

INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the *Against the Odds 2010 Annual*. This year we have shoehorned in four designs on Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union from four of today's leading designers. To keep your blood pulsing, we have an iconoclastic article that destroys many of the myths surrounding World War II on the Eastern Front. Add this to a bonus article on the Abyssinian Expedition of 1868 and you hold in your hand one of today's best wargaming values. Thanks for buying *Against the Odds* and if you aren't already a subscriber, join our ranks and see why we are one of the top-rated wargame magazines in the industry.

Andy
Andy Nunez
Editor

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OPERATION BARBAROSSA FACT -vs- MYTH



BY
NIGEL DAVIES

Barbarossa was the greatest single offensive operation in the history of the world. An eventual 4.3 million Axis troops were launched along an 1800 mile front in an attempt to smash the military potential and economic integrity of the biggest federation on earth. Its goal was the conquest, in a single season, of the largest area of territory to fall since the decades-long campaigns of the Mongol Khans. The cost of its initial successes, and eventual failure, was the most appalling casualty list ever recorded in a single operation. Debates about Barbarossa stand in a class of their own for controversy and misunderstanding.

Hundreds of books have been written on the subject, many with obvious biases – particularly those by pro-Soviet propagandists. So, most summaries available are highly confusing to read, with a number of apparently self-contradictory conclusions. The populist mythology of Barbarossa is that it was a series of mistakes:

1. HITLER WAS MAD TO ATTEMPT IT.
2. STALIN WAS MAD TO IGNORE EVIDENCE THAT IT WAS COMING.
3. THE ATTACK ONLY FAILED BECAUSE OF HITLER'S INTERFERENCE IN THE OPERATIONS.
4. THE ATTACK WAS NOT COMPROMISED BY THE BRITISH INTERVENTION IN THE BALKANS.
5. THE SOVIETS SUCCESSFULLY TRADED SPACE FOR TIME AND WERE NEVER IN DANGER OF TOTAL COLLAPSE.
6. THE SOVIETS WERE ONLY SAVED BY "GENERAL WINTER."
7. THE *WEHRMACHT* HAD MADE NO PREPARATIONS FOR A WINTER CAMPAIGN.
8. THE *WEHRMACHT* HAD VASTLY UNDERESTIMATED THE OPPOSITION AND NEVER STOOD A CHANCE.
9. ONCE THEY HAD SURVIVED THE INITIAL ATTACK, THE SOVIET RESPONSE WOULD BE OVERWHELMING AND INEVITABLE.

There is an *element* of truth in each of these statements, as in most myths, but more that is vastly oversimplified, or just plain wrong.

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