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Except where indicated otherwise in the table of contents the following is a complete translation of the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL.

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USE OF STRATEGIC RESERVES IN ASSAULT GROUPINGS EXAMINED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 83 (signed to press 25 Oct 83) pp 11-19

[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Col B. Petrov: "On Certain Trends in Creating and Employing Assault Groupings from the Experience of Front Offensive Operations in the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] The principle of the massed employment of men and weapons in the offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War was actually embodied in the operations of the assault groupings designed to defeat the enemy in the sector of the main thrust and included the basic portion of the resources of the fronts and involved the reserves of the supreme high command [RVGK]. The assault groupings organized in preparing for the operation ensured a significant superiority in forces in the sectors of the attacks to be made at the outset and the maintaining of this in the course of the offensive and created conditions for breaking through the defenses and exploiting the success at a high pace.

The elucidation of the basic trends in creating and employing assault groupings during the offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War is of great importance in solving analogous problems under present-day conditions, where there is an objective need to find the most rational methods of creating such troop groupings which would ensure the defeating of the enemy in the shortest possible time with minimum losses and the least expenditure of materiel.

In the course of the war there was a tendency to increase the proportional amount of strategic reserves in creating the assault groupings of the fronts. The RVGK were the basic means of achieving superiority over the enemy in the major sectors at the crucial moments of combat.

A most important event in the first period of the war was the counteroffensive by the Soviet Army at Moscow. The basic role was given to the Western Front which had to defeat the strongest enemy grouping. For this reason, Hq SHC [Headquarters Supreme High Command] gave particular attention to strengthening the front with its own reserves. Regardless of the overall superiority of the Nazi troops in personnel and combat equipment in the entire zone of the front, the including of the three all-arms armies (the 1st Assault, 20th and 10th) from the RVGK in the assault groupings made it possible to achieve a certain

superiority in personnel in the sectors of the assault groupings and created conditions for going over to a counteroffensive.¹ Here a characteristic feature was that the assault groupings were organized under the difficult conditions of a fierce defensive engagement and in extremely limited times (5-6 days).

Due to the developing situation, the reserve formations were often committed to battle without a halt and unit by unit and this significantly reduced the results of their use. The State Defense Committee [GKO] in a decree of 16 March 1942 categorically prohibited such a practice.²

The experience of employing the strategic reserves for creating the assault groupings of the fronts in the Moscow Counteroffensive was widely employed in preparing and carrying out subsequent offensive operations. An example of this would be the skillful and effective creation of assault groupings for the fronts involving the reserves of Hq SHC in the period of preparing for the Stalingrad Counteroffensive. In the course of fierce defensive engagements the fronts of the Stalingrad sector were significantly weakened. For this reason the Soviet Command covertly concentrated the basic portion of its reserves in the Stalingrad sector.

The incorporation of the strategic reserves in the assault groupings and the carrying out of regroupings within the fronts made it possible to create in the breakthrough sectors of the Southwestern and Stalingrad Fronts a significant superiority over the enemy: by 2-2.5-fold in personnel and by 4-5-fold in artillery and tanks.³ While in the Moscow Counteroffensive rifle troops predominated in the strategic reserves which were included in the assault groupings and there were extremely few tanks and artillery, in the Stalingrad Counteroffensive the proportional amount of RGVK in the assault groupings of the Southwestern and Stalingrad Fronts was a little more than 30 percent for the rifle troops, from 70 to 100 percent for tanks and over 50 percent for the artillery (Table 1). Here the separate tank brigades and regiments were used in the sector of the main thrust for close infantry support while the tank and mechanized corps were employed as echelons for developing the success of the all-arms armies. Precisely they, in possessing great assault force and high maneuverability, carried out the basic task of creating an inner perimeter for encircling the large enemy grouping. The including of a large amount of artillery from the RVGK in the assault grouping made it possible to fully carry out an artillery offensive.

In the third period of the war, the strategic reserves in a series of operations comprised the basis of the assault groupings. For example, in the Zhitomir-Berdichev Offensive Operation which marked the beginning to the strategic offensive to liberate the Right Bank Ukraine, for creating the assault grouping of the First Ukrainian Front at the end of November 1943, Headquarters transferred from its reserve the 1st Guards Army and later the 18th and 1st Tank Armies as well as the IV Guards and XXV Tank Corps.⁴ These forces comprised the basis of the assault grouping for the First Ukrainian Front.⁵

There was an analogous situation in preparing the Vistula-Oder Operation. Here the strategic reserves in the assault grouping of the First Belorussian Front were 57 percent of the rifle troops and 60 percent of the tank troops.⁶

Table 1

Use of Reserves of Hq SHC in Assault Groupings of Fronts
During Offensive Operations of Great Patriotic War*

Operations, Fronts, Periods of War	Composition of Assault Groupings	RVGK in Assault Groupings	Proportional Amount of RVGK in Assault Groupings (in %)		
			Rifle Troops	Tanks	Artillery
1	2	3	4	5	6
Moscow Counter- offensive, Dec 1941 1. Western Front	30th, 1st Ass., 20th, 16th, 10th Armies, I Gds. cc (rd--34, tbr--14, ar--22)	1st Ass., 20th, 10th Armies (rd--18, tbr--1, ar--2)	53	7	9
Stalingrad Counter- offensive, Nov 1942 2. Southwestern Front	21st Army, 5th Tk. Army, IV tc, VIII cc, III Gds. cc (rd--14, tc--3, stbr--1, str--3, ar--51)	5th Tk. Army, VIII cc, IV tc (rd--5, tc--3, stbr--1, str--3, ar--26)	36	100	53
3. Stalingrad Front	64th, 57th, 51st Armies, IV cc, XIII tc, IV mc (rd--14, tc--1, mc--2, stbr--6, ar--45)	XIII tc, IV mc, IV cc (rd--2, rbr--7, tc--1, mc--1, stbr--3, ar--23)	30	70	51
Belgorod-Kharkov, Aug 1943					

1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Voronezh Front	5th, 6th Gds. Armies, 1st, 5th Gds. Tk. Armies (rd--14, tc--5, mc--2, stbr--1, str--6, ar--73)	5th Gds. Army, 5th Gds. Tk. Army (rd--7, tc--2, mc--1, stbr--1, str--3, ar--47)	50	45	64
Zhitomir-Berdichev, Dec 1943					
5. First Ukrainian Front	1st Gds., 18th, 38th Armies, 1st, 3d Gds. Tk. Armies (rd--25, tc--3, mc--2, stbr--1, str--2, ar--71)	1st Gds., 18th Armies, 1st Tk. Army (rd--16, tc--1, mc--1, stbr--1, str--1, ar--46)	64	40	65
Lublin-Brest, Jul 1944					
6. First Belo- russian Front	47th, 8th Gds., 69th Armies, 1st Army, 2d Tk. Army, II & VII Gds. cc, XI tc (rd--32, tc--3, stbr--2, str--2, ar--43)	8th Gds., 1st Army, 2d Tk. Army, II & VII Gds. cc, XI tc (rd--13, tc--3, stbr--1, ar--18)	40	82	42
Vistula-Oder, Jan 1945					

1	2	3	4	5	6
7. First Ukrainian Front	6th, 3d Gds. 13th, 52d, 5th Gds., 21st & 59th Armies, 4th, 3d Gds. Tk. Armies, VII Gds. mc (rd--54, TA--2, tc--3, mc--1, ar--130)	6th, 21st, 52d, 59th Armies, 3d Gds. Tk. Army, VII Gds. mc (rd--31, TA--1, tc--3, mc--1, ar--74)	57	60	57

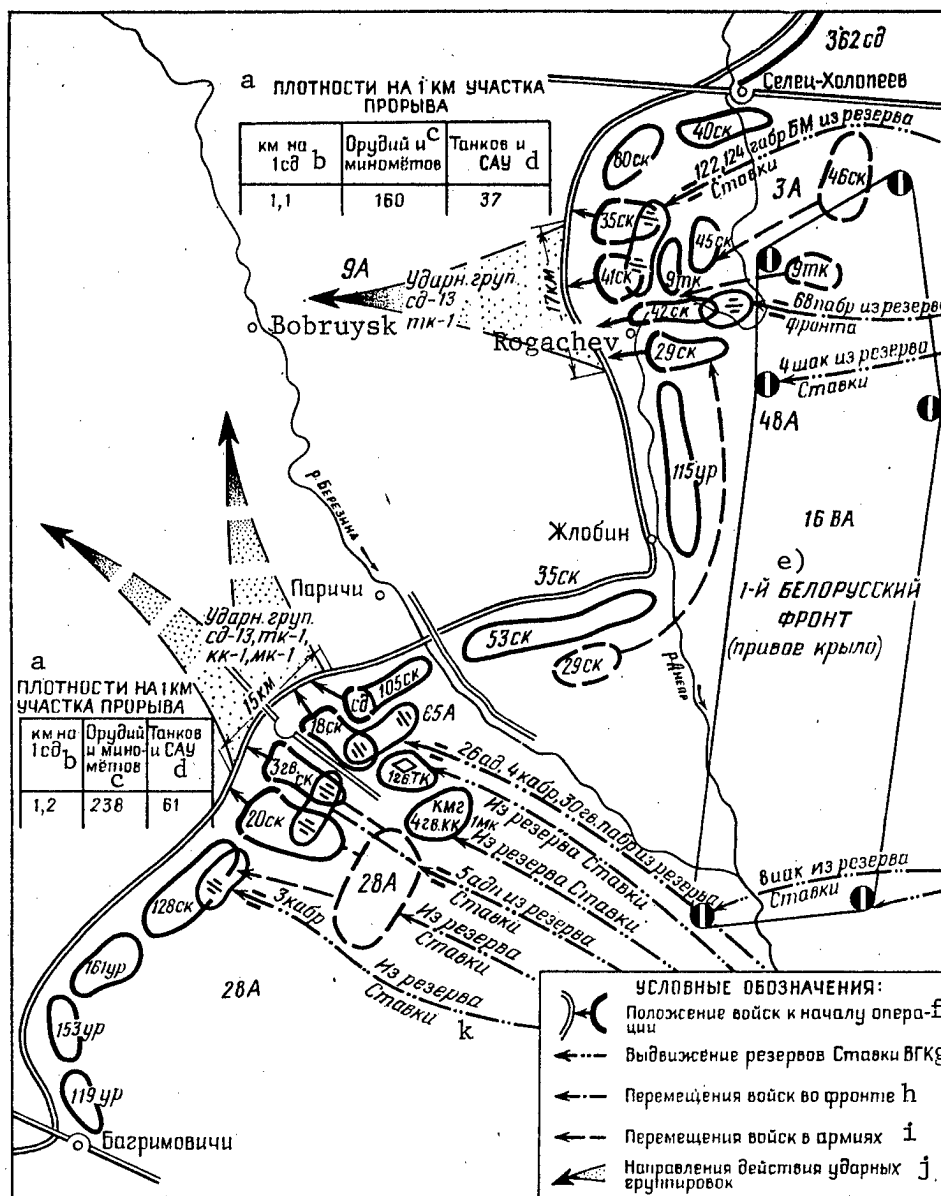
* The table was compiled from materials of: TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 208, inv. 2513, file 7a, sheet 834; file 8, sheet 11; file 1048, sheet 83; folio 229, inv. 590, file 10, sheets 1-19; folio 220, inv. 451, file 64, sheets 1-20; folio 236, inv. 2673, file 175, sheets 55, 56; folio 233, inv. 2315, file 44, sheets 424-430; "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny" [History of World War II], Vols 4-12; "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voynе" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War], Vols 1-14; A. N. Grylev, "Dnepr--Karpaty--Krym" [Dnepr--Carpathians --Crimea], Moscow, Nauka, 1970; "Osvobozhdeniye Belorussii 1944" [The Liberation of Belorussia 1944], 2d Revised and Supplemented Edition, Moscow, Nauka, 1974.

Key: cc--cavalry corps; rd--rifle division; tbr--tank brigade; ar--artillery regiment; tc--tank corps; stbr--separate tank brigade; str--separate tank regiment; mc--mechanized corps; rbr--rifle brigade

In preparing the summer-autumn campaign of 1944, when the main thrust was shifted from the southwestern sector to the western and assault groupings again had to be organized, Hq SHC allocated from its reserves to the Belorussian sector and turned over to the fronts participating in the offensive the headquarters of 4 all-arms armies, 2 tank armies, 52 rifle and cavalry divisions, 6 separate tank and mechanized corps, 33 air divisions, many artillery units and formations and over 210,000 men of draft recruits.⁷ The assigning of a large amount of strategic reserves made it possible, for example, for the commander of the First Belorussian Front, Army Gen K. K. Rokossovskiy, to create two assault groupings for attacking in an envelopment of Bobruysk (Diagram 1).

The tendency to increase the proportional amount of strategic reserves in the assault groupings was also maintained in the concluding campaign of 1945 in Europe. The reserves of Headquarters were basically used for creating assault groupings in the main Warsaw-Berlin sector. Of the 18 all-arms armies which were transferred from the Headquarters reserve to the fronts, 15 were

shifted to the sector of the main thrust.⁸ In committing such significant forces, Headquarters ensured by the start of 1945 the creation of powerful assault groupings in the most important sector of the Soviet-German Front.



Reinforcing of Troops of First Belorussian Front
by Reserves of Hq SHC in Summer of 1944

Key: a--Density per kilometer of breakthrough sector; b--Kilometers per rifle division; c--Guns and mortars; d--Tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount]; e--First Belorussian Front (right wing); f--Position of troops by start of operation; g--Moving up of reserves of Hq SHC; h--Movement of troops in front; i--Movement of troops in armies; j--Axes of assault groupings; k--From reserve of Hq SHC.

Hq SHC was unable to reinforce the fronts from its resources in far from all the operations. This was explained by the limited number of reserves which it possessed as well as in a number of instances by the impossibility of maneuvering resources from the other sectors. At the same time, the growing effective strength of the fronts made it possible for them to get by with the available resources and create assault groupings from maneuvering the formations and units within the front by regrouping them from the secondary sectors to the sector of the planned thrust. Such a maneuver was most widespread in preparing for the offensive operations as well as in the course of them.

In the first period of the war, troops were regrouped usually along the front on foot and only heavy equipment was transported by rail. Due to the shortage of motor transport and the poor road network, the troops to be used for creating the assault groupings were late in being concentrated in the assigned areas and this forced them to shift the time of the offensive and provided the enemy with an opportunity to reinforce the held positions.

In analyzing the experience of the first offensive operations in the winter campaign of 1941-1942, Hq SHC in its directive letter of 10 January 1942 demanded that the commanders of the fronts and armies abandon the even distribution of divisions along the entire front and make up assault groups in the main sectors, supporting their actions with artillery fire.⁹

Regroupings within the fronts were carried out more decisively in the second period of the war and this was related to the increased fighting strength of the assault groupings. While in the first period they were more often created in the fronts within a all-arms army (5-8 divisions) which was insignificantly reinforced with artillery, in the second and third periods considering the RVGK the assault groupings began to include 2-5 all-arms and 1-2 tank armies, 1-2 cavalry-mechanized groups, separate tank, mechanized, cavalry corps and other formations. The increased technical equipping of the troops made it possible in a short period of time to maneuver large forces, increase the quantitative composition of the assault groupings and improve the quality.

Regroupings within the fronts in the operations of the third period of the war were carried out over a distance of 100-400 km during 6-14 days. In an exceptionally short period of time virtually all the men and weapons of the First Baltic Front were shifted in preparing the Memel Offensive Operation. Troops numbering around 500,000 men, 9,300 guns and mortars and 1,340 tanks and SAU were shifted in 6 days to a new zone of advance.¹⁰ An even more difficult regrouping was carried out by the command of the Second Belorussian Front in preparing for the Berlin Operation. In essence, this was a maneuver by the entire front from the region of Danzig, Gdynia to the Stettin sector using a march, motor transport and by rail.

Thus, the creation of assault groupings always entailed the regrouping of troops the number of which grew constantly. While in the second period of the war in the five most important strategic operations (the Stalingrad Counter-offensive, the breaking of the Leningrad Blockade, the Orel, Belgorod-Kharkov and Kiev Operations), in the interests of creating assault groupings around 80 operational regroupings were carried out, in the third period of the war also in the five most important operations (Belorussian, Lwow-Sandomierz,

Iasi-Kishinev, Vistula-Oder and Berlin), over 250 of them were made.¹¹ Here, as a rule, not only the tank armies, the separate tank, mechanized and cavalry corps were moved but also a large portion of the rifle divisions as well as the artillery formations and units (Table 2).

One of the trends in the operations of the assault groupings during the war years was their increased mobility and maneuverability. In the first period of the war, the assault groupings had diverse resources possessing differing mobility and were usually formed up in a single echelon. The rifle troops which were part of the assault groupings were little motorized and fought on the battlefield on foot. Their rate of advance was low and did not ensure the rapid coming out in the flank and rear of the basic enemy groupings. Only occasionally were mobile groups created consisting of cavalry formations reinforced by tank brigades and ski battalions for outflanking the defending Nazi troops or capturing important installations in the enemy rear. However, in such groups there were few combat vehicles and not enough motor transport. This reduced their mobility and limited the opportunities for operating in the operational depth. Moreover, the cavalry suffered great losses from enemy air and tank attacks and the artillery units attached to the mobile group reduced the rate of advance due to the shortage of mechanized traction. This was one of the reasons for the incompleteness of the offensive operations during the first period of the war.

A major role was played by the armored troops in solving the problem of increasing the mobility of the assault groupings. Combining strong fire, a great strike force and high maneuverability, they were best able to conduct the offensive at a high pace. The sharp difference in mobility between the armored and rifle troops largely predetermined the necessity of having mobile groups in the assault groupings in the form of tank armies or several tank, mechanized and cavalry corps. Mobile groups of such a composition were the decisive means for increasing the mobility of the assault groupings, for exploiting the tactical success into an operational one and for a further rapid advance. In possessing high maneuverability, the mobile groups helped to shift the efforts to the new sectors and to create favorable conditions for obtaining the operation's goal. Thus, in the course of the Uman-Botosani Operation, in March 1944, after splitting the Army Group South, the assault grouping of the Second Ukrainian Front in order to prevent the enemy from retreating beyond the Dnepr, shifted its efforts from the western to the southern sector. For the first time, three tank armies (the 2d, 5th Guards and 6th) were operating as part of a front's assault grouping and under flooding and muddy conditions these crossed six rivers without a halt with a rate of advance of 30 km a day.¹²

Even greater mobility was characteristic of the actions of the mobile groups in the Vistula-Oder Operation where the 3d Guards Army which was part of the assault grouping of the First Ukrainian Front, in advancing rapidly in the Breslau sector, on 20 January 1945, was turned to the south for attacking the rear of the Katowice enemy grouping. Then it resumed its advance to the west. Under these conditions, the rate of advance was of crucial significance. It reached 40-60 km a day.¹³

Table 2

Indicators for the Scope of Regroupings within Fronts in Offensive Operations
of Great Patriotic War*

Operations Fronts (Strength of Fronts)	Percent of Regrouped Formations and Units to Strength of Front (Number of rd, tbr, ar)			Distance (km)	Time of Advance (days)
	Rifle	Tank	Artillery		
1. Barvenkovo-Lozovskiy, Southern Front, Jan 1942 (rd--31, ar--30, tbr--9)	42 (rd--13)	44 (tbr--4)	46 (ar--14)	240-460	12-14
2. Ostrogozhsk-Rossosh, Voronezh Front, Jan 1943 (rd--18, tbr--9, ar--41)	40 (rd--8)	66 (tbr--6)	58 (ar--24)	100-175	10
3. Smolensk, Western Front, Aug 1943 (rd--58, tbr--17, ar--107)	66 (rd--38)	80 (tbr--13)	75 (ar--80)	100-160	20
4. Lwow-Sandomierz, First Ukrainian Front, Jul 1944 (rd--74, tbr and mbr--32, ar--109)	50 (rd--37)	100 (tbr & mbr--32)	80 (ar--87)	100-400	14
5. Iasi-Kishinev, Second Ukrainian Front, Aug 1944 (rd--52, tbr & mbr-- 15, ar--113)	86 (rd--45)	100 (tbr & mbr--15)	85 (ar--96)	20-110	14
6. Memel, First Baltic Front, Oct 1944 (rd--57, tbr & mbr--15, ar--108)	89 (rd--50)	100 (tbr & mbr--15)	95 (ar--93)	80-240	6
7. Berlin, Second Belorussian Front, Apr 1945 (rd--42, tbr & mbr--24, ar--158)	86 (rd--36)	70 (tbr & mbr--17)	95 (ar--150)	250-300	6-9

* The table was compiled from materials in: TsAMO, folio 236, inv. 2673, file 1275, sheets 20-22; folio 240, inv. 2779, file 880, sheets 16-17; folio 235, inv. 2074, file 79, sheets 3-7; "Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya Operatsiya" [The Barvenkovo-Lozovskiy Operation], Voenizdat, 1943; "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh...", Vols 1-4.

The insufficient mobility of the rifle troops which were part of the assault groupings to a certain degree was compensated by bold, decisive actions, by the conducting of the offensive and pursuit night and day and by the broad use of forward detachments.

The increased combat might and mobility of the troops in the assault groupings had a determining effect on the scope of the offensive operations and primarily on the increased depth of advance. During the first period of the war, due to the shortage of tanks and artillery, the created assault groupings often did not develop the offensive to the planned depth. In a majority of the conducted operations, the attacks by our troops, as a rule, ended with the breakthrough of the tactical enemy defensive zone and coming out in the operational depth. The further development of success was usually localized by counterstrikes of the enemy operational reserves. The lack of powerful mobile formations limited the capabilities of the assault groupings for the rapid development of the tactical breakthrough into an operational one. For this reason the assault groupings of the fronts operated to a comparatively shallow depth (to 100-140 km) at a low pace (6-10 km a day) and did not lead to the complete defeating of the opposing enemy grouping. For this reason the tendency for an increased depth of operations of the assault groupings began to be more apparent in the second and third periods of the war. This was brought about by the increased number and higher quality of combat equipment, by the improved methods of its employment, by the greater combat skill of the troops, commanders and staffs and by their ability to conduct fluid operations.

The increased combat might of the troops and the necessity of breaking the strongly reinforced and deeply echeloned enemy defenses (1943) and the subsequent exploitation of success to a great depth led to a two-echelon configuration of the assault groupings. Each of them had a significant number of tanks, artillery and engineer equipment. The first echelon usually included from 70 to 80 percent of all the men and weapons of the front and possessed the ability in a short period of time to crush the enemy defenses and create conditions for the mobile groups and second echelons for exploiting the success to a great depth. As a consequence of this, in the front-level operations of 1944-1945, the depth of advance by the assault groupings rose by approximately 2- or 3-fold and reached 250-350 km and in a number of instances 400-500 km.¹⁴

The trends examined here in the organizing and combat employment of troop assault groupings during the years of the Great Patriotic War have not only not lost their importance for today but are continuing to develop in accord with the occurring quantitative and qualitative changes in modern weapons.

FOOTNOTES

1 "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Vol I, Voenizdat, 1958, pp 376, 385.

2 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 4, Voenizdat, 1975, p 327.

- ³ Ibid., Vol 6, 1976, p 48.
- ⁴ A. N. Grylev, "Dnepr--Karpaty--Krym" [The Dnepr--Carpathians--Crimea], p 37.
- ⁵ The assault grouping of the front also included the 38th and 3d Guards Tank Armies which were part of the front.
- ⁶ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy..., " Vol 8, p 66.
- ⁷ Ibid., Vol 9, 1978, p 44.
- ⁸ Ibid., Vol 10, 1979, p 443.
- ⁹ "Sbornik boyvykh dokumentov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Combat Documents of the Great Patriotic War], No 5, Voenizdat, 1947, p 9.
- ¹⁰ "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Vol 4, Voenizdat, 1962, p 355.
- ¹¹ N. I. Yakovlev, "Peregруппirovki voysk frontov i armii v strategicheskikh nastupatel'nykh operatsiyakh tretyego perioda Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Troop Regroupings of Fronts and Armies in Strategic Offensive Operations During Third Period of the Great Patriotic War] (Dissertation), Moscow, 1976, p 4.
- ¹² TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 240, inv. 2779, file 879, sheets 3-6, 12-15, 60-61.
- ¹³ A. I. Radziyevskiy, "Tankovyy udar" [Tank Assault], Voenizdat, 1977, p 133.
- ¹⁴ "Sovetskaya Voennoye Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vol 6, Voenizdat, 1978, p 66.

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STRATEGY FOR LIBERATION OF KIEV TRACED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 83 (signed to press 25 Oct 83) pp 20-24

[Article by Hero of the Soviet Union, Professor, Army Gen S. P. Ivanov: "The Liberation of the Capital of Ukraine, Kiev"]

[Text] The historic victories of the Soviet Army at Stalingrad, in the Caucasus and the Kursk Salient altered the course of the war. The Soviet Supreme High Command from now on began to impose its will on the enemy. The successes of our troops in the summer of 1943 were great but many important operational-strategic tasks still had to be carried out for fully completing the operations of this year and for attaining their ultimate goals. The main one, undoubtedly, was the establishing of bridgeheads of sufficient scale on the right bank of the Dnepr for the deployment of large groupings capable of developing a powerful offensive on the Right Bank Ukraine. Here the greatest importance was given to the bridgeheads in the area of Kiev, for precisely they could create favorable conditions for liberating the Ukrainian capital.

The honorable but difficult task of capturing and reinforcing such bridgeheads and liberating Kiev fell to the Voronezh Front which was commanded by Army Gen N. F. Vatutin with the member of the Military Council Lt Gen N. S. Khrushchev and the chief of staff, the author of these lines Lt Gen S. P. Ivanov.

