

To what extent did the battle of stalingrad lead to germany's defeat during world...



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To What Extent Did the Battle of Stalingrad lead to Germany's Defeat during World War 2?

Table of Contents

Section 1: Identification and Evaluation of Sources.....	3
Section 2: Investigation.....	4
Section 3: Reflection.....	8
Bibliography.....	10

Section 1: Identification and Evaluation of Sources

This investigation will explore the question: To what extent did the Battle of Stalingrad from 1923-1943 lead to Germany's defeat in World War 2? This investigation will focus on the time period from 1940-1945 during the bulk of the war. This is a worthwhile investigation because this battle was a turning point in World War 2.

The first source that is evaluated is the diary entry of William Hoffman during the Battle of Stalingrad. The origin is from a diary entry. The purpose of the source in this investigation is that it can explore the experiences in the point of view of the soldiers who actually fought in the Battle of Stalingrad. The content is that it provides information on the experiences of the German soldiers during the Battle of Stalingrad where William Hoffman is a German soldier who provides a first hand account of this battle from the German perspective. This source is valuable because it comes from a first hand experience of a German soldier so there is valid evidence of the events of <https://assignbuster.com/to-what-extent-did-the-battle-of-stalingrad-lead-to-germanys-defeat-during-world-war-2/>

the war. The source is also valuable because a soldier who has experienced the war first hand can explain the story of the battle in a much more detailed fashion than from an outsider who did not take part in the battle. However, this source is also limited in that it only explores the German perspective of the battle. The German soldier's strategies during the war probably differed from that of the Russian soldier. This source's main value is it gives a more detailed recollection of the first hand experiences during the Battle of Stalingrad.

The second source that is evaluated is the book Victory at Stalingrad by Geoffrey Roberts. The origin of the source is that it was published in 2002 under the publishing company Taylor and Francis. The purpose of this source is that it provides a detailed and thorough analysis of the different events in the Battle of Stalingrad. Roberts analyzes the German and Russian perspectives of the war. He highlights how the Battle of Stalingrad affected the mental strength between these two world powers. Roberts also takes a closer look at how effective the military strategies of the Germans and Soviets were. This source is valuable because it is written from an established writer who has researched deeply into the specifics of the battle. This source is also valuable in that since this book was published in 2002, the author has many other sources that he can refer back on to create a deeper analysis. This source is also valuable that the author analyzes the perspectives of both the Germans and the Russians during the Battle of Stalingrad. Since this book is written from an outsider's perspective, there could be less bias than if it was written from a German or Russian perspective. However, this source is limited in that the author can only rely

on written records and some of those records may be inaccurate. Another limitation is that most of the points the author made were more of generalizations than specifics. Overall, this source provides a thorough and precise analysis of the Battle of Stalingrad from a more objective standpoint.

Section 2: Investigation

Many historians would agree that the Battle of Stalingrad was an important battle during World War 2. This battle could have propelled the Germans to a successful victory against the Russians. In addition, this battle would mark huge progress in Germany's goal to conquer all of Europe. Instead, the Russians stopped the Germans and it led to a big victory for the Allied Powers. This marked a turning point in World War 2 because the Germans were dominating and conquering most of Europe before the Battle of Stalingrad. The Battle of Stalingrad led to Germany's defeat in 1945 during World War 2 because of the diverse geography, harsh weather, and the aggressive military of the Soviet Union.

The geography and weather of the Soviet Union impacted the outcome of the Battle of Stalingrad. Germany wanted to conquer Stalingrad because it was a major industrial city along the Volga River. (The Battle of Stalingrad). It was a major transportation route for oil so Germany's goal was to cut off Soviet supplies in the area in order to get oil (Battle of Stalingrad). If the Germans ended up victorious and getting Stalingrad, Germany would get control over the USSR and give Germany more power. The Germans captured almost all of the city. But, then winter came and the Germans began to suffer in the harsh conditions (MacDonald 245). The German

soldiers became easily fatigued and were depleted of resources. The vast geography of the Soviet Union proved too tough of a task for the Germans to handle. The Germans were faced with the tough task of going through Siberia which was very mountainous. The Germans struggled during the harsh winters and did not have enough energy to fight the Soviets. For the Soviets, they knew the terrain well and used that advantage to build defensive forces to weaken their army. The combination of geography and weather of the Soviet Union was an important factor for the Soviet victory at the Battle of Stalingrad.

