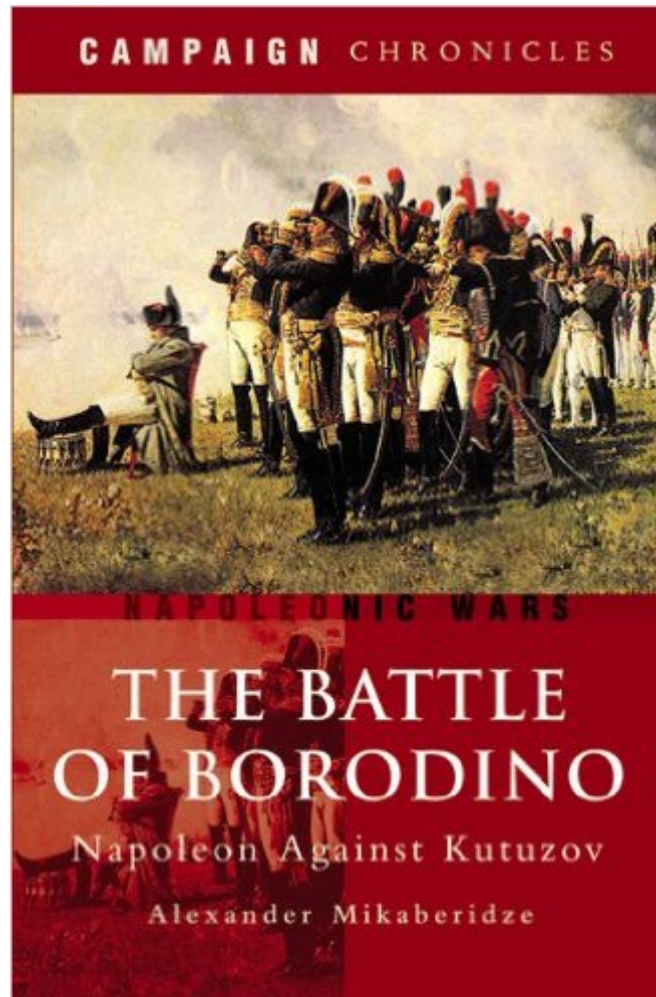


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The Battle Of Borodino: Napoleon Against Kutuzov (Campaign Chronicles)



Synopsis

On 7 September 1812 at Borodino, 75 miles west of Moscow, the armies of the Russian and French empires clashed in one of the climactic battles of the Napoleonic Wars. This horrific - and controversial - contest has fascinated historians ever since. The survival of the Russian army after Borodino was a key factor in Napoleon's eventual defeat and the utter destruction of the French army of 1812. In this thought-provoking new study, Napoleonic historian Alexander Mikaberidze reconsiders the 1812 campaign and retells the terrible story of the Borodino battle as it was seen from the Russian point of view. His original and painstakingly researched investigation of this critical episode in Napoleon's invasion of Russia provides the reader with a fresh perspective on the battle and a broader understanding of the underlying reasons for the eventual Russian triumph.

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Customer Reviews

Alexander Mikaberidze is one of the most important young Napoleonic scholars in the US, and this book is just another reason why that is the case. There have been a number of studies in English of the Battle of Borodino, fought between Napoleon's Grande Armée and a Russian army led by General Kutuzov. That battle, fought on 7 September 1812 about 75 miles west of Moscow,

captures the imagination regardless of which side you would have been on. Both the French and the Russians consider it a victory, and each side can make a decent argument (though to be technical, it was a French victory). Mikaberidze does an outstanding job of telling the story. A native of the Republic of Georgia and holding a PhD from the storied Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution at the Florida State University, Mikaberidze brings a writing style that reflects not only excellent English but fluency in several other languages (at the very least, French, Georgian and, most importantly here, Russian). He writes in a way that will be interesting to scholars and the 'just interested' alike. His writing is augmented by some outstanding graphics. And he tells the story not just from the somewhat more traditional French perspective, but also from the Russian perspective. From my experience at two international conferences held at the battlefield, I can assure you that the Russians have a very different perspective on things than the French! :-)

What makes this book especially important, however, is the incredible breadth of sources used to produce it. Whether you are a scholar wanting verification of any new information or idea, or a general reader who rarely checks the references, you want a book to be based on outstanding research.

This book has everything that you'd expect from the best of the 'Campaign Chronicle' series and one written by a man who is one of the leading 'young bloods' of Napoleonic history, Alexander Mikaberidze. Mikaberidze's lucid writing style enables the reader to easily follow the key events and to understand causes and effects. For example, in the 'Background', which covers causes of the war and the opening manoeuvres, he clearly describes what are often a confusing series of marches, retreats, separate armies and wings and failed enveloping manoeuvres. The bulk of the book is the 'Campaign Chronicle' which details the campaign in small, detailed sections, beginning with the unification of the Russian armies in early August and the manoeuvring to the battlefield of Borodino. Particularly pleasing, and somewhat of a bonus, are the 19 pages dedicated to a description of the Battle of Shervardino that preceded Borodino and gave a clear indication of the struggle that was to come two days later. This is followed by a detailed section on the armies and leaders, which includes a listing of various estimates, from a range of sources and authors, of the numbers present in the two armies, plus tables and graphs of the ages and years of experience of the officer corps of the two adversaries. The next section 'Eve of the Bloodbath' describes the battlefield, the plans of the commanders and distributions of the armies. It also includes detailed descriptions of the fortifications that were built by the Russians, complete with accompanying diagrams, which are particularly useful for wargamers and modellers. The epic battle itself is broken into three phases (6 am to 12 am (sic), 12 am (sic) to 6 pm, 6 pm to 12 pm (sic)), in all comprising

114 of the 276 pages.

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