The battle of Smolensk and battle of Yelnia
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The First Battle of Smolensk was the first major battle during Operation Barbarossa in World War II that significantly delayed the advance of Hitler's Wehrmacht in the USSR. It took place in the region around the city of Smolensk between 10 July and 10 September 1941, about 400 km west of Moscow. At that point the Wehrmacht had advanced 500 km into the USSR in the mere 18 days that had elapsed since the start of the invasion on 22 June 1941.

The Wehrmacht fielded Army Group Centre's 2nd Panzer Group and the 3rd Panzer Group. The Red Army fielded the Western Front, Reserve Front, Central Front, and Bryansk Front.

Ultimately, the Soviet 16th, 19th and the 20th Armies were encircled and destroyed just to the south of Smolensk, though significant numbers from the 19th and 20th managed to escape the pocket.

While a significant temporary success for Hitler, the losses in terms of men and materiel incurred by the Wehrmacht during this drawn-out battle were enormous and—together with the 2-month delay in the march towards Moscow—proved decisive for the Wehrmacht's defeat by the Red Army at the end of the Battle of Moscow three months later in December 1941.

On 22 June 1941, Axis nations invaded the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa. During the opening phase, the campaign met with spectacular gains, as the surprised Soviet troops were not able to offer coordinated resistance. After 3 weeks of fighting, the Germans had reached the Dvina and Dnieper Rivers and planned for a resumption of the offensive effort. The main effort, targeted towards Moscow, was carried out by Army Group Centre commanded by Fedor von Bock. Its next target on the way to the Soviet capital was the town of Smolensk. The German plan called for the 2nd Panzer Group (later 2nd Panzer Army) to cross the
Dnieper, closing on Smolensk from the south, while the 3rd Panzer Group (later 3rd Panzer Army) was to encircle the town from the north.

After their initial defeats, the Red Army sought to reorganise itself and established several measures to ensure a more determined resistance. A new defensive line was established around Smolensk. Stalin placed Field Marshal Timoshenko in command, and transferred five armies out of the strategic reserve to Timoshenko's control. These armies had to conduct a series of counteroffensives to blunt the German offensive. The German high command was not aware of the Soviet build-up until they encountered them on the battlefield.

Facing the Germans along the Dnieper and Dvina rivers were stretches of the Stalin Line fortifications. The defenders were the 13th Army of the Western Front, and the 20th Army, 21st Army, and the 22nd Army of the Soviet Supreme Command (Stavka) Reserve. Another army, the 19th Army, was forming up at Vitebsk, while the 16th Army was arriving at Smolensk.

In Soviet historiography, the Battle of Smolensk (actually a full campaign) would take place in several phases, divided into distinct operations to halt the German offensive and the pincers.

- Battle of Smolensk (10 July – 10 September 1941)
- Smolensk Defensive Operation (10 July – 10 August 1941)
- Smolensk Offensive Operation (21 July – 7 August 1941)
- Rogechev-Zhlobin Offensive Operation (13–24 July 1941)
- Gomel-Trubchevsk Defensive Operation (24 July – 30 August 1941)
- Dukhovshina Offensive Operation (17 August – 8 September 1941)
- Yelnia Offensive Operation (30 August – 8 September 1941)
- Roslavl-Novozybkov Offensive Operation (30 August – 12 September 1941)

Prior to the German attack, the Soviets launched their counter-offensive. On 6 July, the Soviet 20th Army's 7th and 5th Mechanized Corps launched an attack with about 1,500 tanks near Lepiel. The result was a disaster, as the offensive ran directly
into the anti-tank defenses of the German 7th Panzer Division and the two Soviet mechanized corps were virtually wiped out.

