



## ***Tank Warfare on the Eastern Front 1941-1942***

**By Robert A. Forczyk**

**NY: Stackpole Books, 2013, 279 pages**

Reviewed by LTC (Retired) Thomas G. Meara

*Tank Warfare on the Eastern Front* is a book that covers the major tank battles on the Eastern Front between Germany and the Soviet Union during World War II. The author, Robert Forczyk, focuses on the armored aspects of these battles from both the weapon system and doctrinal perspectives of both armies during 1941-1942. Forczyk explores both of these perspectives and others in great depth. His analysis provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of the key aspects of these engagements.

The author does an excellent job describing the fundamentally different approaches to the employment of armored forces for both armies. His analysis and description of the different ideas for organization of forces and the doctrine for their employment leave the reader with an understanding of the two different viewpoints on armored warfare at the beginning of the war. The understanding he provides on the organization and doctrinal aspects of these battles is a topic where Forczyk's book provides great value. Another great value is his analysis of the Soviet and German equipment.

His objective approach in describing the qualitative aspects of German and Russian tanks is invaluable because it is not widely understood by many historians and authors on the subject. His comparison of the two adversaries' tanks using the aspects of mobility, firepower, and protection is particularly informative and breaks some popular myths many hold on the superiority of the German machines. The discussion of mobility and reliability in particular, when combined with the author's analysis of the weather and terrain, gives the reader an objective understanding of the relevant qualities of these weapons systems in the harsh operational environment of the Eastern Front.

With a more complete understanding of the organizational, doctrinal, and qualitative aspects of the Soviet and German tanks and the environment on the Eastern Front, the author integrates descriptions of leadership and command philosophies of both armies. This gives the reader a much more complete understanding of these battles than many historical sources provide. This is, from my perspective, the greatest value of this book: its complete and unbiased approach to analyzing and describing these engagements on the Eastern Front.

I recommend this book to anyone with a general interest in World War II history or specific interest in armored warfare. The book is well written and at only 279 pages reads quickly. Forczyk provides objective understanding from the immensely valuable perspective garnered from his personal experiences as an armor officer during the Cold War. Its greatest value is the completeness and quality of understanding it provides in relatively few pages.