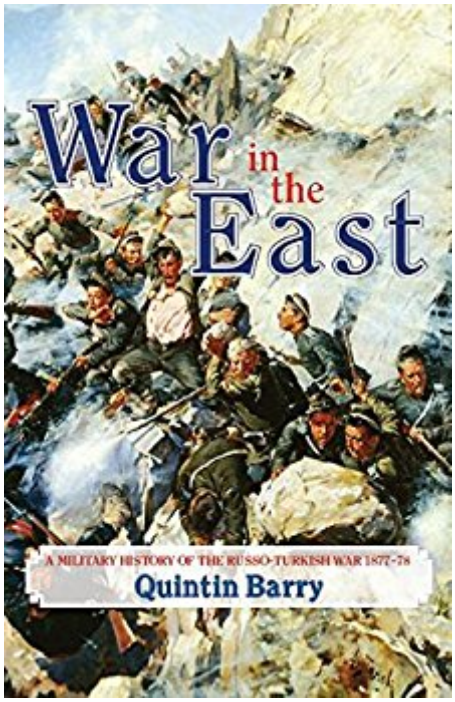
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War In The East: A Military History Of The Russo-Turkish War 1877-78



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Synopsis

When Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire in April 1877, it was the fifth time during the nineteenth century that hostilities had broken out between the two empires. On this occasion the other Great Powers had done all they could to prevent it, although public opinion in the West had been shocked by Turkey's brutal repression of the Bulgarian uprising. The war was to be fought in two distinct theaters. In Europe, as on previous occasions, the Russian objective was to cross first the Danube and then the formidable Balkan Mountains before striking for Constantinople. In Asia, over territory also contested many times before, the Russians aimed to seize Kars and then Erzerum.At first all went well for the invaders, the Turks making no serious attempt to hold the line of the Danube, while a thrust south by General Gourko succeeded in crossing the Balkans by a pass not previously considered practicable. At Plevna, however, the Russian advance stalled in the face of the determined defense of the place by the redoubtable Osman Pasha. In Asia, meanwhile, after initial success, the Russian advance was halted by defeat at Zevin. Poor strategic judgment on the part of the Turks led to their failure to take advantage of the opportunity provided by Osman, even after the Russians had suffered three bloody defeats at Plevna. Eventually, after the town was closely invested, it fell to the besiegers.In Asia, the Turks suffered a major defeat in the battle of God's Mountain, and were driven back to Erzerum, while Kars fell to a brilliant assault by the Russian forces. These defeats marked the beginning of the end for the Turks. By January 1878 the Russians were over the Balkans in force, and the last viable Turkish army was surrounded and captured at Shenovo. Armistice negotiations led to a suspension of hostilities and to the treaty of San Stefano. The other Great Powers had watched the conflict with mounting anxiety and were determined to moderate the terms of San Stefano which had imposed harsh conditions on the Ottoman Empire. This, following tortuous diplomatic negotiations, they succeeded in doing at the Congress of Berlin in July 1878.This book, the first military history of the war in English for over a century, traces the course of the campaigns, examining the many occasions on which the outcome of a battle might have gone the other way, and the performance of the combatants, both leaders and led. The book considers the extent to which the parties applied the lessons of recent wars, as well as the conclusions that could be drawn from the experience of combat with the latest weapons. It also explores the complicated motives of the Great Powers in general, and Britain in particular, in bringing about a final settlement, which postponed the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.The author's detailed text is accompanied by an extensive number of black and white illustrations, an impressive color plate section containing reproductions of paintings by artists such as Vereshchagin, plus black and white and color battle maps. Extensive orders of battle are also

provided.This is the latest title in Helion’s ground-breaking series of 19th Century studies, and will again appear in hardback as a strictly limited edition printing of 1,000 copies, each individually numbered and signed by the author on a decorative title page.

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Customer Reviews

I have found it very hard to find a book on the 1877-78 war. This was a good one. It had maps which helped. Even more maps would have made it better. It was very thorough. There was a good grasp of the significance of the various battles and the eventual peace treaty and final revisions in Berlin. I always wondered how Britain got Cyprus. It was because of the negotiations following this war.

great

This is a very good popular history of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, but I’m giving it only four stars because that’s what it is, a good rehash of the more common English-language books. If a German tried to write a book on the American Civil War using only German-language sources, we would justifiably be skeptical. Yet here is Mr. Barry writing about a war between Russia and the

Ottoman Empire and there does not seem to be a single Russian-language source. This is too bad, because there is a tremendous amount of Russian material on this battle, much of it online. There is a multi-volume history, an even larger compilation of contemporary military documents, a number of regimental histories, and many books by participants. So when Mr. Barry writes on page 265 that "History does not record whether there was a great deal of consideration given to alternatives to an assault on Plevna...," he should have added "in English." Luckily for us, the English-language works are pretty good, from Maurice's strategical analysis written in 1905, Lt. Greene's book written in 1879, and von Herbert's book published in 1895, to Bruce Menning's more modern work. Mr. Barry has neglected several important sources in English however, including David Rich's book on the Russian General Staff, many relevant articles in contemporary military journals that are on Google Books, and to be really thorough, important documents at the UK archives.The book is blessed with some of the best maps in any work of history, informative drawings by newspaper artists, and some fantastic reproductions of paintings of battle scenes. Like other Helion books, the book uses very high quality paper which makes the book weigh a lot but really does justice to the maps and pictures.The above criticisms notwithstanding, the book is a very good general history of the battle but it doesn't break any new ground. The author has done us a service by bringing a little-known war back into the public's eye (or the eye of the thousand or so of us who buy the limited-edition hard copy!).

A wonderful history of the Russo-Turkish War - well written, interesting, and compelling. The lavish illustrations and myriad of wonderful maps sets this book ahead of the majority of history books published today. But it comes at a cost. This is an expensive book (even in Kindle format) well beyond the reach of the average reader. And yet it is a worthwhile investment for those interested in good history and in an important war that continues to have repercussions, as Russia and Turkey square off again for control and influence in southeastern Europe and the Caucasus.

Quentin Barry's War In The East offers a detailed analysis of the Russo Turkish War of 1877. It is replete with color maps and pictures from the period, orders of battle, everything a true historian could want. The text is a bit dry at times but still offers fascinating insight. It is particularly insightful of the Balkan Campaign. This covers a neglected period seldom written about. Rupert Furneaux's Siege of Plevna, and W.E.D. Allen's Caucasian Battlefields date from the 1950's covering this topic and lack the breadth and detail of this work, though they are classics in their own right.

A very good book.

A well written and documented book of a rather obscure event in World History.

I applaud this grand effort at compiling a wonderfully detailed history of an admittedly obscure but important war from eastern Europe. Rich details emerge from Barry's accounts of the major campaigns as well as small-scale skirmishes in a bloody war fought in the Caucasus and Balkans. In this regard, the author makes use of extensive accounts left by Western journalists as well as original archival sources. The book is richly illustrated with sketches (mostly produced by sketch artists from war-time journals). I feel this book has given me an understanding of the grand strategy, major personalities and political negotiations involved with this war. Of equal value, I have also developed an appreciation of the war from the common soldier's perspective. It is evident from the author's research that sources on Russia are far more accessible than records from the Ottoman Turkish side. Highly recommended.

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