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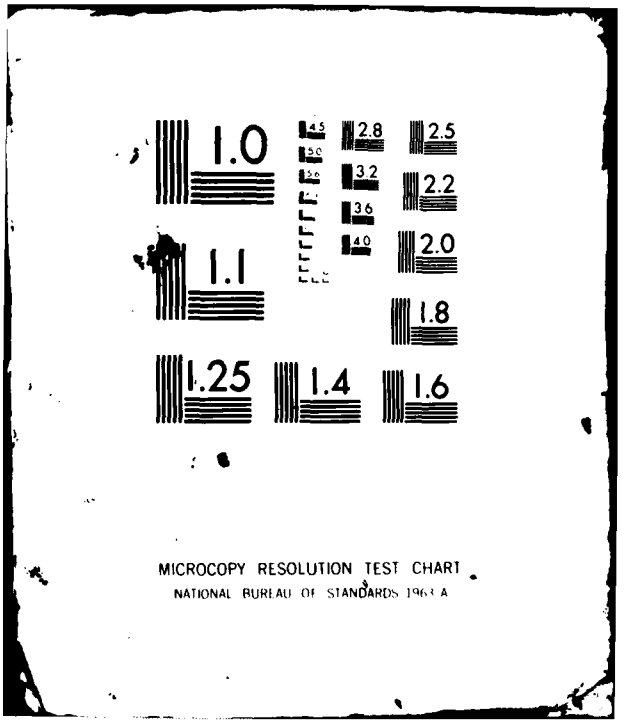
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STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT

THE INTERRELATION
BETWEEN PERSONNEL AND TRAINING
IN THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES
1982

CPT JOHN K. BOLES III

GARMISCH, GERMANY

APO NEW YORK 09053

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THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN PERSONNEL AND TRAINING IN THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES

Captain John K. Boles III

June 1981

US ARMY RUSSIAN INSTITUTE

Garmisch, Germany

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY RUSSIAN INSTITUTE
APO NEW YORK 09053

FOREWORD

This research project represents fulfillment of a student requirement for successful completion of the overseas phase of training of the Department of the Army's Foreign Area Officer Program (Russian).

Only unclassified sources are used in producing the research paper. The opinions, value judgements and conclusions expressed are those of the author and in no way reflect official policy of the United States Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, the US Army Intelligence and Security Command, or the Russian Institute. The completed paper is not to be reproduced in whole or in part without permission of the Commander, US Army Russian Institute, APO New York 09053.

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GEOFFREY J. KLEB
LTC, MI
Commanding

SUMMARY

The relationship in any armed force between the personnel involved and the training received by those individuals is a point often overlooked, however it is precisely the interrelation between these two points of discussion which often determine the success or failure of the overall mission. In this paper the author presents an in depth view of both the personnel of the Soviet armed forces and the training that they receive. Having divided the paper into two parts, each dealing with one of the above topics, the author examines each in detail utilizing source material from open Soviet press. With an orientation towards Tank Forces, the paper discusses in some detail such topics as the Soviet military system, conscription, officer recruitment and schooling, pre-military training, and individual and unit training. The author also presents a critical examination of the conflicts, strengths, and weaknesses of this relationship between personnel and training in the Soviet armed forces, and presents the material in such a manner as to allow the reader to make his own determination as to the ultimate success or failure of the Soviets in their endeavors.

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INTRODUCTION

The Soviet Union is a most formidable opponent and the superior number of tanks in the Soviet inventory creates an overwhelming sense of numerical inferiority in the West. It is necessary, however, to realize that a large amount of sophisticated military hardware is only as effective as those crew members who man them.

A full understanding of the training doctrine of the Soviets would be incomplete without at least a cursory knowledge of the individuals being trained since neither one can be fully discussed without the other. The purpose of this paper, therefore, will be to examine both the personnel of the Soviet armed forces as well as the training that they receive, specifically orienting the discussion towards the tank forces.

The paper is divided into two parts, each dealing with one of the above two topics. Part one, concerning personnel, will be further subdivided into four sections: The first section will give a general overall view of the Soviet military manpower and its strength in order to set a perspective for the rest of the discussion; the second section will examine the conscription system and also the recruitment of officers; the third section will be concerned with the reserve troops and will give a brief picture of their role in the system; and the last section will examine some of the inherent personality traits, strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet soldier.

