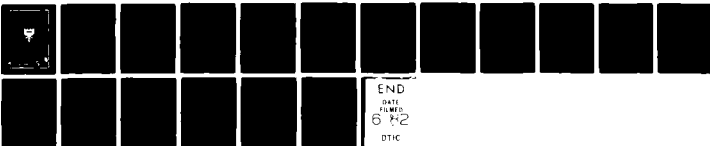


AD-A114 684

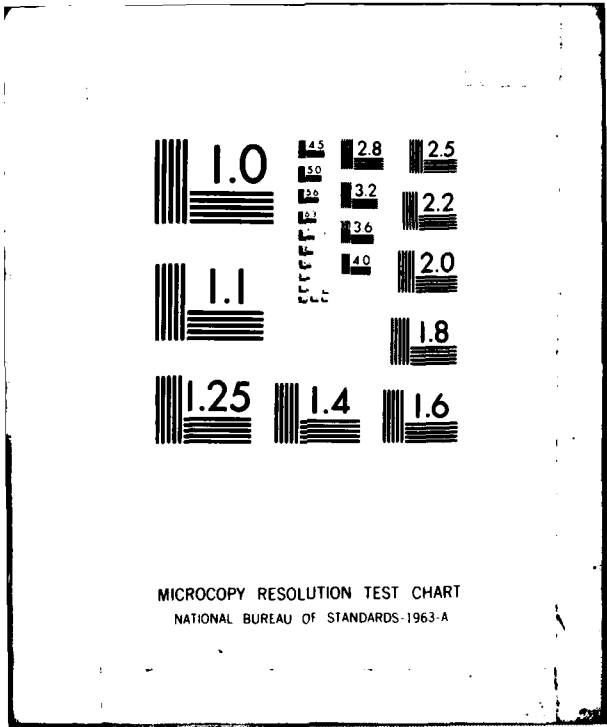
ARMY RUSSIAN INST APO NEW YORK 09053
A SOVIET BATTALION COMMANDER ORGANIZES FOR BATTLE 1981.(U)
1981 J H O'BEIRNE
UNCLASSIFIED USARI-0000947

F/G 15/7

NL



END
DATE
FILMED
6 72
DTIC



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

BAI 14004

2

U.S. ARMY RUSSIAN INSTITUTE



STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT

A SOVIET BATTALION COMMANDER
ORGANIZES FOR BATTLE

1981

MAJ JAMES H. O'BEIRNE

GARMISCH, GERMANY

APO NEW YORK 09085

DTIC FILE COPY

**DTIC
ELECTED
MAY 20 1982**

DISSEMINATION STATEMENT 2
Approved for public release
Distribution Unlimited

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER USARI-0000947	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. AD A114 684	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) A SOVIET BATTALION COMMANDER ORGANIZES FOR BATTLE	5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED	
	6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER	
7. AUTHOR(s) James H. O'Beirne	8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)	
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS US Army Russian Institute APO NY 09053	10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS	
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Office of the Director of Instruction US Army Russian Institute	12. REPORT DATE June 1981	
	13. NUMBER OF PAGES 18	
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)	15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) UNCLASSIFIED	
	15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE	
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		

2

A SOVIET BATTALION COMMANDER
ORGANIZES FOR BATTLE

Major James H. O'Beirne
June 1981

CLEARED
FOR OPEN PUBLICATION

MAR 12 1982 23

DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF INFORMATION
POLICY (OASD-PA)

US ARMY RUSSIAN INSTITUTE
Garmisch, Germany

0000947



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.

This document has been cleared for open publication by the appropriate military service or governmental agency. Interested readers are invited to send their comments to the Commander of the Institute.

Geoffrey H. Kleb
 GEOFFREY H. KLEB
 LTC, MI
 Commanding

DTIC
 COPY
 INSPECTED
 2

Accession For	
DTIC GRA&I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
By _____	
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Avail and/or	
Dist	Special
A	

SUMMARY

In this paper, the author constructs a composite picture of the actions of a Soviet motorized rifle battalion commander as he organizes his unit for entry into a combat operation. The overall description is gleaned from eight separate sources, each of which addresses some of the commander's activities, but none of which treat the subject in its entirety. The paper begins with the battalion commander's reception of the attack mission and studies all significant actions which he undertakes to prepare his unit to accomplish the mission.