On 10 July, the Germans started their own offensive, when Guderian's 2nd Panzer Group launched its surprise attack over the Dnieper. His forces literally overran the weak 13th Army, which opposed his forces. By 13 July, Guderian had passed Mogilev, trapping several Soviet divisions there. His spearhead unit, the 29th Mot. Division, was already 18 km (11 mi) short of Smolensk. Meanwhile, 3rd Panzer Group had also launched its offensive, with 20th Panzer Division establishing a bridgehead on the eastern bank of the Dvina river, threatening Vitebsk. As both German Panzer Groups drove east, three Soviet Armies the 16th, 19th and 20th faced the prospect of encirclement around Smolensk. From 11 July on, the Soviets tried a series of concerted counterattacks. The Soviet 19th Army and 20th Army struck at Vitebsk, while the 21st and the remnants of the 3rd Army attacked against the southern flank of 2nd Panzer Group near Bobruisk.

At the same time, several other Soviet armies also attempted to counterattack in the sectors of German Army Group North and South. This effort was apparently part of an overall attempt to implement the Soviet prewar general defense plan. However, although the Soviet attacks managed to slow the Germans down, their results were so marginal that the Germans barely noticed them as a coordinated large-scale defensive effort. The German offensive therefore continued.

Meanwhile, Hoth's 3rd Panzer Group drove north and then east, parallel to Guderian's forces, and taking Polotsk and Vitebsk. The 7th Panzer Division and 20th Panzer Division reached the area east of Smolensk at Yartsevo on July 15. At the same time, Guderian's 29th Motorized, heavily supported by the 17th Panzer Division broke into Smolensk and cleared most of the city but for the suburbs, precipitating a week of heavy house-to-house fighting due to repeated efforts by Lukin's 16th Army to recapture it. Guderian expected that the offensive would continue towards Moscow as its main focus, and therefore sent the 10th Panzer Division to the Desna River to establish a bridgehead on the eastern side of it at Yelnya, and cleared that as well by the 20th.
This advanced bridgehead became the center of the Yelnya Offensive, one of the first successful Soviet counter-offensives of the war.

This objective was 50 km south of the Dnepr river, and therefore well clear of the objective of liquidating the armies trapped at Smolensk. Under Fuhrer Directive 33 issued on July 14 the main effort of the Wehrmacht was being re-oriented away from an immediate attack on Moscow and south toward a deep encirclement of Kiev in Ukraine and von Bock was becoming impatient, wanting Guderian to strike north and link up with Hoth's Panzer Group so resistance in the city could be mopped up.

In the north, 3rd Panzer Group was moving much more slowly. The terrain was swampy, rain was still a problem, and the Soviets were fighting desperately to escape the trap that was developing. On 18 July, the armored pincers of the two German Panzer Groups came within 16 km (9.9 mi) of closing the gap. However, Timoshenko put newly promoted Konstantin Rokossovsky, who had just arrived from the Ukrainian front, in charge of assembling a stopgap force, which stopped the 7th Panzer's advance and was continuously reinforced, temporarily stabilizing the situation. The open gap allowed a number of Soviet units to escape that were then pressed into service, holding the gap open.

The Soviets transferred additional troops from newly formed armies into the region around Smolensk, namely the 29th, 30th, 28th, and 24th Armies. These newly built formations would, immediately upon arrival, start a heavy counterattack against the German forces around the Smolensk area from 21 July on. This put a heavy strain on the overextended Panzer forces, which had to cover a large area around the perimeter. However, poor coordination and logistics on the part of the Soviets allowed the Germans to successfully defend against these offensive efforts, while continuing to close the encirclement. The Soviet attacks would last until 30 July, when the Germans finally repelled the last of them.

Finally, on 27 July, the Germans were able to link up and close the pocket east of Smolensk, trapping large portions of 16th, 19th, and 20th Armies. However, under the leadership of 20th Army, significant Soviet troops managed to break out of
the pocket in a determined effort a few days later, assisted by the ongoing Soviet offensive efforts along the Smolensk front line. In the end, about 300,000 men were taken prisoner when the encirclement was subsequently reestablished and the pocket eliminated.

