



Through the Maelstrom: A Red Army Soldier's War on the Eastern Front, 1942-1945 (Modern War Studies (Paperback))

Boris Gorbachevsky

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The monumental battles of World War II's Eastern Front—Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk—are etched into the historical record. But there is another, hidden history of that war that has too often been ignored in official accounts.

Boris Gorbachevsky was a junior officer in the 31st Army who first saw front-line duty as a rifleman in the 30th Army. *Through the Maelstrom* recounts his three harrowing years on some of the war's grimmest but forgotten battlefields: the campaign for Rzhev, the bloody struggle to retake Belorussia, and the bitter final fighting in East Prussia. As he traces his experiences from his initial training, through the maelstrom, to final victory, he provides one of the richest and most detailed memoirs of life and warfare on the Eastern Front.

Gorbachevsky's panoramic account takes us from infantry specialist school to the front lines to rear services areas and his whirlwind romances in wartime Moscow. He recalls the shriek of Katiusha rockets flying overhead toward the enemy and the unforgettable howl of Stukas divebombing Soviet tanks. And he conveys horrors of brutal fighting not recorded previously in English, including his own participation in a human wave assault that decimated his regiment at Rzhev, with piles of corpses growing the closer they got to the German trenches.

Gorbachevsky also records the sufferings of the starving citizens of Leningrad, the savage execution of a Russian scout who turned in false information, the killing of an innocent German trying to welcome the Soviet troops, and a chilling campfire discussion by four Russian soldiers as they compared notes about the women they'd raped. His memoir brims with rich descriptions of daily army life, the challenges of maintaining morale, and relationships between soldiers. It also includes candid exposés of the many problems the Red Army faced: the influence of political officers, the stubbornness of senior commanders, the attrition through desertions, and the initial months of occupation in postwar Germany.

Through the Maelstrom features the swiftly moving narrative and rich dialogue associated with the grand style of great Russian literature. Ultimately, it provides a fitting and final testament to soldiers who fought and died in anonymity.

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