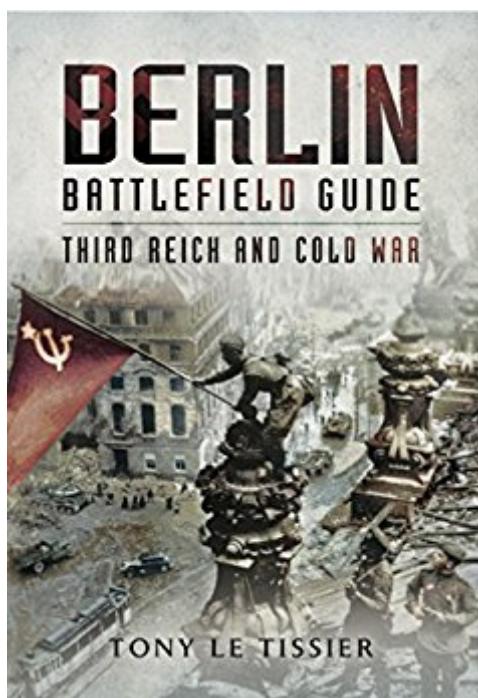


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# Berlin Battlefield Guide: Third Reich And Cold War



## **Synopsis**

On 16 April 1945 the Red Army unleashed a colossal offensive against Berlin with the aim of destroying Hitler's armies in the East and capturing the German capital before the Western Allies. Over two million soldiers confronted each other in the last act in the war against Nazi Germany. In the course of the next three weeks, relentless Soviet assaults crashed against a desperate, sometimes suicidal defense, and the historic city was turned into a vast battleground. This was the climax of an awful conflict. It represented the death struggle of Hitler's Third Reich and the supreme achievement of Stalin's forces, and the story of the battle has fascinated students of warfare ever since. Yet this epic contest can only be understood by visiting the sites of the battle on the ground, on the outskirts of the city, in the suburbs, in the city center where the final dramatic combat took place. And this is the aim of Tony Le Tissier's definitive guide to the Battle of Berlin.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

BBG does a good job of going into deep detail about what happened where in the Battle for Berlin. If you want to know which units, both German and Soviet, were where--down to streets and blocks--

plus the path of the advance, then this book is a great resource. For a detailed researcher, it's so good that it can be a forensic tool that helps you easily find the exact places where the outlined events took place. The big drawback of this book is that if you're new to researching the Battle for Berlin, this book is not for beginners. It presupposes that you have big picture knowledge of who and what happened where. If you are a beginner start with Cornelius Ryan's, "The Last Battle" or Anthony Bevor's, "The Fall of Berlin 1945". The book also does a good job of detailing Cold War sites which you could use whether you were a beginner or seasoned researcher. However, it is an incomplete Cold War resource. Really, it is only one of many you could use to figure out what happened where. Consider others such as the excellent, well organized book by Maik Kopleck, "Pastfinder Berlin 1945-1989: Traces of German History". Kopleck also publishes a Pastfinder Berlin book for the Nazi period, 1933-1945 which is outstanding. You might have to order Kopleck's books from .de or .co.uk.

A useful guide in handy size. Much valuable material. The walking/touring routes are a bit overlong to be practical and the author fail to mention some important sights, while at the same time detailing great stuff I'd never heard about before, a fairly ideoyncratic and eclectic selection. Some of the material seems recycled from "Berlin: Then and Now". I echo the sentiments of an earlier reviewer that the work is somewhat light on Cold War era material, for example entirely omitting mention of one of the few still standing East German watch towers, one hidden behind buildings just south of Leipziger Platz. Only passing references to the ugly atrocities against the civilian Berlin population, the ensuing starvation, the clearing of the rubble, the rebuilding after the war and again after unification. He is also light in discussing the occupation years, mentioning the location of only a few of the allied kasernes and leaving out training areas, etc., which would be of interest to any GI who served in Germany over the decades after the War. I do get the sense that some of the text was written ten years ago or earlier and does not have the benefit of the historical view that's now formed about what is and isn't important. Some of the discussion is light weight and seems a bit off, such as the discussion of the state of the FuehrerBunker and the final Berlin surrender to the Russians. The writing style strikes a contemporary American as an older and more stilted UK English with the use of some terms that I don't think are used any longer on either side of the Atlantic. Also, not very well proof-read. The author mistakes Jesse Owens for Jesse James, not once but at least twice! My criticisms are mainly about style and his choices of emphasis. Don't let these criticisms deter you much, because, all-in-all, and despite some defects, I think that it is a most interesting and valuable book with much information that is hard or impossible for an English

speaker to find elsewhere, particularly about the many battles and skirmishes in Seelow Heights, in the villages surrounding Berlin, and the neighborhood street fighting in Berlin proper. The author is clearly the master of these facts and provides abundant narrations from first-hand observers. Just don't take and swallow everything this book offers unchewed and undigested, keep a critical mind toward the contents, and don't make it your only source for a WWII-Cold War history visit to Berlin. I totally agree with another reviewer who suggested that history visitors obtain Kopleck's Pastfinder Berlin book for the Nazi period, 1933-1945, between the two, and with the use of contemporary maps and a map showing the path of the Wall, you will have what you need to find and experience the sites upon which much of the history of the 20th Century turned. BTW, most of the Pastfinder books are truly excellent, though it's hard to obtain some of them.

