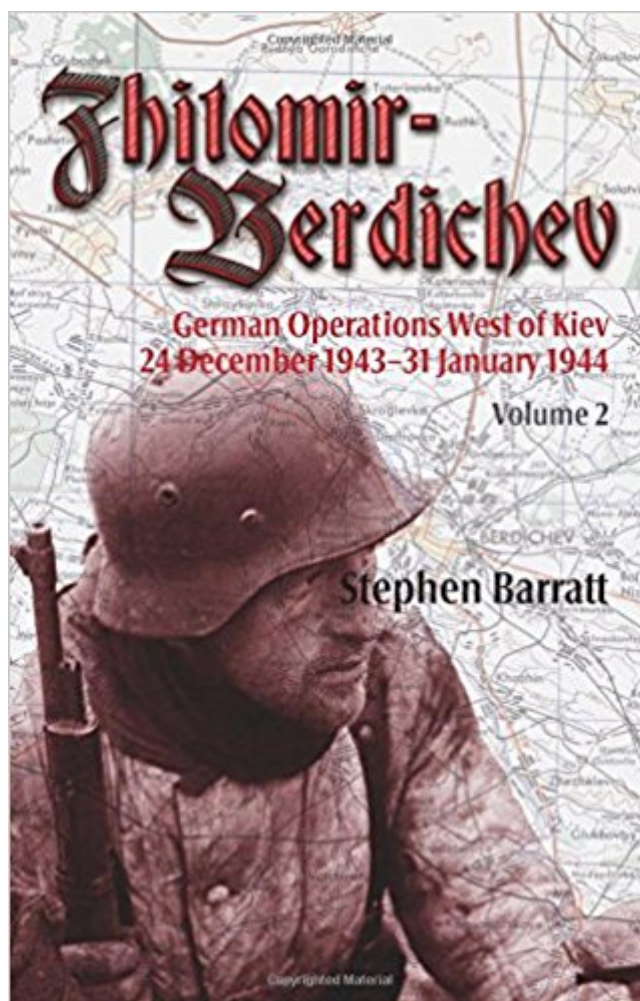


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# Zhitomir-Berdichev. Colume 2: German Operations West Of Kiev 24 December 1943-31 January 1944



## Synopsis

This is the second volume of a two-volume set, which together comprise a detailed and well-researched history of the important but neglected operation that was to be the beginning of the liberation of western Ukraine. On 24 December 1943, the Red Army launched the first of a series of winter offensives against the German Army Group South under von Manstein, the overall object of which was to liberate western Ukraine from occupation. This first offensive is known to Soviet historians as the Zhitomir-Berdichev operation. Based on the unpublished records of the German 1st and 4th Panzer Armies, and supplemented by comprehensive mapping and order of battle data, this book provides an authoritative, detailed, day-by-day account of German operations as they developed in response to the Soviet offensive. It also provides a vivid insight into the planning and decision-making of the German Army field commands in conducting not only a mobile defense, but also a series of counterattacks, which, in the final analysis, could do little more than provide a temporary respite in the face of the growing strength and skill of the Red Army. Following on from where Volume 1 left off, this second volume describes events from 10 to 31 January 1944 and details the series of counterattacks undertaken by the Germans as they tried desperately to stabilize a situation that had already slipped beyond their control. By the time the last of these counterattacks was drawing to a close, the conditions had already been established for the next major Soviet offensive in the region: the Korsun' pocket. In tracing the course of these counterattacks, the book describes how the German operational situation developed during the period immediately leading up to the Soviet Korsun' offensive. Volume 2 includes the appendices, which provide order of battle detail for both sides, and comes with a separately bound book of 253 detailed daily situation maps in color to allow the reader to follow operations as they developed day by day. The first volume, already available from Helion, described operations until 9 January 1944, during which period the German forces were pushed back forcibly under the weight of the Soviet offensive. Together this two-volume set comprises a groundbreaking survey, which is likely to set a new standard for future studies of operational combat on the Eastern Front.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“| should go down as the definitive look from the German side of the hill at the critically important combat operations on Army Group South’s left flank during the lead up to the far more famous Battle of the Korsun Pocket.” (Globe At War)

Perfect!!!!!! Exactly what I was expecting!!!! Highly recommended!!!! Thank you!!!!

Didn’t notice but has me reviewing vol 2 when the book is actually vol 1. Vol 2 isn’t out at this time. The maps aren’t quite as good as I had hoped but better than usual. Maps come in a separate book. This history covers the period after the Battle of Kursk when the Soviets, having ground down most of the German armored forces available on the Eastern Front (some, notably II SS Panzer Korps, were transferred to another front (II SS to Italy); and others had been stripped to 50% or less of their TO&E armor strength - i.e. only one tank battalion and usually a weak one in order to equip the German forces at Kursk) launched a series of offensives in the Kiev area after successfully pushing Army Group South back from Kursk and Kiev. Detailed with good notes and based on German records. The 2nd book comes out this year (2013). Recommend for East Front historians.

Mr Barratt completes his coverage of this Soviet operation with this second volume. This part of the Soviet winter offensive was called Zhitomir-Berdichev due to the axis of attack and had the objective of liberating the rest of Ukraine from German control. There were several new Soviet offensives that were spawned from this operation after the German counter-attack was halted but they will not be covered in this book. In the first volume, the Soviets initially push the Germans back from the Dnepr River in the first two weeks of the assault and in this volume you see after von Manstein receives reinforcements counter-attacks with the objective of closing the widening gap and stabilizing the front line between the towns of Uman, Vinnitsa and Rovno. The German attack does gain ground, securing a brief respite but at this stage of the war German forces were unable to hold the line once

the Soviets regrouped and resumed their offensive. Working primarily from German war records, the author drives the story from the German perspective and while there is some Soviet material some people may be disappointed with the imbalance. I would have liked to have seen more Soviet material but admit the author has done an excellent job with the German side, providing comprehensive coverage of all AGS divisions and the battle sites they defended within this campaign. Since I've been looking for years to read a comprehensive account of this Operation and been unable to find much material, I was delighted to read the daily operational events of this two volume set. This operation also fills the void between the Kursk-Kharkov-Kiev fighting in 1943 with the Soviet offensives toward L'vov-Rovno-Lutsk (eastward) and Cherkassy-Korsun drive to the south that came immediately after Zhitomir-Berdichev and takes the Soviet offensive to mid 1944. Just like the first volume, the second volume includes a separate but larger map book. The maps have the same format as the first volume and if you liked the first set, you'll like these. Its a combination of overall summary maps plus small area maps for each day of the campaign. The author has obviously spent a lot of time on these good looking maps but there is a weakness that avid students may take issue with. The disposition of forces is incomplete. While the German side will display division or corps coverage there are only red arrows that shows Soviet axes of attack. In addition to the maps, Mr Barratt includes Notes and an Index. Orders of Battle for both sides and a few tables of casualty figures are also included. (It may be helpful but I found it a little bizarre that military units found only in the Soviet OB and not in the rest of the book are included in the Index.) The narrative ends with a summary of the entire operation and analysis. Its obvious the author has spent a lot of time researching and collating this material and has become an expert; his views are valid and for anybody looking to study the complete historiography of the war should seriously consider reading this operation.

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