The second part of the paper is divided into three sections and concerned with the training of the Soviet soldier, primarily oriented

towards the tanker. The first section will give a brief introduction to Soviet training doctrine and will discuss the pre-military training given to the soldier. The second section will discuss post induction training of the soldier and will examine the role of military schools, specifically the officer academies. The third section will deal with unit training and will be primarily concerned with tank unit training. This section will also incorporate into it both strengths and weaknesses that are evident in the Soviet training program.

PERSONNEL

Soviet Military Manpower

In terms of numbers of men under arms, backed in turn by a massive reserve, the Soviet military establishment is currently the largest in the world, a reflection of both the traditional Russian predilection with numbers and also the persistent pursuit of the concept of a nation-in-arms where virtually all individuals have been trained in the armed forces and are subject to active duty recall.[1] At present the active strength of the Soviet armed forces amounts to about 4,080,000 men.[2] This figure takes into account not only the five separate components commonly attributed to the armed forces (Strategic Rocket Forces, Air Defense Forces, Ground Forces, Air Forces, and the Navy)[3] but also the Border Guards (under the Committee of State Security, e.g. KGB) and the Internal Security Troops (under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, e.g. MVD). These last two components are included because Soviet draft-age youth enter them as well as the army and the navy.[4] Additionally, the immediate reserve strength, which includes those individuals who have completed at least twelve months service in the last five years, is

currently at about 9,000,000 men,[5] and it is estimated that in any recent five year period around 3,500,000 Soviets complete their military training.[6] Thus, under a system where reserve obligations for non-commissioned officers run to age fifty and for officers to age sixty-five, the reserve capability runs into literally tens of millions.[7]

Whether constituting a militia or a regular standing army, the Soviet forces have traditionally been a conscript rather than a professional, or volunteer army. Historically, an aversion towards a professional army is quite understandable in a revolutionary state such as in the Soviet Union, however professionalism, at least within the army, is encouraged on an increasing basis. Numerous articles have appeared in recent years in military publications such as Krasnaya Zvezda and Voyennyy Vestnik stressing the various facets of military professionalism and its importance to the contemporary soldier.[8] Currently the ratio of conscript to professional officers and non-commissioned officers is 65 percent to 35 percent,[9] however professional officers make up almost two-thirds of the latter percentage, or about 20 percent of all military personnel.[10]

Mere numbers, however, are meaningless without an understanding of the reasons behind them. In line with this, a look at the machinery behind this vast gathering of manpower is perhaps in order.

Conscription of the Soviet Soldier

The Soviet military system is based on compulsory service; that is, the obligation of each citizen of the Soviet Union to undergo a period of military service.[11] Under the 1967 Law of Universal Military Service, all able-bodied men are subject to military service on their

eighteenth birthday.[12] Women may also be subject to call if they have any medical or other specialized training.[13] The Law provides that men going into the army or other land based units serve two years and those going into the navy or the maritime border guards serve three years. Inductees with a higher level of education serve only one year.[14] Upon leaving military service, all men, except officers, remain in the reserves until age fifty and women remain until age forty.[15] Female officers remain until age fifty and male officers remain in the reserves beyond age fifty with the limit being sixty-five years. The higher rank one has, the longer one stays until retirement.[16]

During February and March of the year in which they reach the age of seventeen years young Soviet men register for the draft with their local military commissariat.[17] Each is given a physical examination and is interviewed as to his background, education, attitudes and preferences towards the military. Each young man then receives a registration booklet (Voyennyy Bilet) which is proof of his registration and which he must keep with him at all times.[18] Registration, however, does not automatically mean that an individual will be inducted into active service. Normally only about one-half of the yearly census of eighteen year olds are inducted, or about 1.3 million a year,[19] with the remaining individuals receiving deferments. Deferments will be discussed shortly.

Twice each year, during May and June (at the end of spring planting season) and November and December (at the end of fall harvesting), or in some cases April and October, male youths who have reached their eighteenth birthday are called to active duty,[20] as well as any older men (up to twenty-seven years of age) whose deferments have expired. The first day of active duty is 1 July for those in the earlier

notification period, and 1 January for those in the second period.[21] Partly based upon one's performance in school, one's specialty learned in training courses conducted by DOSAAF (pre-military training to be discussed later), or by other abilities, the individual is assigned by fixed quotas to the various branches, arms and services of the component services. Usually the higher level of education a man has, the more technical a branch he will be assigned to. Some specific abilities looked for in future tank men are mechanical or automotive training, an ability to handle technical equipment, and a general height restriction of sixty-six inches or less,[22] due to the extremely cramped crew compartments of Soviet tanks.