The January 1978 issue of the Soviet military journal, Voenny Vestnik (Military Herald), contained an article by LTC V. Anisimov entitled "Komandir - Organizator Boya" (The Commander - Organizer of the Battle). In each of the subsequent seven monthly issues, a follow-up article appeared by a different author which discussed, elaborated upon, or supplemented Anisimov's description of the critical actions undertaken by a commander in preparation for the conduct of combat operations.

Considering the fact that Voenny Vestnik enjoys a substantial readership within the Soviet Army officer corps and the fact that the journal carried a succession of articles on this theme, then it is logical to assume that the subject is one of some concern to the Soviet military command structure. While Anisimov and each of the other authors concentrated on specific stages of the commander's organizational activities, no one article described the entire process in complete detail. Yet, the eight articles taken together provide a body of information from which a reasonably clear picture of what is expected of a Soviet commander during preparations for battle can be drawn. The style and content of the articles also reflect to some degree the level of military sophistication of the Soviet military readership and illustrate certain trends present in Soviet military writing.

It is my intent in this paper to present a coherent composite picture of a Soviet motorized rifle battalion commander preparing his unit for battle. In addition, I will present some limited observations on the style and content of Soviet military writing formed during the research done for this paper.

At the outset it is necessary to establish in Soviet terminology the meaning of the phrase "organization for combat". Anisimov defines it as follows:

By organization for combat, we mean the commander's work during which he makes the decision, assigns combat missions, determines the procedures and methods for their accomplishments, and also determines the measures for supporting actions and preparing subunits for the accomplishment of combat missions.

Later in his article, he elaborates upon this definition and highlights the following two activities: the arranging of coordination and the defining of the basic tasks of political work.

The successful accomplishment of these actions is complicated by two significant factors. The first of these is the availability of time. The Soviet authors are almost unanimous in stressing this limitation. However, there is no agreement among the authors on the amount of time available to a battalion commander in his preparations for action. Anisimov states that a commander on the contemporary battlefield will only have 2-2 1/2 hours to complete his preparations. However, he describes these actions in only the broadest terms in his article. COL V. Kalinin, LTC K. Zhuateyev, and LTC G. Kotov, writing in "Batal'on Nastupayet s Khodu" (The Battalion Attacks From the March), provide many specific details, but establish 8-10 hours as a reasonable limit in an actual situation. Yet, in the course of their article, they describe a training exercise in which the battalion commander has 18 hours to prepare his unit. In spite of the lack of consensus among the different authors, it must be recognized that time is a commodity of which there will never be sufficient amounts on the battlefield.

The second factor is the growing complexity of arms, equipment, and transport means on the modern battlefield. The firepower and mobility of

contemporary armies far surpass those seen in earlier conflicts. Deriving the maximum advantage from modern military technology demands of the contemporary commander a depth and breadth of technical knowledge not previously required. The following example from LTC A. Latushkin's article, "Organizatorskiye Sposobnosti - Obyazatel'noye Kachestvo Komandira" (Organizational Abilities Are An Obligatory Quality Of The Commander), provides a description of the ideal level of technical competence desired of Soviet battalion commanders:

...(if an officer) makes a decision to employ artillery in combat, the officer (to be understood as a senior officer in charge of training; in this case probably the regimental commander) requires him to perform a specific calculation of the possible enemy losses from its fire. ...one has to know the technical specifications of particular artillery systems and their capabilities based on the unit load, rate of fire, caliber of ammunition and other indicators.²

The first step in the process of organizing for combat occurs when the battalion commander receives his combat mission from the regimental commander at the regimental command post.* This mission reflects the preliminary decision of the regimental commander, which has been arrived at before the conduct of the regimental commander's ground reconnaissance. There is a substantial amount of detail contained in the decision, and the battalion commander generally expects no major changes to it, but rather an elaboration of additional details by the regimental commander at the conclusion of his ground reconnaissance.

