

Why did operation barbarossa fail?



Before Operation Barbarossa was launched, Hitler and Germany have great success on invasion and battles, except Battle of Britain. Hitler invaded Poland in 1931, attacked Belgium, France, and Holland, battle with Britain. But when he comes to invading Soviet Union, the operation was the beginning of Hitler's downfall. Operation Barbarossa is a code name for German's invasion of USSR. That operation was launch on June 22, 1941, and because it was launched at that time, Germany has to deal with one of the biggest problem when they were invading Soviet Union – winter. It was the largest military attack in World War Two. Operation Barbarossa was the turning point of World War Two, and reason why is because the invasion of Soviet Union is one of the biggest mistakes Hitler makes in World War Two. The idea of invading Soviet Union is not the problem, but the way Hitler did it. Operation Barbarossa failed because Germany used weak military forces, had poor logistics and planning, and failed to win the Battle of Stalingrad, which is one of the main battles in Operation Barbarossa.

First of all, Germany has weak army and military forces. Their condition, military forces, army were weaker than Red army. One of the main problems is the winter in Russia. German's army and military forces can't handle the winter in Russia. " The German tanks had narrow treads with little traction and poor flotation in mud. In contrast, the new generation of Soviet tanks such as the T-34 and KV had wider tracks and were far more mobile in these conditions." (Operation Barbarossa) According to the information above, Soviet Union has more reliable and improved vehicles than Germany's. Their military forces such as tanks were not good as Soviet Union's. They were also not prepared for the weather and Soviet Union's poor road network,

even reaching to certain destination was also hard for them. “ Consequently, the troops were not equipped with adequate cold-weather gear, and some soldiers had to pack newspapers into their jackets to stay warm while temperatures dropped to record levels of at least -30 °C (-22 °F). To operate furnaces and heaters, the Germans also burned precious fuel that was difficult to re-supply.” (Operation Barbarossa)

Besides transportation problem caused by the winter, German’s army were also affected by the winter. Their equipment and gears were not fit for the weather. For example, they have to burn fuel, which is a very important supplies and very hard to get, to keep them warm. On the other hand, Soviet Union’s troops have warmer clothing. Their vehicles such as aircraft also weren’t in a good condition, because sometimes fuel will freezes and soldiers will have to took time to fixed it, otherwise those vehicles can not be used. Lubricants for vehicles were also useless as well in such a cold weather in Russia. These supplies such as lubricants, oil, fuel, were extremely important, because these supplies keep German’s military forces such as guns, vehicles in action and a good condition.

Second reasons were German’s poor logistics and planning strategy. One of the reasons is because Germany was way too confidents, they’ve over underestimated Soviet Union. That leads to unrealistic, poor strategy and logistics. “ The invasion had three main objectives. Army Group Center, consisting of 1. 3 million troops, 2, 600 tanks and 7, 800 artillery pieces, mounted a massive drive on Moscow. Meanwhile, Army Group North, consisting of 700, 000 troops, 770 tanks and 4, 000 artillery pieces.” (Erik Sass, Operation Barbarossa: The Biggest Military Adventure in History) Hitler

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uses the strategy called “ blitzkrieg”, or “ lightning war”. This is the same strategy Hitler use to defeat France and Poland, but this doesn’t work on Soviet Union. Soviet Union was also surprised by this invasion, due to Stalin’s belief Germany won’t attack it’s own allied, especially after signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Due to the difficulty of getting fuel for supplies, Germany sometimes has not enough fuel to reach to the destination. Their army doesn’t have enough ammunition and other supplies as well. Food was never important to Hitler. Because it is hard to get supplies while in the frontline of battlefield or marching toward the heartland of Russia, Hitler has to choose between food, ammunition, and warm clothes, Hitler mostly choose ammunition instead of others. “ Commanders in the field relied on foraging local livestock to feed the soldiers and this continued until such time when shortages resulted in troops eating their units’ horses.” (MAJ Loganathan, Failure Of Logistics In “ Operation Barbarossa” And Its Relevance Today) By September 1941, Germany was winning and the invasion was successful so far. They have already conquered Kiev and Odessa, and pushing forward to Leningrad and Moscow. “ By December 1941, the combined German armies had killed 360, 000 Soviet soldiers, wounded one million, and captured two million more, for total Red Army losses of around 3. 4 million by the end of the year. In six months, German troops and their allies advanced up to 600 miles and occupied over 500, 000 square miles of Soviet territory, home to 75 million people.” (Erik Sass, Operation Barbarossa: The Biggest Military Adventure in History)

Finally, Germany lost the battle of Stalingrad, which is the turning point of this operation. Before this battle, Hitler was mostly success in this invasion. “

Russians consider it to be the greatest battle of their Great Patriotic War, and most historians consider it to be the greatest battle of the entire conflict.”

(Battle of Stalingrad) The Battle of Stalingrad was started at 17 July 1942, in this battle Soviet Union successfully defend the city of Stalingrad. One of the reasons why Stalingrad is important is that it was Russia’s main communication center in the south. German’s commander was General Paulus, and his main goal was to secure the oil field in Caucasus, on the other hand, Russia would try not to let Germany secure the oil field. German’s army had to deal with and handle the winter in Russia while fighting with Soviet Union. That makes Germany harder to defeat their enemies.

Zhukov, Russian commander, used strategy to go around the city and trap German’s army. At this point, Hitler still refused to give up, and commanded General Paulus to hold their ground. “ Hitler ordered that Paulus should fight to the last bullet, and to encourage Paulus, he promoted him to field marshal. However, by the end of January 1943, the Germans could do nothing else but surrender. Paulus surrendered the army in the southern sector on January 31st while General Schreck surrendered the northern group on February 2nd, 1943.” (Battle of Stalingrad) 91, 000 soldiers were taken as prisoners and about 150, 000 men were lost. That’s a huge lost for Germany and their military had been weaken since then.

In conclusion, Operation Barbarossa was one of the greatest mistakes Hitler had made. It was the turning point of World War Two. Operation Barbarossa failed because Germany used weak military forces, had poor logistics and planning, and failed to win the Battle of Stalingrad, which is one of the main

battles in Operation Barbarossa. The major problem that leads to the failure of this operation was the winter in Russia. That cause many major and minor problems such as weaker military forces, poor transportation. Russian army also has better equipment, gears, vehicles that suit the situation more. Second is that Germany has poor logistics and planning strategy. Germany has over underestimated Soviet Union, and their army, supplies were too confident. That leads to unrealistic, poor strategy and logistics. Finally, Germany lost the Battle of Stalingrad, which is a important major battle in Operation Barbarossa. German's army was surrounded and Hitler makes the wrong call.

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