The Battle of Smolensk was another severe defeat for the Soviets in the opening phase of Operation Barbarossa. However, this Axis victory did not come without strategic implications. For the first time, the Soviets tried to implement a determined coordinated counterattack against a large part of the front, although the counterattack was almost entirely a failure. Nevertheless, the increasing resistance showed that the Soviets were not yet defeated, and that the Blitzkrieg towards Moscow was not going to be an easy task. This exacerbated a division between the German high command and political leadership. The leaders of the General Staff, Franz Halder and Walter von Brauchitsch, and frontline commanders like von Bock, Hoth, and Guderian counseled against dispersing the German armored units and to focus directly on Moscow. Hitler reiterated the lack of importance of Moscow and strategic encirclements, and ordered a concentration on economic targets such as Ukraine, the Donets Basin, and the Caucasus, and more tactical encirclements to weaken the Soviets further. As a result, the German offensive effort became more fragmented, leading to the battles at Kiev and Uman. Those battles were also German victories, but also cost them vital time, men, and material on their approach towards Moscow, allowing the Soviets time to prepare the defenses of the city.[12][13][14]

The Soviet Army's Yelnya Offensive operation (August 30 – September 8, 1941) was part of the Battle of Smolensk during the initial period of the German-Soviet War.

The offensive was against the semi-circular Yelnya salient which the German 4th Army had extended 50 km south-east of Smolensk forming a staging area for a continued offensive towards Vyazma and eventually Moscow.

Initially located in the salient were the 10th Panzer Division, Waffen-SS Division Das Reich, 268th Infantry Division, and the 202nd Assault Gun Battalion among others; however these were replaced by the 137th, 78th Infantry Division and 292nd
infantry divisions in addition to the 268th, about 70,000 troops in all with some 500 artillery pieces and 40 StuG IIIIs of the 202nd Assault Gun Battalion, last three a part of the German XX Army Corps. The northern base of the salient was held by the 15th Infantry Division, while the southern base was held by the 7th Infantry Division. Although Guderian proposed a withdrawal on the 4 August during a meeting with Hitler and other Army Group Centre commandes during a meeting at Novy Borisov, this was rejected as an option.

On August 26 Stavka ordered the 24th Army of the Reserve Front, led by Marshal Georgy Zhukov, to start an offensive beginning August 30 against the salient. The intent of this offensive was to assault the bases of the salient, with the 102nd Tank and 303rd Rifle divisions forming the outer front of the encirclement, while the 107th, 100th Rifle divisions of the northern pincer and 106th Mechanized Rifle division of the southern pincer formed the inner front of the encirclement. Supporting the 106th in the south was the 303rd Rifle Division. Containing the salient in the central (eastern) sector of the offensive were the 19th and 309th Rifle divisions. The 103rd Motorized and 120th Rifle divisions were deployed on the northern and southern sides of the salient in heavily fortified field positions to prevent possible routes of escape by the German divisions. The 24th Army was allocated only 20 aircraft for reconnaissance and correction of artillery fire for the operation, with no dedicated fighter or strike support.

On September 3, under the threat of the encirclement the Germans started retreating from the salient while maintaining resistance on the flanks. On September 6 Yelnya was retaken. The Soviet offensive continued until September 8, until it was halted at the new German defense line.

This was the most substantial reverse that the Wehrmacht had suffered up to that date and the first successful planned Soviet offensive operation in the Soviet-German war. German losses in the operation are unknown. The Red Army losses are estimated at 31,853 overall casualties. Major General Rakutin was killed during the battle. United States army historian David Glantz states that although the offensive succeeded in attaining its strategic objective, the operation cost the 24th Army nearly
40% of its operational strength. This, combined with other failed Red
Army offensives in the Smolensk area temporarily blunted the German drive but
seriously weakened Red Army formations defending the approaches to Moscow. In a
lecture to the US Army Heritage and Education Center, Mr. Glantz asserted that in
the run up to the Battle of Moscow, the Wehrmacht would not have made nearly as
much progress as they did if the Stavka had not suffered losses in unsuccessful
counter-offensives east of Smolensk.