As mentioned, not everyone is subject to active duty, at least not immediately. There are three general categories of deferments authorized under the 1967 Law -- *family, education, and physical.*[23] If an individual must support or care for his family, e.g. the dependency of disabled parents or of the wife and children upon the draftee, he may be deferred up to the age of twenty-seven years. If still authorized deferment at that time he will then be automatically put in the reserves.[24]

Educational deferments are given to full-time students at universities, high schools (up to age twenty), technical institutions (until graduation) as well as students studying in reserve officer training programs at technical institutions. Again, twenty-seven years of age is the limit.

The last category is for physical reasons where an illness is deferred for one year and other reasons, e.g. a physical handicap, for three years. Upon review the individual is either put on active duty,

placed in the reserves, or on rare occasions is declared unfit and exempted from military service.[25]

Officer Recruitment

Officers of the Soviet armed forces enter the service from a variety of sources and programs. As previously mentioned, about 20 percent of the army personnel are officers, and the younger officers, e.g. thirty years old and less, make up 65 percent of all officers at regimental level and below.[26]

The largest number of officers are commissioned from the military commissioning schools or academies, of which there are 136, each with an average enrollment of about one thousand cadets.[27] Requirements are quite stringent for admission, including successful completion of secondary schooling, as well as proficiency in the Russian language and literature. This particular requirement seems to discriminate against soldiers of non-Russian nationalities considering that there are numerous separate nationalities within the Soviet Union. Another factor concerning admission is that it is not based so much on one's qualifying examination marks as it is upon the "points" earned by the individual's previous record, with special emphasis placed on one's ideological background.[28] This seems to be related to an interest in exercising greater political control over the selection of students for military schools. More on military academies will be discussed shortly.

Another means of acquiring officers is through a reserve officer training program offered in Soviet universities, much like the U.S. program. Given training in military subjects along with their normal curriculum over the duration of their schooling, individuals graduate

with reserve commissions as opposed to the regular commissions given from a military academy. Rarely are reserve officers in this category called for active duty, however they are liable for call-up until age thirty and may be required to serve for a period of up to three years.[29] Periodic call-ups for military exercises are not uncommon.

A third source of officers for the Soviet armed forces is from the ranks. Upon completion of active duty service, conscripts who have a secondary or higher education can be commissioned as a lieutenant in the reserves by successfully passing a commissioning examination. Both warrant officers and non-commissioned officers are permitted to apply for commissions through these examinations. These two areas of rank are worthy of a brief explanation.

Both the warrant officer (Praporshchik) and the non-commissioned officer come from the ranks of the conscripts with the warrant basically being one notch higher than the non-commissioned officer. Each rank is voluntarily applied for and is awarded based on political reliability and one's military record. A warrant's initial term of service is for five years, while a non-commissioned officer can re-enlist (extend his service) for periods of two, four, or six years.[30] One differing factor for the latter group is that a non-commissioned officer makes his rank in two ways. He may be identified immediately after his induction as an outstanding conscript based on his records and tests, and sent to six months of NCO academy training prior to being assigned to a unit.[31] Secondly, following completion of one's active duty, an individual can apply for an extension of service as a non-commissioned officer. Warrant officers, on the other hand, are strictly extended service personnel, sometimes non-commissioned officers themselves, who receive a higher

caliber of schooling for their rank. Together these "career conscripts" make up about 15 percent of the total personnel in the Soviet armed forces.[32]

The Reserves

All former service personnel released from active duty for other than retirement or disability are transferred to the reserves and, as previously mentioned, their numbers probably run into the tens of millions. Unlike the reserve units found in our own system, however, the Soviet reserve system has no organized units as such, undoubtedly by virtue of its size. This is not to give the impression, however, that Soviet reserves are unorganized or that no reserve training is carried on -- quite to the contrary. The Soviet reserve system is structured so as to administratively control each individual wherever he may be, to insure that he does not evade his reserve responsibilities, to include refresher training. Rarely is one able to disappear completely into civilian society upon discharge. One reason is the military Voyennyy Bilet issued to all military personnel. This card is issued to all active duty military members upon registration and is also an important document for the reservist. It indicates that the individual has completed his military service, and is necessary in order to receive residence permits when one changes his locale or address, or for work permits when changing jobs.[33]

