



Enduring the Whirlwind: The German Army and the Russo-German War 1941-1943

Gregory Liedtke

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Despite the best efforts of a number of historians, many aspects of the ferocious struggle between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union during the Second World War remain obscure or shrouded in myth. One of the most persistent of these is the notion - largely created by many former members of its own officer corps in the immediate postwar period - that the German Army was a paragon of military professionalism and operational proficiency whose defeat on the Eastern Front was solely attributable to the amateurish meddling of a crazed former Corporal and the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Red Army. A key pillar upon which the argument of German numerical-weakness vis-à-vis the Red Army has been constructed is the assertion that Germany was simply incapable of providing its army with the necessary quantities of men and equipment needed to replace its losses. In consequence, as their losses outstripped the availability of replacements, German field formations became progressively weaker until they were incapable of securing their objectives or, eventually, of holding back the swelling might of the Red Army.

This work seeks to address the notion of German numerical-weakness in terms of Germany's ability to replace its losses and regenerate its military strength, and assess just how accurate this argument was during the crucial first half of the Russo-German War (June 1941-June 1943). Employing a host of primary documents and secondary literature, it traces the development and many challenges of the German Army from the prewar period until the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. It continues on to chart the first two years of the struggle between Germany and the Soviet Union, with a particular emphasis upon the scale of German personnel and equipment losses, and how well these were replaced. It also includes extensive examinations into the host of mitigating factors that both dictated the course of Germany's campaign in the East and its replacement and regeneration capabilities.

In contrast to most accounts of the conflict, this study finds that numerical-weakness being the primary factor in the defeat of the Ostheer - specifically as it relates to the strength and condition of the German units involved - has been overemphasized and frequently exaggerated. In fact, Germany was actually able to regenerate its forces to a remarkable degree with a steady flow of fresh men and equipment, and German field divisions on the Eastern Front were usually far stronger than the accepted narratives of the war would have one believe.

Enduring the Whirlwind: The German Army and the Russo-German War 1941-1943 Details

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From Reader Review Enduring the Whirlwind: The German Army and the Russo-German War 1941-1943 for online ebook

Mark says

Interesting review of the data

A strategic overview of the German War in the East. The author discusses if the Germans were so outnumbered as their Post war narratives would like you to believe they were.

Dave says

Enduring the Whirlwind is a non-fiction book which seeks to lay to rest some of the mythology around the German battle on the Eastern Front. While it doesn't cover any new ground, its contention is that there is a narrative set by previous historians about the Russian's numerical advantage being the primary reason for the Wehrmacht's loss.

I found that Liedtke had a very dry style of writing, and at times it felt more as though it was history written by an accountant. He seeks to counter the traditional narrative by laying out the dates and data for each unit in the front. The result is a very impersonal, and rather tedious read.

While I acknowledge that the author may well have a point, I found that it was somewhat lost amidst the statistics. I think I would have abandoned this book long before I finished if it wasn't an audiobook. I am afraid that this is one for the completists, while readers looking for a more boots-on-the-ground viewpoint should look elsewhere.

Rachel says

Rather dry read

This is basically about the material and personnel numbers and supply of the German Armies in the Eastern theatre of WWII. Some numbers of the Russian armies are also included. Just the nature of the book's subject matter lend to being a dry read. It actually has facts and analyze I have not read before and found interesting such as how the Germans supplied so much material and personnel so quickly and the problem with rail transport. Just for that reason I have an extra star.