The battalion commander's next action is the clarification of his mission, a mental process by which he thinks through the tasks which he will have to fulfill in the accomplishment of the stated mission. It

* For the purpose of this paper, the battalion commander's actions will be described as he prepares his unit for an attack from the march.

is his purpose here to identify significant tasks which are implied in his combat mission, but which have not been specifically mentioned by the regimental commander in his preliminary decision. COL L. Ivanov, writing in "Polucheniye i Uyasneniye Zadachi - Yedinyy Protsess" (Reception and Clarification Of The Mission Is A Unified Process), suggests that time may be saved at this point if Soviet commanders will consider departing from the most commonly practiced method of executing this step. The common practice is for a commander to plot the pertinent details of the senior commander's preliminary decision on his own operations map, and only when the senior commander has concluded the announcement of his decision, at that time begin the mental process of mission clarification. While acknowledging that this practice has the advantage that "all questions are comprehended and in detail,"³ Ivanov feels that this sequential process is too time consuming. He offers as an alternative procedure whereby the battalion commander only interests himself in that portion of the regimental commander's preliminary decision which affects his unit directly. While details pertaining to other regimental units are announced, the battalion commander begins his mental clarification procedure. While every prudent measure to save time should be used, there is an obvious drawback inherent in COL Ivanov's alternative. In the contemporary, combined-arms battle, a maneuver unit commander ignores or considers lightly the actions of adjacent or supporting units at his own peril. It does seem reasonable that some amount of clarification can be made while the senior commander is announcing his decision, but this should not be done at the risk of missing or disregarding part of the commander's overall plan.

Whether the battalion commander chooses the sequential or the parallel method of clarification or some compromise between the two, when he has completed the clarification process, he moves on to the next step, the determination of measures which must be carried out immediately. The Soviet authors not only mention this action, but stress it as well. Yet, they cite few examples, of which the following are two. The battalion commander will call his own headquarters and notify the battalion chief of staff that he is in receipt of a combat mission and is leaving the regimental command post to return to the battalion. The chief of staff will then assemble the subordinate commanders and the commanders of any attached units at a given time at the battalion command post in order to receive the battalion commander's preliminary decision and instructions as soon as he returns from regiment. The commander may also, before leaving regiment, inform the commanders of any units newly attached as a result of the regimental commander's decision of the location of and the methods for establishing contact with his battalion.⁴ Once these and any other demands of immediate urgency have been addressed, the battalion commander must then judiciously plan the use of the time remaining to him before the hour set for the start of the combat operation. There is a diversity of opinion among the authors on the subject of how time should be allocated. Anisimov, while noting the criticality of proper time allocation, disagrees with the formula commonly applied throughout the Soviet Army, namely one third for the commander and two thirds for the subordinates. He observes, "We must take into account the specific situation, and also the fact that the senior commander's volume of work is always greater than that of subordinates, which means that he has a greater real need for time."⁵

The commander must consider, when making his time allocation, the number of available daylight hours. Ground reconnaissance and terrain orientation, both of which will be discussed later, require daylight conditions to be effective. COL P. Simchenko, in his article, "Do Togo, Kak Prozvuchit Pervyy Vystrel" (Before the First Shot Is Fired) states that, "... (for battalion commanders) two hours of daylight for working on the terrain - with good coordination is quite sufficient to resolve the problems connected with organizing for combat."⁶ Accordingly, the commander should make every effort to allow for sufficient daylight time for his subordinates to conduct their terrain work as well.

Not one of the authors mentions the use of the technique of backward planning, whereby a commander allocates time but in a reverse order, namely beginning with the initiation of the attack and working back to the present. It would seem certain that Soviet military writers would be aware of this useful planning tool. Failure to mention it in these articles is a curious omission.

Upon completion of the time allocation procedure, the commander begins his estimate of the situation. The estimate starts with a study of the information known about the enemy forces in the area. It then proceeds to an analysis of "the capabilities of one's own and adjacent (emphasis added) subunits."⁷ Anisimov does not explain why the battalion commander should involve himself with the capabilities of other maneuver battalions attacking alongside his own. Consideration must also be given to the nuclear and chemical environment. Finally, the commander carefully evaluates the data on the terrain, weather, season, and daylight conditions.

