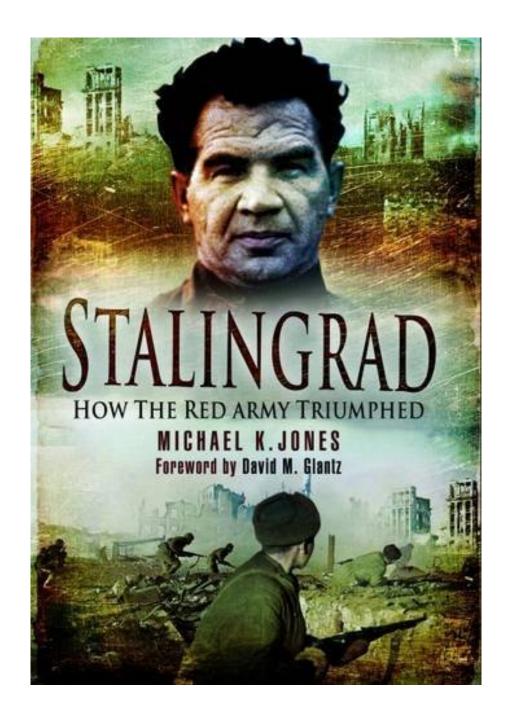


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About the Author

Michael K Jones is an author and historian. Michael Jones is well-known for his innovative, controversial studies of warfare. A former university lecturer in medieval history, he now works as a freelance writer, presenter and battlefield tour guide. He has written numerous articles on warfare for journals. Since 1984 he has been guiding visitors around battlefields, including Stalingrad, Bannockburn, and the battlefields of the Hundred Years' War.

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Michael K. Jones's new history of Stalingrad offers a radical reinterpretation of the most famous battle of the WW2. Combining eyewitness testimony of Red Army fighters with fresh archive material, the book gives a dramatic insight into the thinking of the Russian command and the mood of the ordinary soldiers. He focuses on the story of the Russian 62nd Army, which began the campaign in utter demoralization, yet turned the tables on the powerful German 6th Army. He explains the Red Army's extraordinary performance using battle psychology, emphasizing the vital role of leadership, morale and motivation in a triumph that turned the course of the war.

Colonel-General Anatoly Mereshko fought throughout the battle as staff officer to the commander, Chuikov. Working with the author much of Mereshko's testimony is entirely new - and will astonish a western audience. It is backed up by accounts of other key veterans and the recently released war diary and combat journals. These show that the oft-repeated descriptions of Stalingrad's two critical days of fighting - 14 September 1942, when the Germans broke into the city, and 14 October, when they launched a massive attack on the factory district - disguise how desperate the plight of the defenders really was. In their place is a far more terrifying reality. Grasping this, we come to see Stalingrad as more than a victory of successful tactics - rather, as an astounding, improbable triumph of the human spirit.

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18 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

This book turns accepted Soviet history on it's head,.. brilliantly!

By Brendan J. Mctear

This book is as David Glantz says in the foreward, "a milestone" in the study of the Soviet side of the Battle. It turns a lot of the already accepted history on it's head. I loved reading it.

If you have read the other great works on this Battle and have a basic understanding of the battle's timeline, than this is a must read. It brings detail and life to people like Krylov, Rodimstev and especially Vasily Chuikov. In fact the book doubles as a reading aid to the now out of print memoire of Vasily Chuikov.

It also discounts and re-arranges every old Soviet Propaganda account of the Battle, including Chuikovs. The new sources are Soviet veterans including at least three which I can remember seeing in the BBC documentary War of the Century. I was stunned and a little hurt even to find out some of the most famous episodes and legends of this Battle were lies. I won't spoil the surprises for you. But what makes this book so amazing is that the new "truths" that Michael Jones has pieced together are even more compelling and authentic stories than the originals.