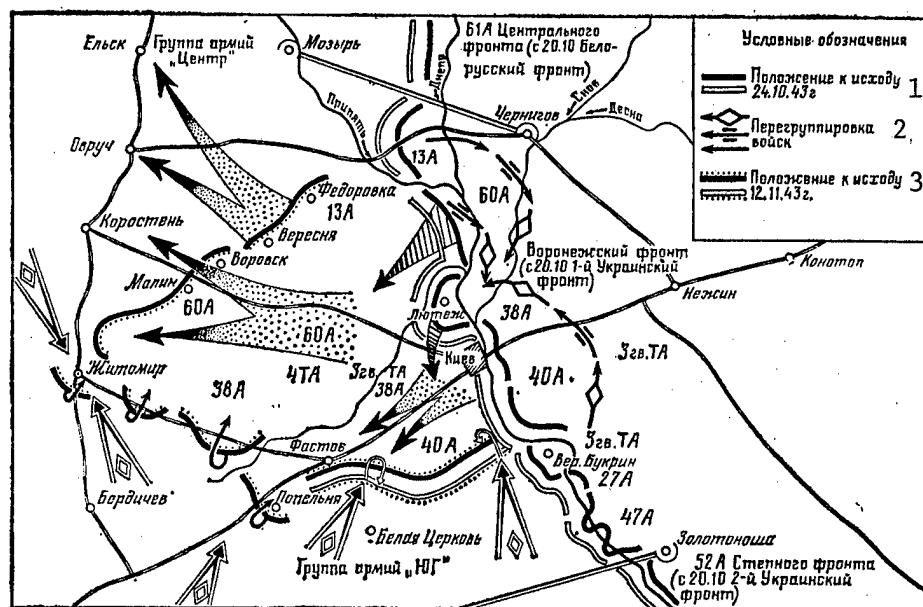
The Nazi Command also focused chief attention on the Kiev sector, considering it the most dangerous for itself. Some 30 enemy divisions including seven tank ones were concentrated in the zone of our front.¹

It was impossible to take Kiev located on the high bank of the Dnepr by a single head-on attack and the crossing of the river. For this reason the commander of the front even in approaching the city decided to defeat the Kiev enemy grouping and liberate the capital of the Ukraine by two attacks from previously captured bridgeheads: the Bukrin and the Lyutezh. Here the main thrust was to be made from the Bukrin bridgehead. As a result, by the end of the fifth day of the operation, Kiev was to be liberated and the Kiev--Zhitomir Highway cut so as to cut off the escape route of the Nazis to the west.

The offensive of the troops from the Voronezh Front from the Bukrin bridgehead started on 12 October. Intense battles went on continuously until the end of

the month. Over this time the troops of the front twice went over to the offensive: the first time during the period from 12 through 15 October and the second time from 21 through 23 October.² However, both attempts to break through the enemy defenses did not produce any substantial results and the bridgehead was widened only somewhat. The offensive from the bridgeheads to the north of Kiev during the period from 11 through 17 October also were unsuccessful and ended only with their certain widening.

However, it would be erroneous to think that the October engagement on the bridgeheads was useless. Regardless of the fierce enemy resistance, the troops of the front did a good deal to improve their operational position on the Dnepr line. Having taken a number of important strongpoints, the troops of the front somewhat broadened the Lyutezh and Bukrin bridgehead and they built bridges and crossings and protected them against enemy air attack. The skill of our engineer units was subsequently recognized by the Nazi general Mellenthin. "The Russians," he wrote, "put up several crossings over the Dnepr and showed so much skill in this area that they were able to build bridges for the crossing of troops and horses with planking below the water level."³



Combat Operations of Troops from First Ukrainian Front
in Kiev Operation, 1943

Key: 1--Situation by end of 24 October 1943; 2--Regrouping of troops; 3--Position by end of 12 November 1943

In these battles, the enemy formations, including those shifted from other areas of the front, suffered major losses. Manstein's plan to throw our troops back from the bridgeheads into the river was thwarted. Here he was unable himself to hold on to the initially occupied positions. But certainly the most important thing was that we tied down the basic enemy forces and prevented its freedom of maneuver.

After the offensive on the Bukrin bridgehead had to be halted, Headquarters took a decision to make the main thrust from the Lyutezh bridgehead, as here the terrain more favored the utilization of mobile troops, but due to the absence of free reserves, Headquarters had to regroup the basic portion of the troops from the Bukrin bridgehead here.⁴ Several variations were discussed for concentrating the additional troop grouping in the area of Lyutezh. The staff of the front carried out great work on all sorts of calculations and the preparation of routes, as well as for organizing a number of deception measures. Let me give just one example. In order to conceal from the enemy the departure of the 3d Guards Tank Army and the artillery reinforcements of the RVCK [Supreme High Command Reserve] from the Bukrin bridgehead to the north, the 40th, 27th and 47th Armies set up a large number of dummy tanks and guns in their areas while the radio network of the 3d Guards Tank Army operated under the same conditions. How skillfully this was done can be seen from the fact that enemy aviation and artillery attacked the accumulations of these dummies until the very moment our troops went over to the offensive. These and other measures made it possible to shift unbeknownst to the enemy significant forces to the Lyutezh bridgehead which was relatively small, some 19-20 km along the Dnepr and 14 km deep. Hanging over the Kiev enemy grouping from the north, it was better than the Bukrin one and this was reflected in the adjusted overall plan of the Kiev Operation. "In attacking with all the forces of the 38th Army from the front of Moshchun, Vyshgorod to the south and with the left flank of the 60th Army on the axis of Dymer and then along the western bank of the Irpen River as well as exploiting the success by the mobile formations in a southwesterly axis, the armies of the First Ukrainian Front⁵ have the immediate task of outflanking Kiev on the west and by the end of 5 November 1943 to capture Kiev."⁶

Considering the necessity of breaking through the prepared enemy defenses, in planning the operation great attention was given to the questions of artillery and air support for the offensive and to creating a strong artillery grouping directly on the bridgehead in the breakthrough sectors.

Significant work was also done to organize troop control. In line with the shifting of the sector of the main thrust to the north of Kiev, it was essential to recreate the entire system of command and observation posts. The command post of the front's staff was deployed to the west of the village of Novyye Petrovtsy, not far from the forward edge of the enemy defenses (presently there is a memorial monument to the First Ukrainian Front and to the 38th, 3d Guards Tank and 2d Air Armies).

Our entire nation forged by the Communist Party into a single fighting camp participated in the preparations for the battle for Kiev. On the eve of the fierce battles--and this had become a tradition--the men linked their destiny with the destiny of the home party. Just in October, more than 13,000 men became communists in the troops of the First Ukrainian Front. As a total by the start of the offensive, there were over 135,000 communists in the front.⁷

On 1 November 1943, the 40th and 22d Armies went over to the offensive from the Bukrin bridgehead. Attacking the enemy repeatedly and tenaciously, although they did not succeed in breaking through its defenses, they did tie down large enemy forces to the area and deprived them of the freedom of maneuvering. The

Nazi Command was unable to promptly shift three tank divisions and one motorized one to the north, where the outcome of the Battle for Kiev was determined.⁸

During the evening of 2 November, the command of the front issued orders for commencing an offensive by the main assault grouping to the north of Kiev. During the night the troops took up the jump-off position. The military council of the front appealed to the troops: "Comrades! Ahead of you lies Kiev, the mother of the Russian cities, the cradle of our fatherland. Here our mighty Russia was born many centuries ago. Here our mothers and fathers, our grandfathers and great-grandfathers with weapons in hand defended the freedom and independence of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples against the enemies.... For our Soviet Motherland, for our freedom and a happy life, for the Ukraine, for Kiev, forward to defeat the enemy!"⁹

In the morning of 3 November, after artillery softening up from the Lyutezh bridgehead, the main grouping of the front went over to the offensive. As a result of the first day of combat, the 38th and 60th Armies had broken through the enemy defenses to a depth of 5-12 km.¹⁰ However, they did not succeed in breaking through the defenses to the entire depth.

Hq SHC, in carefully following the course of the operation, demanded that by no later than 5 November the Kiev--Korosten Railroad was to be cut and Kiev was to be captured no later than 5-6 November.

In the morning of 4 November, the 60th and 38th Armies resumed the offensive. The commander of the front, in the aim of strengthening the attack, during 4-5 November had committed to battle the 3d Guards Tank Army, the I Guards Cavalry Corps, the second echelons and the reserves of the all-arms armies, including the 1st Czechoslovak Separate Brigade. The committing of the new forces to the engagement made it possible to break through the tactical zone of enemy defenses.

The combat operations of the 38th and 3d Guards Tank Armies continued after darkness had fallen. On the morning of 5 November, there was a sharp change in the Battle for Kiev and this was a consequence of the previous 2 days of fierce fighting. The threat of encirclement forced the Nazi Command to begin to pull back the troops to the southwest. At the same time, the enemy removed its troops from the Bukrin bridgehead and shifted them to the area of Kiev. The 2d Air Army, although the weather this time was not completely favorable for flights, made numerous effective strikes against the retreating enemy troops which endeavored to slow down our advance by counterattacking.

Directly engaged in the battle for the Ukrainian capital were the XXIII, L, LI Rifle Corps, the V Guards Tank Corps, the 74th Rifle Division of the XXI Rifle Corps of the 38th Army, the 226th, 121st and 141st Rifle Divisions of the 60th Army, the VI and VII Guards Tank Corps of the 3d Guards Tank Army and the 218th Rifle Division which was under the front and also the 1st Czechoslovak Separate Brigade. Having broken the fierce enemy resistance in the suburbs of the city, by evening they had broken into its central areas.

A bloody engagement was waged the entire night of 6 November on the squares and streets of Kiev. Throwing its reserves into battle, the enemy barbarously was destroying the city with specially created teams. The front's military council realized that under these conditions delay was intolerable and all actions of the commanders and political workers were aimed at decisiveness and drive. The men inspired by the closeness of victory fought unstintingly for each block, for each building. At 0030 hours on 6 November, the banner of the socialist fatherland was again raised over the capital of the Ukraine, Kiev. It was run up by men from the 180th Rifle Division of Gen F. P. Shmelev.¹¹ On the same day, Moscow saluted the troops of the First Ukrainian Front which had liberated Kiev with 24 salvos from 324 guns.

The order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief pointed to the historic significance of the new victory on the Dnepr, for with the clearing of the occupiers out of Kiev, a major industrial center which had been turned by the Nazi Command into a strategic defensive center on the right bank of the Dnepr, we regained the most advantageous strategic bridgehead which was of important significance for driving the enemy from the territory of all the Soviet Ukraine. In the battles for the liberation of Kiev, particularly distinguishing themselves were the rifle formations of Gen K. S. Moskalenko, the tank troops of Gen P. S. Rybalko, the pilots of Gen S. A. Krasnovskiy and the artillery troops of Gen P. M. Korol'kov. A commendation from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief was read to the troops which participated in the liberation of Kiev. Many formations and units received the honorary name of Kiev. The courage and valor of the Czechoslovak troops were also worthily recognized.

The Kiev Offensive Operation showed the high skill of the Soviet Command. This was apparent in the skillful organization and carrying out of the operational regrouping of the troops under difficult conditions and in a short period of time, by the surprise attack against the enemy with large forces of our troops from a small bridgehead and by the skillful development of the offensive by the front's troops in several sectors after the breaking through of the enemy defenses on one of them. This answered the problem of creating a broad and strategically important bridgehead in the area of Kiev.

The covertly and quickly executed regrouping of the troops from the Bukrin to the Lyutezh bridgehead at the end of October ensured operational surprise during the November offensive operation by the front and contributed to the defeat of the enemy and the liberation of the capital of the Ukraine.

Some 40 years have passed since those memorable days. We, the veterans of the unforgettable Battle for Kiev, in visiting the capital of the Ukraine, look with a special feeling at its new attractive appearance. We grieve for the fallen and pay a tribute of profound gratitude to those who have rebuilt the city from the ruins and ashes.

FOOTNOTES

¹ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 7, Voenizdat, 1976, p 254.

- ² "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vol 4, Voenizdat, 1977, p 158.
- ³ F. Mellenthin, "Tankovyye srazheniya 1939-1945 gg. Boyevoye primeneniye ankov vo vtoroy mirovoy voyne" [Tank Engagements of 1939-1945. The Combat Employment of Tanks in World War II], Moscow, Izd-vo inostrannoy literatury, 1957, p 210.
- ⁴ Directive of Hq SHC of 24 October 1943.
- ⁵ On 20 October the Voronezh, Steppe, Southwestern and Southern Fronts were named, respectively, the First, Second, Third and Fourth Ukrainian Front.
- ⁶ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 236, inv. 8695, file 107, sheets 1-15.
- ⁷ "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945 gg." [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Vol 3, Voenizdat, 1961, p 337.
- ⁸ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 7, p 258.
- ⁹ TsAMO, folio 236, inv. 315337, file 1, sheet 65.
- ¹⁰ "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," Vol 4, p 158.
- ¹¹ TsAMO, folio 236, inv. 20835, sheet 232.

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USE OF AIR FORCES AT BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR II ANALYZED

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[Article by Lt Gen Avn V. Gorbachev: "The Employment of the Soviet Air Forces in the Initial Period of the Great Patriotic War"]

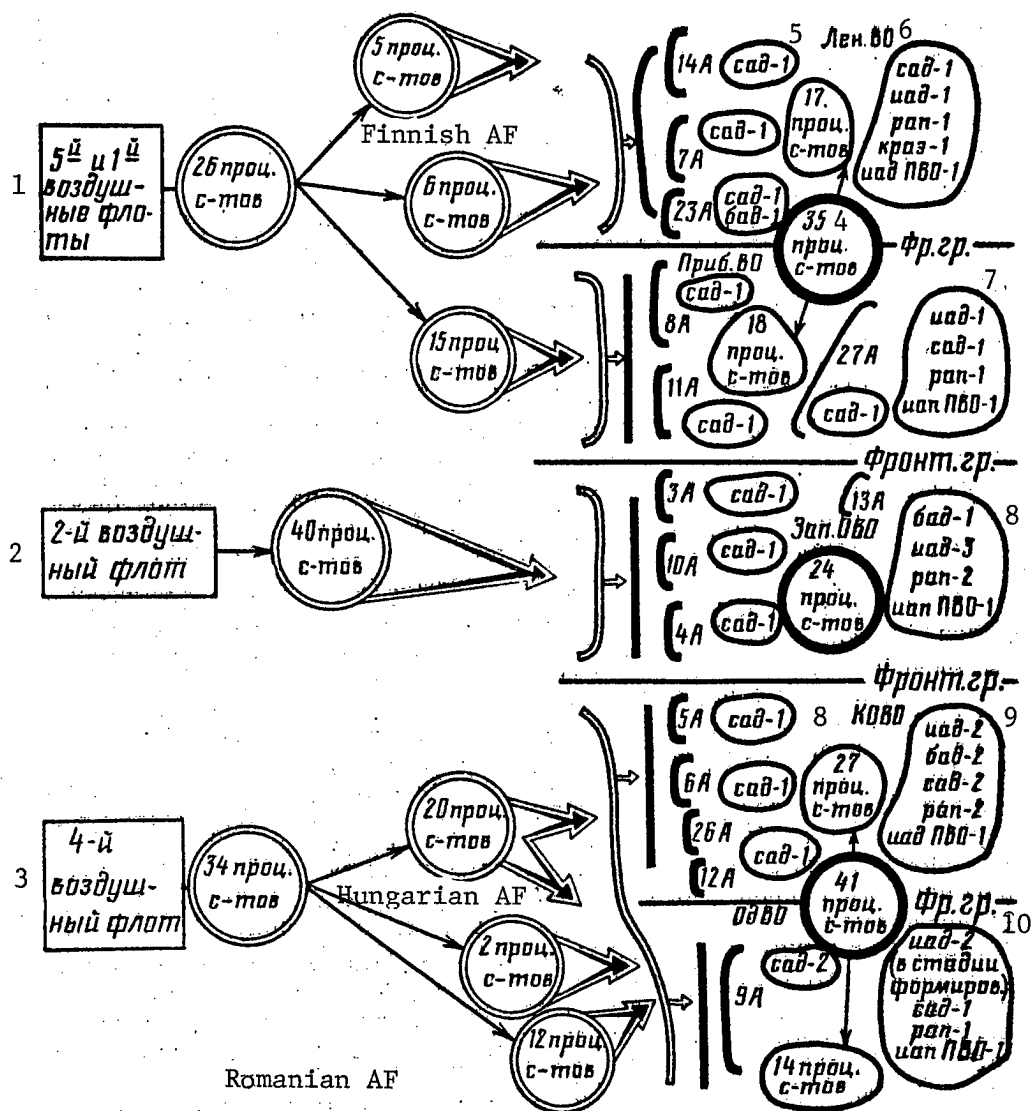
[Text] The Communist Party and the Soviet government, in anticipating the threat of World War II and the attack on the Soviet Union, undertook decisive measures to further strengthen the nation's defense capability and to increase the combat readiness and capability of its Armed Forces. Along with improving the other Armed Services and branches of troops, great attention was given to the development of aviation, to its quantitative growth and to a qualitative improvement in the aircraft fleet. The number of aviation plants was increased and new types of aircraft developed. At the end of the 1930's and the beginning of the 1940's, new fighters appeared such as the MIG-3, LAGG-3 and YaK-1, the PE-2 bombers and the IL-2 ground attack planes which not only were the equal but for a number of indicators surpassed enemy aircraft of the same type. However, their serial output was started only in the second half of 1940.

The network of aviation VUZes was significantly widened. In the training of the aviation personnel, a great deal of attention was given to indoctrinating them in a spirit of total loyalty to the party and the Soviet people and constant readiness to defend the socialist fatherland.

A majority of the aviation formations was deployed in the west of the nation (around 80 percent). The air forces of the border military districts (Baltic, Western and Kiev separate ones, the Leningrad and Odessa) by the start of the war had 59 percent of the fighters, 31 percent of the bombers, 4.5 percent of the ground attack planes and over 5 percent of the reconnaissance planes.¹ The aircraft fleet had 1,540 aircraft of the new types.² The strike force of frontal [tactical] aviation was strengthened by the long-range bomber aviation corps of the High Command.

In preparing for the attack on the Soviet Union, the Nazi leadership concentrated along our frontiers strong air forces including four out of the five air fleets of Germany. The total number of aircraft, including the air forces of the German allies, was 4,980 aircraft.^{2a} The enemy also had advantages in the number of combat-ready aircraft and new types of aircraft as well as in the

experience of conducting combat operations. For example, in the western sector, although the enemy was behind our aviation in terms of the total number of aircraft by 1.1-fold, it surpassed us for combat-ready crews and aircraft by 1.5-fold.³



Composition of Air Forces of the Sides by 22 June 1941

Key: 1--5th and 1st [German] Air Fleets; 2--2d Air Fleet; 3--4th Air Fleet; 4--Percentage of aircraft; 5--Air Division; 6--Leningrad Military District; 7--Baltic Military District; 8--Western Separate Military District; 9--Kiev Separate Military District; 10--Odessa Military District

The war plan against the Soviet Union stated that the task of the German Luftwaffe would be if possible to paralyze and eliminate the presence of Russian aviation as well as support army operations in the crucial sectors.⁴

The basic efforts of enemy aviation on the first day of the war were aimed against the Soviet Air Forces. For winning air supremacy, the Nazi leadership assigned over 50 percent of its air group concentrated against the USSR.

The Great Patriotic War commenced with an invasion of Soviet air space by more than a thousand bombers. At dawn on 22 June 1941, the Nazi aviation made a massed strike against 66 airfields in the four border military districts (Baltic, Western, Kiev and Odessa). The losses of the Soviet Air Forces on the first day of the war were around 1,200 aircraft, including 800 destroyed at airfields.⁵ The surprise factor brought the Nazis initial success.

Regardless of this, Soviet pilots fought courageously. They boldly engaged the superior enemy forces and on 22 June shot down more than 200 enemy aircraft.⁶ Many fighter pilots, when all ammunition had been exhausted, boldly carried out a ramming. On just the first day of the war, Nazi aircraft were downed by rams by pilots L. G. Butelin, A. S. Danilov, I. I. Ivanov, D. V. Kokorev, A. I. Moklyak, P. S. Ryabtsev, S. M. Gudimov, Ye. M. Panfilov and A. S. Protasov.

The combat operations of the Soviet aviators on this difficult day excelled in great intensity. For example, Sr Lt I. I. Drozdov at that time made five combat sorties and shot down two aircraft while the senior political instructor A. A. Artem'yev made nine sorties and destroyed three aircraft;⁷ A. I. Moklyak recorded three downed enemy aircraft to his combat score.

Over the next 2 days, the enemy continued active operations against the airfields but no longer with the former success. This was explained by the increased resistance from Soviet aviation as well as by the measures undertaken to spread out and camouflage the aircraft.

In addition to air battles, Soviet aviation more and more frequently began to attack enemy airfields. Thus, on 25 June Hq SHC organized an air operation to destroy enemy aviation at airfields in Finland and Northern Norway as a result of which prior to 30 June around 130 enemy aircraft had been destroyed at airfields and in the air. During the night of 3-4 July, several airfields in the zone of the Western Front were attacked and on 8 July the Soviet Command organized a massed raid against enemy airfields along the entire Soviet-German Front from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Participating in it were the air forces of all five fronts and the long-range bomber formations. As a total, 40 enemy airfields came under attack. Just the pilots of the Western Front set afire and damaged 54 Nazi aircraft.⁸ On the next day, our aviation attacked another five airfields.

Upon instructions of Headquarters, on 26 June combat operations of the long-range bomber aviation commenced against the oil field installations on Romanian territory. From 3 July, the air forces of the Black Sea Fleet were involved in the operation. Regardless of the limited scale of these operations, they played a definite role in combating the air enemy.

On the first 3 days of the war, the long-range bombers attacked military industrial installations in the enemy rear, including the aviation plants in Warsaw and Königsberg.

Over the first 18 days of the war, Soviet pilots made more than 47,000 aircraft sorties.⁹ The air forces of the fronts spent 37.1 percent of the aircraft sorties made on combating enemy aviation.¹⁰ Our pilots downed 752 enemy aircraft in air battles and destroyed 348 at airfields.¹¹ However, our own losses were also high. The shifting of the aviation units and formations from the interior of the nation to the fronts and the deliveries of aviation equipment from the plants were unable to make up for them. The fighting strength of the air forces of the fronts as a whole was declining. On 10 July 1941, the enemy had around 5,000 aircraft while our frontal aviation had only 2,516, of which 638 were in flying order.¹² For an extended time air supremacy shifted to the enemy. But it was unable to achieve the main thing, that is, defeating our aviation. Later German military historians were forced to admit that "the Russians were able to find the time and the strength for putting up decisive resistance."¹³

Air support for the troops was the second mission on which the Soviet Air Forces spent 47 percent of all the combat sorties.¹⁴ The rapid advance of the enemy assault groupings in the Northwestern, Western and Southwestern strategic sectors forced the commanders of the fronts to use the basic aviation forces for fighting the Nazi mechanized columns and support our troops. In endeavoring to reduce the enemy rate of advance and cause it tangible losses in armored equipment, attacks were made against tank columns on roads and crossings over the Western Dvina, Neman, Berezina, Drut, Prut, Dnestr and other rivers not only by the frontal bombers but also by fighters and by naval aviation on the maritime sectors.

However, because of the great losses in the aircraft fleet during the first days of the war, the striking power of frontal aviation was significantly weakened. For this reason Headquarters drew on the long-range bomber corps to combat the mechanized and tank enemy columns. Thus, on 26 June 1941, its directive to the commanders of the III and I Long-Range Bomber Corps set the mission of destroying the enemy tanks moving from Minsk to Orsha and Mogilev by continuous daytime and nighttime raids.¹⁵

In a number of instances, our Air Forces checked the enemy advance and its attacks. Such was the result of an attack by the 4th Ground Attack Air Regiment under the command of Maj S. G. Get'man on 30 June against the Nazi troops to the east of Mogilev. The successful operations on 24 June by crews of the 33d and 52d Bomber Regiments caused great damage to the enemy in the region of Dubno.¹⁶

Air reconnaissance held an important place among the other missions for aviation. An average of from 10 to 13 percent of all aircraft sorties were spent on conducting it by the air forces of the fronts.¹⁷

Thus, from the very outset the combat operations of the Soviet Air Forces were characterized by great intensity and diversity of the missions carried out. However, regardless of their great activeness, our aviation was unable to securely cover the ground forces and effectively support their combat operations. The air forces were not concentrated with sufficient decisiveness in the main sectors and there was a lack of experience in organizing air control over the battlefield. One of the serious factors impeding its massed use was

the scattering of a significant portion of the bomber and fighter forces over the all-arms armies. The mixed air divisions which had been organized on the eve of the war later were not to prove effective.

The poor organization of tactical cooperation between aviation and the ground forces also had a negative impact on the success of operations. This was explained by the primitiveness of the target designation and reciprocal identification equipment. The command posts of the aviation and all-arms commanders did not have the necessary amount of radios for rapid and reliable communications between themselves. In order to avoid hitting our own troops, the air units and formations were given targets a great distance away from the forward edge and the troops were not always able to utilize the results of our aviation's operations.

In the developing, exceptionally difficult ground and air situation, the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the Soviet government adopted a number of measures for the organizational strengthening of the Soviet Air Forces and for eliminating the shortcomings in their combat operations.

The aviation of the border military districts during the first days of the war was turned into the air forces of the front. On 29 June 1941, there was established the position of the commander of the Red Army Air Forces and deputy peoples commissar of defense (prior to this there was the Main Directorate of the Air Forces) and the Military Council of the Air Forces was established. The main directorate and staff of the Air Forces were put directly under the Air Forces commander. On 10 July 1941, with the formation of the main commands of the Northwestern, Western and Southwestern sectors, under them the corresponding air forces commands were formed and the most important task of these was to coordinate the efforts of the air forces of the fronts. This partially solved the problems of the massing and centralizing of aviation control. In the rear areas of the USSR, the aviation units and formations were organized and then sent to the front. Reserve air regiments and brigades were established for the retraining of the flight personnel. Party political work was strengthened.

At the same time, the Soviet Command undertook energetic measures to eliminate the shortcomings existing in Air Forces combat operations.

Headquarters and the Air Forces commander issued a series of directives aimed at increasing the effective employment of aviation. These concerned the spreading out of basing at the airfields, and the camouflaging of aircraft at parking areas, on the employment of incendiary agents (granulated phosphorus, thermite balls and so forth) for hitting enemy combat equipment and so forth.

For example, on the basis of analyzing air combat operations, the commander of the Red Army Air Forces on 9 July 1941 issued a directive which demanded: "Not more than 9-12 aircraft should be based at each airfield. After landing the aircraft are immediately to spread out over the field areas, they should be camouflaged or moved into shelters. Slit trenches should be dug for the flight and technical personnel. Strictest camouflage discipline should be instituted at the airfields, prohibiting open walking on the flight field or the driving of motor vehicles."¹⁸

The Command of the Soviet Army Air Forces, the air forces of the fronts and armies, the commanders and staffs began to pay more attention to raising the combat readiness of the units and formations, to strengthening airfield air defense, to improving observation, warning and communications and to studying enemy tactics and equipment with the flight personnel.