Once again, a lack of agreement is noted among the Soviet authors. COL Simchenko writes:

A special place (in the organizational process) is occupied by the estimate of the situation, during which the commander, with the staff's help (emphasis added), is obligated to delve deeply into the complex process of the development of combat. And the effectiveness of coordination depends largely on how correct an estimate is made...

Yet, COL Kalinin et al. in their article describe the battalion commander making the estimate alone, as he returns to his own headquarters following the reception of the regimental commander's preliminary decision.

When the estimate is complete, whether arrived at singly or in coordination with the staff, the battalion commander formulates his preliminary decision on the method of mission accomplishment. He immediately plots this decision graphically on his own operations map, and, arriving at the battalion command post, announces this preliminary decision to the subunit commanders who have been assembled there by the battalion chief of staff. In addition to his decision, he also gives the assembled officers the pertinent details about his upcoming ground reconnaissance in which they will take part, e. g. the composition of the reconnaissance group, the time and location of its assembly, the means of transport and communication, the number of observation points to be used and the time spent at each one, and the measures to be taken for camouflage and security.

The battalion commander then returns to the regimental command post in order to take part in the regimental commander's ground reconnaissance. The commander of the artillery unit attached to the battalion may accompany the battalion commander at this stage. During this reconnaissance, the battalion commander must be prepared to present a precise account of the personnel and equipment status of his unit. He must also have with him a detailed operations map on which have been

plotted his battalion boundaries, the enemy position, the positions of friendly adjacent and supporting units, and the graphic plot of his own preliminary decision for the employment of his unit in the upcoming battle.

The first matters addressed on the regimental ground reconnaissance are the procedures and the order for movement out of assembly areas to the initial point (IP) on the route of attack and the time that each unit must cross the IP. The regimental chief of staff normally presents this information to the reconnaissance group. The regimental commander then instructs the participants of the reconnaissance group on the special items for their attention during the movement of the group. At that point, the group moves out along the attack route.

During the movement along the attack route, lines of deployment into battalion, company, and platoon columns are refined. Upon arrival at each of these lines, the battalion commanders are given the required times of passage. Areas which may become impassable are identified, and the chief of the regimental engineer service assists the battalion commanders in developing plans for the potential bypass of the areas. Battalion commanders also note prominent reference points for their use. The objective of the reconnaissance up to this point is to ensure nonstop advance and timely arrival of regimental subunits at the line of departure (LD).⁹

The regimental commander begins his terrain orientation when the reconnaissance group finishes the examination of the route to the LD.

*In the event that there are two attack routes, the group will divide in two; the regimental commander accompanies the subgroup on the route which will carry the main attack, and his deputy moves with the subgroup along the route that will carry the supporting attack. At the conclusion of the reconnaissance of routes, the two subgroups link up at a predetermined location for the regimental commander's terrain orientation.¹⁰

He is assisted in this by several of his staff officers. The intelligence officer points out the trace of the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA), and then briefs the group on the most current information available on the enemy force, e. g. strongpoints, antitank emplacements, minefields, possible avenues for counterattack, etc. The chief of the regimental engineer service is then called upon to visually indicate the locations of intended passages through the enemy minefields and to describe the procedures for marking these passages. The senior regimental artillery officer points out targets to be destroyed by supporting and attached artillery as well as the targets which should be neutralized by direct fire. Once this information has been disseminated by the regimental staff, the regimental commander updates his earlier announced, preliminary decision and issues a verbal operations order. Upon receipt of this operations order, the battalion commanders in the group must refine their earlier decisions in light of the additional detail presented in the regimental operations order. This refinement process must be done on the spot because each battalion commander must present his updated decision to the regimental commander for his approval before he can return to his battalion to continue the organizational process. The regimental commander concludes by arranging coordination.*

When the approval has been granted, the battalion commander immediately departs for his own command post or for some other previously designated location in his battalion area at which point he is awaited by his battalion reconnaissance group. This is composed of the chief of staff, the company commanders, the signal platoon leader, and the

*This is a detailed and lengthy process and will also be undertaken by the battalion commander at the conclusion of his battalion operations order. An examination of this step in the organizational process will be made at that point.

commanders of any units attached to his battalion, e. g. tank, artillery, air defense, engineer-sapper, radiological and chemical defense, etc. He then initiates his own ground reconnaissance during the course of which he covers very much the same elements which were addressed in the regimental reconnaissance, but in greater detail. He provides his group with an update of the enemy situation and conducts a detailed study of the nature of enemy defenses to the depth of the immediate and subsequent objectives. The battalion reconnaissance also covers the route to be used by the battalion from the assembly area to the LD. As the group covers this route, the commander points out the IP, lines of deployment, possible areas to be bypassed, and reference points. He also draws upon the special expertise of the commanders of the attachments to address any of the special problems which might occur during the operation.