Mobilization of the reserves will be quite an undertaking when and if it happens. At the initiation of mobilization all active duty troops will be retained until further notice and all reservists subject to recall will be issued mobilization orders indicating where and when to

report.[34] Reservists called to active duty receive assignments on the basis of their occupational specialty and the quotas required to fill various units. Not everyone is mobilized at once, however, and the operation is divided into two phases. Fully trained troops are called up first to bring the active duty units up to strength, with the second phase concerned primarily with the induction, assembly and training of lesser trained reservists for further expansion and replacement of the forces. Additionally, state run "commercial" organizations such as Aeroflot (with its vast amount of aircraft), the Soviet Merchant Marine (with its extensive fishing fleets) and the trucking industries would be mobilized en masse, and manned by their own people who are virtually all reservists.[35]

Personality Traits, Strengths and Weaknesses

Throughout much of the current literature published by the Soviets concerning their soldiers, descriptive terms keep recurring such as "ideologically conditioned", "iron discipline", "self reliance and initiative",[36] "combat maturity" and "the ability to act decisively under the most difficult conditions".[37] Some of these terms are quite probably very true and yet some are contradictory to what is commonly known about the Soviet system.

The Soviet soldier is a product of one of the most regimented societies in history and from childhood he is accustomed to everything going according to plan. As long as things go as they are planned, there is no problem; the political socialization so commonplace within the society drives into the individual the characteristics of conformity, and creates a sort of dogmatic approach towards life and one's work. The inflexibility

of today's Soviet soldier is reinforced through the "iron discipline" to which each conscript is initiated in the military service when confronted with such slogans as "an order is sacred..." or "an order under any circumstances must be carried out..."[38] No latitude is given and the authorities try to make the soldier obey orders without question, a form of blind obedience.[39] Thus, the Soviet soldier, in a rapidly changing situation may tend to follow the last order given regardless of how inappropriate or illogical it might turn out to be. This drive to persist on a course of action despite the objective conditions appears to be a major weakness of the Soviet soldier. Conversely, this weakness may be overshadowed by the soldier's obedience, which is one of his major strengths.

A major objective of Soviet military training, specifically in the case of the officers, is the development of professionalism, initiative and creativity. As one writer states:

> ...the high intensity of contemporary war with its numerous rapidly changing situations calls for increased creativity and initiative on the part of all commanders and leaders.[40]

In the words of another writer:

> ...a commander cannot count on receiving exhaustive instructions from a senior commander at all stages of the battle. In complicated and tense situations, under conditions created by unexpected and sharp changes in the situation, the commander will have to make responsible decisions on the basis of (his) overall concept of action.[41]

The Soviet system presently offers little chance for initiative to come forth. Although publically the drive is on to "encourage more initiative"[42] among both soldiers and officers, the fact still remains that the constant stress on discipline and strict compliance with orders overshadows this move. Over-supervision by superiors is commonplace in

that the soldier is the product of a society which places great reliance on directions "from above". Additionally, the training one receives from childhood through political socialization and collectivization tends to contradict the move towards encouraging initiative. On the one hand an individual is taught to conform to the others, while on the other hand he is basically being pushed towards something inherently alien to his societal upbringing. This tends to have a stifling effect upon innovation and initiative at the intermediate (younger officers) and lower levels (conscripts), both due to fear of reprisal and to confusion. Stemming from this, it also appears that very little faith is placed in subordinates. This may be evidenced by the detailed and exacting orders and instructions given for almost any situation, leaving little room for individual initiative.[43] Quite probably, the reasoning behind this action is to decrease the chances of the subordinate making major errors for which the commander or leaders will be held responsible. While there seems to be some progress being made towards development of initiative in the Soviet soldier, it seems apparent that it will take quite some time for them to fully realize this goal. Steps are being taken, however, in that lack of initiative as well as the taking of initiative are being given much emphasis in ongoing discussions found in Soviet military publications such as Krasnaya Zvezda[44] and Voyennyy Vestnik.[45]

The political indoctrination process, although boring at times, is effective. Political control is evident at all levels of the military and plays a major role in the decision making process, as well as in the day to day life of the soldier. Having been raised under political socialization, the conscript generally is concerned with his

fellow soldiers and pays attention to the social pressures within his unit. The USSR has subjected the majority of its citizens to indoctrination for their entire lives, and military personnel, because they are a captive audience, are exposed to it constantly. Although certain aspects are sometimes counter-productive, such as the incessant meetings, endless discussions of political writings of Lenin and others, this political training, none-the-less, is effective, although much of it appears to be taken for granted.

