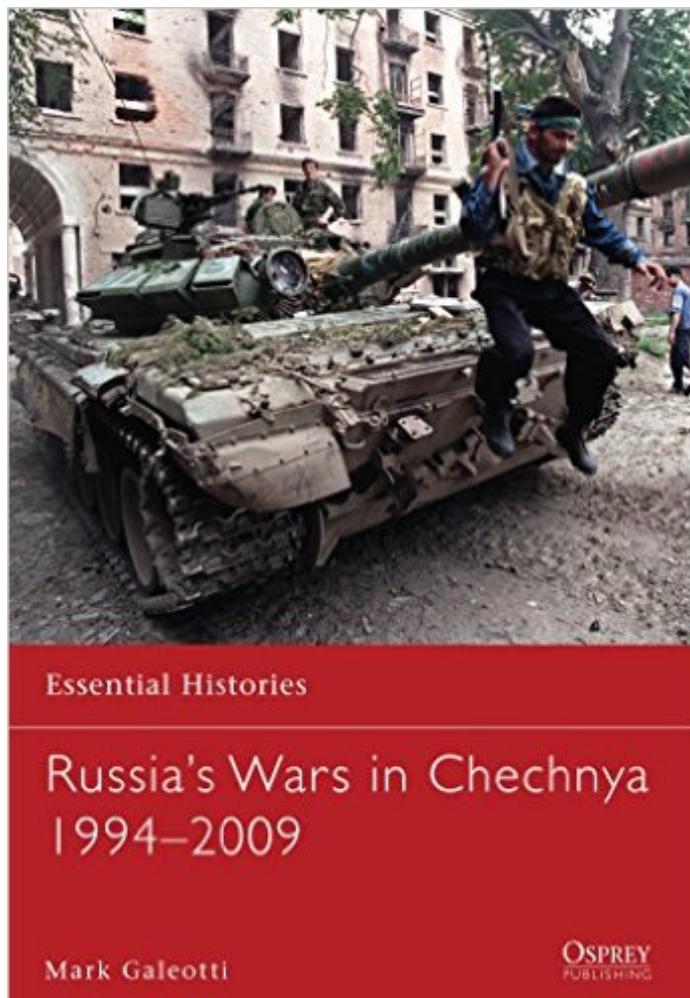


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Russia's Wars In Chechnya 1994-2009 (Essential Histories)



Synopsis

Featuring specially drawn full-color mapping and drawing upon a wide range of sources, this succinct account explains the origins, history and consequences of Russia's wars in Chechnya, thereby shedding new light on the history - and prospects - of that troubled region. Mark Galeotti, an expert on the conflict, traces the progress of the wars, from the initial Russian advance through to urban battles such as Grozny, and the prolonged guerrilla warfare based in the mountainous regions that is common to both wars. He assesses how the wars have torn apart the fabric of Chechen society and their impact on Russia itself, where they have influenced presidential elections and widened the gulf between the military and the rest of society. These were savage conflicts which combined at different times the characteristics of an imperial war, a civil war and a terrorist campaign. The rich tradition of banditry in Chechnya, exemplified by the disproportionately large numbers of Chechens in the Spetsnaz special forces, gave the conflict its particular character, as did the steady shift from the initial nationalism to being inspired by a wider Islamic jihad.

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Customer Reviews

The conflicts in Chechnya are fascinating. The fifteen years that encompassed two wars (1994-96 and 1999-2009) provide huge lessons in asymmetrical warfare and hinted at growing Muslim militancy. To say the Russians were tested and often bested is an understatement. Their military was at a historic low point. It lacked funding, training, and discipline. Units were undermanned and inter-service and unit cohesion was nonexistent. The book suggests the military was operating on a

budget at least 60% deficient. This allowed no modernization or progression in doctrine. That is why during the first war, they paid for a strict adherence to Cold War mass mechanized fighting. Meanwhile, the Chechens were innovative and determined. Chechens have historically been fierce mountaineers with a reputation as bandits and excellent guerrilla fighters. They harboured deep resentment towards Russia given Stalin had once deported their entire nation. That mass movement is known as The Exodus (Chechens now refer to Putin as Stalin). This did not stop many of them from serving in the Soviet and Russian forces and then using that expertise and knowledge in their favour. Chechens adapted their tactics including "hugging" Russian units to avoid airstrikes and setting up resistance in basements as Russian tank guns could not depress low enough to hit them. All the while, the Russians had forgot much of what they learned the hard way fighting in Afghanistan. Much of the Western powers enjoyed the fact that Russia experienced such difficulty. Unfortunately, they did not examine the conflict closely enough to get a sense of where the world was heading. Russia went through five commanders in two years in the first war and six in the latter.

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