The terrain orientation of the battalion ground reconnaissance is always conducted by the commander himself, usually from one point during preparations for an attack. However, a second point may be used if the terrain features are such that the commander is prevented from adequately seeing the area essential to his description of the operation for his subordinate commanders. When the terrain orientation has been completed, the commander updates his earlier announced, preliminary decision and issues a verbal operations order which assigns combat missions to all subunits of the battalion.¹¹

*The use of two or more observation points is more common in the establishment of a defense not in contact with the enemy. In the case of setting up a defense under enemy pressure, a single observation point situated on the enemy's main avenue of approach is used. In this last case, subordinate commanders do not accompany the battalion commander on his reconnaissance. Rather, he conducts the reconnaissance himself and then visits each company area afterwards.¹²

In the ideal situation, only minor, if any, changes will be made to the earlier decision as a result of the terrain orientation. The unnamed author of the article, "U Gor Svoi Zakony" (The Mountains Have Their Own Laws), points out that if the preliminary decision has not been carefully thought out, then considerable correction might be unavoidable later. But none of the authors discuss the procedure to be followed in the event that such changes become necessary. It will be recalled that the regimental commander approved the battalion commander's updated decision. It is unclear whether the regimental commander's approval must be secured once again if it develops that substantial changes become necessary. If such action is required, then a serious delay in the organizational process appears likely.

The last major step in the process of organizing for combat is the arranging for coordination. This is done after the combat missions have been announced in the operations order. A great deal of emphasis and attention is focused on this subject in Soviet military operations. It represents the commander's explicit explanation of how he intends to orchestrate the combined actions of all of the subunits under his command during the upcoming battle. COL Simchenko notes that, "In arranging coordination, the commander...lays down the preconditions for victory."¹³

Coordination of joint actions is planned under four headings: missions, axes, lines, and times. Special attention is given to the synchronization of the efforts of fire support units with those of motorized infantry and tank units. The scope of coordination includes defining the goals of the attack and all details of joint action. Coordination is organized to the entire depth of the attack, but in greater detail to the depth of the immediate objective. LTC M. Feodorov, in

his article, "Komandir u Shtab Rabotayut na Mestnosti" (The Commander And Staff Work On The Terrain), states that there are two methods by which a commander can arrange coordination.¹⁴ The first is by stating it himself. The second is by listening to the reports of his subordinate commanders as they describe the sequence of operations to be conducted by their units. He recommends the second because it gives the commander the opportunity to check on the correctness of the understanding of the overall operation by his subordinates. When coordination has been arranged, the commander issues signal and logistics instructions, and with that the task of organizing for combat is essentially complete.

Only one of the eight articles briefly mentions the work of the deputy battalion commander for political affairs. This may be an indirect indication that political work during the preparation for an attack is not considered of any great importance.¹⁵

The eight articles which formed the research material for this paper vary in the quality of their content, style, and organization. There seems to be no general standard. Some are logically constructed, presenting the subject in a complete and competent manner. Others are poorly organized, repeating the same information in several places, but never in complete detail. Quite often, an author will cite the importance of a specific action of the commander in the organization process. He will emphasize the need to be able to undertake and accomplish this action, but instead of describing in sufficient detail how the action is conducted, he will cite an obscure incident from World War II in which a commander successfully accomplished this action with only the vaguest explanation of how he did so.

