



Island of Fire: The Battle for the Barrikady Gun Factory in Stalingrad

Jason Mark

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Stalingrad symbolises many things: the ideological clash between Nazism and Communism, the battle of wills between Hitler and Stalin, and the absolute fortitude of the Soviet people. In many people's minds, however, it represents the savagery, folly and utter waste of urban combat, a city where dozens of lives were readily exchanged for a ruined building. And nowhere did this senselessness manifest itself more than in the Barrikady Gun Factory and its housing settlement. The men of the German 305. Infanterie-Division had captured all of the factory's massive workhalls by the end of October 1942. The only obstacles standing between them and the Volga were a few battered houses and the remnants of the Soviet 138th Rifle Division. Five fresh pioneer battalions were brought in to help the Germans and the 'final' attack in Stalingrad (known erroneously as Operation 'Hubertus') was launched on 11 November, 1942. The push to the river cut off the Soviet troops and left a tiny bridgehead. Grim fighting raged around this fiery perimeter for three months. To the Soviet soldiers, this bridgehead was known as 'Lyudnikov's Island', or 'Ognenniy ostrov' - 'Island of Fire'. Painstakingly compiled from German and Russian sources such as war diaries, combat reports, published works, eyewitness accounts, letters and photos, this book presents an unbiased chronicle of the pitiless struggle from both perspectives.

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