Smolensk defensive battle of Soviet troops (10 July – 10 September 1941)
includes Leninskuy offensive operation of the Reserve front, under the command of
General of the army G. K. Zhukov in the period 30 August to 8 September 1941. In
late July, the Germans captured an important foothold in the area of Yelnya, where it
was beneficial to break into the area of Vyazma, and it was possible to hit the rear of
the Western front and even on Moscow.

On 29 July 1941 Zhukov was relieved of his duties as chief of the General staff
and appointed commander of Reserve front. An hour after the appointment, he went
to the front. At dawn on 30 August the troops of the Reserve front launched a strong
attack on Yelnya. In fierce fighting on 6 September our troops were able to repel the
enemy suffering Yelnya.

But let's start in order. Properly constructed, the operation is usually
"develops itself", almost not demanding intellectual effort from the responsible
commanders. The success of the main attack provides further increase of events, and
a failure in the auxiliary areas only contribute to the harmonious flow of the
operation. It comes down, basically, to combat the natural "friction" by Clausewitz:
"the Secret of military art is to go on the offensive where it is moving forward, not
slow down a rolling ball, but without interference to allow him to move on an
inclined plane".

It would seem that after such victories that the Wehrmacht won in Belarus
and Ukraine, "ball" will roll forward quite freely. But the defects deployment plan
"Barbarossa"began to appear even before the end of the battle frontier. This plan is
not really oriented performers even in the direction of "ball movement". The troops
were delivered one particular "double challenge": to smash the Red Army in the Western parts of the country and go to the line of the Western Dvina – Dnieper. By the end of June, the Wehrmacht in General did it.

Manstein's corps was ordered to stop. It von Leeb, commander of army group "North" were all reasons: both flanks and the rear of the 56th tank corps were opened. North of 41st Panzer corps behind nearly 160 miles, and the infantry of 16th army was still crossing the Niemen. In the South, the 3rd tank group Gotha G. blocked Minsk. Between Daugavpils and Molodechno was nominated the 9th army, but its movement was slow enough.

In the centre there were fights for Minsk and the Minsk fortified area. The rebound surrounded the Russian army proved to be unexpectedly difficult, absorbing almost all the infantry divisions of the 4th army and operatively connecting the 3rd and 2nd Panzer group.

The adjacent flanks of the group "Center" and "South" were separated by the Pripyat marshes. South of the Pripyat river 1st Panzer group in close cooperation with the 6th field army captured Exactly. Next, the front line abruptly turned to the East to Lviv and Drohobych. Farther to the South Hungarian corps and the 11th German army with its tributary Romanian troops (the 3rd and 4th army) still fought on the border line.

Thus, the centre rushed forward to Berezino, both flanks had lagged behind, with the commanders of groups of armies had not taken any measures to rectify the situation. The German General staff stated that a complete tactical surprise was achieved. Contrary to the fears planners, Soviet troops did not try to go deeper into the country: they fought fiercely for every turn, at every opportunity, passing in counterattack. In this for the Wehrmacht were both positive and negative sides.

The initiative at the front firmly held by Germany, and by the beginning of July 1941 the Soviet army cover was dissected, and by mid month they will be finally destroyed. But this success had to pay disproportionate (from the point of view of the Germans) price: only army group "Center" the Blues lost by 30 June, about 9
thousand people: the car-related losses have already exceeded the "normal" French campaign twice.

In the North-West have created an environment fraught with "natural" stopping the offensive on the line of the Western Dvina – Dnieper. The blows of the German tank wedges cut defense Council's 11th army, which, sprawling, rolled to Nevel. To the North the 8th army in a more organized following the order of the front commander, went to Riga. Between the armies the who-nick gap, which could cover up the forces of the 5th airborne division and the 21st mechanized corps. From the East came untouched in the border battle of the 27th army.

These measures would not be enough to save the front, because the housing Manstein was on the East Bank of the Dvina. It seemed that nobody and nothing prevent him to knock down failed to return 27th Soviet army, to intercept the reconnaissance battalions of the 3rd mechanized division crossing of Krustpils and Riga, to throw the main forces of the corps on the Island. Such order was waiting at the corps headquarters, but von Leeb ordered first to collect 4-th tank group together and pull infantry units. Only July 2, Manstein received permission to come on Rezekne – Ostrov – Pskov.