In addition to the lack of a high editorial standard, several of the articles cast doubt on the military sophistication of the Soviet reader. An article may establish a high degree of professional competence as the desired goal. For example,

In order to win victory in modern, combined-arms warfare, our battalions and regiments must be headed by officers who possess high organizational capabilities, initiative, and a sense of responsibility, who are capable of making a decision quickly and implementing it firmly.¹⁶

However, an average article may also include elements which call into question whether that standard applies in many cases. For example,

...we recommend that they (battalion commanders) outline activities which must be done immediately in notebooks as they go along, and also to make notes necessary for issuing warning orders.¹⁷

and, ... (a battalion commander should reflect) his conclusions on a work map using conventional symbols, abbreviated notes or simply by some mark understandable to him. It is best to make these marks with a regular pencil so that they can be erased...¹⁸

and, The (battalion) commander's practical experience must be shown in the ability to plot the situation on a map quickly and correctly from an oral account, orient himself on the terrain, collate it with a map, and understand the senior commander's concept and the main substance of the assigned combat mission.¹⁹

It seems apparent from the excerpts that there is a dichotomy between goals and practice at least at battalion level.

FOOTNOTES

¹V. Anisimov, "Komandir - Organizator Boya" (The Commander-Organizer of the Battle), Voenny Vestnik, No. 1 (1978), p. 46.

²A. Latushkin, "Organizatorskiye Sposobnosti - Obyazatel'noye Kachestvo Komandira) (Organizational Abilities Are An Obligatory Quality Of A Commander), Voenny Vestnik, No. 2 (1978), p. 106.

³L. Ivanov, "Polucheniye i Uyasneniye Zadachi - Yedinyy Protsess (Reception and Clarification of Mission Is A Unified Process), Voenny Vestnik, No. 3 (1978), p. 67.

⁴V. Kalinin, K. Zhauteyev, G. Kotov, "Batal'on Nastupayet C Khody" (The Battalion Attacks From The March), Voenny Vestnik, No. 6 (1978), p. 34.

⁵Op. cit., Anisimov, p. 48.

⁶P. Simchenko, "Do Togo, Kak Prozvuchit Pervyy Vystrel" (Before The First Shot Is Fired), Voenny Vestnik, No. 8 (1978), p. 51.

⁷Op. cit., Anisimov, p. 48.

⁸Op. cit., Simchenko, p. 50.

⁹M. Feodorov, "Komandir I Shtab Rabotayut Na Mesthosti" (The Commander And Staff Work On The Terrain), Voenny Vestnik, No. 4 (1978), p. 40.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 40.

¹¹Op. cit., Anisimov, p. 48.

¹²Ibid., p. 49.

¹³Op. cit., Simchenko, p. 49.

¹⁴Op. cit., Feodorov, p. 105.

¹⁵Op. cit., Kalinin, et al., p. 37.

¹⁶Op. cit., Anisimov, p. 46.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁸Op. cit., Ivanov, p. 67.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 68.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Voenny Vestnik (1978), Moskva (Moscow), Izdatel'stvo Krasnaya Zvezda
(Red Star Publisher)

No. 1, Anisimov, V., "Komandir - Organizator Boya" (The Commander - Organizer Of The Battle), pp. 46-49.

No. 2, Latushkin, A., "Organizatorskiye Sposobnosti - Obyazatel'noye Kachestvo Komandira" (Organizational Abilities Are An Obligatory Quality Of The Commander), pp. 105-108.

No. 3, Ivanov, L., "Polucheniye I Uyazneniye Zadachi - Yedinyy Protsess" (Reception and Clarification Of The Mission Is A Unified Process), pp. 66-68.

No. 4, Feodorov, M., "Komandir I Shtab Rabotayut Na Mectnosti" (The Commander And The Staff Work On The Terrain), pp. 40-42.

No. 5, Shadrin, B., and Kreer, A., "Nachalnik Shtaba Rukovodit Svyaz'yu" (The Chief Of Staff Control Communications), pp. 54-57.

No. 6, Kalinin, V. and Zhauteyev, K., and Kotov, G., "Batal'on Nastupayet C Khody" (The Battalion Attacks From The March), pp. 32-39.

No. 7, No author named, "U Gor Sboi Zakony" (The Mountains Have Their Own Rules), pp. 35-39.

No. 8, Simchenko, P., "Do Togo, Kak Prozvuchit Pervyy Vystrel" (Before The First Shot Is Fired), pp. 48-52.

END

DATE

FILME

6-8

DTIC