These and other measures had a positive effect on increasing effective combat operations by the air formations and units. There was a significant drop in the losses of our aircraft at airfields from Nazi air strikes. Enemy losses rose continuously. Thus, German military historians admit that "over the first 14 days of the war, more aircraft were lost than in any of the subsequent analogous intervals of time."¹⁹

The experience of the employment of the Soviet Air Forces in the initial period of the last war is instructive and pertinent in our days, too. It shows, in particular, the particular importance of choosing correct strategic concepts underlying the operational plan of a future war. The Soviet Command prior to the Great Patriotic War considered the southwestern sector, the Ukraine, and not the western, or Belorussia, as the most dangerous strategic sector.²⁰ Correspondingly, 41 percent of all the air forces deployed along the western frontier was concentrated in the southwestern sector, 35 percent on the northwestern and just 24 percent on the western. At the same time the Nazi Supreme Command committed its most powerful air grouping which included 40 percent of all the aviation thrown against the USSR precisely in the western sector.

This circumstance, undoubtedly, was reflected in the course of combat operations of our air forces since the enemy, as was pointed out above, immediately obtained a 1.5-fold superiority in aviation in the main sector. Nevertheless, the main reason for the failures of the Soviet Air Forces during the first days of the war, in our view, consisted in the lack of resolution of the combat readiness problem as this made it possible for the enemy to fully realize the surprise factor.

With increased combat readiness and the dispersed basing, aviation losses were sharply reduced and the Nazi Luftwaffe did not achieve the designated goals. For example, in the Odessa Military District, in line with the checking of mobilizational readiness on the eve of the war, the air forces were in increased combat readiness, they had been relocated to field operational airfields, they had been dispersed and camouflaged. In the fighter air regiments they had organized duty service for the flights and a system of measures to alert the personnel had been worked out. The staff of the district air forces had been moved to a command post in Tiraspol and communications organized with the command posts of the air formations. The measures carried out made it possible for the air forces command in the Odessa Military District to organize effective repelling of surprise enemy bomber raids. On 22 June the pilots of the district shot down 40 aircraft in air battles. Our losses were half that amount.²¹

With the surprise appearance of enemy aviation, all the air forces personnel of the Odessa Military District acted successfully, showing decisiveness, courage and a feeling of high personal responsibility for the fate of the motherland. The commanders of the units and formations skillfully directed their subordinates in the course of repelling the enemy.

For example, under the conditions of the loss of contact with the district air forces staff, the commander of the 67th Fighter Regiment, Maj B. A. Rudakov, without waiting for orders from above, promptly took a decision to repel a Nazi air raid. The pilots of the regiment on 22 June 1941 made 117 combat sorties, they repelled 4 Nazi bomber raids and destroyed 13 enemy aircraft in air battles, losing only 2 of their own.²² The commander of the 55th Fighter Regiment, Lt Col V. P. Ivanov, and others also skillfully directed the combat operations of their subordinates.

There is no doubt that even with the existing shortcomings, high combat readiness in the other border districts would have provided our aviation with better conditions for an organized commencement of combat operations and repelling the aggressor's surprise attack. Unfortunately, the combat readiness of our air forces as a whole by the start of the war did not meet the needs of the times.

Among the factors leading to a decline in combat readiness and high losses of the Soviet aviation we must mention the unfavorable conditions of its basing, particularly in the Western and Baltic districts. The simultaneous initiating of construction work in 1941 on the airfields²³ in the border area sharply limited the opportunities for dispersed and deeply echeloned basing of the aviation and gave away the operating airfields at which many aircraft had accumulated.

The organizational structure of the frontal aviation units also created additional difficulties in carrying out its concealed and dispersed basing. The aviation regiments (60-64 aircraft) were cumbersome in composition and at least two airfields were needed for their normal basing. However, a majority of the regiments was stationed at one airfield and it was virtually impossible to quickly shift them from under enemy air strikes. Moreover, the clustered basing close to the state frontier for certain units made it easy for the enemy to destroy our aircraft at the airfields not only by bomber forces but even by artillery and tank troops.

The incompleteness and weakness of equipping the theaters of war with operational communications also told on the declining combat readiness of the air forces. The hopes put on the permanent wire lines of the People's Commissariat of Communications were not justified. The lack of underground lines and underground facilities for locating communications centers made the entire communications system exposed and easily hit. At the same time there were few radios. All of this led to a situation where the enemy which possessed data on the location of the control posts, the communications centers and lines, by air strikes and the actions of sabotage groups on the very first day was able to knock out a significant portion of them. With the loss of communications, control of the troops and the aviation was disrupted and lost.

One of the factors for the high losses of our aviation at the airfields was the large number of unfit aircraft and crews. Thus, on 1 June 1941, in the air units there were 11.6 percent of working aircraft,²⁴ and this was explained chiefly by the lack of aviation motors and spare parts. The great diversity of aircraft also caused difficulties in their supply (there were more than 20 types and considering the modifications of the motors and weapons, over 70 types).

As for the combat ready crews, just in the Baltic, Western and Kiev Special Military Districts, there were not enough, respectively, for 188, 430 and 342 combat aircraft.²⁵ This was explained primarily by the fact that a process was underway of converting to new aircraft and this had basically started in April-May 1941. Of course, the two prewar months were not enough for fully working out all the tasks of combat training for the new equipment. Moreover, retraining itself had been planned without considering the possibilities of industry to deliver the new aircraft. According to the plan in 1941 a large number of regiments was to be converted, including 96 fighter and 62 tactical bomber ones.²⁶ The retraining times were drawn out and the combat training of the units which received the new aircraft was low. In the Western Special Military District, for example on 22 June 1941, only 1,086 aircraft could take to the air for carrying out combat missions, counting the long-range air corps, that is, around 60 percent of the total number of aircraft. The remaining aircraft either were without combat-ready crews or out of commission.²⁷

The shortcomings in the work of the aviation rear services also reduced the combat readiness and capability of the air units. The reorganization started at the end of April 1941 in the aviation rear services along territorial lines (the creation of RAB or aviation basing areas) had not been completely carried out. The lack of personnel for the rear units, the shortage of motor transport and special transport and the storage of a large amount of supplies directly at the state frontier (which made them on the very first day of the war the object of attack or capture by the enemy) significantly impeded the support for the air combat activities and the preparations for repeat combat sorties, particularly preparations for massed attacks.

The frequent changing of air force leadership also had a negative effect: over the first 20 days of the war, the air force commanders of all the fronts, with the exception of the Northern, were changed twice. All of this complicated the already difficult situation and had a negative effect upon the control of the air forces and their combat operations at the outset of the war.

Many of the designated shortcomings were the consequence of mistakes made in assessing the military political situation on the eve of the war. This meant a delay in carrying out important and broadly conceived measures to increase the combat and mobilization readiness of the air forces. Designed chiefly for the second half of 1941 and even for the first half of 1942, these measures had been only partially carried out.

Thus, the war caught our Air Forces not completely ready for immediately repelling an attack by the aggressor and this was the main reason for their high losses with the start of military operations.

The other conclusions stemming from the experience of the employment of the Soviet Air Forces in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War were related to the problem of the struggle for air supremacy.

First of all the experience repudiated the opinion which existed and was voiced at a meeting of the higher command personnel in December 1940 that "the struggle for air supremacy...should be carried out within the limits of a front and army operation."²⁸ From the very first day of the war, this struggle assumed a

strategic scale and was conducted with enormous intensity along the entire Soviet-German Front.

The experience obtained provided an unambiguous answer also to another fundamental question of which of the two main tasks of aviation--assisting the success of the ground troops or achieving air supremacy--at the outset of the war would assume priority in the sequence of execution. The demand of the all-arms command to use the basic air forces solely for support and operations against the enemy tank and mechanized columns shifted the task of winning air supremacy to the background. Under these conditions, active, offensive forms and methods of fighting enemy aviation inevitably gave way to forced, wearing air battles and the balance of forces for aviation changed in favor of the enemy every day. Having lost air supremacy, our aviation was unable also to support the ground forces with sufficient effectiveness.

Finally, the conclusion was reaffirmed of the importance of air reserves. The absence of such reserves in the Soviet Air Forces was one of the factors influencing the outcome of the struggle for air supremacy in the initial period of the war. Without aviation reserves, the Soviet Command was deprived of the possibility of planning ahead of time for increased air efforts in the major sectors and the broad maneuvering of the air formations with the start of the war.

These are just some conclusions from the experience of the employment of our aviation in the initial period of the last war. A knowledge of them and practical employment will help to avoid shortcomings at present and in the future and will ensure the complete readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces to repel a surprise attack and decisively defeat any aggressor.

FOOTNOTES

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DEVELOPMENT OF NAVAL LOGISTICS IN WORLD WAR II TRACED

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[Article by Adm L. Mizin, deputy commander-in-chief of the navy for the rear services and chief of the Navy Rear Services: "The Organization and Control of Naval Rear Services in the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] Soviet military science, in accord with the basic provisions of Marxist-Leninist teachings on war and the army, views rear support as one of the important and essential types of support for the forces in operations. "For conducting a war in a real manner," wrote V. I. Lenin, "it is essential to have a strong, organized rear. The best army, the persons most dedicated to the cause of the revolution will be immediately annihilated by the enemy if they are not sufficiently armed, supplied with food and trained."¹

In the prewar period, the questions of organizing the Rear Services of the Armed Forces were repeatedly discussed in various governmental and party bodies. In 1935, upon the initiative of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party [Bolshevik]] Central Committee, the system of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense] underwent a thorough study, the results of which were discussed at an enlarged session of the VKP(b) Central Committee and the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars] with the involvement of Army and Navy administrative specialists. The adopted decisions outlined specific measures to improve logistics for the Armed Forces, including the Navy. All the most important questions for strengthening and developing the Armed Forces and their rear services were settled in the Defense Committee under the USSR SNK.

In accord with the decision of the VKP(b) Central Committee and the USSR SNK, at the end of 1937, the Navy was separated from the NKO system and an independent People's Commissariat of the Navy was formed with its own budget, plans for industrial orders and inventories of materiel. At the same time an organization of the Naval Rear Services was established as independent of the NKO.

In March 1939, fleet (flotilla) rear services were established in the fleets (flotillas) and base rear services at the naval bases. In 1939-1940, these were set up and organized. In 1941, on the basis of the experience of the Soviet Finnish War, the new organization was adjusted. On 1 April 1941, by an order of the People's Commissar of the Navy, the "Provisions on the Rear Services of the Fleet (Flotilla)" and "Provisions on the Rear Services of a Naval Base" were put into effect.²

By the start of the Great Patriotic War, in accord with the reorganization carried out and the new regulation, the naval rear services consisted of general fleet rear bodies and the rear services of the naval bases with their dumps and production enterprises. The general fleet rear bodies included: gunnery, torpedo and technical sections, the chief military port consisting of the following sections: fuel, stores, transport, food and motor transport, boats and harbors; inspectorates for fire safety and boiler inspection.³ Moreover, the fleet rear services included a billeting operations section. The basic task of the general fleet bodies was to supply the fleet as a whole. At the same time they carried out the functions of the base rear bodies for the main base, if the fleet's rear services were located in it. The rear services of a naval base were organized according to the same scheme as the fleet rear services.

The organizational structure of the Naval Rear Services set up prior to the war generally proved effective. At the same time, the increase in the overall amount of work done by the rear services with the outbreak of war necessitated a strengthening of the central element of the rear services. A reorganization of the Main Port Directorate of the Navy (GUP) was carried out. The Supply Directorate which was part of it was broken up and on its basis a Food Supply Directorate and a Directorate for Uniform and Quartermaster Supply were established. The fuel section was changed into the Fuel Supply Directorate. Subsequently the other sections of the GUP (auxiliary vessels and harbors, labor and personnel) were strengthened by reorganization as directorates, the veterinary section was separated from the Medical Directorate and turned over to the Navy GUP. In the aim of improving the work of the Naval Rear Services, in May 1942, the Navy GUP was transformed into the Main Directorate of Naval Rear Services following the Main Directorate of the Red Army Rear Services. The Chief of the Main Directorate of Naval Rear Services (GUT), Lt Gen Shore Serv S. I. Vorob'yev was simultaneously appointed the deputy people's commissar of the navy.

The situation which developed in the first period of the war necessitated the creation of additional rear bodies at the center in the form of directorates of representatives of the people's commissar of the Navy. These were entrusted with the tasks of stockpiling materiel for the fleets and shifting cargo from one type of transport to another. In line with the difficulties of acquiring the holdings and stocks of individual types of materiel, certain directorates set up procurement sections, locating them in the procurement areas (Moscow, the Urals, the Volga). All the central supply directorates were forced to set up several central dumps in various rear bodies where the stocks of the center were stored and which were concerned with acquiring the assigned supplies, procurement and the obtaining of materiel from industry.

With the turning over of the special purpose submarine expedition (EPRON) to the system of the Navy at the outset of the war an emergency rescue directorate was established. In 1942-1943, a river emergency rescue directorate also existed. Both of these were in charge of emergency rescue support and carried out ship raising and underwater repair work.

The reduced amount of capital construction made it possible to unify the engineer and construction directorates. The rear services of the air forces were strengthened: a rear directorate consisting of eight sections was established

as part of the Main Directorate of Naval Air Forces. Subsequently, the Air-field Service Directorate was separated from it.

The organizational structure of the rear services of the fleet (flotilla) and naval base did not undergo fundamental changes during the war. A veterinary section was incorporated in the rear services of the fleet, procurement and agricultural sections were re-established and later a section of captured equipment. The first and second sections of the directorate of naval rear services were combined into the organizational and planning section. Moreover, for improving the work of the individual sections, their line of command was shifted. The sections for boats and harbors, motor vehicle, labor and personnel were taken away from the commander of the main military port and put directly under the chief of the rear services. In 1943, the position of deputy chief of the rear services for weaponry and ship repairs was introduced. The weaponry and technical sections were put under him. The remaining services continued to exist independently. Analogous changes were also carried out in the rear services of the naval base.

In 1944-1945, naval defensive areas (MOR) were established in the fleets and these combined from one to three bases. In line with this MOR rear services had to be formed and these held an intermediate position between the rear services of the fleet and the rear services of a navy base. The chiefs of the rear services of the bases which comprised the given MOR were in special subordination to the chief of the rear services of the MOR. The rear services of the MOR were developed along the same lines as the rear services of a navy base.

In January 1942, the position of deputy commander of the air forces for rear services was introduced in the fleet and a section for the organization of the air forces rear services was established. The air bases were under the deputy commander of the air forces for rear services while the repair bodies were under the chief engineer of the fleet air forces. This released the commanders of the air units from daily concern for logistics. The air bases were under the unit commanders in operational terms.

In managing the rear services of the Navy, important significance was assumed by precise planning of orders for industry, the delivery of material stocks to the fleets, their stockpiling at the bases and dumps and the prompt and complete supply of the ships and units.

The central supply bodies of the People's Commissariat of the Navy, on the basis of the guidelines of the people's commissar, his deputies and the Main Naval Staff, determined the demand for weaponry, military equipment, ammunition and other materiel. In accord with the allocations established by the government and the allotments, contracts were concluded with industry and the materiel was procured, plans were worked out for the delivery of weaponry and materiel to the fleets and flotillas, the central stocks were partially stored at the central dumps and the storage of supplies in the fleets and the operation of the dumps were supervised. Virtually all the central supply bodies along with logistical support, carried out the tasks of organizing material support: the development of production enterprises, the planning of repairs on equipment, the procurement of spare parts, assemblies and units, the supervising of the operation of the equipment as well as the financial, administrative and production activities of the enterprises.

The principle elaborated in peacetime for rear support of the Navy from the top downwards (center--fleet--navy base--formation--units and ships) in the course of the war did not undergo fundamental changes, but in a number of instances the situation necessitated the incorporating of certain adjustments. Thus, difficulties in obtaining railroad cars necessitated the dispatching of the small lump of freight received from industry to the central dumps where consolidated into large batches they were dispatched to the fleets. Due to the incompleteness of deliveries from the center, there was an increasing amount of procurement on the spot and the use of local industrial, raw material and food supplies under requisitions by the center and by purchase. For the logistical support of besieged naval bases as well as for carrying out individual important operations, the center assigned special purpose material stocks. Thus, in December 1941, for the Sevastopol Defensive Area (SOR) special purpose stocks were established and in the same month a transshipping base of the center was established in Novorossiysk and this was responsible for the stockpiling of materiel going to Sevastopol and its dispatch (loading onto transport) to Sevastopol. In preparing for the Crimean Operation (April-May 1944) for the Black Sea Fleet, from December 1943 through April 1944, the center supplied 1,913 carloads of various freight, including 1,020 carloads of ammunition, 260 carloads and tankloads of fuel and 633 carloads of other freight; a total of 25,272 tons.

In the fleet overall leadership over the rear services was provided by the fleet commander through the chief of the fleet rear services. Ordinarily the directorate of the rear services maintained close contact with the fleet staff and this made it possible to promptly take into account and satisfy the fleet's requirements in operations while the fleet staff would know the condition of the rear supplies and the presence of material resources. The work of the directorate of the rear services included: systematizing information on the state of logistical support for the units, ships, formations and data on the situation; the drawing up of the decisions of the chief of rear services and the prompt issuing of these to executors; supervision over the fulfillment of the orders of the People's Commissar of the Navy, those of the fleet commander and the instructions of the fleet chief of rear services; the organizing and maintaining of continuous contact with the supply sections and the chiefs of rear services of the bases and formations; ensuring cooperation between the supply sections.

Daily supervision over the current activities of all the rear services bodies was provided by the operations dutyman for rear services control. However, the system of dutyman without an administrative apparatus did not prove effective. For this reason, shore flagship command posts (BFKP) were established in the fleets. At them there was a staff rear services post which was concerned with coordinating and supervising the activities of the rear services and other supply bodies. Subsequently it was again necessary to change the system of managing the rear services. The new system envisaged the establishing of a command post for rear services (KPT) as a working apparatus under the chief of the rear services. The first deputy chief of fleet rear services was appointed the chief of the KPT. For example, in the Northern Fleet, the KPT had five rear posts. The first post was concerned with the questions of the organization, planning, delivery and stockpiling of materiel; the second post with the questions of the management of ships and motor transport; the third post were

the questions of the activities of the port; the fourth post with the questions of running the other rear services sections; the fifth post with the questions of communications.⁴

In the operations of the Soviet fleets during the years of the Great Patriotic War there were no classic sea battles involving large formations of surface vessels. The combat of the naval forces was of an intense nature and was marked by the carrying out of a large number of actions of varying scale and involving long stays of the ships at sea. This largely predetermined the particular features of planning combat operations and rear support for the naval forces.

Thus, in 1941-1942, the plans for the rear support of fleet combat operations were compiled only in special instances. Basically (with the exception of the carrying out of large operations for amphibious landings and the escorting of convoys), rear support for the naval forces was carried out by the procedure adopted for daily service and with emergency assignments by the issuing of special directives.

During the first period of the war, primarily in defending a number of naval bases which was carried out jointly with the ground troops and naval forces, close cooperation between the rear bodies of the front (army) and the fleet was developed and established for virtually all types of rear support.

Rear support was organized depending upon the scale of the defenses and the composition of the involved forces. Thus, in establishing the Odessa Defensive Area (OOR) its rear services included the rear facilities and units of the Odessa Naval Base and the rear services of the Separate Maritime Army. Such an organization of the rear services was also adopted in Sevastopol, when the Sevastopol Defensive Area (SOR) was established. The basis of its rear services was the rear bodies of the fleet (base) which provided aid to the front (army). The rear services of the defensive area supplied the army units through the head army dump and the naval forces through the surviving base dumps or dump departments. In the defense of Leningrad all the rear services bodies of the front and the fleet were functioning. General questions were settled by the rear services of the front with the rear services of the fleet having special subordination under it.

The rear services of the Odessa Base (Chief of the Rear, Capt 1st Rank I. Ye. Olenov) at the outset of the war had food supplies for 6 months, up to 40 units of fire for rifle cartridges and gasoline for 5 or 6 months. But at the beginning of the defense, a larger portion of these supplies went to supply the Separate Maritime Army. For the entire month of August, the supply of the units of the OOR was carried out from the navy base supplies and only the lacking types of supplies were delivered by sea. Subsequently the basic source of supply was the fleet supplies in Sevastopol. From the beginning to the end of the defense of the city, transports made 215 trips unescorted and 696 in convoys along the Sevastopol--Odessa run. Some 63,759 servicemen, 1,314 horses and 18,181 tons of military freight were delivered to Odessa. Evacuated from Odessa were 120,731 servicemen, 3,900 horses, 51,063 tons of military freight, 300,760 civilians and 287,240 tons of other cargo, including the equipment of 34 large enterprises and 80 small ones.⁵

After the evacuation of Sevastopol the rear services of the Black Sea Fleet were under difficult conditions. The leadership of the rear services (chief of the rear, Rear Adm N. F. Zayats) was provided from Tuapse, where the fleet military council and staff were located. Immediate leadership over the supply of the units in the SOR was entrusted to the first deputy chief of the rear who was in Sevastopol along with the operations group. The second deputy chief of the rear directed the work of the basic personnel of the supply bodies located in Poti, Batumi and their surroundings. In the questions of the planning of logistics, the directorate of the rear of the Maritime Army was under the chief of the rear of the SOR.

The operations group of the fleet rear services during the first days of November was confronted with supplying the Separate Maritime Army retreating to Sevastopol without supplies as well as organizing food supply for the city's population. No special allocations had been assigned for this and delivery by sea was just being organized. The units of the SOR and the population had to be supplied from the stocks existing at the base. In Sevastopol, over 10,000 tons of various types of fuels and lubricants, all available stocks of cartridges, grenades, mines and shells were turned over to the Separate Maritime Army, while 775 naval mines, 626 large and 252 small depth charges and 87 torpedo warheads were allocated for strengthening defenses on likely tank approaches.

A large amount of work was done by the fleet in delivering materiel to Sevastopol. Aside from the transports, combat ships and submarines were also used for supplying, particularly in the last stage of the defense. The combat ships transported 41,438 men, 8,816 tons of ammunition, 40 motor vehicles, 108 guns, 729 flamethrowers and mortars, 515 machine guns and 490 antitank guns, a total of 18,570 tons. Submarines delivered 2,116 tons of ammunition, 1,032 tons of food, 508 tons of gasoline and 46 persons. The submarines evacuated 1,392 persons from Sevastopol.⁶

The activities of the rear services in the Red Banner Baltic Fleet (chief of the rear, Lt Gen M. I. Moskalenko) were carried out under different conditions during the defense of Leningrad, when the fleet rear services were subordinate to the rear services of the front. The supplying of the fleet with general types of supplies, such as food, fuel and certain other types of materiel as well as the use of the city production enterprises and all transport were determined by the decisions of the Military Council of the Leningrad Front and were carried out by the front rear services. But the rear services of the fleet maintained their independence within the allocated special types of supplies and in the employment of their own production enterprises.

The organization of logistics during the period of the Leningrad blockade, represented the greatest difficulty, particularly in the autumn and winter of 1941-1942. All the supplies of the fleet rear services (food, fuel) were turned over to the general supplies. The ice road across Lake Ladoga became the basic means of delivery and with the arrival of the navigation season, deliveries by boats. This necessitated the establishing in the fleet rear services of a directorate of the deputy chief of the fleet rear services for shipments on Lake Ladoga and a group for transit-transshipping and other dumps.

The intense work carried out by the sailors of the Ladoga Naval Flotilla and the river workers during the 1942 navigation season made it possible to surmount the difficult situation, organize the supply of the front, the fleet and the public and to stockpile supplies. In 1942, the ships transported 703,300 tons of cargo to Leningrad and shipped out 304,800 tons. The Ladoga Naval Flotilla transported 795,400 persons, including 528,400 persons from Leningrad and 267,000 persons to Leningrad.⁷ The detachment of flotilla transport workers under Capt Lt V. P. Belyakov distinguished itself in the shipments. The transport "Vil'sandi" (Capt 2d Rank M. O. Kotel'nikov) made 238 trips, it transported more than 100,000 men and 64,000 tons of cargo and successfully repulsed eight enemy air attacks. The transport "Chapayev" made 317 trips during the navigation season.

Motor transport was the basic means of transport on the level fleet rear services--formations--units--ships. Rail transport and auxiliary vessels were employed in individual areas. Communication with the island garrisons was maintained by the auxiliary vessels and during the winter by motor transport over ice roads. Aviation was also employed on a limited basis for this. The practice of establishing supplies for the entire winter on the islands proved effective. In Leningrad the ships also provided a fuel supply for the entire winter season and this freed the work of motor transport and made it possible to economize on gasoline.

The Northern, Baltic and Black Sea Fleets, the Onega, Ladoga and Azov Naval Flotillas took an active part in the offensive operations of the Soviet Army in 1943-1945, while the Pacific Fleet and the Northern Pacific Flotilla which was part of it were involved in the defeat of imperialist Japan. In contrast to the first period of the war, in 1943 and subsequent years the fleets began planning and carrying out operations to assist the maritime flanks of the front. Plans for the rear support of the fleet forces were worked out in preparing for these operations.

In 1943-1945, there was a process of developing the formations of the rear services of the fleets and flotillas at newly created bases and base points. However, due to the heavy destruction of the ports and the mining of the seaways, the plans of rapidly rebuilding the old naval bases were not born out. This necessitated the development of forward bases for the fleet rear services in the area where the operation was to be conducted. These bases had to be capable of promptly and completely meeting the needs of the fleet forces for supplies in the forward areas.

In the actual work of the rear services of the Black Sea Fleet, the Danube Flotilla and partially the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, an optimum composition was established for the forward bases of the fleet rear services. This included the head dump for the types of supply for a united head dump, a motor transport battalion, a worker battalion, a mobile motor vehicle repair base and sometimes a transloading base or point. These rear subunits and facilities were located in the area of the regulating station of the maritime front, they received all the fleet's cargo and with their own motor transport or auxiliary vessels delivered this to the forward bases, the shore bases of the formations or their mobile departments and to the air bases. Such a rear grouping could be considered a forward mobile base of the fleet rear services but it was not organizationally complete.

The increased amount and altered conditions for the work of the fleet rear services necessitated the formation of new rear units and subunits, dumps and production enterprises. In all the fleets and flotillas, initially motor columns and later motor battalions began to be organized for delivering materiel to the forward units. It was essential to develop transloading bases and increase the worker subunits. For all types of rear support, mobile forces and equipment were developed on boats, motor vehicles and railroad cars. The rear services of the fronts (armies) provided cooperation and great aid in supplying the forward forces of the fleet with ammunition, food, fuel and repair facilities.

Operations groups headed by one of the deputy chiefs of the rear were established from the rear directorates and sections for directing the work of the fleet rear services during offensive operations on maritime sectors and in certain landing operations. Such operations groups were set up during the Kerch Landing Operation of 1943, the Crimean, Iasi-Kishinev and Vyborg Operations.