Propaganda and indoctrination, both in and out of the military, are established fixtures of the Soviet society as a whole, and they have made their mark on the military. Presently about 20 percent of the total population belong to the Communist Party or the Komsomol. In contrast, over 80 percent of all military personnel and 90 percent of the officer corps are Party or Komsomol members.[46]

By virtue of his upbringing the Soviet soldier is a relatively unsophisticated and simple man. He is one who accepts things as they are and who rarely challenges his superiors. Soviet military life is simple and uncomplicated and, as long as one does his job well, one gets along. The Soviet High Command reinforces this attitude of a simple and unsophisticated soldier through their training. It is designed to impart minimal knowledge to the soldier and thus to force him to be a member of the team and to strip him of his individuality. Molded through this process, the conscript is relatively unambitious and used to comparatively fewer comforts in life. He is an uncomplaining soldier and one accustomed to living a spartan existence (by Western standards). The end result is that he appears to be a good line soldier who obeys without question, and who is conditioned to live under the relatively primitive conditions of

war. Ironically, however, the Soviet's greatest strength (obedience) is perhaps his greatest weakness (initiative).

TRAINING

Pre-military Training

Military training in the Soviet Union consists of civilian pre-military training, in-service training, and reserve training.[47] The pre-military training concept is not new, however with the initiation of the 1967 Law of Universal Military Service greater emphasis has been given to this area than before. The general reason for this is that in reducing an individual's active duty time in service from three years to two years, an inherent problem is the adverse effect on combat readiness due to a reduction in training time. It was, and is, felt that this pre-induction training would offset the loss of in-service training time by making the transition from civilian life to military life easier and would help the new soldiers master modern military equipment more quickly when they were drafted.

While military training is prevalent from the very early years in a child's training, e.g. Young Pioneers, and Komsomol summer camps, the "official" pre-induction training is given during the last two years of high school and is compulsory for all young men between the ages of sixteen and eighteen.[48] Additional training is given to those who are deferred for some reason, and are in professional trade schools, specialized secondary schools, or who have left school and are working in factories, offices, or farms. Generally run by the All Union Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Army, Air Force, and Navy (DOSAAF -- Dobrovol'noye Obshchestvo Sodeystviya Armii, Aviatsii i Flotu)[49] under

auspices of the Ministry of Defense, the training received varies from military oriented sports programs to training specifically oriented for a particular specialty.[50]

Generally speaking, the pre-military training is the "pre-1967" basic training that inductees used to receive once they were drafted. The standard program is based around a 140 hour block of instruction oriented towards familiarization with military organization and regulations, small arms use, and civil defense techniques.[51] Normally students spend about two hours a week over the two school years on these topics in addition to their normal course load. Workers, on the other hand, attend three, week-long, full time sessions at training centers.[52] In addition to this formal classroom training, a system of camps run by DOSAAF and the Komsomol has been established where trainees attend field exercises varying in duration from five to fifteen days, putting into practical application what they have learned in class.[53] Attendance is supposedly voluntary, and the camps are run like military garrisons with formations, revielle, guard mount, physical training and weapons firing.

In addition to the standard pre-military training just discussed, DOSAAF is also responsible for the specialist training offered in the second year of the basic course. This is again "voluntary" on the part of the individual and not everyone participates, but the fact is that quotas are assigned to the local military commissariats and these must be filled, normally by individuals who have shown a preference for a particular specialty. There are over 2,000 military specialties in the Soviet armed forces, each with its own prerequisites and training.[54] The program is ten months long and is autonomous from the standard program in that it orients an individual both theoretically and practically toward

his given specialty. Courses in military-technical areas such as automotive repair, truck driving, communications, and piloting of aircraft are offered, to name a few.[55] Within the standard program mentioned earlier, about one-third of the time is devoted towards a "mass assigned" specialty for the typical individual, i.e. basic infantry soldiering, but it is not as comprehensive as the specialist training mentioned here.

