



# Red Army

*Ralph Peters*

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## **Red Army** Ralph Peters

In the heart of a European forest, a young private dreams of home and rock 'n roll. At command headquarters, a four-star general pursues a family tradition of military honor that reaches back centuries. They could be any two soldiers in the world. It could be any army - but it's not. The place is the East German border. The time is tomorrow - and the Soviet Army is about to attack. . .

While western leaders debate the use of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Army and its Warsaw Pact Allies crash across West Germany, exploiting the NATO armies' deadly lack of preparation. In a matter of days, refugees clog the roads and the cities are in shambles. The Soviet Army wages a brutal battle for Europe - even as the hidden rivalries and divided loyalties within its ranks began to emerge.

In this extraordinary, controversial novel, author **Ralph Peters** a U.S. Army intelligence officer specializing in the Soviet military - takes us inside an army of dozens of languages and ethnic backgrounds, into the belly of an armored personnel carrier, the cockpit of a MIG, and onto the bloody battlefield where sophisticated tanks duel like ancient, flame-spewing dragons.

From Chief of Staff Chibisov, fighting his ethnic heritage, to the daring tank commander Bezarin, locked in an unforgettable duel of wits with a British division, from bitter veterans of Afghanistan to raw recruits, a host of vivid characters are swept up in the chaos and drama. Some will be heroes. Some will die, and others will have their souls scarred forever.

As the NATO armies make their last, desperate stands - divided by Soviet maneuvers and their own political squabbling - *Red Army* thunders to a truly frightening climax.

Told entirely from a Russian point of view, *Red Army* is a riveting tour de force. More than a portrait of high-tech modern warfare, it is a fascinating novel of human strengths and weaknesses - a chilling look at the one army in the world that may have the power to defeat us.

## **Red Army Details**

Date : Published March 1st 1990 by Pocket Books (first published May 1989)

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Author : Ralph Peters

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## From Reader Review Red Army for online ebook

### David Garvin says

The story is very well-written; however, the author's prejudices against the non-American NATO allies is blatant. Having said that, this is a must-read for anyone interested in the "Cold-War-Turned-Hot" genre of the 1980s.

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### Daniel says

This is a great novel. It brings together the action of a Third World War novel with the detailed account of personal stories. I read this book slowly and thought a lot and really savored it. Books like this really bring out the truth and horrible nature of war on an individual level. War is not great. I greatly appreciate the talents of the author to bring all the great aspects of this book into one great moving force.

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### Andrew says

A very solid entry in the technothriller genre which takes the unique approach of looking at a war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact from the Soviet-side. An easier read due to the lack of too much technobabble and also the less-than-rounded characters, contrasted with other contemporary writers and their works, it is a useful antidote to the incessant 'west wins' finale of so many books from the genre/period.

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### Anthony says

A gritty, yet enjoyable anti-war war novel. The story is told from the perspective of Soviet soldiers, from front commanders to artillerymen, tankers and infantrymen, and focuses on the logistical, psychological and moral struggles of in hypothetical war between USSR and NATO forces in Germany. While there are many passages describing front line fighting, the author also incorporates military organization, logistics and strategy in the book. Although the book was published in 1989, it wasn't too dated - the intricacies of post-WW2 warfare aren't really explored in contemporary war movies/games.

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### Russell Phillips says

When I first read this, the idea of the cold war turning hot and the Warsaw Pact invading western Europe was still a possibility. Now, of course, it's more alternative history than a possible future.

It's very different reading it now, but it's still a good book, and still worth reading. As the author says, the book is "not about the hardware or even the mission, but about the men". That makes it unusual within the genre. I only once saw a piece of equipment named (an F-16), every other time they are given generic names or descriptions.

This focus on men over machines, and particularly the author's decision to only tell the story from the Soviet

point of view, make the book a very interesting read. It's interesting to see things from a Soviet point of view, and Peters has some intriguing ideas about how the Soviets would have done things.

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### **Steve says**

Probably the best alt-history book about WWII that I've read. Posits a future where the Soviet military did far better than anyone anticipated. Well-written and gives a view of the enemy that is mostly lacking in books of this type.

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### **Mikkel says**

A worthwhile read!

An excellent in-depth account of the war that never happened from the point-of-view of the Red Army. Ralph Peters takes the reader through a range of personal accounts of the war presenting both military-technical as well as cultural-personal aspects of a Warsaw Pact invasion on the European central front. Peters eloquently portrays the moral, mental, and physical aspects from the point-of-view of the front commander down to the individual motor-rifleman tagging along in his BMP. At the same time Ralph Peters drives home an excellent point about NATO cohesion and doctrinal challenges - which are as relevant today as back then.

At the macro level the book demonstrates easily digestible insights into Soviet military-science and the execution of deep battle as envisioned by Tukhachevsky. For a deeper insight into the execution of maneuver warfare the reader is suggested to consult: Leonhard, Robert R. *The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver-Warfare Theory and Airland Battle*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1994. In addition, a brief google search will reveal a range of excellent cold-war documents on both Soviet deep battle and the situation on the European central front in the 1980's.