Rear support for the Allied convoys arriving in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk required special planning. The rear services of the Northern Fleet on the basis of data from the fleet staff worked out a detailed logistical plan for the next Allied convoy. Over the entire war the fleet rear services provided the convoy ships and vessels with 89,382 tons of mazut, 2,080 tons of diesel fuel, 1,708 tons of other types of liquid fuel, 5,000 tons of coal, 250,000 rubles worth of food and in Murmansk repaired 296 foreign ships and vessels (21 percent of the total number of repaired ships). Rescue and aid were provided for 56 Allied ships and vessels (with a total tonnage of 238,684 tons).

We should also note the work methods developed in the Northern Fleet during the period of the war for the rear directorates and sections in preparing for and conducting operations. On the basis of an order or operational directive from the fleet commander, tasks were set for the fleet rear services. Subsequently, the following documents were worked out: an order of the chief of the rear for the organizing of the rear services and logistical support for the forces in the operation, a diagram for the combat supply of the units (ships) during the preparatory period and in the course of the operation, a diagram for the communications of the rear bodies, a plan for the transporting of materiel, including by ships to ships, and a request for the lacking number of vessels for the VOSO [military communications service]. The chiefs of the first departments of the supply sections were also involved in this work.

In the course of an operation, the chief of the rear directed the organizing of logistical support for the ships and units through the rear command post (KPT). The fleet rear services delivered the materiel according to the elaborated calculations, shipping plans and requests of the chiefs of the rear of the naval bases, the commanders of the formations, units and ships. For all requests the fleet chief of the rear took a decision and through the organizational and planning section issued orders to the chiefs of the supply bodies. In individual instances the fleet rear services created additional rear groupings (a forward supply point) or assigned an operations rear group for directing logistics in the area of the operation.

Thus, in the course of the war an ordered system for controlling the fleet rear services was worked out. A positive role was played by the rear command posts organized in the fleets as these provided clearer daily work of the rear supply sections as well as a consideration of the general situation and monitoring the activities of the rear units and subunits.

The experience of the Great Patriotic War confirmed the necessity of developing the naval rear services within the overall system of the Armed Forces rear services.

In the postwar period, our Navy has become ocean-going. The technical equipping, mobility and invulnerability of the rear services have increased significantly. The role of the maneuverable rear support facilities and primarily the auxiliary fleet has increased. As a result the rear services have become capable of carrying out diverse tasks relating to the rear support of the naval forces in various regions of the world ocean.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 35, p 408.
- ² TsVMA [Central Naval Archives], Vol 2, inv. 027987, file 1, sheets 546-565; folio 10, inv. 0018490, file 34, sheets 40-60.
- ³ "Krasnoznamennyy Baltiyskiy flot v bitve za Leningrad" [The Red Banner Baltic Fleet in the Battle for Leningrad], p 408; TsVMA, folio 72, inv. 027987, file 1, sheets 547-550.
- ⁴ TsVMA, folio 10, inv. 0018490, file 38, sheet 91.
- ⁵ "Boyevaya letopis' VMF 1941-1942 gg." [The Combat Chronicle of the Navy of 1941-1942], Moscow, 1983, p 238.
- ⁶ Ibid., p 291.
- ⁷ Ibid., p 189.

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DEFENSIVE ACTIONS OF RIFLE DIVISION NEAR MOSCOW ANALYZED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 83 (signed to press 25 Oct 83) pp 42-47

[Article by Lt Col (Ret) A. Kolmakov*: "On the Edge of Immortality"]

[Text] It was the unforgettable, anxious October of 1941. The Nazis had captured Orel, Bryansk, Vyazma, Kaluga and Gzhatsk. The enemy was pushing steadily toward Moscow.

The Nazi Command felt that the detailed plan for the general offensive against Moscow and the use of superior forces for implementing it would provide the defeat of the Soviet troops before the onset of winter. But these plans were not to come about.

During the night of 5 October, the State Defense Committee [GKO] approved a special decree on the defense of Moscow, choosing the Mozhaysk Defensive Line as the main line of resistance.

Upon orders of Hq SHC, several divisions were shifted here from other fronts, including our own 32d Red Banner Rifle Division which at the end of September arrived from the Far East in the area of Volkhov and was preparing for battles to break through the Leningrad Blockade.

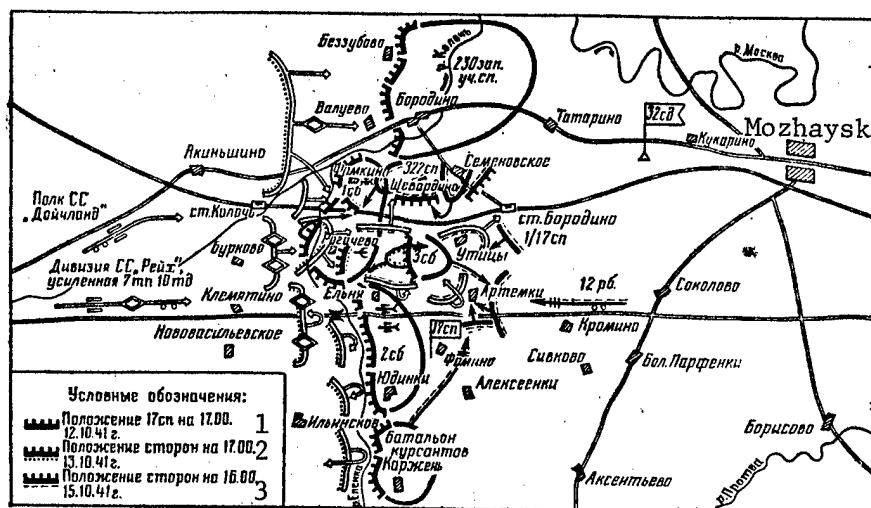
Our train reached the darkened capital at night. Searchlights roamed through the skies. You could scarcely make out the outlines of the buildings. At the station of ancient Mozhaysk the trumpeter gave the signal to unload. An air battle was underway above the city. The Far Easterners unloaded from the railway cars to the chatter of anti-aircraft guns and machine guns, they led out frightened, stiff horses and unloaded guns, messes and wagons. We were met by the division's commander, Col V. I. Polosukhin and he immediately issued orders where the regiment's subunits were to go. An hour after unloading, the columns were moving out along the Minsk and Mozhaysk highway toward the enemy, they were moving out to defend the Borodino Field, to defend Moscow.

* During the described period, Aleksandr Kuz'mich Kolmakov was the commander of a combat engineer company in the 17th Red Banner Rifle Regiment.

On the Borodino Field, like sentries, stood monuments to the units and formations of the Kutuzov Army and to the valorous defenders of the motherland in 1812. Here everything was dear and sacred to each of us. We involuntarily recalled the words of M. Yu. Lermontov: "All Russia with good reason remembers the day of Borodino." The field of glory of Russian arms was again readied to become a place of fierce battles.

Upon orders of the divisional commander, the 17th Rifle Regiment took up the defenses in the main sector of the formation. Its forward defensive edge ran along the western edge of the villages of Fomkino, Rogachevo, Yelnia, Yudinki, Karzhen (the length along the front was more than 20 km. See the diagram).

The right flank of the regiment running along the Borodino Field was defended by the 1st Rifle Battalion. At the center of the regiment's defenses which were occupied by the 2d Rifle Battalion was the Minsk Highway. On the left flank, to the south of the highway, in the area of the population points of Yudinki--Karzhen, the defenses were occupied by an officer candidate battalion from the Moscow Red Banner Military Political School which had been attached to the 17th Rifle Regiment. The 3d Rifle Battalion occupied the defenses in the area of Utitsy--Artemki.



Combat Operations of the 17th Rifle Regiment of the 32d Rifle Division of 12-15 October 1941

Key: a--Position of 17th Rifle Regiment at 1700 hours on 12 October 1941; b--Position of sides at 1700 hours on 13 October 1941; c--Position of sides at 1600 hours on 15 October 1941

In the second half of the day of 12 October, the enemy forward units appeared in front of the division's defenses in the area of the 17th Rifle Regiment.¹

Nazi flanks were approaching along the Minsk Highway at a high speed and with clanking tracks toward the regiment's forward defensive edge.

"Tanks are approaching from the west along the highway!" reported the observer of the regimental antitank battery, Red Armyman N. S. Selin, to the battery commander, Sr Lt P. Ye. Polibin.

"With armored piercing shells, load!" came the command of the battalion commander. "With direct laying at the tanks, fire!"

The first round gotten off by the gun commander Sgt I. Ya. Kharintsov hit the head tank. Having encountered stubborn resistance, the enemy tanks endeavored to deploy into battle formation. But our troops did not allow them to do this. Directly on the highway, approximately 100 m from the bridge over the Yelenka River, they destroyed 4 tanks in just a few minutes. Leaving the hit vehicles on the highway, the Nazis retreated. The first attempt by the enemy to break through the line without a halt in the Yelnya River was repelled.

As soon as the first rounds had died away on the Minsk Highway, I was summoned by the acting regimental commander Maj Ye. V. Borodinov and ordered to blow up the bridge on the Minsk Highway over the Yelenka River where our forward defensive edge ran.

I reported that we had little explosives for blowing up a reinforced concrete bridge. The regimental commander advised us to partially use mines and added that until the bridge was blown up he would not leave it.

An hour later the combat engineers were in place. To our amazement, we found explosives in bags under the bridge. Not far off, on the highway, stood the damaged Nazi tanks. The combat engineers went to work. The brief October day ended. Darkness fell rapidly. The sky turned a sinister red from the fires. Signal rockets exploded continuously in the enemy positions. The noise of motors reached us. The combat engineers were working beneath the bridge in pitch darkness. When they had readied everything, I for some time hesitated to give the command for the demolition. It was a pity to destroy public property and in addition the company political instructor Petr Fedorovich Kurokin continued to search for a tractor in order to pull the damaged German tanks over to our side. We wanted to believe in a miracle, we wanted to advance and not be on the defensive. In my heart I was hoping that orders would be received to put off the explosion. Suddenly the skies were illuminated with rockets and we were being fired on. Simultaneously nearby motors started up and a growing clanking of tracks could be heard. The tanks were approaching the bridge. There was no time to delay. A sharp turning of the handle of the electric exploder and we were hit by the shock wave. Pieces of concrete hit all around. The noise of the tanks and the small-arms fire from the enemy gradually abated.

In the morning of 13 October, a black cloud of "Junkers" hung over Yelnya, bombing the forward defensive edge and the firing positions of our artillery. For the first time in our lives from the trenches we saw the black dots of bombs drop from the aircraft. A few seconds later they tore the ground to pieces and everything living on it. The aircraft had not yet flown off when the artillery softening up started. The artillery cannonade lasted some 30 minutes. The village of Yelnya, the fields and groves adjacent to it were covered in powder smoke. The earth shook from the explosions of shells. It

smelled of powder and tolite. Seemingly no one and nothing could survive. But when after the artillery softening up the enemy tanks and infantry went into the attack, our defenses came alive. The artillery troops fired accurately. Before reaching our forward edge, one hit tank halted and after it a second and a third while a fourth caught on fire. Three tanks exploded on mines set by the combat engineers of Lt G. T. Kugayevskiy. The enemy infantry following behind the tanks hesitated. At first they lay down and then fled back in panic. Our soldiers caught the laggards with intense small-arms fire. The first enemy attack petered out.

Regardless of the high losses, morale in the troops remained good. We saw the backs of the brazen invaders who, without encountering stubborn resistance, had had an easy march through many European nations. Ahead of our positions stood 11 destroyed tanks and hundreds of killed Nazis remained lying on the approaches to the Yelenka River.

After a second unsuccessful attack, the Nazis abandoned the offensive along the Minsk Highway to Yelnya and shifted the attack to the Mozhaysk Highway. This was our first serious victory. We had not only stopped the enemy but had caused it serious harm and forced it to abandon the offensive along the highway.

An intense battle was being fought to the north. The machine guns and sub-machine guns chattered continuously. The Nazis were throwing heavy artillery and mortar fire against the 2d Rifle Company which was defending in the area of the village of Rogachevo. With tank support by the end of the day they had succeeded in driving into our defenses and with forces of over a battalion with tanks had begun advancing along the railroad to Borodino Station. The regimental commander decided by a counterattack from a reinforced 3d Battalion under the command of Capt P. S. Mikadze to destroy the enemy which had broken through and restore the situation in Rogachevo. However, the forces were too unequal and our counterattack bogged down. As a result of the meeting engagement, the 3d Battalion was split into two parts. The 7th and 8th Companies under the command of Lt N. A. Ivasenko dug in on a hill to the north of Yelnya while the remaining subunits from the battalion headed by Capt P. S. Mikadze retreated into the Utitsy Forest. On 15 October P. S. Mikadze fought his way with a portion of his subunits into the village of Semenovskoye where upon the orders of the divisional commander, Col V. I. Polosukhin, they took up the defensive.

The 2d Rifle Battalion was also attacked by the enemy in the area of Yelnya. Suffering high losses in the 4th Rifle Company and with the threat of the enemy reaching the flank, the battalion retreated to a line of Fomino, Yudinki, marker 215.4, taking up the defensive facing the northwest.² The difficult and unforgettable day was drawing to an end. The courage and tenacity shown by the personnel of the 17th Rifle Regiment did not allow the enemy to achieve any substantial successes in the numerous attacks on the Borodino Field and Minsk Highway.

It was growing light. A new combat day had begun. The regimental commander with a group of officers was at the command post. The regimental commissar P. N. Mikhaylov with the Komsomol organizer of the regiment A. A. Yevseyev set off to the forward defensive edge in Yelnya where the heaviest fighting was

occurring. Having been repulsed at Yelnya in the advance from the west along the Minsk Highway, the Nazis on 14 October endeavored to capture it, striking from the north from Rogachevo. Having brought up tanks and artillery during the night, the enemy by an offensive against Semenovskoye and Artemki was endeavoring to break deep into our defenses. By the simultaneous concentration of efforts in the north and in the south, it was trying to broaden the breakthrough toward the flanks. A critical situation developed in the regiment's defensive area, particularly in the region of Yelnya. Communications and control were disrupted and the command post was surrounded. At that moment, when hand-to-hand fighting had already started here, a small group headed by the divisional commissar, regimental commissar G. M. Martynov, broke through to the command post to help our men. The Nazis lost their nerve and retreated.

In the second half of the day, strong fighting broke out for the village of Fomkino, where the 3d Company, reinforced by subunits from the antitank battery of the 17th Regiment was on the defensive. The company was under the command of Yakov Danilovich Fomenko. The enemy was advancing from the west and the south from the forest along the right bank of the Koloch River. Being in a trench on the southern edge of Fomkino, Sgt A. Kosharnyy mowed down the Nazis with a machine gun. In repelling the fourth attack he allowed the advancing extended line to come very close and fired on it at almost point-blank range. At this time, the entire company rose to the counterattack.

"For the motherland--forward!" commanded the company commander and with grenades in his hands rushed toward the enemy. The loud "hurrah!" and the rapid attack by our men shook the Nazis. They retreated. During the counterattack Ya. D. Fomenko was severely wounded in both legs. The political instructor of the company A. I. Sokolov assumed command of it. For 3 more days this subunit held the area of Fomkino--Shevardino.

The day of 14 October was the most tragic for our regiment. By attacking Utitsy and Artemki, the enemy had split its defenses into two parts. Our subunits suffered heavy losses. On that day, the Nazis directed their basic efforts at throwing us back from the Minsk Highway and thereby commit to battle the 10th Tank Division which had been forced to halt on the approaches to Yelnya. At the center and on the flanks of the advancing enemy grouping there was intense fighting for each trench and each position. Frequently the fighting ended with hand-to-hand combat. In order to halt the further advance of the enemy to the east, the regiment's command removed from near Yelnya the detachment of Lt N. A. Ivasenko (the 7th and 8th Companies of the 3d Battalion and the remnants of the 1st Company) and shifted it to the area of Utitsy--Artemki. In retreating to the east, the detachment on the way attacked the Nazis in the village of Utitsy. The attack was rapid. Only a few Nazis succeeded in saving themselves by flight. In this battle, Lt Ivasenko was wounded. Lt A. I. Mikhaylov assumed command of the detachment.

With the departure of the detachment of Lt N. A. Ivasenko from Yelnya, the situation there significantly deteriorated. The enemy captured Doronino and advanced toward Utitsy, Artemki. The right flank of the defenders of Yelnya was exposed. Enemy tanks fired from a halt at the embrasures of the pillboxes and firing positions of our surviving guns. Under the cover of a smokescreen, enemy combat engineers several times endeavored to make passages through the

antitank trench for their tanks, but in suffering great losses from the cross-fire and concentrated fire, crawled back. The commander of the mortar crew V. N. Struzhanov recalled that we occupied firing positions in scrub brush not far from the Minsk Highway. The entire day our battery fired against the attacking enemy and its firing positions which were located to the west of Yelnya. When all the shells had been expended, they began fighting as infantrymen.

On 14 October the Defense of Yelnya was led by the regimental commissar P. N. Mikhaylov, the adjutant of the 2d Battalion M. M. Kazemirov and the regiment Komsomol organizer A. A. Yevseyev. In walking through the trenches and firing positions they encouraged the men to feats. In the evening the regimental commissar went over to a trench where machine gunners and combat engineers were located. The wounded commander of the machine gun company, Sr Lt P. T. Zele-nukhin endeavored to get to his feet and report to the regimental commissar:

"Comrade battalion commissar...."

Mikhaylov by a gesture with his hand stopped the report of the company commander.

"There is no need to report, I see everything." He raised his binoculars and carefully inspected the battlefield where hit Nazi tanks were silhouetted and the bodies of Nazi soldiers heaped up. Then he said:

"Smart fellows, Far Easterners, but more than smart fellows, you are heroes. Hold out, my friends, hit the invaders and stand like sentries. Behind you is Moscow! Comrade senior lieutenant, when darkness falls order that the killed be buried. All wounded should be sent to the medical station."

In leaving, the commissar added:

"We will submit all the killed, wounded and survivors for decorations."

But he did not sign the award certificates. Our beloved commissar Pavel Nikiforovich Mikhaylov was cut down by an enemy bullet on 20 October in repelling an enemy attack in the village of Borisovo where we had retreated from the Borodino Field. A foxhole became his grave. A remarkable Russian woman, Aleksandra Fedorovna Skuyeva, saved the grave of this steadfast defender of the motherland. In January 1942, our division liberated Borisovo. The body of the commissar was reburied. Now his remains rest near the village on a hill above the Protva River.

Having concentrated the main efforts in the sector of Semenovskoye and Artemki, the enemy was endeavoring to force the defenders to retreat from the area of Borodino, Shevardino, Yelnya. By noon on 14 October, the superior enemy forces had succeeded in forcing out the small group of men headed by Lt F. F. Ivannikov and captured Artemki.

The division commander, Col V. I. Polosukhin, took a decision to use the forces of the 322d Rifle Regiment, a reconnaissance battalion which had just arrived

from the railhead and a company of officer candidates from the Military-Political School imeni V. I. Lenin to destroy the enemy which had broken through and restore the defenses of the 17th Rifle Regiment.

In carrying out the orders of the division commander, the commander of the 12th Reconnaissance Battalion, Maj V. P. Korepanov, by a forced march brought his battalion to the jump-off line for the attack and together with the company of officer candidates with the support of the 154th Howitzer Regiment (commander, Maj V. K. Chevhus) drove the enemy out of Artemki and dug in there. The enemy, in suffering high losses, retreated hurriedly. The Far Easterners and the officer candidates pursued the Nazis but were halted by their reserves which had hurried up.

The battles for Artemki or more precisely, for the Minsk Highway at Artemki, continued with variable success from 14 through 18 October. Over this time the small village of Artemki changed hands several times.

On 16 October, the enemy went over to an offensive with large forces. Around 35 tanks and up to a battalion of infantry on motor vehicles broke through along the Psarevo--Tatarino road and engaged our units, going for the artillery positions.³

Fighting courageously and skillfully against the enemy were the soldiers and commanders of the 65th Antitank Artillery Battalion (commander, Capt N. N. Belyayev), the 1st Battalion of the 133d Light Artillery Regiment (commander, Capt V. A. Zelenov) and the 2d Battalion of the 154th Howitzer Artillery Regiment (commander, Sr Lt B. E. Gol'farb).

On 17 and 18 October, having brought up fresh forces, the enemy initiated an offensive from the areas of Semenovskoye, Borodino in the aim of breaking through to Mozhaysk and then to the north and east. Our soldiers fought steadfastly and courageously.

On 18 October, the division commander received a combat order from the commander of the 5th Army, Maj Gen Art L. A. Govorov, to retreat to a new line. The achieved success had cost the enemy a great price. At the distant approaches to Moscow, on the sacred Borodino Field, the division had destroyed several thousand enemy soldiers and officers, 117 tanks, more than 200 motor vehicles and scores of guns and mortars.

The basic forces of the division retreated to the northeast while the subunits of the 17th Rifle Regiment and the officer candidates from the Military Political School imeni V. I. Lenin went eastwards.

The retreat was organized by the regimental commissar P. N. Mikhaylov, the commander of the signals company V. V. Davydov and the regiment's staff officers. A rear guard consisting of the 6th Rifle Company and a combat engineer platoon was assigned to cover the retreat. They were under the command of the adjutant of the 2d Battalion, M. M. Kazemirov.

During the night of 19-20 October, we fought our way into the village of Borisovo. During the night the regimental commissar organized an all-round

defense. Early in the morning the combat engineers blew up the bridge across the Protva River. During the day, in suffering high losses, we repelled fierce enemy attacks.

During the next night the men of the 17th Regiment and the officer candidates, having consumed all their ammunition and having loaded the wounded on carts and caissons, moved east to the new defensive lines. They were moving toward the capital. They were moving with the sole hope of defending the heart of our motherland, Moscow, on the new line....

At present, on the southwestern edge of Yelnya, on the eastern slopes of a hill in an old park among old lindens there is a fraternal grave of our fellow servicemen who perished in October 1941. On it a monument has been set up, a sculpture of a soldier who in grieving silence stands immobilized over the dust of the loyal sons of the motherland.

The students from the local school have built a youth park in memory of our fallen comrades. The straight maples, the leafy larches and heady acacias carefully attended by the hands of the children symbolize the succession of generations, the triumph of life and the greatness of the feat for its sake.

FOOTNOTES

¹ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 29 gv. sd, inv. 1, file 13, sheet 38.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., sheet 42.

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ACTIONS OF RIFLE DIVISION IN LIBERATION OF KIEV REVIEWED

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[Article by Hero of the Soviet Union, Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Lt Gen Engr Trps G. Samoylovich: "The 167th Rifle Division in the Battles for the Liberation of Kiev"]

[Text] Among the numerous all-arms formations involved in the Great Patriotic War, a worthy place is held by the 167th Rifle Division. For feats committed in battles, 109 of its men received the title Hero of the Soviet Union, 20 became full holders of the Order of Glory and 208 received this order twice. The total number of order holders who fought in the units of the formation during the war years exceeded 14,000 persons. Twelve times the division was commended in the orders of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief as the most outstanding in the liberation of a number of Soviet, Czechoslovak and Polish cities. It inscribed a vivid page in its history by brilliant combat operations and massed heroism of the men in crossing the Dnepr and in liberating Kiev.

I would like to describe to the journal's readers the events of those already distant days which I happen to be a witness and direct participant in.

At the end of September and beginning of October 1943, the division was fighting toward the Desna, without halting it crossed it in the area of Svinoyedy (to the south of Letki) and then crossed the Dnepr in the area of Vyshgorod (to the north of Kiev). Subsequently its units, together with other formations of the 38th Army, during October fought stubbornly to widen the Lyutezh bridgehead.

After bloody, unbelievably difficult October battles which led only to a certain widening of the bridgehead, by a decision of Hq SHC, the staffs and troops began preparing for a new operation to liberate Kiev.

The plan worked out by the staff of the 38th Army envisaged making the main thrust with the adjacent flanks of the L and LI Rifle Corps with the forces of four rifle divisions on a 6-km front. Among them the 167th Rifle Division from the L Corps was to advance in a zone 1.5 km wide. The configuration of the battle formation was in two echelons. In the first were the 465th Rifle Regiment with a jump-off position in front of the edge of the forest by the

village of Novo-Petrovtsy and the 615th Rifle Regiment in the forest along the northern bank of the Moshchun River. The second echelon was created by the end of 2 November after pulling the 520th Rifle Regiment from the bridgehead at Vyshgorod.

During the preparations and in the course of combat operations important significance was given to engineer support. The basic efforts of the engineer troops of the front and armies were aimed at building and maintaining the crossings over the Desna and the Dnepr. For this reason for the divisions of the assault grouping, including the 167th, it was essential to carry out all the engineer measures in the preparations for and in the course of the offensive with their own resources (the divisions had a combat engineer battalion of two companies while the regiments each had a combat engineer platoon).

In the morning of 2 November 1943, a second reconnaissance in force was carried out (the first reconnaissance was undertaken on 31 October). After brief concentrated fire, the forward battalions of the 465th and 615th Rifle Regiments went over to the attack, but in encountering stubborn enemy resistance, retreated to the initial positions. Reconnaissance reconfirmed the enemy's attention to hold the occupied line at whatever the cost. Here the artillery troops discovered additional targets and the combat engineers clarified the position of the enemy minefields. The intelligence data made it possible to make the corresponding adjustments in the battle plan.

The author of these lines at that time had to perform two duties: to command the 180th Separate Combat Engineer Battalion of the 167th Division and at the same time replace the divisional engineer.¹ This required me to take an active part in organizing the reconnaissance in force and in preparing the offensive.

During the night of 3 November, the leadership of the 167th Division, like the other formations of the 38th Army, did not get a wink of sleep. The staff officers headed by the chief of staff, Lt Col I. M. Antonov, again and again checked the readiness of the troops for the offensive, the division's political workers led by the chief of the political section, Lt Col I. F. Petrov, were with the units and subunits. They brought the personnel the appeal of the front's military council.

The personnel of the formation were greatly excited by the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of 29 October 1943 (this document was published in the central newspapers and was received by the troops on 2 November 1943). This Ukase awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union to the first 9 men of the division for crossing the Dnepr. Among those to receive the high decoration were Majs F. F. Bruy and V. N. Shevtsov, Sr Lt I. D. Ocheret'ko, Lt N. S. Potapenko, Sr Sgt M. Ye. Zhbanov and Sgts K. A. Limanskiy and A. Ya. Peregudov. The title of Hero of the Soviet Union was also awarded to the courageous combat engineer and assistant platoon commander of the 180th Combat Engineer Platoon, Sr Sgt N. P. Starikov. During brief meetings, the men and the commanders vowed to equal the heroes of the Dnepr and spare neither forces nor life itself for driving the enemy from the Ukrainian land.

