

Stalingrad: The City that Defeated the Third Reich

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The turning point of World War II came at Stalingrad. Hitler's soldiers stormed the city in September 1942 in a bid to complete the conquest of Europe. Yet Stalingrad never fell. After months of bitter fighting, 100,000 surviving Germans, huddled in the ruined city, surrendered to Soviet troops.

During the battle and shortly after its conclusion, scores of Red Army commanders and soldiers, party officials and workers spoke with a team of historians who visited from Moscow to record their conversations. The tapestry of their voices provides groundbreaking insights into the thoughts and feelings of Soviet citizens during wartime.

Legendary sniper Vasily Zaytsev recounted the horrors he witnessed at Stalingrad: “You see young girls, children hanging from trees in the park.[...] That has a tremendous impact.” Nurse Vera Gurova attended hundreds of wounded soldiers in a makeshift hospital every day, but she couldn't forget one young amputee who begged her to avenge his suffering. “Every soldier and officer in Stalingrad was itching to kill as many Germans as possible,” said Major Nikolai Aksyonov.

These testimonials were so harrowing and candid that the Kremlin forbade their publication, and they were forgotten by modern history—until now. Revealed here in English for the first time, they humanize the Soviet defenders and allow Jochen Hellbeck, in *Stalingrad*, to present a definitive new portrait of the most fateful battle of World War II.

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Stalingrad: The City that Defeated the Third Reich From PublicAffairs Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #522087 in Books
- Published on: 2015-04-28
- Released on: 2015-04-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.63" h x 1.25" w x 6.50" l, .92 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 512 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

“...A book whose heroic rhetoric and rhythms match the heroism of the people of Stalingrad...This is a stunning history...” —*Boston Globe*

“Intriguing and gripping... Hellbeck's selections vividly depict the battle of Stalingrad in all its horror and heroism.” —*Winnipeg Free Press*

“[A] compelling new history of the Battle of Stalingrad...” —*Washington Free Beacon*

“Jochen Hellbeck recasts our understanding of the ‘Russian way’ of waging war. He comes as close as will ever be possible to capturing the peculiar culture of Soviet soldiers in their devastating struggle against the German invaders, who were as feared as they were loathed.” —**Michael Geyer, Samuel N. Harper**
Professor of History, University of Chicago

“This candid and comprehensive view of the battle of Stalingrad through the eyes of participants captures the brutality these soldiers endured and adds a new dimension to recent scholarship on this most terrible of struggles.” —**Colonel David M. Glantz, US Army (ret.), editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies***

“Like no other recent book on the war, Stalingrad forces readers to look at the open wounds of others. You won't be able to avert your eyes.” —**Süddeutsche Zeitung**

About the Author

Jochen Hellbeck

is a professor of history at Rutgers University and a specialist in twentieth-century Russia. His previous book, *Revolution on My Mind*, explored personal diaries written in the Soviet Union under Stalin. The German edition of *Stalingrad* won a DAMALS prize for best historical study of the year. Hellbeck runs a website, facingstalingrad.com, that features portraits and interviews taken with German and Russian veterans of the battle of Stalingrad. He lives in Brooklyn, NY.

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