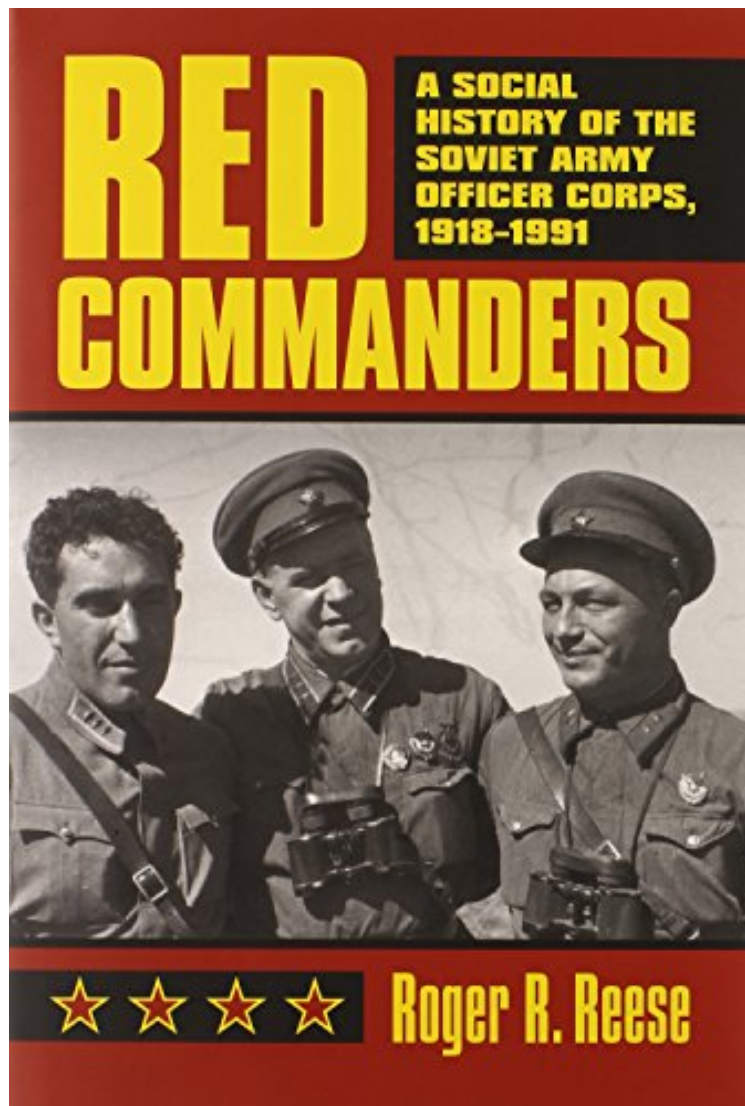


[Get free] Red Commanders: A Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918-1991 (Modern War Studies (Hardcover))

Red Commanders: A Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918-1991 (Modern War Studies (Hardcover))

