly long paragraphs that meander over several subjects. For example:

- Pages 57 – 59 contain a 1 ¾ page paragraph on the Terror of 1937 and its perpetrators and effects on other current Generals and survivors who would become Generals in the future.
- Pages 189 – 191 contain a 2 ¼ page paragraph on anti-tank gun production, ammunition production, and gun performance.
- Pages 266 – 267 contain a 1 ½ page paragraph on Soviet infantry attacks in front of Moscow, T-34 tank attacks by 5th Army, and separate attacks by a variety of Brigades and Independent Tank Battalions.

Another criticism is the sometimes incredibly long and convoluted individual sentences. I'll just cite one example from page 266: "Infantry support for the component of the Soviet operation by 33rd Army to eliminate the forward bridgehead over the Desna for example was limited to relatively small numbers of tank - riding troops – on 2 December only 65 infantrymen accompanied 136th independent tank battalion as it went over to the defense that night, and even the next day Soviet operations did not for example include the two ski battalions (23rd and 24) and 18th Rifle Brigade allocated as support, where according to Soviet after-action reports even on 3 December the concentration of the infantry was delayed and at the allotted time the infantry did not attack." There are also instances of sentences having a singular subject with an associated plural verb and sentences with plural subjects

and a singular verb. There are also at least a couple of sentences with no verb at all.

In a definitive new account of the Soviet Union at war, Alexander Hill charts the development, successes and failures of the Red Army from the industrialisation of the Soviet Union in the late 1920s through to the end of the Great Patriotic War in May 1945. Setting military strategy and operations within a broader context that includes national mobilisation on a staggering scale, the book presents a comprehensive account of the origins and course of the war from the perspective of this key Allied power. Drawing on the latest archival research and a wealth of eyewitness testimony, Hill portrays the Red Army at war from the perspective of senior leaders and men and women at the front line to reveal how the Red Army triumphed over the forces of Nazi Germany and her allies on the Eastern Front, and why it did so at such great cost.

About the Author Alexander Hill completed both his undergraduate education and doctorate at Peterhouse College, Cambridge, and has taught military history and Russian history at the University of Calgary for more than a decade. During his tenure at the University of Calgary, he has published two other books, *The War behind the Eastern Front* (2005), on the Soviet partisan movement in north-west Russia during the Second World War, and *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945: A Documentary Reader* (2009), as well as many journal articles on the Soviet Union during the Second World War.