Group "North" decided on their plans for the next phase of the campaign. If von Leeb focused its operations on the North-East, the group "South" tended to: South 1st Panzer army broke through from Rivne to Berdychiv, 17th army after the retreating troops of the 26th and 12th Soviet armies were moving from the city to Proskurov.

In the most difficult situation was the commander of the group "Center" – Colonel-General Fedor von Bock. Operational "emptiness" before the front "pulling" the group of armies to the East to Smolensk. Ongoing fighting in "Minsk pot" linked the 4th army von Kluge. And on both flanks of the gaping hole, and in the South, in the Pripyat area, still maneuvered 5th Russian army, not broken, endured the cross-border battle and never retreating without orders.

By mid-July to continue the attack the German high command could use not more than 60 free divisions. This was considered sufficient: in the opinion of the
chief of the General staff Halder, the Soviet Union remained at the front only 46 have not broken divisions. In reality it was for the Wehrmacht somewhat worse. The red Army launched a group of armies of reserve command – 74 division in three echelons. Given the insufficient number of Soviet troops, we can assume that the Soviet side put up a force equivalent to 55-60 "settlement division". So actually at the front were of equal strength.

The strategic balance was still in favor of the Germans: their reserve, in the form of forces, Visva-bogdashina after solving problems related to the destruction of the encircled groups, came to the front faster than the Soviet command was able to mobilize new divisions. This meant, among other things, that the Germans were supposed to afford an operational pause.

Soviet troops from such a pause is not received, in essence, nothing, except a little better organized stationary defense (that is, if the attack proves successful, the Soviet side lost more divisions surrounded). The Wehrmacht has gained a lot of advantages: time to relax tank and motorized rifle connection, more time for planning operations, it was possible to obtain more accurate intelligence information.

When initial planning an operational pause was deemed necessary, and it was given for 20 days. But the German generals were in a hurry to win the war! In fact, German troops were required to regroup on all fronts (in the North 16th and 18th army had already begun to interfere with each other, in the center frankly not enough troops).

The operation would be faster if along with the regrouping, would be introduced in line reserves the OKH (high command of land forces), and transferred fresh divisions from Europe. In the time it would take to conduct these activities, freed infantry division, leading the battles in the Baltic States, Belarus, Moldova and Western Ukraine, and the high command could decide on objectives and plans for the second phase of the campaign.

Is reasonable and scheduled breaks, began a series of battles, the Central of which is Smolensk. Beginning July 10, it was continued to September 10, and has determined the course and outcome of the entire operation "Barbarossa".
The campaign Smolensk battle should be seen as a decisive battle, the outcome of which depended the fate of the war. If the Germans had won it quickly (by early August), they really were a "void", so favourable for the attack of tank connections. The loss meant stopping half of all forces of the Wehrmacht, which immediately caused significant deterioration of the positions of the two flanking groupings and large-scale crisis all over the front.

The Germans won the surgery, but slowly and with heavy losses. As a result, the army group "Center" has lost the ability to conduct meaningful offensive action before it was ready and occupied by the Soviet troops the next line of defense. However, because the advance troops of the army group "Center" to Moscow was interrupted by the heroic efforts of Soviet troops on July 29, 1941 English radio announced that the battle for Smolensk was won by the red Army.

Having determined the direction of the main blow of the enemy, the Soviet high command is making desperate efforts to build a solid front if not in Berezino, on the Dnieper river. In the Smolensk region to the West and deployed five new armies – 22nd, 19th, 16th, 20th, 21st, and the remains of 13th and 4th armies – all in the first wave of 24 divisions, a few connections came later. In the rear, behind the Gums, formed the backing group the 24th and 28th armies – 19 divisions. In a first approximation, these forces were enough to "close the gap" on the Berezina, battles to retreat to Smolensk, where occupy a strong defense.