During pre-induction training no formal political training is given, at least not specifically within the program. The responsibility for this lies with the schools, factories and local Party organizations, although inevitably the program itself has a strong latent political message.[56]

Considering the vast scope of this training program, problems do occur. With over 330,000 training sites to man and run,[57] invariably some, especially those in more urbanized areas, will be better organized than others. Shortages in trained personnel and insufficient supplies of necessary equipment are to be expected with many of the cadre being older reserve officers and non-commissioned officers. Even with these problems, however, the pre-induction training program appears to work. It does provide preliminary military training to the majority of draft age young people going on to active duty as well as to the roughly 50 percent of Soviet youth that are not called.[58]

Post Induction Training and Schools

The training that one receives following induction may be arbitrarily divided into individual and unit training. Twice a year, as previously mentioned, draftees are called up for active duty, but having

been drafted does not mean that an individual is "officially" in the army yet. Newly inducted soldiers are transported to camps which equate roughly to the reception centers of the U.S. army. Here the recruits are given a physical examination, issued clothing and are subjected to about four weeks of intensive individual basic military training which augments that which was learned in the pre-induction training. The combination of these two periods could be loosely compared to U.S. basic training. The recruit learns to drill, march and basically how to integrate himself into a military unit. At the end of the period of training he is sworn into the armed forces in an impressive ceremony where each soldier is required to read the Oath of Allegiance aloud and sign it in front of his peers and superiors.[59] Only after a soldier has read the Oath is he "officially" in the military service.

Upon completion of the initial four weeks of instruction the recruit is assigned to an operational unit. Certain conscripts, however, will be selected to attend advanced specialist training based on their pre-induction training record. Additionally, certain outstanding conscripts will be selected to proceed directly to a non-commissioned officer's school for a period of several weeks to a year. Most non-commissioned officer training appears to last about six months.[60] These schools are operated by the specific components and arms to which the conscript is assigned, e.g. the tank forces, with the subject matter of the courses varying with the pertinent specialty, but concentrating primarily on military subjects and technical areas. Prior to joining their units, conscript tank commanders, gunners and driver/mechanics complete a period of four to six months instruction in specialist training covering such topics as maintenance, tank weapons systems, firing procedures, and vehicle operation.[61]

The initial training and schooling of the young officer of the Soviet armed forces is somewhat different. With roughly 136 military academies and colleges the Soviet Union possesses the world's most extensive network of officer commissioning programs. Having discussed the admission requirements earlier, it should be evident that the military colleges are the backbone of the Soviet commissioning program with the total output of all of its officer candidate establishments at approximately 50,000 officers annually.[62] Military schools range from three to five years in length and graduates of both types of colleges (technical and higher colleges) are commissioned as lieutenants in their respective branch. Unlike the U.S. army, Soviet officers are commissioned "for the duration" and normally are not released from active duty until the minimum age of forty years.

As in our own academies, strict military discipline and bearing is enforced at all times, which, in addition to the educational requirements, serves not only to train the young cadet officers, but also to weed out the undesirables.[63] The curricula in these academies vary depending on the branch towards which the school is oriented. Generally 60 percent of their curriculum is devoted to specialized military subjects such as regulations, branch tactics, weapons and equipment and about 30 percent is devoted to academic subjects. The remaining 10 percent is dedicated to political studies.[64] Cadets are also given "substantial experience" by what might be called hands-on-training through "group exercises, seminars, and participation in troop exercises at various types of tank practice ranges, airbases, motor vehicle ranges and water practice ranges.[65] For one and a half months each year students at these institutions also train in the field with an appropriate branch unit.[65a] As General-Lieutenant A. Fomin states:

> It is obvious that in order to resolve the questions of troop training and of being at the height of modern requirements, officers must themselves have an exemplary mastery of the technology and the weapons, must be able to demonstrate examples of outstanding firing from the organic weapons and must have a thorough knowledge of and mastery of various forms and methods of training their subordinates.[66]

The ultimate goal of the academies is to give the cadets not only technical and scientific training, but also "the process of instruction is designed to train commanders to be competent in training units for battle, in controlling subunits and units in any conditions of all arms combat, and in effectively educating their subordinates."[67]