Dawn was approaching. The morning of 3 November 1943 had come. It was overcast but the cloudiness was high. This instilled hope that the weather would

not prevent the operations of our aviation and would provide an opportunity to start the offensive promptly. While still dark the command personnel and the political workers of the division, the regiments and battalions, having completed inspections in the units and subunits, took up their places according to the battle plan.

At 0500 hours, the division commander, Gen I. I. Mel'nikov, the division's chief of the political section, Lt Col I. F. Petrov, the commander of the formation's artillery, Lt Col V. D. Radzhenko, as well as a group of officers from the division's staff and political section arrived at the observation post of the 167th Division which had been well equipped by the men of the 180th Combat Engineer Battalion under the leadership of Sr Lt V. V. Levitskiy.

Having received reports from the units that they were ready for the offensive, the division commander reported this to the corps staff.

Exactly at 0800 hours on 3 November, signal rockets burst in the sky and after this the silence of the autumn morning was shattered by the powerful roar of gun salvos. Soon the forward edge and the immediate depth of the enemy defenses were covered by bursting shells which merged into a solid wall of fire and smoke. After this, bombers and ground attack planes appeared over the battlefield. Regardless of the bad weather conditions, they promptly started the air softening up. For 40 minutes powerful artillery and air strikes descended on the enemy defenses.

During the last intensive shelling, the mine specialists again inspected the passageways through the enemy minefields and set identification markers along them to support the passage of the infantry and tanks through them.

A new series of signal rockets from the observation points announced the going over of the troops to the attack. The subunits of the 167th Division rushed forward through the passages in the minefields, they deployed into an extended line and with a loud "hurrah!" attacked the enemy positions. Moving up behind the forward subunits were the tanks of the 39th Tank Regiment under the command of Lt Col S. F. Pushkarev. One of the tanks hit a mine. A reserve team of mine specialists headed by Jr Sgt I. N. Kolin arrived at the site of the accident. It turned out that the crew had not noticed the warning signs and the signals of the mine specialist on duty by the passage and had traveled across the minefield. Fortunately, the exploding of the mine had merely broken the track and damaged one roller. The tank crew quickly repaired the damage with the aid of the combat engineers. The other 14 tanks crossed the minefield while the infantry of the 465th and 615th Rifle Divisions succeeded in reaching the second position of enemy defenses where a fierce battle ensued. As a result of the precise cooperation between the infantry, the artillery and the tanks, enemy resistance was crushed and the offensive continued with unabated force.

By the night of 4 November, the units of the 167th Rifle Division, with the support of the 39th Tank Regiment, had driven 12 km into the enemy defenses and reached the settlement of Dachi Pushcha Voditsa.²

The enemy did not want to give up the settlement. It threw more than a regiment of infantry with tanks into a counterattack against the attackers. The attack was made against a battalion from the 465th Rifle Regiment headed by Sr Lt A. I. Rozhnov. The battalion was cut off from the main forces. But the men and their young commander did not hesitate. Taking up an all-round defense, they met the Nazis with organized fire. The artillery troops hurried to aid the riflemen, unleashing powerful strikes against the attacking enemy.

The men of the 3d Rifle Company, M. M. Severin and I. Ya. Kas'yan particularly distinguished themselves in this battle. Positioning themselves with a light machine gun behind the turret of a tank attached to the battalion, with accurate fire they hit the enemy and helped their battalion repel the enemy attack. For the bravery shown they both were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The Nazis were retreating with high losses. The division's offensive was developing successfully.³

At 2005 hours on 3 November 1943, the formation's units fought their way into the settlement of Dachi Pushcha Voditsa and, without ceasing combat at night, advanced successfully. By dawn of 4 November, the 465th and 615th Rifle Divisions supported by the 576th Artillery Regiment had reached the edge of the forest by the southern boundary of this settlement and drove even deeper into the position of the enemy troops. The Nazi Command began to hurriedly bring up reserves and without a halt to throw them into a counterattack. From intelligence data we learned of the possible approach of the enemy 20th Motorized Division in the combat area and a counterattack by it against the division's units which had had the greatest success.

The command of the front realized that the success of the 167th Division had opened up a possibility of developing an offensive with a deep envelopment of the Kiev enemy grouping. For this reason, measures were taken to ensure its unhalting advance. Antitank weapons were moved up from the front's reserve to cover the flanks of the formation, aviation was instructed to support its actions while the artillery troops of the VII Breakthrough Corps were ordered to concentrate their fire to the south of the settlement of Dachi Pushcha Voditsa. Moreover, the division was additionally reinforced by the 52d Tank Brigade.

On the morning of 4 November, the 465th (commander, Lt Col M. T. Khomenko) and 615th (commander, Maj M. N. Morozov) Rifle Regiments, with the support of the 576th Artillery Regiment (commander, Maj A. F. Patrin) attacked the enemy but were unable to break through the defenses. Soon thereafter the commander of the 52d Tank Brigade, Lt Col M. L. Plesko, arrived at the division's observation post and the tank battalions began moving up after him. With their arrival, the attack was resumed and the rifle regiments reinforced by tanks after stubborn combat drove 1.5-2 km into the enemy positions.

In observing the course of combat, the division's commander took a decision to commit the 520th Rifle Regiment (commander, Lt Col P. G. Akulov) to combat along with a tank battalion from the brigade. The actions of the 520th Rifle Regiment were supported by groups of mine specialists from the 180th Combat Engineer Battalion who had the mission of escorting the tanks and preventing

them from being blown up on enemy mines. Without having their own transport, the combat engineers operated as tank-borne troops. The 520th Regiment with insignificant losses broke through the enemy battle formations and by noon on 4 November had captured the settlement of Berkovets,⁴ while the 615th and 465th Rifle Regiments were fighting to the south of the settlement of Dachi Pushcha Voditsa.

The early autumn dusk was approaching. The enemy could use the nighttime for reinforcing the defenses of its units in the region of Svyatoshino, Nivki, Syrets, Priorka. For this reason active nighttime operations of the advancing troops were required. In undertaking them for the purpose of capturing the settlements of Svyatoshino and Nivki, the tank troops attacked with headlights on and wailing sirens. Each tank was accompanied by an infantry group consisting of a squad of sub-machine gunners or riflemen and two-three combat engineers. These groups helped the crews in finding their way and supported the tanks against hitting mines or being hit by enemy antitank grenades from short range. Several lead tanks were equipped with mine clearing attachments. By the joint efforts of the regiments from the 167th Rifle Division and the two tank brigades from the VI and VII Tank Corps supported by the artillery troops of the VII Artillery Corps, as a result of the surprise nighttime attack we succeeded in driving the enemy from its defensive positions held on the approaches to Svyatoshino and Nivki and on 5 November to reach them before dawn.⁵

Even in the evening of 4 November, at approximately 2100 hours, two rifle companies, a platoon of sub-machine gunners, a platoon of antitank rifles and machine gun and mortar platoons from the 520th Rifle Regiment under the command of Capt V. I. Polinskiy had broken into Svyatoshino. By dawn they had succeeded in capturing several houses, destroying an enemy battery and digging in on the edge of the settlement. The enemy counterattacks which came one after another from different directions were driven off. The success of these subunits were used for developing the offensive by all the forces of the 167th Division and the two brigades from the tank corps.

✓ Capt V. I. Polinskiy, Jr Lt A. M. Bondarev and several men from their subunits were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for bravery shown in the battle for Svyatoshino.⁶

In the morning of 5 November, the offensive was resumed. The enemy continued to put up fierce resistance, endeavoring to hold Svyatoshino and Nivki. The battle for the settlements lasted until noon and only by 1200-1300 hours on 5 November did the division's units along with the 55th Tank Brigade from the VII Tank Corps succeed in driving the enemy out of Svyatoshino. The Kiev--Zhitomir Highway which was important for our troops had been cut.⁷

Having liberated Svyatoshino, the formation shifted its front to the east and began to drive toward Kiev.⁸ The units fighting on the left from the 136th Division of Gen I. M. Puzikov and the Czechoslovak Brigade of Col L. Svoboda were advancing with heavy fighting toward the settlement of Syrets. To the right, toward Vasil'kov, the 232d Rifle Division was advancing.

Groups of mine specialists from the 180th Combat Engineer Battalion supported the advance of the 520th Rifle Regiment which, along with the 39th Tank

Regiment was fighting as the division's forward detachment. At the settlement of Nivki at 1300 hours on 5 November, the detachment encountered enemy fire from positions behind an antitank trench dug in 1941 by the people of Kiev in preparation of the city's defenses.

At that time, when a portion of the forces from the forward detachment had begun to deploy to attack the enemy positions, groups of mine specialists moved forward to the antitank trench to build passages across it as the approaches to it had been mined. One group consisting of D. T. Voyevodin and V. K. Kordyuchenko under the leadership of Sr Sgt A. G. Chepelev made two passages through the minefield under enemy fire and the combat engineers used the removed mines for detonating the sides of the antitank trench. The same thing was done by another group of mine specialists consisting of Pfc I. V. Abramov and Pvt T. N. Mikhnev under the command of Jr Sgt I. N. Kolin. The powerful explosions formed gentle ramps and also served as the signal for the attack. The tank troops and rifle subunits successfully crossed the antitank trench.

By the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of 10 January 1944, the title of Hero of the Soviet Union was awarded to the combat engineers I. V. Abramov, D. T. Voyevodin, I. N. Kolin, V. K. Kordyuchenko, G. N. Mikhnev and A. G. Chepelev for bravery shown in combat.⁹

The sub-machine gun troops of the 520th Regiment with the tank troops from the 39th Regiment advanced rapidly and after a brief but intense battle occupied the settlement of Nivki. With its capture, the division had completed the breaking through of the last defensive line of the Nazi troops on the approaches to Kiev. The way to the Ukrainian capital was open. Using this, the detachment rushed toward the city, destroying small Nazi groups along the way. By 1430 hours on 5 November, battalions of the 520th Rifle Regiment were approaching the western edge of Kiev and captured the territory of the film plant (now the movie studio) and cleared the enemy out of the Bolshevik Plant. By 1700 hours, the regiments had broken through to the center of the city and reached the Botanical Garden.¹⁰

At this time the 465th Rifle Regiment was advancing toward the city center to the left of the 520th Regiment while the 615th Regiment was successfully advancing around the settlement of Nivki from the south, breaking through to the Zhulyany Airfield. The staff of the formation by 1700 hours had moved to Nivki. The division's commander, Gen I. I. Mel'nikov, visited the regiments to clarify the missions for nighttime operations.

In the morning of 6 November, an unprecedented feat was carried out by the medical workers of the 520th Rifle Regiment, the Komsomol members Lts Medical Service F. A. Pushina and N. A. Kopytenkov. At the moment when they were giving first aid to the wounded, an enemy shell hit the building of the medical station located in Svyatoshino. It burst into flames. Without losing any time, Pushina along with Kopytenkov rushed to help the wounded. The girl succeeded in carrying more than 30 persons out of the fire. The flames engulfed her when she tried to rescue the last severely wounded soldier. However, the strength of the Komsomol member was exhausted and she lost consciousness. She was carried from the building by Nikolay Kopytenkov, but the burns sustained were fatal and the heroine died in the arms of her combat comrade.

By the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of 10 January 1944, the title of Hero of the Soviet Union was presented to F. A. Pushina and N. A. Kopytenkov for the feat performed.

Around noon a column of cars left Svyatoshino along Shevchenko Boulevard toward the city center. It halted near the Botanical Garden. Coming out from the lead car were the commander of the 38th Army, Col Gen K. S. Moskalenko, the member of the Army Military Council, Maj Gen A. A. Yepishev and the commander of the L Rifle Corps, Maj Gen S. S. Martirosyan. The army commander had decided to see personally that the division since 1700 hours had been fighting in the center of Kiev.

In commemoration of the contribution of the 167th Division to the liberation of the Ukrainian capital, the deputy commander of the formation, Hero of the Soviet Union Lt Col M. G. Manakin was appointed the first military commandant of the city, while Maj Gen S. S. Martirosyan was made the chief of the Kiev Garrison.¹¹ But these appointments were symbolic and a tribute to old traditions.

By the end of 6 November, the troops of the 38th Army had pulled out of Kiev and were advancing to the south toward Belaya Tserkov. Left in the city were only the army and front engineer units engaged in the clearing of mines and reconstruction work. The city residents for many days with trepidation watched the painstaking work of the mine specialists who step by step checked every street and every hours, leaving small markers with the inscription: "Cleared." The chief of the engineer troops of the 38th Army, Hero of the Soviet Union Gen I. V. Kirsanov, directed the mine clearing work in Kiev.

The 167th Division celebrated the 26th anniversary of Great October in Zhulyany. It was moved into the second echelon of the corps and received a day's rest.

The formations and units which had most distinguished themselves in the battle for Kiev were commended in the orders of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of 6 and 17 November 1943. The 167th Sumi Twice Red Banner Rifle Division was the first of the formations to receive the honorary name of "Kiev," in the order. The formation was awarded the high honor with good reason. Its regiments and battalions were the first of the troops participating in the Kiev Operation to break through to the Ukrainian capital and they conducted stubborn battles on its streets and boulevards.

The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet in its Ukase of 10 January 1944, awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union to 382 participants in the battles for Kiev, upon recommendation from the command of the First Ukrainian Front. Among those awarded were 70 soldiers, sergeants and officers from the 167th Rifle Division. The ranks of the Heroes of the Soviet Union were increased by the regiment commanders P. G. Akulov, M. N. Morozov and A. F. Patrin, the deputy regimental commanders for political affairs N. A. Kuznetsov and A. S. Starykh, the regimental party organizer A. N. Asmolov, the battalion commanders T. F. Kovalev, I. N. Ozerov, V. A. Rusov, G. F. Samoylovich (the article's author.--Editors) and N. I. Yunkerov, as well as 9 company commanders, 10 platoon commanders and 40 enlisted men.

Many of those who distinguished themselves in the battles for the liberation of Kiev did not live to the bright victory day, dying a death of the brave in the fierce battles against the enemy. Others, having survived the war, died soon from wounds sustained and hardships endured. All of them are worthy of the thankful memory of their successors, for they went into battle for the motherland not for the sake of glory but for the sake of the life of our Soviet people, in the name of the bright future of all mankind, in the name of communism!

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ The divisional engineer of the 167th Division, Maj N. D. Vishnevskiy, at the beginning of October 1943 was appointed the corps engineer of the LI Rifle Corps.
- ² TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 393, inv. 9005, file 109, sheet 38.
- ³ Ibid., inv. 9023, file 9, sheet 243.
- ⁴ Ibid., inv. 9005, file 109, sheet 29.
- ⁵ Ibid., sheet 30.
- ⁶ Ibid., folio 1408, inv. 1, file 3, sheets 4, 5.
- ⁷ Ibid., folio 393, inv. 9015, file 31, sheet 519.
- ⁸ Ibid., inv. 9005, file 109, sheet 30.
- ⁹ Ibid., folio 236, inv. 2673, file 6, sheets 44, 45.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., sheets 44, 45; folio 393, inv. 9005, file 109, sheet 30.
- ¹¹ Ibid., folio 393, inv. 9771, file 61, sheet 97.

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ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS ON KIEV OFFENSIVE PUBLISHED

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[Archival Documents prepared by Col I. Yaroshenko and Lt Col V. Kovalev: "The Kiev Offensive Operation in Documents"]

[Text] In the course of crossing the Dnepr, the troops of the Voronezh (First Ukrainian) Front on its right bank seized two major bridgeheads: to the south of Kiev in the area of V. Bukrin and to the north, in the area of Lyutezh, but the offensive from them in October 1943 was unsuccessful. The front was ordered to prepare a new offensive operation (Document 1).

The Operations Directive of the First Ukrainian Front of 1 November 1943 to the 66th, 38th and the 3d Guards Tank Armies and to the 2d Air Army set new tasks (Document 2). The shifting of the direction of the main thrust to the right wing of the front required the reinforcing of troops in the 38th Army with the V Guards Tank Corps and the regrouping of the troops of the 3d Guards Tank Army of Gen P. S. Rybalko from the Bukrin to the Lyutezh bridgehead into the zone of the 38th Army (Document 3).

The offensive operation to liberate Kiev started on 1 November with the actions of the 40th and 27th Armies from the Bukrin bridgehead and on 3 November by the assault grouping of the front to the north of Kiev. Hq SHC closely followed the course of the operation and had a direct influence on it (Document 4). The commander of the front, on the basis of the Directive of Hq SHC, adjusted the missions for the 38th, 60th and 3d Guards Tank Armies and the 2d Air Army to defeat the enemy grouping in the area of Kiev and capture the city (Document 5).

As a result of the successful carrying out of the set missions, the troops of the First Ukrainian Front on 5 November broke into Kiev and by the morning of 6 November had liberated the capital of the Soviet Ukraine from the Nazi invaders (Documents 6 and 7).

Document 1

FROM THE DIRECTIVE OF Hq SHC OF 24 OCTOBER 1943 TO THE HEADQUARTERS
REPRESENTATIVE G. K. ZHUKOV AND THE COMMANDER OF THE FIRST UKRAINIAN FRONT
FOR CARRYING OUT THE KIEV OFFENSIVE OPERATION

1. Hq SHC points out that the failure of the offensive on the Bukrin bridgehead occurred because prompt attention was not given to the terrain conditions

which impeded the offensive actions of the troops here, particularly the tank army. Reference to the shortage of ammunition is invalid, since Stepin¹, in having no more ammunition than Nikolayev¹, but in correctly using his troops and fighting on somewhat better terrain, has successfully carried out his missions.

2. Headquarters orders that a regrouping be carried out for the troops of the First Ukrainian Front in the aim of strengthening the right wing of the front, with the immediate mission of defeating the Kiev enemy grouping and capturing Kiev. For this:

a) The Rybalko 3d Guards Tank Army is to be shifted to the sector of the front to the north of Kiev, using it here together with the I Guards Cavalry Corps. Rybalko's tanks in less than top condition are to be left where they are to fill out the VIII Guards Tank Corps and the X Tank Corps. The tanks received as reinforcements for the front are to be used primarily for adding to Rybalko's tank corps;

b) The right wing of the front is to be strengthened with three or four rifle divisions at the expense of the front's left wing;

c) Also to be used for reinforcing the right wing of the front are the 135th and 202d Rifle Divisions which are to be turned over to you from the 70th Army of the Headquarter Reserves;

d) The 60th and 38th Armies and the 3d Guards Tank Army are to be involved in the offensive against Kiev.

3. Offensive operations on the Bukrin bridgehead are to be carried out by the forces remaining here, including by the tank units, drawing to themselves as many enemy forces as possible and under favorable conditions to break through the enemy front and advance.

4. The Rybalko move is to be made in such a manner as to be unnoticed by the enemy, using dummy tanks.

5. Rybalko and the three or four rifle divisions are to be shifted from the left wing immediately and the concentration of them on the right wing is to be completed by 1-2 November 1943.

6. The regrouping of the right wing is to commence on 1-2 November 1943 so that the 3d Guards Tank Army can commence operations on 3-4 November 1943. The left wing is to commence regrouping no later than 2 November 1943....

8. Report on fulfillment.

Hq SHC
I. Stalin
Antonov

TsAMO [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense],
folio 236, inv. 2712, file 17, sheets 315-317

¹ The code names of Army Gens I. S. Konev and N. F. Vatutin, respectively.

Document 2

OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE OF COMMANDER OF FIRST UKRAINIAN FRONT OF
1 NOVEMBER 1943 TO COMMANDERS OF 60th, 38th, 3d GUARDS TANK AND
2d AIR ARMIES FOR GOING OVER TO OFFENSIVE

As a result of the detailed elaboration of the operations plan, I am adjusting the missions for the armies and order in conducting the operation to follow the current directive and to cancel the operations directive of 27 October 1943.

In attacking with all forces of the 38th Army from the front of Moshchun, Vyshgorod to the south and by the left flank of the 60th Army toward Dymy and subsequently along the western bank of the Irpen River, as well as in developing the success by the mobile formations on the southwestern sector, the armies of the First Ukrainian Front have the immediate mission of outflanking Kiev from the west and by the end of 5 November 1943, to capture Kiev with the rifle formations reaching a front of Sychevka, Manuisk, Vladimirovka, Dudki, Felitsialovka, Mikulichi, Kozintsy, Motyzhin, Yablonovka, Vasilkov, Bezradichi, Novoselki with the mobile formations reaching the area of Fastov, Belaya Tserkov, Vasilkov.

The further missions are according to the appended map.

Full readiness for the offensive is the end of 1 November 1943.

The start of the offensive will be indicated in a separate order.

The left wing of the front is to go over to the offensive simultaneously in the direction of Pii, Kagarlyk, Belaya Tserkov, and by the end of 5 November 1943 should reach a front of Yushki, Kadomka, Nikolayevka, Selishche, with the mobile formations reaching the area of Kagarlyk.

I order:

1. The commander of the 60th Army, with forces of at least nine rifle divisions and reinforcements, to make the main attack on the Rovy axis outflanking Dymy to the west and further along the western bank of the Irpen River with an auxiliary attack on the axis of Sychevka, Manuisk, Buda and then along the eastern bank of the Zdvizh River, breaking through the enemy front and in developing the success reaching by the end of 2 November 1943 a front of Sychevka, Manuisk, Fedorovka, Rostesno, Dymy, Kazarovichi and by the end of 5 November, a front of Sychevka, Manuisk, Vladimirovka, Dudki, Felitsialovka, Mikulichi, Kozintsy.

Simultaneously with the start of operations to make an auxiliary strike in the area of Kazarovichi in the aim of tying down the enemy around Dymy and facilitating the advance of the main grouping around Dymy....

Boundary lines: to the right the Uzh River as far as Detkovichi and further, Vaskovka, Lushny Station; on the left to Vorzel as before and then Motyzhentsy, Lipvka, Rakovichi, Berezovka, Trokovichi, Vilsk.

2. The commander of the 38th Army with the V Guards Tank Corps and the VII Artillery Breakthrough Corps is to secure himself from the west along the Irpen River with the forces of two rifle divisions and the remaining forces are to deploy on the front of Mushchun, Vyshgorod, having in the first echelon the L Rifle Corps consisting of four rifle divisions and the LI Rifle Corps consisting of three rifle divisions and the Czechoslovak Brigade; in the second echelon the XXIII Rifle Corps consisting of three rifle divisions for the L Rifle Corps and the XXI Rifle Corps consisting of two rifle divisions in the area of Staroselye, Khotyanovka, Oseshchino.

The V Guards Tank Corps in the area of Novo-Petrovtsy.

Mission: In making the main thrust on the axis of Pushcha Voditsa, Svyatoshino, Zhulyany Station, Vasilkov, to break through the enemy front, to support the committing of the 3d Guards Tank Army and the I Guards Cavalry Corps to the breakthrough and with the forces of the L and LI Rifle Corps by the end of 2 November 1943 to reach a front of Mostishchi, Belichi Station, the northern edge of Priorka; by the end of 3 November to reach a front of Shevchenko, Dalniy Yar Farm, Sofiyevskaya Borshchagovka, Priorka. By the end of 4 November 1943, the L Rifle Corps is to reach a front of Veta Pochtovaya, Kreminishche, Zapovednik Zaspas and the LI Rifle Corps a front of the shipyard, the northern edge of Kiev, Solomenka, Lysaya Gora, having surrounded Kiev from the north, west and south. By the end of 5 November 1943, the LI Rifle Corps is to capture Kiev and the L Rifle Corps Vasilkov, Kopachevskaya Sloboda, Bezradichi, Nikolenki.

With the forces of the XXIII Rifle Corps, in bringing it up from the second echelon, to cross the Irpen River to the south of Mostishchi and by the end of 4 November 1943 to reach a front of Bucha, Yedineniye Kolkhoz, Budova, Negrashi, Bobritsa. By the end of 5 November 1943, a front of Nikolayevka, Motyzhentsy, Yablonovka, in supporting the army thrust from the west.

The XXI Rifle Corps is to develop the success on the axis of Svyatoshino, Fastov behind the 3d Guards Tank Army and by the end of 4 November 1943 to reach a front of Bibritsa, Budayevka, Veta Pochtovaya. By the end of 5 November 1943, a front of Pereviz, Plesetskoye, Vasilkov.

The V Guards Tank Corps is to be employed in cooperation with the rifle divisions of the LI Rifle Corps with the task of helping to break through the enemy defenses and quickly bring the infantry around Kiev to the west and southwest. Subsequently to follow the plan of the commander of the 38th Army.

The units on the eastern bank of the Dnepr River opposite Kiev and to the south, with the start of the offensive, are to provide active assistance with fire, they are to employ smoke and rockets for tying down the enemy and deceiving it and should endeavor to cross to the western bank of the Dnepr River. During the night of 3 November 1943, with forces of up to one mixed rifle division, to cross the Dnepr River in the area of Kazachiy Island with an immediate mission of crossing the road running south via Pirogovo to Kiev, preventing the movement of the enemy along this road.

The commander of the 38th Army in the event of difficulties in committing the XXIII Rifle Corps to the south of Bucha is to prepare for the attacking of it and the crossing of the Irpen River in the area of Rakovka to my personal instructions, using the existing bridgehead on the western bank of the Irpen River.

Boundary lines to the left to Kaylov as before and then Trepillya, the Krasnaya River to Makeyevka, Makeyevka, Palyanichentsy, Trilesy, Dunayki, Pavoloch, Mal. Chernyavka, Khazhin, Andriyashevka.

3. The commander of the 3d Guards Tank Army with the I Guards Cavalry Corps by the dawn of 2 November 1943 is to take up a jump-off position in the region of Guta Mezhygorskaya, Nadiya Kolkhoz, Lyutezh and with the cavalry corps in the area of Svaromye and the forest to the east.

Mission: To enter the breakthrough upon reaching the initial elev. 158.5, the fork in the road, the northern edge of Priorka and, in rapidly exploiting the success, by the end of 3 November 1943, to capture the area of Zaborye, Glevakha, Khotiv, Sofiyevskaya Borshchagovka. By the end of 4 November 1943, to capture the area of Plesetskoye, Vasilkov, Glevakha and by the end of 5 November 1943, to reach the area of Fastov, Belaya Tserkov, Grebenki. Subsequently to follow the appended map.

The I Guards Cavalry Corps is to enter the breakthrough behind the first echelon of the army and subsequently develop the thrust along the eastern bank of the Irpen River across the copses to Fastov. Upon capturing Fastov, to plan to turn to the north with the mission of reaching the area of Yurov, Makarov and with a portion of the forces Brusilov in the area of coming out in the rear of the Irpen enemy grouping and cutting the highway between Kiev and Zhitomir.

Upon my personal instructions, a second version of army combat operations is to be prepared.