The 2nd and the 3rd German armored group, composed of 28 divisions, including 9 tank and 6 motorized was going to step on vasilisadimitrinka the front, in the General direction of the East. It is no exaggeration to say that German troops are not so many started the battle, how many were involved in it the inertia of motion to the East. The operation began on 10 July and was developed in three separate operational areas – Velikie Luki, Smolensk and Rogachev.

The Soviet leadership lost the first stage of the struggle and not built big illusions about the second. While German armored group remained on track, to oppose them was nothing. But the leadership of the General staff in early July was well aware that the Germans unexpectedly learned by the end of the month: all of
Russia, even the whole European Russia, on the tracks of the tanks pass. The life will end earlier.

In addition, by mid-July it became clear that the German offensive has lost a single guiding line and is diverging in three directions – to Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev. This created the preconditions for strategic isolation of the German groups of armies, crushing their forces and, in the longer term to stop the advance into the Soviet Union. And F. Halder notes in his diary occurred on the Eastern front "tendency to position note".

From July 10, 1941 the Germans began the battle for Smolensk. The defense of the approaches to the city was carried out by parts of the 20th army to the West and 16th army from the North. The first phase of the battle of Smolensk lasted from 10 to 20 July and was accompanied with new high-German us-the Peha. July 15, 1941 7th German Panzer division came to the highway Smolensk – Moscow in the district of Yartsevo, going round the rear of the 16th army of Lieutenant General M. F. Lukin

July 16, Nazi troops entered the southern suburbs of Smolensk and captured Yartsevo. Bypassing knots of resistance in the city, the enemy on the 17th of July their main forces occupied Smolensk. Part 16-th army forced the enemy street fighting in Smolensk, which lasted until the end of July 1941.

July 20, 1941 the Germans tried to completely surround the 20-th and 16-th army of the Western front. Forces of the 7th armored division from the district of Yartsevo in a southerly direction and 17 Panzer division from the area of Yelnya on the North the Germans attacked the crossing of the Dnieper, trying to block escape routes for the 16th and 20th armies. However, the group of K. K. Rokossovsky in continual fighting managed usati the crossing of the Dnieper.

In late July, the leadership of the Western front took decided to recuse surrounded by the Germans near Smolensk 16th and 20th armies, as their small squad couldn't withstand the constant onslaught of the enemy. In the divisions of the 16th and 20th armies were not more than 2000 people, there were very few tanks and artillery. On 4 August 1941, troops of the 16th and 20th armies, supported by the retaliation of the Western front from the region of Yartsevo, began crossing across
the Dnieper river with a few crossings – Solov'ev, Ratchino and Zabir. With the departure of the 16th and 20th armies to the East effectively ended the battle for Smolensk.

In the North the 57th Panzer corps threw the 22nd army and took Velikie Luki. However, as with all direct attacks, this offensive had only limited success: Soviet troops entrenched to the East of the city front to the South. Almost 22nd army was formed by what in the theory of operation is called "remote flanking position," and blocked any attempt of the 3rd Panzer group to move in a northerly or easterly direction.

By the end of August the Germans manage to cope with the 22nd army, but it will not have crucial importance. In the center of the case, the Germans were much better. They easily overcame the resistance of the Soviet army and went to the operating room: by 16 July, the 3rd Panzer group blow from the North captured Yartsevo, 2nd – tied battles for Smolensk, bypassing it from the South. Secondary attack near Mogilev led to the encirclement of part of the 13th army, the remnants of which fell back to the South. It should be noted that in the days of the battle of Smolensk a lot of support to the soldiers of the Western front was provided by the defenders of Mogilev, held down large forces of German. Being behind enemy lines, the connections of the red Army and the citizens of Mogilev a long time held the city.

In these circumstances, Guderian, commander of the 2nd Panzer group advanced towards elnia, occupying an advantageous starting position for the attack on Moscow. G. The goth, commander of the 3rd tank group – oriented their part in the Rzhev, in order, first, to understand the complex situation on its Northern flank, and to surround and eliminate the 22nd and approached her 29-th army, and, secondly, to the South to reach the Valdai hills, threatening not only Moscow and focused around her forces, but the North-Western front.