In conjunction with these officer's schools, warrant officers and warrant officer candidates also attend various courses at their own institutions.[68] As discussed earlier, warrant officer candidates must attend a six to nine month course to become a warrant officer once accepted into the program. Having successfully completed this course they may be directly commissioned to lieutenant by passing the commissioning examination after five years in rank or they can be directly commissioned after ten years of successful active service.[69]

Unit Training

Once a conscript reaches his unit of assignment, most of his further military training is obtained under the supervision of the officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers of the organization. Unlike the U.S. system, the Soviet soldier remains with his unit until discharged two (or three) years later, thus contributing to a fairly stable progression of training.

Unit training activities are incorporated into a yearly training program which is divided into a winter (1 December to 1 May) and a summer

(2 May to 30 November) period.[70] Within these training periods different levels of instruction are taught simultaneously so as to incorporate both the recruit as well as the more experienced senior serviceman into meaningful instruction. Both winter and summer periods are basically the same since there is an ever revolving cycle of soldiers entering and leaving active service every six months.

Small unit training receives the greatest emphasis by the Soviets, usually oriented from squad/crew to platoon level. Soviet training is generally simple, repetitious, and as realistic as possible.[71] Repetition in training, be it at an individual or unit level, has its positive and negative aspects. While it stresses the term "povtoreniya mat' ucheniya" -- "repetition is the mother of learning" -- to its fullest limit, to insure that each soldier or unit can perform their combat task automatically and with high confidence, it also drastically hinders the initiative and decisiveness of the soldier. Additionally, a soldier is normally taught only what he needs to know in order to accomplish a specific task or mission, and nothing else. Although there are frequent public references to cross training,[72] such as between a gunner or loader in a tank, training in only one skill appears to be the rule in practice.[73] This can have drastic effects on a "team" such as a tank crew where the loss of one man could very well negate the combat effectiveness of the vehicle and its weapons system. In unit training the same criteria applies. In a tank platoon or company, for instance, most training is merely a repetition of standard drills and formations,[74] with very little opportunity for junior officers and tank commanders to use their initiative. Concepts such as our "overwatch" movements, which utilizes individual movement and terrain for protection and which

stresses initiative on the part of every tank commander and crewman are virtually nonexistent.

The realism practiced in training is a definite asset and is very evident in the publicized maneuvers and exercises of recent years. Training activities conducted in near realistic combat conditions serve to psychologically "steel" the Soviet soldier to enable him to become stable and confident in his ability to withstand stress and overcome fear.[75] As an example, live fire and aerial bombing, as well as live chemical and radioactive agents are used (within reason) by the Soviets during large training operations such as the Onieper, Dvina and Brotherhood of Arms maneuvers.[76] Soldiers are required to wear protective clothing and masks for up to several days at a time and to practice decontamination techniques in actual contaminated situations. Additionally, there is no "inclement weather schedule" in the Soviet army -- no matter what the weather is at the time, scheduled training takes place.[77] Little concern is given for a soldier's physical comfort since he is being prepared to fight at any time and under any conditions.[78]

Approximately 75 percent of a soldier's training time is in the field, regardless of the subject, be it political training or tactics.[79] In conjunction with this field training, a great deal of all training, at least for a tank company, is done under night conditions,[80] since night operations are treated as a normal operation by the Soviets and not as something out of the ordinary. The Soviets feel that they must make an all out effort towards being able to fight under any conditions in a contemporary war, and logically feel that if a unit can operate successfully at night under adverse conditions it can become even that much more effective in better conditions through its higher experience and confidence.[81]

Physical conditioning is also very much in evidence in field training, organized sports and calisthenics. Physical conditioning is emphasized through the training day even with tankers making forced marches with full gear.[82]

Training Aids and Tactical Simulators

Quite contrary to the realism evident in much of the training of the Soviet armed forces, equipment conservation is widely practiced with perhaps only 20 percent of actual equipment normally being used in a given divisional field exercise.[83] The majority of this conservation is practiced at the lower unit levels, and is specifically oriented towards individual training. As an example, training in a tank company concentrates on firing, driving and rapidly shifting combat formations.[84] As mentioned earlier, most training consists of repetitious drills done over and over again in order to make one's actions and reactions in a given situation automatic. To conserve equipment "for combat", however, tank companies normally use only one or two tanks (out of ten or thirteen tanks) for training.[85] The remaining tanks are kept in storage and are periodically rotated with training tanks or used for large scale exercises. It would appear that the training of crews whose tanks are in storage is probably not as effective in comparison to those crews having their own tanks being utilized as training tanks.