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### **Mieczyslaw Kasprzyk says**

The Soviets invade West Germany in a lightning stroke. Brutal fighting ensues as the front gives way... The Soviets prove to be very successful in what is, after all, a conventional land war. In just three days the Rhine is in sight, can anything stop the Red Army? "War was only about winning. Killing the other one before he killed you." says one of the main characters of the book, and indeed it is about killing, putting pressure on your opponents, driving forward. It is also about ordinary soldiers fighting, thinking about their families back home and about staying alive. Death walks among them, indiscriminate and brutal.

This is an interesting read but it also raises many questions. Why, for example, have the Soviets decided to attack anyway, what has driven them to this? Why are the allies, NATO, so ill-prepared? Surely there was a period of tension leading up to the event? The answer lies in the fact that the American author doesn't have much faith in NATO and feels that America is really a bit misguided to be committed to it. The American forces turn out to be the only real counter to the Soviet attack, efficient and destructive whilst their other allies prove to be slow, poorly-coordinated, and stereotyped.

## Liam says

I keep coming back to this book for some reason- when this was published in 1989, Ralph Peters was a serving officer of the U.S. Army, an Intelligence officer like my father and my 8th grade 'Language Exploration' teacher, Mr. Smith. The latter two were both graduates of the U.S. Army Language School at Monterey, California; my father was a Chinese linguist, and Mr. Smith was a Russian linguist & area specialist as Mr. Peters was. I am somewhat leery of Mr. Peters' current political outlook & activities, but when he wrote this book he was just developing into a promising young writer on Military Affairs. Many people, including myself, have often said that Fiction can sometimes give one a better understanding of historical events than History itself. In terms of understanding the officers & men who served in the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union during the 1970s & 1980s, I would recommend reading both 'Red Army' and also 'Feast Of Bones' by Daniel P. Bolger (another U.S. Army officer, a rough contemporary of Mr. Peters, who stayed in the service and got his second star last May). I myself have only a passing interest in Russia/Eastern Europe, but I feel that in order to understand 20th Century Military History one must have at least a passing familiarity with the structure and outlook of all major politico-military actors of those times. Fortunately, both this book and General Bolger's book referenced above are well written and engrossing stories in their own right, and would possibly make enjoyable reading even for someone with little or no interest in Military Affairs.

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## Dane Sørensen says

I loved this book from the first time I picked it up. In my teen years I read a lot of Tom Clancy so I was pretty well up to speed on 1980's weapon systems, and since I'd already ground through *Red Storm Rising* I thought I knew what I was in for here.

I was mistaken.

*Red Army* is not *Red Storm Rising*. In fact it's almost the anti-techno thriller, never getting bogged down in technology porn because sometimes a tank is just a tank. The focus is squarely, emphatically, on the characters, every one of whom is a real, relatable person who we want to see come out of this hellish experience alive. The story is driven by the impact of World War III on the minds and bodies of real people, and that's a very different kind of storytelling.

Being told from the Soviet point of view, it is also mercifully free of flag-waving Americans and their corny "Helluva thing, Mike" dialogue that infest most novels of this type. Instead we get the carefully chosen words of our officer-and-a-gentleman General Malinsky, the man charged with planning a full-scale invasion of West Germany. We get the hopefulness of Bezarin, whose ruthless capability and naivete make him feel like someone we could actually meet in the real world. We also get more repulsive creatures like Starukhin, the bully with the command tent, whose personal hatred for the Jewish staff officer Chibisov corrupts everything they achieve together.

It's a product of its time, having been written at the same time Rumsfeld was giving his infamous "They've been busy" speeches about the largely imagined power of the Soviet military. It was also unfortunate to be released in 1989, just as the Soviet Union was beginning its great breakup (although I think we're all glad it was never vindicated by history). And ultimately its *blitzkrieg*-on-steroids portrayal of Deep Operations was proven flawed by Desert Storm, where it turned out Clancy was right about the power and flexibility of

modern defenses. But still... it's a vividly real picture of war in the (almost) modern era, contrasting the burning tanks and attrition of the fast-moving front with the traffic control disasters being faced by the high command, and at the climax, a chillingly sensible discussion of what to do if the battlefield goes nuclear.

So if you're after another techno-thriller, this ain't it. But if you're after a moving, tragic story of the human cost of war, or maybe a slice of alternate history, *Red Army* is brilliant.

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### **Leo says**

Ever wonder what WWIII would have been like from the Red Hordes perspective? I enjoyed this book and I think you will too.

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### **John says**

Now an obsolete Cold War era thriller. But it scared the heck out of me as an Army private in 1990!

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### **Aditya Pareek says**

Col. Ralph Peters was the only man on this planet with balls enough to portray a WWIII where Sovetski soyuz wins. Hats off to the most visible American foreign and military policy commentator.

The tank battles in his prose, deep in west germany would always echo in my head.  
"LOAD SABOT, AIM, FIRE".

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### **Belhor says**

One of the best books I've read. I've never seen a military novel with such excellence.

The movement of the forces, logistics and strategic - even tactical - details are astonishing and very realistic. Characters are also very well developed.

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### **Odhran says**

Possibly my favourite WWIII alt-history, because it's written from the side of the Soviets and doesn't rely on massive coincidences and chance in favour of NATO (both are very common, and quite annoying.)

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