This solution answered perfectly to the situation, but von Kluge, who at this point were effectively subordinated both tank groups Gotha turned to the South, proposing to engage in the destruction of the encircled Smolensk groups. Happened is exactly what was hoped, the Soviet high command: a German moveable connection lost
freedom of maneuver, tempo of operations instantly fell, and there was an opportunity to fend off certain tactical threats, which was not much.

Immediately began the Soviet offensive in the center (in the General direction of Smolensk) and on the flanks. From the 20th of July, army group "Center" goes to the defense on all external front of an environment. A shot at Smolensk forces tightened the reserve armies had, in General, very limited success. Although managed to break through a narrow "corridor" to the surrounded troops of the 16th and 20th armies, but this "corridor" was narrow and was exposed to fire through. In addition, the 28th army in its turn was surrounded.

Much more dangerous for the Germans was the action on the extreme flanks, where the 22nd army attacked the 57th corps in the General direction of Velikiye Luki and put him in a very difficult position, and the cavalry corps Petrovsky took Rogachev and Zhlobin and began to cover the southern flank of army group "Center" has long been "hanging in the air." The Germans eliminated these counterattacks, using division, the liberation of Minsk and allowances the EQC.

Almost, by the end of July, these reserves were used, being inserted into the line piecemeal to solve tactical problems at various points of the battle of Smolensk. The Germans have made further significant gains, advancing at 170-220 km. But now the movable parts of the Wehrmacht finally became connected absolutely not adequate to the task to block is surrounded by troops. Come to the East was no one left.

Our army tried to relieve the surrounded force, it was not a success, but forced the enemy more and more to expend their forces, and it was about the most valuable footage of elite divisions. Losses in tanks in the 2nd and 3rd tank armies amounted to 60-70% of payroll. Glaring problem with engine life. Only one of the 3rd tank army was urgently required 300 new engines. The logistics services of the EQC there were only 400, but the motors were still required to deliver to the front line.

Field Marshal von Bock, commander of army group "Center", declares on 4 August Hitler arrived on the Eastern front: "the offensive of army group "Center" I
believe, my führer, and offer a threat in the current climate to take a strong position to wait out the Russian winter".

By early August the plan "Barbarossa" had ceased to exist. Too much time lost Nazi forces near Smolensk, near Tallinn, at the turn of the Luga river, in the district of Kiev, where the 1st Panzer group got stuck in the Russian defense and unable to convert tactical success into operational.

After a long and bitter defensive battles of Smolensk, the German front in the centre at the time stopped. The 10th German tank division was a success, overcoming the stubborn resistance of 24-th army of Lieutenant General Rakutina K. I., July 19, 1941 to take Yelnya and create Elninsky bridgehead (Elninsky the ledge) for the possible development of the offensive on Moscow. However, despite the large number of German divisions, passed through the "elninsky hell", the Germans failed to advance further and had to move to defense. Near the town of Yelnya in the front like a bubble arched to the East. It was a very dangerous springboard, here Pro-tunic threw fresh troops, hence he was preparing to make a new throw to Moscow.

On the twentieth of August in the area of the ledge Leninskogo our troops went on the offensive. Like mites gradually compressed at the base of the ledge, threatening to cut off completely concentrated on the bridgehead of the German troops. Under the threat of complete encirclement, the enemy was forced to leave elninsky the ledge. In fierce fighting on 6 September our troops were able to repel the enemy suffering Yelnya. It was the first city that the red Army was able that summer to repel the invaders – unfortunately, only for a month. I really wanted to lift the value of this private success. The situation remained formidable. However, a dangerous springboard for an attack on Moscow was destroyed.

In the battle was destroyed five enemy divisions, the enemy lost about 50 thousand soldiers and officers, many vehicles and weapons. Was won so necessary in a time victory! The good news about it flew throughout the country, and the word "finalized" was at the time a harbinger of the doom that waits the enemy and on other parts of the front.