4. The commander of the 2d Air Army with all forces, following a special plan, is to assist the 38th Army and the 3d Guards Tank Army and cover from the air the main forces of the 38th Army and the 3d Guards Tank Army.

5. The army commanders are to plan the artillery support with particular care. The density of artillery fire in the main sectors is to be: 300 barrels per kilometer of front in the 38th Army and 150 barrels per kilometer of front in the 60th Army. The length of the artillery softening up is 70 minutes. The method of conducting the artillery softening up is by special instructions.

Commander of First Ukrainian Front,
Army Gen Vatutin

Military Council Member of the
First Ukrainian Front, Maj Gen Kraynyukov

Chief of Staff of Front,
Lt Gen Ivanov

TsAMO, folio 236, inv. 2712, file 1, sheets 65-69

Document 3

COMBAT ORDER OF COMMANDER OF FIRST UKRAINIAN FRONT OF
25 OCTOBER 1943 TO COMMANDER OF 3d GUARDS TANK ARMY FOR REGROUPING

I order:

1. The commander of the 3d Guards Tank Army, with the onset of darkness on 25 October 1943, is to begin pulling units of the 3d Guards Tank Army from the Bukrin bridgehead to the eastern bank of the Dnepr River, using all the existing crossings over the Dnepr River.

The army's mission: in advancing along the routes of Pereyaslav-Khmelnitskiy, Borispol, Brovary, Kalinovka Farm, Rozhny and Pereyaslav, Voytovtsy, Lyubartsy, Ivankovo, Senkovka, Gogolev, Bol. Dymarka, Letki, by the end of 30 October 1943 should be concentrated in the area of Lebedev Farm, Vysshaya Dubechnya, Nizshaya Dubechnya, Svaromye, ready to begin crossing the Dnepr River. The further mission will be given subsequently.

Resting areas en route:

26 and 27 October 1943--Kharkovtsy, Yerkovtsy, Staroselye, Karan, Pereyaslav; 28 October 1943--Bol. Staritsa, Bol. Aleksandrovka, Ivankovo; 29 October 1943--Letki, Rozhny, Nikolayevka, Bogdanovka.

2. The march is to be carried out with absolute secrecy, moving only at night and observing camouflage measures both on the move and at halts. Dummies are to be left at the former parking areas on the Bukrin bridgehead. Transmitting by radios is categorically prohibited. No telephone calls about the move are to be made.

3. Full supplies of fuel, ammunition and food are to be in the new area by 30 October 1943.

4. Out of order and defective tanks are to be turned over on the spot to the 40th Army for reinforcing the VIII Guards and X Tank Corps.

Bear in mind that you will receive new tanks for your army at the new concentration area...

5. The army staff is to be in Nizshaya Dubechnya on 29 October 1943.

6. The plan for the march is to be submitted by 1000 hours on 26 October.

Vatutin

Khrushchev

Ivanov

TsAMO, folio 236, inv. 2712, file 3, sheets 235-237.

Document 4

FROM THE DIRECTIVE OF Hq SHC OF 3 NOVEMBER 1943 TO THE COMMANDER OF
THE FIRST UKRAINIAN FRONT FOR DEVELOPING THE OFFENSIVE

The operation commenced on the right wing of the front is not to be drawn out, since each extra day merely provides an advantage for the enemy, allowing it to concentrate its forces here, using the good roads, while the roads destroyed by the enemy impede us and limit our maneuvers.

Proceeding from this, Hq SHC orders:

1. No later than 5 November, to cut the Kiev--Korosten Railroad to the east or to the west of the Irpen River depending upon the situation and to capture the city of Kiev no later than 5-6 November.
2. No later than 9-10 November, to cut the Kiev--Fastov Railroad....
4. To consider that the Kiev bridgehead is the most important and most advantageous bridgehead on the right bank of the Dnepr River having historical significance for expelling the Germans from the Right Bank Ukraine.
5. Report on the receipt and issued instructions.

Hq SHC
I. Stalin
Antonov

TsAMO, folio 3, inv. 11556, file 13, sheets 438, 439.

Document 5

COMBAT ORDER FROM COMMANDER OF FIRST UKRAINIAN FRONT OF
3 NOVEMBER 1943 TO COMMANDERS OF 38th AND 60th ARMIES,
THE 3d GUARDS TANK ARMY AND 2d AIR ARMY ON THE CAPTURE OF KIEV
AND THE CARRYING OUT OF SUBSEQUENT MISSIONS

1. Hq SHC has ordered that the operation commenced on the right wing of the front not be drawn out.... Headquarters has set as the immediate and most important task of the front the capturing of the city of Kiev and the cutting of the Korosten--Kiev and Kiev--Fastov Railroad.
2. In execution of the Headquarters Directive, I order:
 - a) The commander of the 60th Army during the night of 4 November 1943 is to capture the areas of Manuilsk and Dymerskaya, Kazarovich, Glebovka. From 0730 hours on 4 November 1943, to continue the rapid advance by all forces of the assault group, committing additionally the 141st Rifle Division with a tank regiment and the 3d Guards Rifle Division to combat from the second echelon. During 4 November, to link up with the troops of the 38th Army and by the end of 4 November 1943 to reach a front of Manuilsk, Osikovo, Vladimirovka Farm, Rudnya Dymerskaya, Mlynok Farm, Katyuzhanki, Nikolayevskiy Farm, Tarasovshchina

Farm, Sinyak. By the end of 5 November 1943, to reach a front of Katyuzhanki, Dudki, Rudnya Shibenskaya Farm, Pilipovich, Novaya Greblya, Dachi Klavdiyevo, Dachi Kicheyevo, Dachi Irpen. I remind you to pull one additional division back into the second echelon from the holding section.

b) The commander of the 38th Army:

Is to have operational command additionally of the VI Guards Tank Corps of the 3d Guards Tank Army.

During the night of 4 November, to continue the rapid advance by all forces, making the main thrust on the axis of Svyatoshino, Zhulyany Station, and for this from 0800 hours on 4 November 1943, to commit to battle the XXIII Rifle Corps and, using it to attack along the left bank of the Irpen River, by the end of 4 November 1943 to come out along a front of Lyustishche, Shevchenko Farm, Bolshevik Sovkhoz; by the end of 5 November 1943, a front of Shevchenko Farm, Bobritsa, Malyutyanka, Yankovich. The corps is to be reinforced with the 39th Tank Regiment.

The L Rifle Corps along with the VI Guards Tank Corps of the 3d Tank Army, in making the main thrust of the army, by the end of 4 November 1943 is to reach Bolshevik Sovkhoz, Za. Bolshevik Sovkhoz. By the end of 5 November 1943, a front of Yankovich, Khodosovka, Kazachiy Island.

The LI Rifle Corps along with the V Guards Tank Corps first during 4 November 1943 is to eliminate the enemy on the Vyshgorod Salient and by the end of 4 November 1943 reach the front of Svyatoshino, Priorka. By the end of 5 November 1943 to capture the city of Kiev.

The XXI Rifle Corps by the morning of 4 November 1943 is to cross to the western bank of the Dnepr River and upon finishing the unloading of the units in the corps, to concentrate in the area of Valki and to the south, having in mind the further exploitation of the success in accord with the situation.

For the rest to follow my previous instructions.

c) The commander of the 3d Guards Tank Army is to assign the VI Guards Tank Corps for joint actions of the L Rifle Corps, and the remaining forces of the army by the morning of 4 November 1943 are to take up a jump-off position in the area of the forest directly to the northeast of Dachi Pushcha Voditsa.

When the infantry has reached a line of elev. 158.5, the fork in the roads and Priorki, to overtake it and, in rapidly exploiting the success, to reach: by the end of 4 November 1943, the area of Budayevka, Veta Pochtovaya, Khotyev, Zhulyany Station. By the end of 5 November 1943, the area of Plesetskoye, Vasilkov, Glevakha.

For the rest to follow my previous directive, bearing in mind that the VI Guards Tank Corps from 5 November 1943 will be taken from the 38th Army and returned to you.

d) The commander of the 2d Air Army: is to continue with all the forces of the army to support the 38th Army and the 3d Guards Tank Army and to cover the main forces of these armies from the air.

3) Confirm receipt. Forward copies of issued orders.

Vatutin

Khrushchev

Ivanov

TsAMO, folio 236, inv. 2712, file 38, sheets 85-89.

Document 6

REPORT OF COMMANDER OF FIRST UKRAINIAN FRONT OF 5 NOVEMBER 1943
TO SUPREME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ON ENTRY OF FRONT'S TROOPS INTO KIEV

Moscow,
to Comrade Stalin

With great joy we report to you that the troops of the First Ukrainian Front have entered the city of Kiev, they are fighting in the city center and have cut off the escape route for the enemy out of Kiev to the south and southwest.

We are taking every measure so that by the morning of 6 November 1943, the city of Kiev will be cleared of German occupiers. At present, we are at a command post to the north of Kiev and are observing great explosions and fires. By 2000 hours on 5 November 1943:

1) Chernyakhovskiy has captured Guta Katyzhanskaya (20 km to the northwest of Dyer), Nikolayevskiy Farm, Tarasovshchina Farm, Gavrilovka, Lubyanka, Ozery, covering during the day of combat up to 20 km. Chernyakhovskiy's troops are continuing without a halt to pursue the enemy with an immediate mission of reaching the Kiev--Korosten Railroad.

2. Rybalko is moving toward Vasilkov and to Fastov.

3. Moskalenko is fighting in the center of the city of Kiev and has cut all escape routes from it. Moskalenko's troops on the right flank have crossed the Irpen River and have captured Kimerka and the northern part of Dachi Bucha. To the south of Dachi Bucha they have reached the Irpen River. All the remaining Moskalenko troops have passed to the south of the Kiev--Zhitomir Highway and reached a front of Shevchenko, Petrovskiy Farm, Nikolskaya Borshchagovka, Zhulyany and the settlement of Volynskiy. We have a report that our troops have taken Myshelovka. We are verifying this report. The Moskalenko troops are continuing to carry out the mission given them under the plan without interruption.

Vatutin

Khrushchev

TsAMO, folio 236, inv. 2673, file 6, sheets 34, 34 verso.

Document 7

REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVE OF Hq SHC AND COMMANDER OF
FIRST UKRAINIAN FRONT TO SUPREME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
ON THE TAKING OF KIEV (6 NOVEMBER 1943)

Moscow,
to Comrade Stalin

With the greatest joy we report to you that the mission set by you of capturing our beautiful city of Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, has been carried out by the troops of the First Ukrainian Front. The city of Kiev has been completely cleared of German occupiers.

The troops of the First Ukrainian Front are continuing to carry out the mission set for them.

Zhukov

Vatutin
Ivanov

Khrushchev

TsAMO, folio 236, inv. 2673, file 6, sheet 74.

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PARTISAN DEMOLITION OF RAIL BRIDGE RELIVED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 83 (signed to press 25 Oct 83) pp 60-67

[Article by Maj (Ret) P. Borovichev: "Blowing Up the Bridge on the Besed River"]

[Text] The second partisan spring had arrived. Nature was coming back to life. The streams bubbled and rushed over the rapids. The beautiful Nadva River was wandering, overflowing its banks, spreading wide and inundating the thickets along the banks.

The flooding restricted the activities of the 2d Kletnya Partisan Brigade¹ and blocked the shortest routes to the enemy garrisons, to the railroads and highways. But even under these conditions the partisans found an opportunity to attack the enemy. Again the enemy trains and motor vehicles were derailed and overturned, the fuel and ammunition dumps were blown sky high and the Nazi personnel and combat equipment destroyed.

But suddenly the situation changed sharply. The staff began receiving alarming signals.

"We could not get close to the railroad, comrade commander," reported the sabotage groups.

"The Nazis have strengthened the security on the lines of communications," the scouts announced.

"Day and night the enemy trains are moving toward the frontline," the subunit commanders informed the staff.

The brigade's command decided to change the tactics. All the sabotage groups of the partisan detachments (battalions) were combined into a single unit. They began going out on missions in larger forces of 200 or 300 men. However, the brigade did not achieve any significant successes as the front of action became narrower and the number of sabotages declined sharply. The Nazis also began acting more effectively: they pulled the blown up trains off the tracks, they put down new rails and 5 or 6 hours later train traffic had been restored.

In March-April 1943, traffic intensified on the rail section between the towns of Unecha and Krichev. Each day up to 28 trains with personnel and combat equipment moved toward the front line.

"What are the Nazis undertaking?" asked the partisans of their immediate commanders.

"It is a new offensive," they replied, although it was clear to everyone that the Nazi Command was preparing to break through the frontline somewhere to the south of Bryansk.

The funny jokes and stories stopped and the faces of the men turned somber. Each was thinking how to hold up the shifting of the enemy troops for a longer time and how to provide the Soviet Army formations with an opportunity to better prepare for the offensive. Talks about this were held at the party and Komsomol meetings. The communists and Komsomol members passed decisions to increase the actions of the detachments, particularly on the enemy lines of communications.

Probably the developing situation was viewed more acutely than the others by the brigade's commander Timofey Mikhaylovich Korotchenko. In a few days, he had noticeably grown older and had become distant. Only his pipe smoked more than usual with its rough tobacco.

"What is the matter with the brigade commander? Has he fallen ill?" the more observant partisans asked the doctor.

"No, he is simply tired. He eats poorly and doesn't sleep at night," replied the doctor Sof'ya Nikolayevna Afrikanova.

At the brigade's staff they knew the real reason for the "sickness" of the commander. The inhabitants of the dugout together had worked out different variations for stopping the shifting of the enemy troops and equipment to the front line. They were all of the unanimous opinion that for this they had to blow up the railroad bridge across the Besed River. This bridge was between Belynkovich and Kommunny Stations. The staff worked nights on the plan for this operation. The men rested an hour or two and then went back to work. Korotchenko got up earlier than the others from the plank bed. With his thin hand he reached out for the light made from a shell casing, he lit the fabric wick made from a piece of coat and on an empty cartridge box laid out the German map and began to figure. The chief of staff Maj G. K. Kraskovskiy got up after the brigade commander. Ordinarily he put his feet down slowly, he groaned, rubbing his bruised side. But he was beaten by the rather heavy-set brigade commissar P. V. Lebedev and the short, agile chief of the brigade's sabotage service Capt P. I. Shilin and the assistant chief of staff Capt N. I. Chusov. Kraskovskiy was usually the first to break the silence. The former chief of the operations section of the staff of the 84th Motorized Division, he quickly spotted the mistakes of the brigade commander and commissar.

"Not one of the variations proposed by you is any good," he said. "We will lose men but we will not blow up the bridge. Initially it is essential to find

the mistakes of those who tried to blow up this bridge before and then search for a new solution!"

Putting themselves first in the position of the advancing partisans and then the defending enemy, the brigade's command more and more was firmly convinced that the advance should be made simultaneously along the right and left banks of the Besed. The chief of the sabotage service P. I. Shilin proposed that they calculate and work through the time for each element in the operation under conditions close to a combat situation. Petr Vasil'yevich Lebedev immediately supported this proposal and then insisted on carrying it out.

The bridge across the Besed was ⁶⁰60 km from the position of our brigade. The complexity of its design and its 110-m length had attracted the attention of many commanders of partisan brigades. But all attempts to blow up the bridge had been unsuccessful.

The partisan attacks on the bridge had alarmed the Nazis and forced them to strengthen the security. Three times the garrison had received additional personnel and weapons. By April 1943, it had been brought up to 140 men. The earth and timber pillboxes had been replaced by reinforced concrete ones. On both sides of the river the bridge was covered by four pillboxes. The pillboxes closest to the bridge were double-tiered. On both sides of the bridge along the railroad the Nazis had set out minefields with wire obstacles. Along the embankments they had dug deep trenches and communications trenches while the barracks located 200 m from the left bank was protected by an earthen embankment and a mortar battery was located close to it.

The security of the more distant approaches to the railroad bridge had also been strengthened. On the left bank, some 3 km from the bridge in the village of Belynkovichy there was a battle-worn artillery regiment in which two or three 105-mm cannons remained. A mortar regiment was positioned at the Belynkovichy Station. Although both were understrength, they represented a real danger which the command of the partisan brigade had to consider.

On the right bank, at Kommunar Station, there was an enemy armored train. It took just 8 minutes for it to reach the bridge and help the garrison. Up to 200 Nazis were located in the town of Kostyukovichy. They also could come to the aid of the garrison defending the bridge. The total number of enemy troops located up to 7 km from the bridge was more than 1,000 men.²

The brigade commander T. M. Korotchenko was somewhat mistrustful of the information on the enemy obtained from the brigade's reconnaissance platoon.

"There cannot be such a concentration of enemy forces just for one object. In this area there obviously is something else which we have not noticed," he told the commissar.

Petr Vasil'yevich proposed that the brigade commander send out a group of scouts to the bridge from the 3d Battalion headed by the young intelligent Bashkir hunter Fedor Silant'yevich Yekhlakov.

Having dispatched a second group of scouts to the bridge, T. M. Korotchenko led the brigade deep into the Kletnya Forest, to the bridge over the Nadva River

and issued instructions to commence training the subunits for blowing up the installation. The Nadvá bridge was very like the Belynkovichí one but somewhat shorter. The partisans had long ago knocked out the railroad but the bridge had remained standing. For us it had become a training field for working on the questions of crossing a water obstacle and for cooperation between the assault, sabotage (demolition) groups and the support (cover) groups.

The high Nadvá after the spring flood received the partisans cruelly. The icy water took your breath away and cramps wracked your hands and feet. It was essential to jump in it fully clothed, with ammunition and weapons and help comrades push 3-pood boxes with dummy explosives. The sabotage groups were to place these boxes at a strictly determined place on the bridge, to fasten them on with parachute cord, insert the fuses, light the short pieces of Bickford safety fuse, run to a safe place and wait for the simulating of the explosion there. Rarely was the exercise carried out completely without mistakes and in proper precision. More often at its concluding stage the brigade commander gave the order: "Leave off!" and everything started over.

We conducted two-sided drills. The bridge was defended by the 1st Battalion of the brigade under the command of battalion commissar, T. T. Il'yukhin, a former commissar from the 184th Rifle Regiment. The personnel of the battalion built various fortifications around the bridge similar to the German ones and "defended" them rather successfully. Although the partisans did not fire the positions were not surrendered without hand-to-hand fighting. The umpires Shilin, Sharipov and Chusov were in no hurry to intervene in settling the disputed questions and allowed the partisans an opportunity to test their strength and agility, waiting to see who would win.³

At the end of the intense training days, the partisans not far from the training field lit bonfires, dried out their clothing and prepared food. Here around the bonfires the commanders and political workers summed up the drills and commended the outstanding men with gifts received from the country's rear. In taking the tobacco pouch or handkerchief, the partisans read on them the dear words stitched in colored thread: "To a partisan of the Bryansk Forest!" "To the people's avenger!" and "To a brave soldier!" The gifts sent by the workers of Siberia, the Urals and Far East raised the morale of the partisans, smoothed over the difficulties of training, they united the personnel of the detachments into a single close family and imposed even greater responsibility for the fate of the motherland.

Having worked out in detail each element of the forthcoming operation, the brigade returned to its camp. There, near the village of Mamayevka which had been burned by the occupiers, the partisans received supplies which had been dropped in by parachute, as at that time it was impossible to land aircraft on the muddy ground. The Western and Central staffs of the partisan movement and the command of the Western Front sent the brigade many PPSH sub-machine guns, ammunition, explosives, biscuits, tobacco, salt, medicines, surgical instruments and other extremely necessary articles.

...The scouts of F. S. Yekhlakov approached the bridge from both sides, but they were unable to come close to it to examine the enemy defensive system in

detail. Patrols and pickets operated far away from the bridge. Groups of enemy soldiers constantly combed the terrain around the railroad and bridge.

Having changed observation points at least ten times, the scouts noticed a group of women approaching the bridge at evening.

"They are nothing more than milkmaids," said the young partisan Grigoriy Pashkov.

The commander picked up a pair of captured binoculars, he wiped the fogged-over glasses with the lining of his coat and began to carefully watch what the women did.

"They are carrying something carefully in bundles and knapsacks," he said finally. "Probably they are feeding the skunks. And we do not even have any biscuits."

Darkness was approaching and Yekhlakov led the group closer to the village of Seletskoye. At dawn, the scouts here met the women who the night before had appeared at the barracks. Having spotted the partisans they grew frightened.

"We are taking the milk against our will," began the older of them hurriedly.

"If you try not to obey they immediately shoot you or string you up on a gallows. I have three grandchildren to care for. My son is in the Red Army, if he is alive, and his wife is sick. The Nazis tortured her. They wanted to disgrace her, the monsters."

The younger women told the scouts all that they knew about the Nazis on the bridge and in the barracks. The Nazis did not allow them to the right bank. By constant observation of the enemy and by the data received from the local population, the partisans collected the necessary information on enemy strength in the area of the bridge. It turned out that the garrison of the town of Kostyukovichy had around 200 men, from 200 to 300 men were at Belyukovichy and Kommunary Stations and somewhat fewer in the village of Belyukovichy.

The unit services company, the sick and wounded at the camp under the supervision of Capt P. E. Kotrushenko, the brigade moved to the concentration area, closer to the bridge on 17 April. The first move was made during the day and before night set in they had crossed the high Iput. During three nighttime moves the brigade approached the village of Botayevo and stopped to rest in the forest, some 9 km from the bridge. While the partisans rested, the brigade commander summoned the battalion commanders and commissars and the chief of the sabotage service and together with them on the morning of 21 April set off for reconnaissance.

The group halted on the edge of a thin forest where they could see the upper portion of the bridge's beams. Here the brigade commander set the combat missions for the detachments. The 1st Battalion (commander T. T. Il'yukhin, commissar V. S. Kudryavtsev) received the mission of supporting the actions of the 2d and 3d Battalions for blowing up the bridge. The company of V. I. Novikov

was to block off the remnants of the German mortar regiment at Belynkovich Station and in creating the appearance that the station was being attacked by large partisan forces, to force the Nazis to go over to the defensive and prevent them from leaving the station settlement to help the bridge garrison.

The company of Petr Afanas'yev was to tie down the enemy garrison in the village of Belynkovich. A more difficult task was assigned to the platoon of Grigoriy Galdin. It was to cross the Besed, come out at the railroad between the bridge and Kommunny Station and at the small curve in the track, to derail the enemy armored train or blow up the railroad in front of and behind it, thus sealing off this threatening combat unit.

The 2d Battalion (commander V. P. Dobrovolskiy, commissar K. M. Vasil'yev) reinforced by the reconnaissance platoon and the brigade's sabotage group, had the mission of advancing along the left bank of the Besed, capturing the left bank side of the bridge and blowing it up and with a portion of the forces cut off the enemy's path from the barracks.

The 3d Battalion (commander P. I. Borovichev, commissar Ya. F. Seleznev) was to cross the Besed and, in advancing along the right bank of the river, to capture and blow up the right-bank part of the bridge.

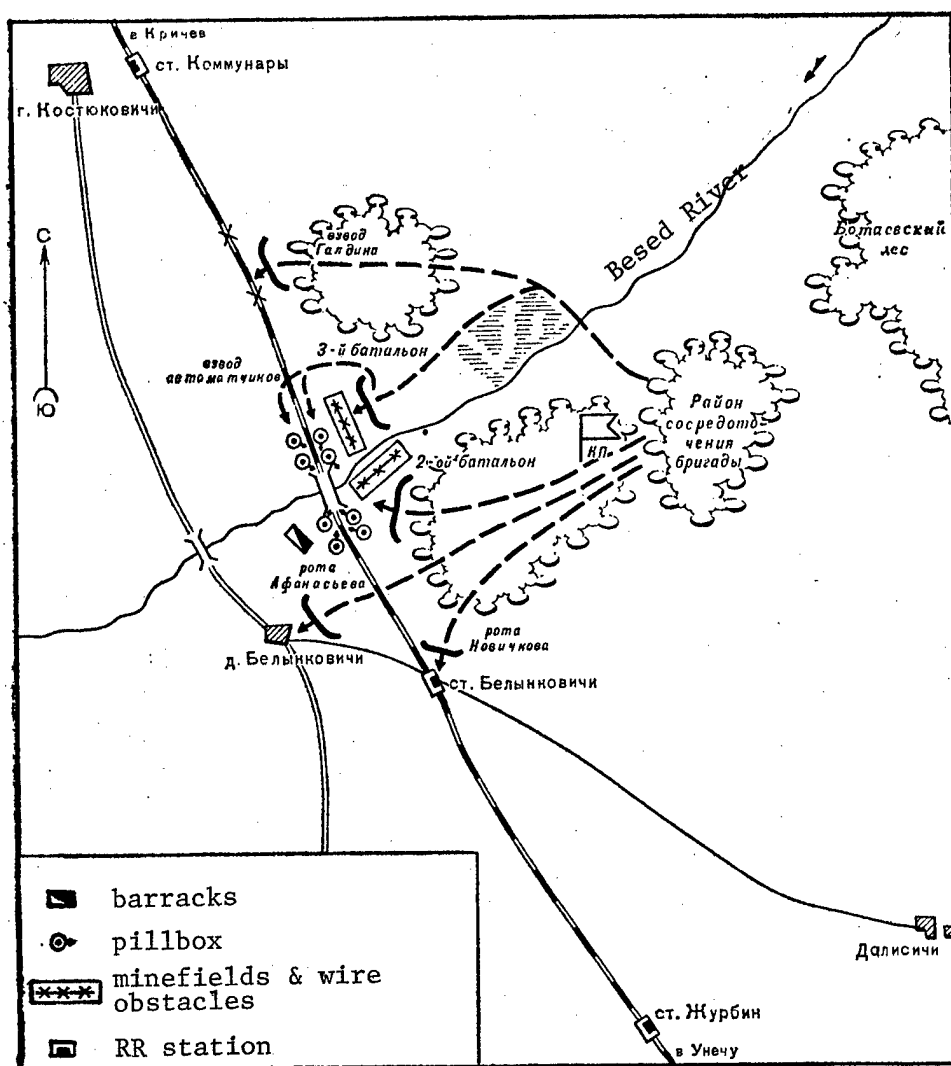
The brigade's command post was selected on a small hill on the left bank of the river approximately 600 m from the bridge. In the area of the command post was the reserve consisting of two platoons from the 3d Company of the 1st Battalion and the medical subunit.⁴

During the night of 22 April, the brigade reached the left bank of the Besed and concentrated in the forest 3 km from the bridge. After a halt, each of the battalions moved further along its route (see the diagram). Our battalion with the platoon of Lt G. M. Galdin headed to the ford across the river in order to cross to the right bank.

The undressed sub-machine gunners of the battalion were the first to enter the icy water in total darkness. In stretching along the ford in an extended line, they became a sort of beacon on the sand spit. Then, moving from "beacon" to "beacon," the partisans from the company of Grigoriy Bondar' crossed to the right bank of the river. Dressing quickly, they took up the defensive at the crossing, supporting the advance of the remaining subunits.

