



The Russian Campaign of 1812

Carl von Clausewitz

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Among the enormous oeuvre of Clausewitz the best-known work, by far, is the unfinished magnum opus *On War*. His works include many excellent writings on military history, of which *The Campaign of 1812 in Russia* is, assuredly, the masterpiece. This book is a superb first-hand account and analysis of the military disaster of 1812 and the characters who played a significant role in it. An eyewitness and participant in the war, Clausewitz' writing remains the most serious source on that campaign. Napoleon's campaign of 1812 against Russia was a crucial event in the Napoleonic history. At the beginning of 1812, Napoleon was at the peak of his glory.

On the eve of the Russian campaign the majority of European diplomats thought that Napoleon would emerge victorious. The campaign, however, proved to be disastrous for the French Grand Arme. The Battle of Borodino, with heavy causalities on both sides, was probably the hardest fought battle of the Napoleonic era. Victory at Borodino gained Napoleon entry to Moscow only to end in catastrophe and the retreat of the French army in fall of the same year. The campaign of 1812 against Russia marked the beginning of the end of Napoleon's rule in Europe.

Clausewitz is more than a military historian in the traditional sense. His concrete and objective analysis enables him to appreciate the situation in all its political, diplomatic and military ramifications. The Russian Campaign of 1812 will be of interest to historians, political scientists, and students of military history and strategy.



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