Roger R. Reese

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Roger R. Reese : Red Commanders: A Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918-1991 (Modern War Studies (Hardcover)) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Red Commanders: A Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918-1991 (Modern War Studies (Hardcover)):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Communist Military Leadership failures
By Dietz Ziechmann, Shofet Reese, a history professor and US Army veteran of un-publicized rank, makes a very useful, and apparently objective, study of the strengths and weakness, its inheriting and then greatly exacerbating the lack of core professionalism in first the Czarist, and then the Soviet officer corps, citing specific, documented instances and sources. The Red, then since 1946, Soviet, Army and other armed forces had their primary focus of loyalty on the Soviet Communist Party and the dominant faction in its Central Committee, whoever happened to constitute that factor and the current Party General-Secretary. Reese makes important distinctions between the Civil War to World War, WWII, and post-WWII and post-Stalin and Gorbachev periods. Reese shows how educational deficiencies (both civil: literacy, math, language skills, culture, and military: technical and tactical) and lack of platoon through brigade experience before taking on higher command responsibilities contributed to a lack of empathy and command judgement at those higher levels. He also shows how placing responsibility for morale and well-being of the troops into the hands of political workers/officers (PUR), not military officers led to a growing indifference about those categories and estrangements between officers and men. In the post-WWII era, the military officers came to constitute something of a self-enclosed privileged class allied to the interests of the Central Committee and the Soviet Military Industrial Commission (VPK), the Russian equivalent of the American military-industrial complex on steroids. Finally, we see, in the Gorbachev era, how serving officers running for elective office delivery an ironic, final blow to what might have been the professionalism of the Soviet officer corps. Reese apparently confirms Viktor Suvorov's claims that the Great Purge of 1937 onward contributed less to Soviet military inefficiencies in 1939-1941 onwards than has been generally assumed. Ironically, Reese makes no use of Suvorov's contentious books and studies, including Suvorov's observations that the winter timing of the launch of the Finnish war exacerbated the inefficiencies of the Red Army in that conflict or that the offensive dispositions of the Red Army in 1941 in line with Soviet doctrine contributed to its catastrophe defeats. Reese walzes around a central factor in this story: if Lenin had built an uncoerced consensus behind his political goals, he would not have needed to construct such a dual track leadership of his armed forces. In the 1920s, ironically while most of the Communist leadership favored a militia organization for the armed forces, instead of a standing army, while simultaneously dreaming of exporting a world revolution.
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Bursts some bubbles
By James D. Crabtree A very good work, this book discusses the Red Army officer corps from its inception to its disintegration. The author uses several sources to look at "typical" Soviet officers at different period of the Red Army's existence, including the Purge era, post WWII, etc. Changes in demographics, schooling and political influence are all discussed. First-hand accounts are used whenever possible. I found it especially interesting that Mr. Reese chose not to perpetuate the idea that "the best and the brightest" were eliminated during the Purge, paving the way for the disaster that the Red Army suffered when Germany attacked. As the author pointed out, bad officers must have also been eliminated, since the Purge seems to have been almost arbitrary. An excellent book but not a light read.
6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Very critical of the Soviet officer corps
By 1. Reese writes that the Soviet officer failed to develop an independent identity, impose discipline in the ranks, and train small units. Reese maintains that the Soviet officer corps lacked a professional sense of identity since Soviet officers had to be members of the Communist party and this involved them in interparty disputes further political commissars with no professional abilities could be generals. Soviet officers also used commissars to try to impose order in the ranks and this made them fail to have any sense of group identity with the ranks. Furthermore, this neglect of enlisted men, made it possible for abuse to occur between NCOs and lower ranking members of the Red army. Soviet officers also did not develop small unit tactics that required individual initiative, and this greatly impeded the effectiveness of the Red Army throughout its history. The only weakness of the book is that Reese leaves out the reason why that the Soviet officer corps managed to conduct effective strategic moves, such as the 1944 summer offensive, during the Second World while failed in the area of tactics. I would greatly recommend this book for anyone has an interest Russian military history.

One of the largest and most feared military forces in the world, the Red Army was a key player in advancing the cause of Soviet socialism. Rising out of revolutionary-era citizen militias, it aspired to the greatness needed to confront its Cold War adversaries but was woefully unprepared to change with the times. In this first comprehensive study of the Soviet officer corps, Roger Reese traces the history of the Red Army from Civil War triumph through near-decimation in World War II and demoralizing quagmire in Afghanistan to the close scrutiny it came under during Gorbachev's reform era. Reese takes readers inside the Red Army to reconstruct the social and institutional dynamics that shaped its leadership and effectiveness over seventy-three years. He depicts the lives of these officers by revealing their class origins, life experiences, party loyalty, and attitudes toward professionalism. He tells how these men were shaped by Russian culture and Soviet politics—and how the Communist Party dominated every aspect of their careers but never allowed them the autonomy they needed to cultivate a high level of military effectiveness. Despite its struggle to develop and maintain professionalism, the officer corps was often hampered by factors inextricably intertwined with the Soviet state: Marxist theory, revolutionary ideology, friction between party and non-party members, and the influence of the army's political administration organs. Reese shows that by rejecting the Western bourgeois model of

military professionalism the state greatly limited its officer corps' ability to develop a more effective military. While a sense of group identity emerged among officers after World War II, it quickly lost relevance in the face of postwar challenges, especially the war in Afghanistan, which underscored fatal flaws in command leadership. *Red Commanders* offers new insight into the workings of a military giant and also restores Leon Trotsky to his rightful place in Soviet military history by featuring his ideas on building a new army from the ground up. It is an important look behind the scenes at a military establishment that continues to face leadership challenges in Russia today.

“Reese, one of the foremost social historians of the Red Army, draws upon newly available sources from the Soviet Army archives to provide a balanced study filled with new insights.”—Mark L. von Hagen, author of *Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship: The Red Army and the Soviet State, 1917–1930* “Reese’s path-breaking work is the first comprehensive history of the Red Army as a social institution.”—David Stone, author of *Hammer and Rifle: The Militarization of the Soviet Union, 1926–1933* From the Back Cover “Reese, one of the foremost social historians of the Red Army, draws upon newly available sources from the Soviet Army archives to provide a balanced study filled with new insights.”—Mark L. von Hagen, author of *Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship: The Red Army and the Soviet State, 1917-1930* “Reese's path-breaking work is the first comprehensive history of the Red Army as a social institution.”—David Stone, author of *Hammer and Rifle: The Militarization of the Soviet Union, 1926-1933* About the Author Roger R. Reese is professor of history at Texas AM University and author of *Stalin's Reluctant Soldiers: A Social History of the Red Army, 1925-1941*, also from Kansas, and *The Soviet Military Experience: A History of the Soviet Army, 1917-1991*.