Because of this equipment conservation the Soviets have developed, and place great reliance upon, a myriad of tactical simulators in order to more adequately train their personnel. As an example, the majority of training time in a tank company is spent using driving simulators and sub-caliber devices to improve maneuvering and gunnery techniques.[86]

In tank gunnery only the machine guns and the 23mm subcaliber device for the main gun are used for qualification.[87] The tank commander (not the gunner) normally fires only three rounds of main gun tank ammunition each year for familiarization.[88] Tank trainers have been developed to simulate virtually any kind of terrain and allow the driver to prepare the vehicle for movement, shift gears, turn and brake -- much like a Link trainer for pilots.[89] Additionally, other simulators have been developed for the gunners and tank commanders to practice ranging, fire commands, and laying of the main gun.[90]

It would appear that a great deal of faith is being placed on the simulators in lieu of working with the actual equipment, and in addition to the conservation of money and machines achieved, the Soviets feel that their training goals are being accomplished.[91] Tactically complex operations, by virtue of this training concept, may not be carried out with full success, but the type of operation which involves standard drills of smaller units and less complex operations will probably be successfully acccmplished. The massive forces employed will probably also serve to alleviate any shortcomings in this area of concern.

Political Training

Political training is an area that has ramifications throughout the Soviet military. From 10 to 15 percent of the military training day is devoted to political indoctrination either through lectures or through Party organizational meetings.[92] All units of company size or larger have a deputy commander for political affairs (Zampolit) who is responsible for the political training and ideological soundness of the unit.[93] He is not limited to purely political affairs, but can also be the unit

executive officer, training officer, or can hold other duties as well. Competence in military skills and progress in military training are associated with effectiveness in political indoctrination and, as stated by General Major S. N. Kozlov:

> Ideological education and training are inseparably linked and there is constant interaction between them. The former imparts ideological direction to training and increases its effectiveness. In turn, both formal and ideological educational problems are resolved during the course of training.[94]

The soldier's whole purpose for being is centered around the Party, and political awareness and military achievements are considered one and the same -- in the eyes of the Soviet the latter cannot be accomplished without the former. All failures or successes are defined in terms of how politically sound one's training is and to a great extent the pertinent political decisions of a unit are not made by military councils but rather at meetings of the "Party committee" to which military commanders are invited.[95] That the Party leads the army in all spheres of military affairs is perhaps the most important theme of political indoctrination in the Soviet armed forces.

Socialist Competition

In line with political indoctrination, socialist competition has become an effective means for improving the overall capabilities and accomplishments of both individuals and units.[96] Utilized extensively, it basically consists of an individual or unit pledging to exceed a certain norm or level of expertise over a given period, usually to the "Glory of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Revolution" or some like cause.[97] This can be done in such areas as using training time effectively, mastering the operation and maintenance of combat equipment, training

outstanding and first class specialists, and even keeping up one's appearance.[98] Like any competitive program it does serve to give impetus towards one's work, to do the best one can. By the same token it many times has the additional negative characteristic of causing shortcuts, padded scores, cheating, and a general paranoia towards tests and inspections.[99] Units are rated on the basis of a four point system based on an "excellent, good, satisfactory, or poor" score, with basically anything less than "excellent" in the Soviet's eyes considered as a failure. This is in addition to the stress already placed on individuals and units by virtue of the overall Socialist system. Socialist competition, nevertheless, is an important part of the military/political process of the Soviet forces, and it does serve to keep most units at a higher degree of preparedness than they might normally be.

Conclusion

As we have seen in this discussion of personnel and training of the Soviet armed forces, there is much more to their forces than mere numbers indicate. The Soviets have the strong conviction that the limits of a man's potential are never reached, and that the goals of accomplishment can and must always be pushed a little further. These convictions are evident not only in their training doctrine, but in their tactical doctrine as well, and in many ways become one mode of thought. There are, in effect, only two states of being for a Soviet military man -- either he is fighting or he is training, and in the Soviet's mind these concepts are one and the same.

FOOTNOTES

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