I was very happy to finally read a history of the Russian side of this story that was not ashamed of saying that the Red Army at Stalingrad was a heroic group of soldiers who fought to the death because in their minds it was the right thing to do. Their general's example of courage and determination taught them that they were fighting a must win cause. Often other authors on the subject play up Stalin's terror against his own people as a chief motivator for their will to fight. While it was most certainly true that Stalin ruled with an iron fist, it is also true that the atrocities carried out by the Nazis were certainly adequate motivation to fight an ultimate battle of survival against a 'hated invader.'

I would not recommend this book as your first introduction to the Battle of Stalingrad. It only covers the Soviet side of the battle and only within the city itself. Also I believe the author assumed the reader would have some background on this battle so he doesn't repeat a lot of the basic details of the battle, except for when he's about to offer some new evidence to discount it!

I recommend reading Anthony Beevor, John Erickson, Vasily Chuikov (out of print but available used on line), Joel S. Hayward, Stephan Walsh and even the classic William S. Craig versions of the story first before approaching this book.

16 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent account of Stalingrad.

By Logibear64

Michael K. Jones has written an extraordinary account of Stalingrad told by the Soviet veterans of the battle. As one reviewer has pointed out Jones' book challenges some of the myths of Stalingrad particularly from the Russian side. However, the crux of the book is material from the Soviet 62nd Army and accounts by Russian veterans of the battle present a harrowing account of life and death in the Stalingrad.

A book like this is long overdue. In the past many books even the excellent one by Beevor gives a panoramic view of the struggle at Stalingrad. Others have focused on the German accounts and documents readily accessible in the west. However, an in-depth study of the common Soviet soldier fighting in Stalingrad has been missing until now. Michael K. Jones has filled a huge void in Stalingrad literature.

If you are an enthusiast of the "German" side of the battle there is few if any German accounts in the book. However, the author has used German material to cross-reference the "Russian" accounts and documents of the struggle. For those stuck on the German side you will come to appreciate the German struggle at Stalingrad by becoming ferocious resistance of their Soviet opponent too often dismissed as a Communist automaton. In this book the Red soldier is not only motivated by fear of commissars and the Gulag but more importantly fiercely motivated by love of country to fight an invader to the death even against hopeless odd. Michael K. Jones "Stalingrad" is a must for any serious student of the battle!!!

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

At last!

By baikonour

At last a book which pays tribute to the Red Army commanders and soldiers defending Stalingrad, giving them the full credit they deserve, without any distortions, using nothing but real facts. Not all soldiers or commanders were heroes, but on the other hand those who were have not "been forced to", as it had been usual to believe for so many years in the west. Moreover, heroism was contagious, like said Chuikov, commander of the Soviet 62nd Army who did not give up in this unequal and tragic fight, and to whom the book is largely devoted. One of the major leitmotiv is the role of the will, courage and leadership by example of so many commanders in this army, along with a deep, genuine care for their subordinate soldiers, as opposed to the traditional belief that Red Army men were thrown into battle at the point of a gun, driven like cattle and forced to charge in bloody assaults. Using multiple testimonies and new evidence, the author demonstrates that the battle of Stlalingrad could NOT have been won by fear and coercition only. The main factor was somewhere else, in an intangible spiritual force never seen before that was so particular to Stalingrad. That aspect has long been overlooked and diminished in the Cold War years, and even after if you consider a well-known bestseller published in late 90s which sometimes seems to be more focusing on anti-communist propaganda than on the battle itself. Only recently the real motivation factors for the incredible Soviet stand at Stalingrad are beginning to be analysed and the truth brought to light without any bias.

M. Jones relies mainly on veterans' accounts, these provide the backbone material and the book is totally structured around them. The approach is thematical rather than chronological, and deals extensively with the psychological aspects. Some myths forged in the Soviet era are finally deconstructed without diminishing the bravery of the defenders, on the contrary: whereas events are described in their real context we learn about new heroes and yet unknown facts.

A splendid contribution to the knowledge in military history.

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