"We are freezing. We can't stay in the cold water," came the voices of the sub-machine gunners.

In order to accelerate the crossing, we began to move the men not in a single file, but rather three men in a row. As a result in the darkness and crowding, certain partisans missed the ford, they lost their footing and began to drown. A noise was raised in the crossing. It seemed that our move would be heard by the Nazis. Fortunately, at that very moment the roar of a passing train was heard. Finally, the crossing ended safely. The men put on their clothes and split up by subunits, the companies moved up to the jump-off line and lay down. Having frozen in the cold water, they waited impatiently for the signal to attack.



Actions of Subunits of the 2d Kletnya Brigade in Blowing Up the Railroad Bridge Across the Besed River (22 April 1943)

At midnight two red rockets burst simultaneously from the brigade's command post. Then all the partisan weapons began to speak: near the bridge, at the station and near Belynkovich village. The only quiet was in the area where the platoon of Grigoriy Galdin lay waiting for the approach of the enemy armored train.

The bridge which we were approaching was illuminated by scores of rockets. The hail of fire encouraged the partisans and added strength and confidence. The armored train caused some concern. But from the direction of Kommunar Station a loud, deafening explosion was heard: the steam locomotive coughed as if it had a cold, the brakes squealed and disordered machine gun firing commenced. Soon, there was a second explosion and the exchange of fire assumed a two-sided nature.

"Everything is in order. The armored train has been sealed off!" shouted the commissar, encouraging the partisans.

But the joy was premature. The Nazis rallied from the surprise attack, they occupied the weapon pits, trenches and pillboxes, they blocked the path to the bridge with solid machine gun fire and from the region of the barracks the enemy mortar battery was hitting the immobilized extended lines. Feeling that the attack could peter out, I shouted to the commissar, "Only forward!" Yakov Fedorovich instantaneously judged the existing situation, stood up and shouting "After me! Forward!" raised the partisans to the attack. But the men had already anticipated him. In front of the others ran Marusya Vasil'kova or Vasilek as the partisans called her with endearment.

Suddenly the earth shook. The swampy ground rolled back and forth. An orange explosion engulfed the ranks of the partisans. Heavy metal balls sprouted skywards. Commissar Seleznev dropped slowly to his right knee.

"Vasilek is killed! Vasilek is killed!" came his voice and again the partisan lines hit the dirt as a minefield blocked the way.

"Concentrate fire against the embrasures of the pillboxes and machine gun nests. Don't move forward!" I sent the command up the line.

The company and platoon commanders, in carrying out the order, opened concentrated fire against the machine gun points and the embrasures of the pillboxes, they blinded the enemy, and forced the Nazis to lessen the fire and take shelter deeper in the trenches and pillboxes. Then another command moved up the line:

"Sub-machine gunners and demolition personnel to the right flank!"

The extended line began to move and one could hear the hoarse voice of the sub-machine gun platoon commander Lt Botalkin:

"Eagles, after me!"

"After the commander! One by one!" repeated the platoon political instructor M. M. Radik with a Baltic accent. One after another, crouching down, the sub-machine gunners rushed to the bridge and after them the demolition sappers with boxes of explosives.

Having ordered the chief of staff P. A. Kamenskiy to assume command of the holding force and continue to use blinding fire against the enemy, I went to the battalion's right flank and along with the sub-machine gunners began to move forward along the edge of the pine forest. The pine trunks covered us securely against the bullets. In order to skirt the minefield, the group stretching in a long file moved farther and farther from the shore. We approached the railroad without a single shot. Stopping by the embankment, we waited for the mine specialists to move up and began moving carefully toward the bridge.

In the light of the rockets we could clearly see the four enemy pillboxes covering the bridge from the west. The two closer ones were smaller and the farther ones were double-tiered. The pillbox garrisons were behaving strangely: they did not open fire but rather sent green rockets toward the sub-machine gunners. The Nazis obviously were expecting reinforcements to arrive from Kostyukovich and from Kommunny Station and accepted our sub-machine gunners dressed in German uniforms as their own. The grenades thrown by the sub-machine gunners through the embrasures and openings of the two end pillboxes destroyed the enemy machine gun crews. The Nazis recognized their mistake and opened fire, blocking the path of the sub-machine gunners to the bridge.

Platoon commander Botalkin spread out the men on both sides of the embankment, he released a hail of fire from all the sub-machine guns against the pillbox embrasures, covering the approach of the political instructor M. Radik and the soldier V. Kopyshchev. Approaching the pillbox, they simultaneously threw hand and antitank grenades through the embrasure. The fire of the two enemy machine guns immediately died out. Other submachine gunners quickly moved up to the pillbox while Radik and Kopyshchev crawled further, to the last concrete firing point of the enemy. Here they repeated the same method of attack. However, one of the brigades did not go through the embrasure but slid across the concrete wall and exploded on the surface. Its fragments hit Vasiliy Kopyshchev. The sub-machine gunners who rushed up carefully lifted their comrades but he was no longer alive. Having neutralized the fire of the pillboxes, the sub-machine gunners captured the right bank part of the bridge. Below, beneath the bridge the Nazis continued to put up stubborn resistance. From the sounds of battle on the left bank side of the bridge we could see that the men of the 2d Battalion had also broken through to the bridge.

The chief of staff P. A. Kamenskiy closely followed the course of combat. Having noticed the success of the sub-machine gunners, he immediately ordered the battalion cover subunits to the bridge. He deployed the company of M. Dvoyeglazov facing the west, covering the battalion's basic forces from a possible enemy attack from Kostyukovich and Kommunny Station while the companies of G. Bondar' and V. Novgorodtsev were along the river bank on both sides of the railroad embankment.

The Nazis on the bridge, under partisan fire from the left and right sides, began to jump into the water. Many were hurt and immediately drowned while others made their way to shore and continued to put up resistance.

Covered by the crossfire of our two companies, the battalion's sub-machine gunners were able to make their way to the middle of the bridge. With the capturing of the right bank portion of the bridge, the group of demolition sappers of Pavel Smirnov quickly set explosive around the shore foundations, they fastened on with parachute cord the 3-pood boxes with TNT and set the fuses.

"Ready, comrade commander!" reported Smirnov.

"Detonate, the men are out of the way," I ordered, observing the hurried actions of the mine specialists. But there was no explosion. It turned out that Smirnov's igniter did not work and there was no spare. Lt Botalkin ran up to

Pavel and with his lighter lit the short piece of Bickford fuse. A deafening explosion rang out. An enormous piece of iron flew past and landed near the bomb crater in which we were sitting with a group of partisans.⁵

"Everyone retreat! The column must cover Dvoyeglazov!" I commanded. But the men stood still and watched the slightly askew bridge.

"The bridge was not blown up," came someone's voice.

"There will not be another convenient chance!" rumbled a deep bass nearby.

In silence, with their heads down and without a single sound, the men of the battalion approached the crossing. Each felt that the operation had not achieved the set goal. The men silently took off their clothing and footwear and suddenly the cracking and creaking of metal were heard. The sounds at one moment grew stronger and then died out. The partisans strained their eyes looking into the predawn gloom but could see nothing.

Crossing the Besed, we rapidly got dressed and looked at the bridge. At that moment the right portion of the bridge, with breaking steel beams, slowly settled while the other rose up.

"Look, look! The bridge has split in two," shouted the Komsomol organizer Volodya Chunikhin unable to check the happiness which engulfed him. Everyone stood up and looked intently at the results of the combat. In an instant the faces of the fellows were glowing. Over the river bank there rolled a loud triple "hurrah!" The obvious success lifted the fatigue from the partisans. How could one help but rejoice if they had been able for a long time to interrupt the enemy rail movements between the key stations of Krichev and Unecha.

The partisans tenderly carried their fallen comrades: Marusya Vasil'kova and Vasiliy Kopyshhev. On the way to the village of Botayevo, they halted in a small village with a cemetery on a low knoll. Here they buried their combat friends.

After the operation the brigade's battalions assembled in the Botayevo Forest. Here Timofey Mikhaylovich made a brief analysis in which he pointed out that the companies from the battalion of T. T. Il'yukhin had succeeded in sealing off the enemy garrisons and forcing the Nazis to go over to the defensive, thereby depriving them of a possibility of aiding the bridge garrison.

The battalion of V. P. Dobrovol'skiy was the first to reach the bridge. The assault was so rapid that the group of demolition sappers burdened down with the heavy boxes with explosives had lagged behind. The Nazis had made a strong attack against it. As a result of the losses suffered, there was virtually nothing to blow up the supports on the captured bridge on the left bank. The brigade commander positively viewed the actions of our battalion which had been able to blow up the bridge across the Besed. It took the Nazis 27 days to rebuild the bridge, we later learned.

T. M. Korotchenko ended the brief analysis of the operation by setting new tasks for the detachment. The battalion of V. P. Dobrovol'skiy which had

suffered the greatest losses was ordered to return to the camp, in the Kletnya Forest. The battalion of T. T. Il'yukhin was to attack the railroad station of Zhurbin, to knock out the track system, to destroy the rails and do everything possible to impede the rebuilding of the demolished bridge.

Having dismissed all the commanders and political workers with the exception of myself and commissar Seleznev, Timofey Mikhaylovich also set the task for our 3d Battalion: to make our way closer to Gomel, to study the terrain, the population and the economy and to chose here in the forests a new position for the brigade.

"The Nazis will not forgive us for blowing up the bridge," noted the brigade commander in conclusion. "Be careful, act covertly, reconnoiter the area properly and inform us periodically of the situation."⁶

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ During the described period P. I. Borovichev was the deputy commander of the 2d Kletnya Brigade and simultaneously the commander of the 3d Battalion. The brigade operated in the forests of Kletnanskiy Rayon of Orel (now Bryansk) Oblast.
- ² Party Archives of the Smolensk CPSU Obkom (below PASO), folio 8, inv. 1, file 330, sheet 69.
- ³ Ibid., sheet 70.
- ⁴ Ibid., sheets 70-71.
- ⁵ Ibid., sheet 73.
- ⁶ Ibid., sheet 74.

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BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF MAR SU R. YA. MALINOVSKIY TRACED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 83 (signed to press 25 Oct 83) pp 68-73

[Article by Col Gen M. Povaliy: "A Communist, Soldier and Patriot (On the 85th Birthday of Mar SU R. Ya. Malinovskiy)"]

[Text] The reader should not view my remembrances of Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovskiy¹ as an all-encompassing description of his life. First of all because I would be repeating much that has already been written about him. Moreover, in a single journal article it would be impossible to describe exhaustively the life and activities of R. Ya. Malinovskiy, a prominent Soviet state and military leader, a communist and citizen.

The youth of the future famous Soviet military leader and internationalist-patriot was involved with World War I. Then he fought the fascists on the side of the republican forces in Spain. During the years of the Great Patriotic War R. Ya. Malinovskiy showed his brilliant generalship talents in directing the combat operations of a corps, armies and fronts. Finally, in the postwar years he devoted himself to the cause of strengthening the nation's defense capability and to raising the combat readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces. Rodion Yakovlevich did particularly much in this area in the position of the USSR Minister of Defense.

In the present article I would like to share my impressions of Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovskiy under whose leadership I happened to work for many years.² I hope that my recollections will help the young reader more clearly see the image of this remarkable person.

After the return to the motherland from Spain, R. Ya. Malinovskiy became a senior instructor at the Military Academy imeni M. V. Frunze. Within the walls of this school I first encountered him. I heard his lectures. At that time there were many talented scientists and specialists on the academy's faculty. Nevertheless, R. Ya. Malinovskiy taking up teaching for the first time was not lost among them. We, the students, were probably most impressed by the fact that the calm, smart brigade commander with clear grey eyes and with flashing medals, with restraint, without any external affectation gave a course on tactics and staff service, in injecting the feeling of the Spanish storms into the auditorium.

With the start of World War II, many of us were sent from the academy to the troops, and I saw no more of R. Ya. Malinovskiy, although on the eve of the Great Patriotic War he arrived for service in our Odessa Military District.³

We met soon after its start. Although the meeting was brief, I remember it well.

By the end of 14 August 1941, the formations of the 9th Army where I was then serving in the operations section of the staff, under the pressure of the superior enemy forces had crossed the Dnestr and Southern Bug and had dug in on its left bank in a sector of Novaya Odessa, Nikolayev. The army commander, Col Gen Ya. T. Cherevichenko ordered me to leave for the 18th Army in order to establish cooperation with its troops in carrying out the received mission of defeating the enemy which had broken through toward Nikolayev. Its staff was just 20-30 km to the north. However, the situation was such that I spent almost a day in carrying out the commander's mission.

Upon return to Nikolayev, I did not find the staff of my army there and when I entered the room I saw Maj Gen Malinovskiy who was sitting tilted back in the chair, with eyes closed, with the air of an excessively fatigued, over-tired person. However, hearing my steps, he opened his eyes, held me with his sharp glance and immediately asked:

"Why have you come here?"

The results of my trip, undoubtedly, were of interest most to R. Ya. Malinovskiy since precisely his corps was to carry out the set combat mission in cooperation with the 96th Division of the 18th Army. He heard me out attentively and then said:

"Your troops have been moved to Kherson." And, drawing my map to him, indicated on it how I could more easily catch up.

I did catch up with the army staff halfway to Kherson. There I learned that the initial frontal attacks undertaken by the XLVIII Rifle Corps with the aim of liberating Vodopy Station and the nearby hills had not been successful. Then the corps commander had assembled all the available resources and, out-flanking the enemy to the north of the village of Zhovtnevy, attacked it in the left flank and the rear. The enemy units had been routed and the path for the retreat of the 9th Army to Kherson was open.

Even during these first, inordinantly difficult months of the war, Gen Malinovskiy was able to prove himself as a courageous and skillful military leader. In recommending Rodion Yakovlevich as the commander of the XLVIII Rifle Corps, Col Gen Cherevichenko commented on his firmness, decisiveness and will power. Under difficult combat conditions, he wrote, Malinovskiy led the troops skillfully and in an area where a difficult situation arose showed himself and by his own personal example, intrepidity and conviction of victory inspired the troops to defeat the enemy.

During the critical days of the August battles at Dnepropetrovsk, when the Nazis had broken across the Dnepr to its eastern bank, R. Ya. Malinovskiy was

appointed chief of staff and soon thereafter the commander of the 6th Army. For 3 weeks the army led by him drove enemy attacks, holding on to the left-bank settlements. Unable to break through our defenses, the enemy shifted the attacks to other sectors. For valor shown in battle, R. Ya. Malinovskiy was awarded the rank of lieutenant-general, he was awarded the Order of Lenin and in December 1941, appointed commander of the Southern Front.

In July 1942, when I was working on the staff of the Southern Front as the senior officer of the operations section, there was another memorable meeting with Rodion Yakovlevich. This was a difficult time for the front. In making successive strikes against the troops of the 9th Army and then the adjacent armies of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts, the enemy had driven deep into our defenses, capturing the flank of the front.

The situation was extremely difficult. Communications was disrupted, as always in such situations. An avalanche of pressing matters requiring the rapid taking of decisions by the commander grew with unbelievable speed. But still Rodion Yakovlevich, having determined the key element in all this turmoil and having sought the advice of the chief of staff A. I. Antonov, found it necessary to personally instruct me prior to leaving for the 12th Army which was already defending Voroshilovgrad. Armed with colored pencils, on my map he clearly and precisely sketched in the situation with the boundary lines, all the lines and times of retreat. He did this work rapidly and thoroughly but without any shadow of hurry. Subsequently, I many times had an opportunity to see that such efficiency was one of the characteristic traits in the work style of R. Ya. Malinovskiy.

In the heat of the crucial events in the great Battle of Stalingrad, Hq SHC ordered R. Ya. Malinovskiy to head the 2d Guards Army. In cooperation with the 5th Assault and 51st Armies, the 2d Guards defeated the Manstein grouping on the external perimeter, finally determining our victory in the battle on the Volga. For the defeat of the major enemy groupings, a group of Soviet military leaders, including Rodion Yakovlevich, for the first time on 28 January 1943, was awarded the Order of Suvorov 1st Degree.

From February 1943, R. Ya. Malinovskiy again headed the Southern Front and later commanded the troops of the Southwestern and Second Ukrainian Fronts. He was always in the most active sectors of the Soviet-German Front and the victories won by the troops under his leadership in the liberation of Rostov-na-Donu, the Donets Basin and in the Zaporozhye, Nikopol-Krivoy Rog, Bereznevatoye-Snigarevka Offensive Operations, were brilliant pages in the chronicle of the Great Patriotic War.

In August 1944, the troops of the Second Ukrainian Front under the command of R. Ya. Malinovskiy, in cooperation with the troops of the Third Ukrainian Front (commander F. I. Tolbukhin) successfully conducted one of the outstanding operations of the Great Patriotic War, the Iasi-Kishinev. After it came the victorious Debrecen, Budapest and Vienna Operations. On 26 April 1945, Mar SU R. Ya. Malinovskiy was awarded the highest military Order of Victory for skillful leadership of the troops in the final stage of the war against Nazi Germany. From July 1945, he was already commanding the troops of the Transbaykal Front which were to fight on the main sector in the Manchurian Strategic Operation to

defeat the Kwantung Army. Here his generalship talents were again brilliantly manifested. In the planning and execution of this operation, the axes of the main thrust were skillfully chosen, the tank army was boldly employed in the first echelon of the front, and cooperation was clearly organized in conducting the offensive along separate, isolated axes. All of this made it possible to achieve an exceptionally high rate of advance for those times under difficult terrain conditions. This is what Rodion Yakovlevich himself has written about this: "From the very first days of the operation, the combat of the troops of all the fronts assumed a highly fluid nature and developed along individual, widely separated operational axes. The Japanese Command, having lost control of the troops during the first days, showed complete confusion.... The enemy did not even allow the thought that the main forces of the Red Army could cross the inaccessible Greater Khingan and the desert steppes of Mongolia and actually bring the Kwantung Army to its knees."⁴

The military art of Mar SU R. Ya. Malinovskiy shown during the war against imperialist Japan was commended by the awarding of the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. The war was over but Rodion Yakovlevich remained for a long time in the Far East. The Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Soviet government rightfully entrusted him, one of the most experienced Soviet military leaders, with the leadership of the Transbaykal-Amur Military District (1945-1947) and the troops of the Far East (1947-1953) and the Far Eastern Military District (1953-1956), since this area, soon after the end of World War II, again became one of the most threatened for the security of our nation. The nuclear strikes against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, having destroyed them and ended many human lives, were at the same time a challenge to the Soviet Union from the U.S. imperialist circles.

R. Ya. Malinovskiy devoted more than ten years of his energies to strengthening the defenses of the Far East, particularly during the period of the Korean War. During those years for the first time after the war I happened to meet Rodion Yakovlevich. This happened in Chita. The very fact of his arrival there seemed noteworthy to me. Mar SU Malinovskiy arrived in Chita after the commander of the Transbaykal Military District had contested the conclusions of a commission made in an inspection. He arrived in order to personally analyze the affairs of the district. And he analyzed, as always, thoroughly and carefully. As the chief of the operations directorate and deputy chief of staff in the district, I had to prepare and submit numerous documents upon his request. As a result of the investigation, the objective claims of the district commander were confirmed.

In 1956, Mar R. Ya. Malinovskiy was appointed USSR First Deputy Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces and in October 1957, the Minister of Defense. He remained rather long in these positions, around 12 difficult and disquieting years.

World imperialism had created military bases around the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Rodion Yakovlevich in carrying out the party's demands on the defense of the nation and the socialist commonwealth countries, did everything to prevent the unleashing of a nuclear war as well as the falling behind of our weaponry.

During all these years I worked within the central apparatus of the Ministry of Defense and frequently met with him.

The years that R. Ya. Malinovskiy held the highest post in the Soviet Armed Forces were a time when fundamental changes were occurring in military affairs.

Rodion Yakovlevich realized that the scientific and technical revolution would inevitably involve fundamental changes in the economy as well as in the weaponry and organization of the troops, their training and control by the commanders and staffs. For this reason with enormous energy he consistently carried out the necessary measures to rearm and rebuild the Army and Navy and to improve the forms of their combat control.

In keeping with the changes occurring in the material base for conducting combat operations, R. Ya. Malinovskiy profoundly and thoroughly directed the reorganization in the training and indoctrination of the personnel. The ability to direct as needed and subordinate all the processes of daily troop life to the carrying out of practical tasks is probably the most characteristic distinguishing feature in the activities of Rodion Yakovlevich. He took an active part in the exercises of the troops and staffs involving the use of offensive and defensive methods of actions, new weapons and the corresponding procedures of armed combat. He introduced much that was new in training. With fervor and passion he gave reports and lectures at analyses and exercises to all categories of personnel. He constantly passed on to the leadership of the Warsaw Pact armies and their staffs his rich experience in troop training and their employment in combat and an operation and he willingly conducted various joint exercises.

R. Ya. Malinovskiy was a master of creating a complex and instructive situation and in clearly stating and formulating his ideas, decisions and instructions. He taught wisdom to many military leaders, saying approximately thus: "The document must be written briefly, precisely and clearly so that the reader understands its meaning even if he does not want to."

R. Ya. Malinovskiy was also known as an indoctrinator, the mentor of subordinates, a theoretician, an educator, pedagogue and organizer who possessed exceptional talent. He called training and indoctrinational work with the commanders and political workers the indoctrination of indoctrinators and spared no time on it. And through them he constantly sought the indoctrination of all the personnel in a spirit of Soviet patriotism, high dedication to the party and combat readiness.

With his diverse, busy practical work, Rodion Yakovlevich relied on a profound knowledge of theory and was a theoretician in the full sense of this word. He himself not only was concerned with the questions of theory daily. He was able to assemble around himself the best theoretical forces, to clearly formulate the pertinent problem confronting them and organize and direct the efforts of the military and civilian scientists at solving this.

As a prominent state and military leader, R. Ya. Malinovskiy was among those military, scientific, engineer and technical leaders in our nation who under the leadership of the CPSU Central Committee and the government waged a struggle

to eliminate the atomic superiority of American imperialism and for preventing a war. He carried this out with complete dedication of all his forces, energy and talent.

One cannot help but say a few kind, warm words about Rodion Yakovlevich as a fine and educated person, an exemplary member of the CPSU. For a long time we were with him in the same party organization. I do not know of a single instance when he did not come or was late to a party meeting, did not show an interest in the life of the organization or did not pay his party dues. Attentive and polite, he often gave useful advice to the communists in the party organization, he was constantly in the thick of people, he was humble and simple and loved to laugh and play chess during breaks. Everyone loved and respected him for his simplicity, humanness and professionalism.

The Soviet people under the leadership of the Communist Party have created a modern army possessing everything necessary to dependably protect its peaceful, creative labor. This army is invincible for it is armed with a Marxist-Leninist ideology, it is indoctrinated in a spirit of Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism, it is armed with modern combat equipment and uses this perfectly. Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovskiy, a communist and a citizen, a soldier and military leader who completely carried out his duty to the motherland devoted much effort to its organizational development and to strengthening its combat might.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ For more detail on Mar SU R. Ya. Malinovskiy, see: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 11, 1968; No 11, 1978.
- ² Col Gen M. I. Povaliy was an active participant in the Great Patriotic War. He started the war on the Southern Front on the Operations Section of the Staff of the 9th Army. In 1942, M. I. Povaliy served as the senior officer on the Operations Section of the Staff of the Southern Front which was under the command of R. Ya. Malinovskiy.--Editors.
- ³ In March 1941, Maj Gen R. Ya. Malinovskiy was appointed the commander of the newly organized XLVIII Rifle Corps.
- ⁴ R. Ya. Malinovskiy, et al., "Final. Istoriko-memuarnyy ocherk o razgrome imperialisticheskoy Yaponii v 1945 godu" [Finale. A Historical Memoir Essay on the Defeat of Imperialist Japan in 1945], 2d Supplemented and Revised Edition, Moscow, Nauka, 1969, pp 180, 362.

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HISTORY OF EMPLOYMENT OF HELICOPTERS IN LOCAL WARS VIEWED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 83 (signed to press 25 Oct 83) pp 74-81

[Article by Maj Gen Avn L. Mikryukov and Col V. Vaytushko: "From the Experience of the Combat Employment of Helicopters in Local Wars*"]

[Text] In the local wars started by the imperialists, helicopters have been widely employed along with other weapons.

In the Korean War (1950-1953) the American Command initially used helicopters for rescuing airplane crews. Then they began to transport wounded, to deliver food, ammunition and other materiel to the troops, to land parties and sabotage groups and evacuate subunits from encirclement areas. Helicopters were also employed for guiding combat aircraft to targets, for correcting artillery fire and conducting air reconnaissance.

In the course of the war, helicopters were also employed in the U.S. Army, Air Force and Navy. Thus, in the American Air Force in Korea there was the 3d Air Rescue Squadron which in addition to airplanes had 20 H-5 helicopters. The 7th Fleet had 40 (10 flights) of the same helicopters based on ships. The 8th American Army had 110 helicopters (a battalion) while a marine corps had 20 H-19 and HRS-1 troop carrying helicopters (one squadron).

On 19 September 1951, a tactical landing force was landed from helicopters for the first time. On 12 H-19 helicopters, an assault group consisting of 228 men with 8 tons of ammunition was delivered to an inaccessible mountain area. The soldiers descended to the ground on rope ladders. The landing was covered by a fighter screen.¹ On 11 October 1951, on 12 helicopters of the same class in 6 hours an American marine battalion numbering around 1,000 men was delivered to the front.² Using helicopters communications lines were laid across inaccessible terrain and radio operators with their radios were moved. The use of helicopters significantly increased the mobility of the means of communications and accelerated their deployment.

The American Command, in giving great importance to helicopters, continuously increased their number. In 1950, in Korea, it had 500 helicopters and by the war's end their number had increased to 1,000 units.

* The article has been prepared from materials in the foreign press.

During the period of the Korean War, helicopters were still not employed for supporting ground forces. For the first armed helicopters were employed by the French **in the course of combat operations in Algeria.**³ Initially an ordinary machine gun fixed on the vertical axis was mounted in the hatches of the cargo compartments. With the delivery of the CH-34 helicopter to the French troops, they began to mount several machine guns instead of one. However, their fire was not sufficiently effective. For this reason, a search was made for another, more powerful weapon for fire damage to personnel and equipment from the helicopter. The most effective was the unguided missiles and the 20-mm automatic Mauser cannons which were first employed on the SE-3160 Alouette helicopters.⁴

The French military specialists worked out the tactical procedure employing so-called orbital fire. Its essence was the following. In searching for the target, the helicopter usually flew around the perimeter of a designated area or assumed location of the detachments of the Algerian National Liberation Army. Having detected the target, it went into a turn at an altitude of approximately 30 m and when its pitch and the angle of the weapons reached 90°, the gunner could fire with direct aiming. This was the first attempt at employing armed helicopters.