The Soviet Union's military strategy also overwhelmed the Germans. Hitler's confidence and ambition to overtake the city also led to his ineffective military tactics. Hitler had " every intention of taking Stalingrad very quickly at the beginning of the battle" but the Red Army " continued to hold strong and deter the Germans at every turn" (Liddl 209). The Soviet Union was the underdog coming into the Battle of Stalingrad but their strategy led them to victory. The Soviet Union recognized Hitler's quest for its oil and Stalin established " the Stalingrad Front which consisted of 38 divisions and 3 reserve armies" (Roberts 64). In November 1942, German military general Paulus, who led the 6th army, had already had thousands of casualties and still had no control of the city (Roberts 86). Even worse was that his soldiers were " battered and exhausted, and incapable of serious offensive action in the city" (Roberts 86). During the winter of 1942, the German soldiers were forced into defensive positions and wait until the spring (Roberts 86). The Soviets were able to stop the Blitzkrieg because the only way it would work is if the Germans kept going forward. The Soviets mainly just guarded the

Volga River and Stalingrad with air artilleries and launched relentless counter attacks on Germany to wear them down and weaken the soldiers. Hitler's ambition to invade the Soviet Union came with some harsh consequences and the most significant issue was that Hitler was forced to fight a two front war. The German morale " was high from the very beginning" (Liddl 208) and they were able to sustain their confidence through their " victories on the battlefield" (Liddl 208). Both countries felt the importance and pressure of winning the Battle of Stalingrad (Liddl 210). As soon as the Germans started losing more ground in Stalingrad, their confidence and morale started to decline significantly (Liddl 212). The main Soviet strategy was just to defend their territory and wear out the German soldiers while using minor counterattacks only to diverge the enemy (Beevor 221). The Soviets were able to psychologically wear down the Germans and make them slowly lose motivation. The Soviets were clearly winning this war of attrition and the Germans had no answer to it. The Germans also underestimated how powerful and efficient Soviet weapon production was during the battle. Stalin employed thousands of women into the workforce, including mothers and daughters, to speed up the production of tanks (Beevor 224). The women in the Soviet Union were also key contributors to the Soviet victory. Hitler made the costly mistake to fight a two front war and the Soviets took advantage of their mistakes by defending and using counter attacks. The Soviets never lost faith by persevering through hardships and never giving up until they reached victory. Unfortunately, the Germans lost confidence because of Hitler's mistake of dividing the 6th Army which ultimately led to their defeat.

In conclusion, the Soviet victory at the Battle of Stalingrad proved to be a huge turning point of World War 2. The war was a humiliating defeat for the Germans and a significant victory for the Soviet Union. This battle could have changed the outcome of World War 2 if the Germans had won. The conditions in Stalingrad were not ideal for the Germans as the cold winters caused the German soldiers to lose their battle spirit. On the other hand, the Soviets were ready to take advantage of any mistakes that the Germans made. The Soviets fought relentlessly against the Germans and had the will, perseverance, and determination to triumph in Stalingrad because they recognized the implications if Germany took their country. The Germans were simply worn out from trying to invade Russia. The Germans were not able to recover from this humiliating defeat and this ultimately led to their defeat and surrender at the end of World War 2.

Section 3: Reflection

This investigation has allowed me to gain valuable experience about the methods that historians use, such as drawing inferences to the records of a historical event, to investigate a subject and the challenges that they face. After doing this investigation, I have developed some valuable skills that are important for historians to have such as analyzing a variety of primary and secondary sources, referencing specific evidence pertaining to the investigation, and drawing conclusions based on the evidence and sources. I was able to analyze a variety of sources with different perspectives and reach a viable conclusion. To carry out this investigation, I read two books by renowned historians, primary documents, and academic journals which are all common methods used by historians.

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Historians face many challenges when completing an investigation. One of these challenges is determining which perspectives are more valid. In history, there is no absolute truth or certainty about one correct answer. The historian has to determine the validity of each source and pick which pieces of evidence are the most accurate. Perspectives are also not perfect because there will always be different interpretations from the viewpoints of different authors. Some perspectives have more truth and accuracy than others. For example, I read two books and I found that their styles were very similar in that they were both written from an outsider's perspective and they both analyzed the specifics of the events. Both of the sources analyzed the German and Russian perspectives but I found the book written by Roberts more useful because he analyzed the perspectives of the battle in a more precise and straightforward way. Beevor's book had more description of what happened than the implications that the Battle of Stalingrad had on the Germans and Russians. I found that the primary source of William Hoffman's diary less useful than the two books because while he does provide inside information about the battle, he only explores it from the German perspective and that leads to more bias than what the two books offered. Based on this analysis, I believe that the Battle of Stalingrad had a large impact on Germany's defeat during World War 2.

Overall, this investigation has given me valuable insight into the complexity involved in interpreting a historical event. I also gain a better understanding of how to analyze a variety of sources with different perspectives in order to reach justifiable conclusions.

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