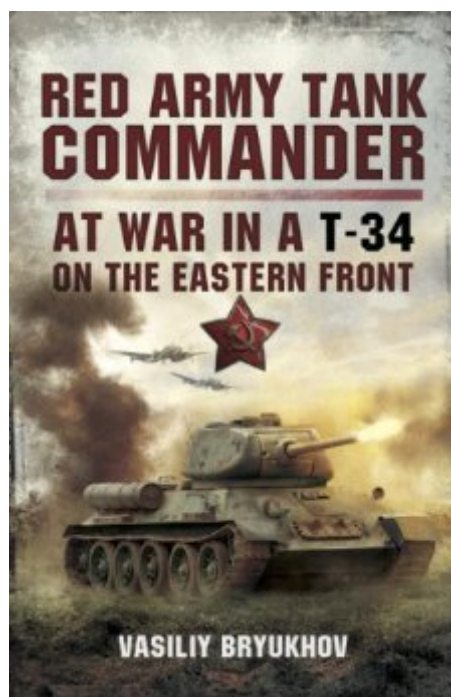


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Red Army Tank Commander : At War In A T-34 On The Eastern Front



Synopsis

What was it like to command a T-34 tank on the Eastern Front during the Second World War? How were tank operations organized and carried out, what was the actual experience of combat, and what were the qualities that made the difference between success and failure - and what were the chances of survival? Vasiliy Pavlovich Bryukhov's vivid, detailed and gripping memoir of his wartime service gives a fascinating and authentic insight into these questions. Also it provides an accurate, unsentimental record of the day-to-day life of a tankman whose unit fought in the forefront of the Red Army throughout the conflict across the western Soviet Union and into eastern Europe. His first-hand eyewitness account is a memorable personal story, and it gives a powerful insight into the reality of tank warfare seventy years ago. Vasiliy Pavlovich Bryukhov was born in Osa, In April 1943, after graduation from tank school, he was given command of a T-34 tank, and he took part in the Battle of Kursk. He served continuously until the end of the war, fighting through Ukraine, Moldavia, Romania and Hungary to Austria. In one action his crew destroyed nine German panzers and in another he led the vanguard of his tank brigade through German lines to capture bridges and cut off the German retreat. In 1944 he was promoted to battalion commander. For his actions at the end of 1944 and 1945 he was nominated for the title Hero of the Soviet Union, but this nomination was not fulfilled until 1995 when he was given the title of a Hero of the Russian Federation for the courage and gallantry he displayed in battle during the Great Patriotic War .

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Customer Reviews

Tedious recounting of authors experiences as T-34 commander. Too many characters to keep them straight even though he develops none of them. Every fellow officer seems to have one of two destinies: criminal / coward or Hero of the Soviet Union. Very little action from the turret view. In his credit unlike most soviet memoirs every enemy tank is not a Tiger or Panther. OK book but wish I would have waited a few weeks and not paid new issue price. Writing style is a bit bland. Just not one of those books you can't put down..

This is, in many ways, just a time line of the Vasiliy Bryuhkov's life in the Soviet Army tank corps in the Second World War. Eight pages are devoted to his childhood and slightly more to events after the war. The book contains 8 pages of photos as well, nearly all personal. No photos of the types of equipment used by either the Soviets or the Germans and no maps charting the actions the author was involved in - which would have been helpful. The basic outline of the book is: we attacked the Germans, we drove them back, we moved back to rearm and refuel, repeat and repeat and repeat. While this may provide a sense of the drudgery of combat very little insight, general or personal, is given. There are odd nuggets that he throws out; such as once recalling that they attacked at 9:30 or mentioning that he forgets the name of one of his early tank crew's drivers. His recollections are also notable in that when casualties of battles are recorded the Soviets, or at least the units he is associated with always have fewer casualties (read tank) losses than the Germans. This may be hard to reconcile historically. In general the book reads like a Soviet war poster where the gallant heroes of the motherland triumph through hard work and dedication. There is a very nice book about a US tank crewman "Another River Another Town" by John P. Irwin that gives a much better idea of being involved in tanks, albeit American in this case. It is a shame that Mr. Bryukhov could not have dug some more meaty anecdotes from his life as an ascending tank commander in the Soviet Tank Corps.

It was a good account of day to day action until the author moves out of tanks and into a commanding role. Then it's switches to a lot of big picture stuff and no longer tells of the action as first person. Still a good read.

This is a fairly good book from a Soviet author, although this is not the first such book I have read. There seems to be a required plot for Soviet authors on WW2 and this one follows it. Plenty of combat but written so it is hard to tell if this is fact, bad memory, or fiction. Still, lots of combat and a non-German view of the war on the Eastern Front. Not quite up to TANK RIDER but readable.

Interesting book. Essentially a lucky man as all survivors were; a German sniper killed a man standing next to him thinking that man was an officer while Bryukov although an officer was dressed as an ordinary soldier. Also he managed to jump out of two tanks destroyed under him. To ensure Bryukov survived the last few months of the war his brigade commander promoted him to the brigade staff, keeping him out of a tank, though he still faced some danger. I give it only 4 stars instead of 5, because two of the last chapters read like the brigade log, since Bryukov was no longer the commander of a tank.

I found this book to be very well written; it is factual, well organized, and detailed. The author is honest in his recounting of his experiences, and shows the reader what World War Two was like not only for the Russian military, but also, for the villagers and Russian people overall. I enjoyed this book a great deal.

It is very light and general in its observations. It appears to be written many years after the war like many modern WWII books.

The book tends to read like an after action report. Awash in the minutia of where they campaigned, the book reads more like a very dry geography lesson. There is scant detail of the environment in which they battled and virtually no personal insight to the feelings of the soldiers that participated.

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