Excellent book!!! Well written and with many tips for anyone!!!

Very interesting and enjoyed the book. Now I know where to go next time I visit Gsrmany and Berlin

Very interesting. Thanks.

I am a big fan of Tony Le Tissier. Although this is not like most of His regular works. It is a valuable and interesting read. Especially for anybody interested in Military History or traveling to Berlin. If You have both, then it is a win-win.

BERLIN BATTLEFIELD GUIDE: THIRD REICH & COLD WARTONY LE TISSIERPEN AND SWORD, 2009HARDCOVER, \$60.00, 320 PAGES, ABBREVIATIONS, SYMBOLS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, MILITARY INDEX, PHOTOGRAPHS, MAPSIn January, 1945, much of Berlin lay in rubble. The city was littered with bombed-out structures, the result of years of air attacks and saturation bombing. The city, in fact, endured more than 450 bombing raids and was the target of 45,517 tons of bombs dropped during the war. Beginning in mid-February, 1945, Berlin experienced almost continual aerial bombardment from U.S. and British aircraft for thirty days and nights. Many of the ruins, however, were cleared out and the lots used to raise a few crops as the populace attempted to survive until the end of the war. With the almost complete destruction of the social and economic system, black markets flourished, as did a variety of other illegal war-related activities, such as theft, break-ins, and roving teenage gangs. Transportation lines within the city and interconnecting with other cities lay in ruins, and the city was increasingly isolated. Berlin was

vulnerable to the final onslaught and conquest. The Allies decided to have the Soviet Union conquer and occupy Berlin. The planning for the final assault on the German capital began in April, although the Soviet armies began redeployment for the attack a month earlier. In preparation for the operation, more than two and a half million Soviet troops under the command of Marshals Georgy Zhukov and Ivan Konev were assembled outside the city. Responding to the imminent Soviet threat, the Germans declared Berlin to be a "Defensive Area," on 1 February 1945, when the Soviet soldiers had already reached the Oder River. Three defensive rings were set up around the city, one along the sixty-mile-long city boundary, a second following the city's rail lines, and a third around a core area encompassing the more important government buildings. The arrangements and preparations at each of these defensive lines depended heavily on local commanders. The operation to capture Berlin began at 0430 hours on 16 April. The Red Army had on overwhelming superiority, including 40,000 artillery pieces, 6,000 tanks, and 7,500 aircraft. The Wehrmacht could muster only 10,000 artillery pieces, 1,500 tanks, and 3,000 tanks with about 767,000 soldiers commanded by Lt. General Helmuth Reymann. Following an intense artillery preparation delivered by 20,000 guns, Zhukov's 1st Byelorussian Front (army group) attacked the northern part of the city while Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front attacked directly into the city center. On 20 April, General Konstantin Rokoossovsky's 2nd Byelorussian Front joined the attack to neutralize what was left of Colonel General Gotthard Heinrici's German Army Group Vistula along the Baltic coast. By 21 April, the Red Army occupied the outlying areas of the city. German leaders rejected a demand to surrender, hoping the troops from the Western Front, particularly the 12th Army, would come to the city's aid. On 23 April, Hitler appointed General Helmuth Weidling the defense commandant of Berlin. Two days later, Berlin was completely surrounded, with nine Soviet armies positioned for the final assault. The advance proceeded methodically. By the end of April, only the area around the Reich Chancellery and the zoo remained in German hands. With the final defeat clearly imminent, Hitler and Goebbels took their lives on 30 April. On 1 May, Zhukov's troops raised the Soviet flag over the ruined Reichstag building. The following day, the last of the defenders put down their arms in response to Weidling's order to surrender. The victorious Red Army took 134,000 German soldiers and officers prisoner. In vivid detail, **BERLIN BATTLEFIELD GUIDE: THIRD REICH AND COLD WAR** describes the course of the battle, from the tense initial struggle for the Seelow Heights and the house-by-house fighting through the streets to the final act—the assault on the Reichstag. Author Tony Le Tissier provides a series of driving and walking tours of the key sectors of the battlefield which allow the visitor to see for himself where the armies clashed, the terrain over which they fought, and the obstacles they faced. His encyclopedic knowledge of the battle and the

subsequent Cold War aspects of the Soviet occupation of East Germany-enables him to give a compelling and moving account. Tony Le Tissier's account is highly impressive and it shows that he is a superb writer, a diligent researcher, and a master of battlefield detail.Lt. Colonel Robert A. Lynn, Florida GuardOrlando, Florida

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