In the war in South Vietnam (1959-1973), the American Command employed helicopters widely for carrying out diverse missions. In the foreign press this war is even called the "helicopter war." The main task for the helicopter subunits of the U.S. Army Aviation was to conduct aeromobile operations. They were also employed for ferrying troops and ammunition by air, for searching and reconnoitering the detachments of the NLF of South Vietnam, as battle outposts for ground troops, for observing the battlefield, for correcting artillery fire, for protecting lines of communications, for ensuring the communications of the command and liaison communications, for evacuating wounded from the battlefield and the personnel of surrounded subunits as well as for searching out and rescuing the crews of downed aircraft and helicopters.

One of the particular features of the "counterinsurgency" war in South Vietnam was the increased role of fire support helicopters. Multipurpose UH-1 Iroquois helicopters were first employed for these purposes. Since 1962 they had been also employed for escorting troop transport helicopters. Subsequently (in 1967) in addition to the UH-1 Iroquois helicopter, the U.S. Army began receiving a helicopter specially designed for fire support, the AH-1 Hugh Cobra which had a number of modifications (Photo 1) [not reproduced]. As the number of fire support helicopters increased, they were employed for the following purposes: preliminary firing in the planned troop landing area; fire support for those landing areas which were beyond the range of artillery; fire support for ground troops which had entered combat.⁵

The broad employment of helicopters had a substantial impact on the tactics of ground forces. The aeromobile operations during the war in South Vietnam became the basic type of their combat operations. For conducting these tactical aeromobile groups were formed consisting of one or two infantry battalions and an army air battalion. In addition, in the U.S. Army in Vietnam for the first time the first Aeromobile Division was organized and this had 434 helicopters.

The actions of the helicopter units and subunits in an aeromobile operation were carried out in five stages: the ferrying of the helicopters from the permanent base to the jump-off area; the ferrying of troops by air to the combat area; the landing of the forces and fire support in the course of combat; the returning of the helicopter unit to the jump-off area (with incidental evacuation of wounded); return to the base.

At the moment the troops were loading, the fire support helicopters circled over the jump-off area, securing it, and during the flight to the combat area covered the flanks of the battle formation of the troop transport helicopters. As a rule, a reconnaissance helicopter (OH-6A Kaius or OH-58A Kiowa) flew ahead of the battle formation. Upon detecting firing points this helicopter gave the target designation to the gunships.

In approaching the designated area, the fire support helicopters increased speed, passed the troop transport helicopters and, having arrived in the landing area approximately 2 minutes ahead, attacked the personnel and equipment by firing gun and missile weapons. The troop transport helicopters, having reached the landing area, descended and landed the force. Frequently tactical aircraft were involved in supporting the landing and these cooperated with the fire support helicopters in terms of lines or time.

✓ The first helicopter with the landing force landed 1 minute after the tactical aircraft had made their last run at the target. Some 7 or 10 seconds were allocated for landing the party from the helicopter. During this time the fire support helicopters covered the landing, flying around the perimeter of the area and neutralizing the ground weapons.

After the landing of the personnel, a portion of the fire support helicopters supported the actions of the force, they conducted reconnaissance in adjacent areas and by fire thwarted undertaken counterattacks, while the other portion protected the troop transport and transport helicopters evacuating wounded, prisoners or broken down military equipment. At the same time some helicopters of the troop transport helicopters by firing the machine guns supported the combat of the landing force and others returned to the jump-off area where they were ready to begin evacuating wounded, ferrying supplies and repair teams or evacuating the landing party after it had carried out the combat mission.

In the course of the "counterinsurgency" war, the helicopters were rather widely used in conducting nighttime combat. For detecting ground objects during darkness, various illuminating devices and night vision instruments were mounted on them and special television equipment and very modern radars were employed.⁶ However, regardless of all of this, the Americans did not succeed in employing combat support helicopters at night with sufficient effectiveness.

In entering the war in Vietnam, the Army Air Command still did not have fixed principles for the combat employment of helicopters. As the journal ARMY has written, "in the course of combat operations in Vietnam which were carried out under the most diverse terrain conditions, the employed tactics were subjected to testing, they were improved, revised, praised or repudiated."⁷

Under the conditions of the absence of dependable ground control and the difficulty of locating targets by the combat helicopter crews, the tactics of "mixed forces" was considered the best where three or four reconnaissance helicopters and six-eight fire support helicopters operated in a single battle formation and according to a single plan. Here the "fire reconnaissance" group which was given the task of seeking out and hitting the detected targets usually consisted of two OH-6A and two AH-1 helicopters. The reconnaissance helicopters (OH-6A) flew at low altitudes. The fire support helicopters (AH-1) flew at altitudes of 600-700 m and beyond the effective range of small arms. The Hugh Cobra helicopters immediately attacked the guerrillas who gave themselves away by firing at the reconnaissance helicopters.

Many aeromobile operations involving helicopters were also carried out with the Air Force. In those instances when the jungles were so dense that it was impossible to land a force even with rope ladders, the Air Force planes dropped large-caliber high explosive bombs which, in exploding close to the ground, formed the necessary landing pads for the helicopters.⁸

The HH-3 and HH-4 helicopters were employed rather successfully for rescuing plane and helicopter crews shot down over the territory of South Vietnam as well as in the air space of North Vietnam. The rescuing of pilots from downed aircraft in the Gulf of Tonkin was carried out by deck-based helicopters. After the pilot was forced to leave the aircraft, he activated a special transmitter which sent a disaster signal which was picked up on an airborne command post, a HC-130 airplane. The commander of the combat crew took the bearing of the source of the signals and sent rescue helicopters escorted by ground attack planes and fighters to the point of the water or on-land landing. The ground attack planes sealed off the designated area with fire, one of them fought the crew of the downed aircraft and gave the target designations to the helicopters. The HH-3 rescue helicopter released the lift device with a cable up to 75 m long and then raised the man on board with the lift mechanism.⁹

Thus, the use of helicopters in South Vietnam for carrying out various missions provided an opportunity for the American command to significantly increase the mobility and fire power of their infantry, the effectiveness of fire support, to accelerate the moving of troops and the transporting of cargo and the evacuation of wounded, to maneuver artillery by air and so forth. The former commander of the American troops in South Vietnam, Gen Westmoreland has written, for example, that "without helicopters the United States and Saigon would have needed another million soldiers to fight the enemy."¹⁰

However, in analyzing the experience of this war, American specialists also have pointed out a number of essential shortcomings in the employment of helicopters. Thus, the short length of flight for the fire support helicopters (a little more than 2 hours) limited the length of actions against the personnel and equipment, particularly when the combat area was a great distance away from the permanent base. The speed of the fire support helicopters was slower than the speed of the CH-47 troop transport helicopters (Photo 2) [not reproduced] and this impeded their joint operations and held up the pace of the aeromobile operations. The low accuracy of the fire from helicopters also reduced its combat effectiveness.

The helicopters suffered tangible losses from small-arms fire and in conducting combat operations in areas where there was a sufficient amount of air defense weapons, the losses increased significantly. This was confirmed by the experience of combat with the invading of Laos by the interventionists in 1971. Here is what the American magazine NEWSWEEK wrote at that time: "During 4 weeks, the American Army Air pilots operated under the conditions of the heaviest enemy antiaircraft fire during all the years of the war in Indochina. In just one day, 10 helicopters were lost in Laos.... By the end of the first week of Operation Lamshon-719, we had lost 61 helicopters.... The situation became even more severe after the start of the offensive by the Saigon troops which were supported by Army Air Aviation. In just one of the attacks to the south of Route No 9, of the 60 helicopters involved in combat in some 90 minutes, 8 were destroyed and 30⁰ sustained heavy damage. The ground fire was intense and accurate and each hit in a way confirmed the great vulnerability of the helicopters."¹¹

By the end of the war in Vietnam, the total number of helicopter losses reached 5,000. In essence, the fire of the troop air defenses and small arms in a local war completely destroyed the effective helicopter strength of the U.S. Army Aviation. But if one considers the number of combat sorties which the helicopters made, the level of their losses over the 14 years is still considered low by the foreign specialists.¹²

The questions of controlling the helicopter subunits and units and the organizing of their cooperation with the ground forces and tactical aviation were not completely solved. Experience showed that the absence of centralized control over a large number of Army Air subunits was the reason for its ineffective use as a means of troop fire support.¹³

One of the main reasons for the significant number of helicopter losses from air defense weapons was the insufficient range of their onboard weapons. In order to employ the carried cannons, unguided missiles or grenade launchers, it was necessary to close in on the object of the attack to such a degree that an entry into the kill area of the air defense weapons became inevitable.

In Laos helicopters for the first time fought against tanks. Tow antitank guided missiles (ATGM) were mounted on several Hugh Cobra helicopters. The methods of employing the new weapon were worked out. The ambush tactic was the most effective: the helicopters reached the areas where enemy equipment was moving, they concealed themselves at a maximum low altitude against the background of the terrain and waited for the moment to attack; with the approach of the target to a distance where the weapon could be employed, a rapid ascent was carried out ensuring its locking-on and tracking and then in a hover mode the ATGM was launched from a distance of 1.5-3 km. After the attack, the place of the ambush was changed.

In the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, helicopters were used against tanks and other targets, they were employed for landing tactical airborne forces, delivering ammunition, food and other supplies to troops located in inaccessible areas, they conducted air reconnaissance, they evacuated wounded, they searched for and rescued the crews which had bailed out of their aircraft. Fire support

helicopters were widely employed by the Israeli troops as a highly maneuverable antitank reserve on the battalion--brigade level. Ordinarily the battalion antitank reserve included two-four fire support helicopters with the AH-1S ATGM and were used in cooperation with other weapons (tanks, artillery and ground ATGM) for destroying the tanks which had broken into the defenses.

The fire support helicopters, as a rule, were stationed in a shelter a short distance behind the defensive zone of the troops, due to which they appeared over the battlefield 4-5 minutes after the issuing of the command. The ATGM were launched against the tanks depending upon terrain conditions from a range of 3-2 km and from altitudes of 25-50 m. The launch line was usually chosen over the position of friendly troops. The approach of the helicopters to the launch line was carried out covertly, the climb, detection of the target and aiming of the missile to it were carried out in 25-40 seconds.

For attacking the tanks which has broken deep into the defenses, the helicopters often operated from ambushes which were set up ahead of time on the possible tank routes, usually by narrows and mountain passes. In the aim of achieving greater concealment and reducing losses from air defense weapons, the helicopters, as a rule, flew at altitudes up to 50 m using the terrain features. In individual instances they made it a practice to employ helicopters armed with ATGM in night combat.

In combat operations in October 1973, the fire support helicopters were more widely employed for fighting against tanks. In the opinion of foreign military specialists, the greatest results of helicopter operations were achieved in their joint employment with tanks, artillery and ground ATGM.

In the course of combat operations at sea, the Israeli helicopters conducted reconnaissance of the naval bases and the coast, together with the missile boats they attacked surface ships and shore installations, they landed and picked up reconnaissance and sabotage groups, they rescued the personnel of sunken ships and downed aircraft and were also employed for setting up radar jamming. Helicopters equipped with angle reflectors in flying at low altitudes at a speed of 30-40 km per hour with the simultaneous setting of passive radar jamming often simulated surface targets. Three small landing vessels were employed for the basing of the helicopters and delivering them to the combat area. Special landing pads for two helicopters were built on each of them.

In the course of the aggression against Lebanon (1982), Israeli helicopters provided fire support for the ground forces, they landed tactical airborne forces and attacked the fighter air guidance centers and the antiaircraft missile complexes.

The fire support helicopters operated from minimum altitudes in groups of six units, as a rule, by surprise after final reconnaissance of the targets. Close cooperation was organized between the helicopter subunits and the supported units of ground forces; the strikes were made using the data of air spotters. The transport helicopters landed the tactical airborne forces both during the day and at night. Fighters supported the actions of the fire support helicopters and the landing of the troops.

In the course of the combat in the area of the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands, English helicopters provided ASW defense of their ships, they attacked the enemy surface ships and subsequently the positions of Argentine troops on the islands, they conducted reconnaissance, participated in the landing of the troops, they delivered various cargo and also performed other missions.

On the basis of generalizing the experience of the local wars in various regions, foreign military specialists have concluded that helicopters can be successfully employed for carrying out fire, troop transport and special tasks. They feel that helicopters armed with ATGM are an effective weapon in combating tanks and other armored equipment. Here it is assumed that their tactics will be based on an attack from a hover mode in emerging from an ambush. With a stabilized sight and an advanced ATGM, it is recommended that firing be opened up from a range up to 4,000 m. After launching two or three missiles, the helicopter should move to another position and resume the attack. Conditions where tanks, in making a rapid breakthrough, are moving across open terrain while the helicopters are in a natural shelter at a range of visual visibility of the enemy are considered to be the best for operations from an ambush. Ensuring an aimed launch of the ATGM at a range up to 4,000 m requires the use of more effective electrooptical systems with image magnification, infrared forward vision devices as well as tele- and radar equipment. However, this involves increased helicopter costs and these have acceptable limits.¹⁴

In the armies of foreign countries they presently are searching for an optimum organizational structure for the helicopter subunits and units. Thus, the United States has organized a separate antitank brigade while Army Aviation has created helicopter antitank battalions; in the FRG, Great Britain and France there are helicopter antitank regiments.

Modern helicopters are being equipped with an armored cockpit, an advanced navigation system, a radar detection receiver, a device for reducing the engine's thermal radiation, a set for infrared jamming, an infrared forward vision system for nighttime operations and so forth. The AH-64A Apache helicopter can carry 16 third-generation Hellfire ATGM capable of hitting tanks under any weather conditions during the day and at night.¹⁵

Thus, the use of helicopters in local wars has brought about the further development of their equipment, weapons and an improvement in tactics and organizational structure.

FOOTNOTES

¹ G. Feuchter, "Istoriya vozdushnoy voyny" [The History of Air Warfare], Voenizdat, 1956, p 323.

² Ibid.

³ MILITARY REVIEW, No 9, 1965, pp 3-12.

⁴ Ibid., No 3, 1966, p 35.

- ⁵ ARMY, No 3, 1972, p 17.
- ⁶ AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY, 1 January 1966, pp 30, 31.
- ⁷ ARMY, 3 March 1972, p 18.
- ⁸ INTERAVIA, 7 July 1970, p 833.
- ⁹ AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY, 18 November 1967, p 41.
- ¹⁰ NEWSWEEK, March 1971, p 19.
- ¹¹ Ibid., August 1971, p 19.
- ¹² INTERAVIA, 7 July 1970, pp 830, 831.
- ¹³ Ibid., p 832.
- ¹⁴ FLIGHT INTERNATIONAL, 6 June 1976, p 1561.
- ¹⁵ ZARUBEZHNOYE VOYNNNOYE OBOZRENIYE, No 12, 1982, p 39.

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BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON ARMY GEN I. A. PLIYEV GIVEN

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 83 (signed to press 25 Oct 83) pp 90-92

[Article by Hero of the Soviet Union, Professor, Lenin Prize Winner, Army Gen P. Kurochkin: "A Man of Military Duty (on the 80th Birthday of Army Gen I. A. Pliyev)*"]

[Text] During my years of study in the Military Academy imeni M. V. Frunze, I repeatedly met Issa Aleksandrovich Pliyev and had the occasion to think and debate about the use of cavalry in a war against a strong, technically equipped enemy. Ardent, mercurial and with flashing eyes, he would say: "I believe in the capability of the cavalry and its use along with tanks and aviation. We must make raids in the enemy rear, particularly at night, we must destroy its staffs and garrisons and the lines of communications. That is how it was and that is how it will be." This stuck in my memory "thus it has been and thus it will be."

He confirmed these words at the very outset of the war in the course of a defensive engagement in 1941 on the Smolensk Sector, where I was in command of the 20th Army and I. A. Pliyev was the commander of the 50th Cavalry Division. This division, fighting in the cavalry group of L. M. Dovator, in the second half of August and the beginning of September made a daring raid in the enemy rear in the area of Dukhovshchina, disrupting its lines of communications and destroying the communications centers and staffs. For able leadership and heroism shown during the raid, Dovator and Pliyev were given the rank of major general. Issa Aleksandrovich also received the Order of Lenin. Thus the son of the Ossetian poor peasant learned to fight and win. This science did not come easily to him. The lines of the combat chronicle for the history of the 50th Cavalry Division were written in fire and blood. The division commander carefully thought out and planned each battle, and hurried decisions were alien to him.

In mid-November 1941, a second general offensive of the Nazi troops against Moscow started. During these tense days, Issa Aleksandrovich with his cavalrymen as part of the cavalry group of the 16th Army under Gen K. K. Rokossovskiy

* For more detail on Army Gen I. A. Pliyev, see: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 11, 1973.

defended Moscow, where on 26 November, for courage and military valor, his division was turned into the 3d Guards Cavalry Division. By its bold raids in the enemy rear under winter conditions it had contributed to the combat operations of our troops.

In the counteroffensive by the Soviet troops at Moscow during the winter campaign of 1941-1942, in the offensive on the Kharkov sector in the spring of 1942, in the defensive operations on the southwestern sector in the summer of 1942 and in the counteroffensive at Stalingrad, I. A. Pliyev, in commanding the II Guards, the V and then the III and IV Guards Cavalry Corps successfully led them under various conditions and by personal example of courage and tenacity showed how to hit the enemy unstintingly and skillfully, showing tenacity and valor in this. The corps commander used every break between battles for improving the combat skills of his subordinates. Sparing neither strength nor energy, he taught the soldiers and officers to rush rapidly into the attack, to fire accurately on the move, to decisively pursue the enemy until its complete defeat on the offensive, and to be steadfast on the defensive.

The military talents of Issa Aleksandrovich were most fully apparent in the course of the Bereznegovatoye-Snigarevka Operation (6-18 March 1944) during which by the decision of the commander of the Third Ukrainian Front a cavalry-mechanized group was to be organized consisting of the IV Guards Cavalry Corps and the IV Guards Mechanized Corps under his command.

In the foreword to the book by I. A. Pliyev "Pod gvardeyskim znamenem" [Under the Guards Banner], Mar SU A. M. Vasilevskiy wrote: "During those days the Soviet Informburo [Information Bureau] announced that 'the main defeat had been caused to the enemy during the period of 13-16 March 1944, when the German Command confronted by the guards group of Lt Gen Pliyev reaching the German rear lost all control over the troops and ordered that they make their way to the west in small groups and even individually. Only certain fleeing staffs and small remnants of the destroyed German formations were saved.'"¹

For skillful troop leadership in the crossing of the Southern Bug River, in the battles for Odessa and the courage and heroism shown here, on 10 March 1944 he was awarded the Order of Suvorov 1st Degree and on 16 April he received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

And once again the marches, battles and engagements. Under the command of Issa Aleksandrovich Pliyev, the soldiers and officers of the cavalry-mechanized group won undying glory in the famous Bagration Operation. In it the cavalry-mechanized group committed to the engagement in the breach of the enemy defenses, broke out into the operational space, in destroying the enemy personnel and equipment by surprise and bold attacks, and defeated its reserves, its headquarters bodies and rear services a significant distance away from the main forces of the front. The troops of the group distinguished themselves in the battles to surround and defeat the large enemy grouping in the area of Bobryusk.

¹ I. A. Pliyev, "Pod gvardeyskim znamenem" [Under the Guards Banner], Ordzhonikidze, IR, 1976, p 9.

Their actions were highly praised in the Order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of 2 July 1944. To the southwest of Minsk, the troops of the First Belorussian Front, by a rapid attack by the cavalry, tank formations and infantry, captured the towns and most important communications centers of Stolbtsy, Gorodeya and Nesvizh, thereby cutting off the communications lines for the Germans from Minsk to Brest and Luninets. In skirting the Brest Fortified Area to the northwest, the men from the group of I. A. Pliyev were the first on the western strategic sector to reach the USSR state frontier with Poland.

In the autumn of 1944, I. A. Pliyev was appointed the commander of the cavalry-mechanized group of the Second Ukrainian Front which included the IV, VI Guards Cavalry and the VII Mechanized Corps. Boldly and decisively, in close cooperation with the 6th Guards Tank Army in the Debrecen and Budapest Operations, it continued to defeat the enemy fighting in the sector of the front's main thrust.

For military valor and courage in the battles to defeat the Nazi troops on Hungarian and Czechoslovak territory, by an order of the People's Commissar of Defense of 26 January 1945, the cavalry-mechanized group of the Second Ukrainian Front became the First Guards Cavalry-Mechanized Group and its commander received the Order of Suvorov 1st Degree. In May he was given the military rank of colonel general.

After the historic Victory Parade, Col Gen I. A. Pliyev left for the Transbaykal Front where he assumed the command of the cavalry-mechanized group from the Soviet-Mongolian forces and this group participated in the Khingan-Mukden Operation. And here, under the conditions of the waterless steppes of Inner Mongolia, the combat operations of the troops also had a highly fluid nature and the commander himself proved to be a remarkable organizer of combat operations for a large troop grouping. Later the former chief of the Political Directorate of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army Yu. Tsedenbal said: "Certain characteristic traits in the military style and creative activities of our commander were...the taking of sound, most effective decisions for the given moment on the basis of the rapid and thorough consideration of the combat situation, the firm and unswerving carrying out of the adopted decisions, ensuring continuity in troop command in any complex combat situation, unswerving adherence to the tactics of decisive actions designed for surprise for the enemy, and a desire to always anticipate the enemy in the maneuver and actions...."²

For successfully carrying out the command's combat mission to defeat the Japanese troops, I. A. Pliyev was awarded his second Gold Star and the group which he commanded received a commendation from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief while many of its units were awarded the honorary name of Khingan.

Issa Aleksandrovich received six Orders of Lenin, the Order of the October Revolution, three Orders of the Red Banner, two Orders of Suvorov 1st Degree,

² Foreword by Yu. Tsedenbal to the book: I. A. Pliyev, "Konets Kvantunskoy Armii" [The End of the Kwantung Army], Rostov-na-Donu, Rostovskoye knizhnoye izd vo, 1968.

the Order of Kutuzov 1st Degree and medals as well as foreign decorations. In 1971, he received the title of Hero of Mongolia.

In the postwar period, I. A. Pliyev held a number of responsible command positions, he was the commander of a number of armies and military districts and from July 1968, he became a Military Inspector-Adviser of the Group of General Inspectors of the USSR Ministry of Defense, where he devoted all his energies and experience to strengthening the defense might of the USSR and the socialist commonwealth nations. He took an active part in the work of generalizing the experience of the Great Patriotic War and in the military patriotic indoctrination of the Soviet youth in a spirit of wholehearted dedication to the CPSU and the socialist motherland. Issa Aleksandrovich appeared in the periodic press and generously shared the experience of the war and postwar development of our Armed Forces. He has written books which have won reader recognition.

The Communist Party and the Soviet people have repeatedly shown great confidence in Army Gen Pliyev, electing him a delegate to party congresses (19th, 20th, 22d and 23d). He was a candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee and repeatedly elected a member of the Bureau of the Rostov CPSU Obkom, a deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet (2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Sessions) and a deputy of the Rostov Oblast Soviet during many sessions.

The memory of the faithful son of the Leninist party and our socialist motherland, I. A. Pliyev will always remain in the hearts of the Soviet military and all our people.

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BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON ADM L. M. GALLER OUTLINED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 83 (signed to press 25 Oct 83) pp 92-94

[Article by Capt 1st Rank V. Redanskiy: "Adm L. M. Galler (on the Centennial Anniversary of His Birthday)"]

[Text] The Army and Navy veterans who served in the prewar years as well as many participants of the Great Patriotic War are well familiar with the name of Adm L. M. Galler who at that time was the chief of the Main Navy Staff and then the deputy people's commissar of the navy for shipbuilding and weaponry.¹ The former People's Commissar of the Navy M. G. Kuznetsov, in remembering the first days of his work on the central staff of the People's Commissariat of the Navy (in the position of first deputy people's commissar), told about one conversation with the Politburo member and secretary of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the Leningrad Obkom and Gorkom A. A. Zhdanov, held in mid-April 1939: "Zhdanov...was interested," wrote N. G. Kuznetsov, "in which of the leading workers from the people's commissariat I knew well.... First of all, I told about Lev Mikhaylovich Galler who was well known as a person with enormous experience, who had great regard among the sailors and was an honest and indefatigable worker. I was pleased that Zhdanov agreed with this description. This was no surprise as Lev Mikhaylovich had dedicated his entire life to the Navy and had behind him more than three decades of service at sea."²

After completing the Naval Cadet Corps in January 1905, L. M. Galler was appointed the chief of the watch on the dispatch boat "Aziya." Later he served on the training vessels "General-Admiral" and "Gertsog Edinburgskiy" and on the battleship "Slava." During a voyage abroad, he along with the battleship crew participated in aiding the inhabitants of the Sicilian city of Messina which in December 1908 had been devastated by an earthquake.

The first years of Lev Mikhaylovich's service on the ships coincided with those times when the Russian officers, including the naval ones, were endeavoring to understand the causes of the Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 and the reasons for the Tsushima tragedy. Like many honest officers, he could not help but realize that the main reason was in the rotten autocratic system, the routine which reigned in the Navy, the inertness and lack of talent of its leaders.

A predisposition for the precise sciences inherited from his father led Galler to the artillery officer class. Having brilliantly completed his studies in 1912, he was initially assigned to the battleship "Andrey Pervozvanny" and later served on the destroyer "Aurora" and again on the battleship "Slava" where, as a senior officer, Lev Mikhaylovich participated in thwarting the Moonsund Operation of the German Navy (29 September/12 October--6/19/October 1917), the aim of which was to destroy the Russian naval forces in Riga Bay, capture the Moonsund Archipelago and subsequently attack revolutionary Petrograd.

After the Great October Socialist Revolution, Capt 2d Rank Galler, being a commander of the destroyer "Turkmenets-Stavropol'skiy," along with the ship crew without hesitation came over to the side of Soviet power.

For Galler, the Ice Cruise of the Baltic Fleet in the spring of 1918 was the first testing under new conditions as here the destroyer under his command among other ships arrived from Helsingfors at Kronshtadt.

L. M. Galler particularly distinguished himself in June 1919 in suppressing the counterrevolutionary coup at Fort Krasnaya Gorka. In an open letter to their commander, the ship crew wrote: "You have honorably carried out the difficult responsibility entrusted to you in commanding the glorious 'Andrey' and have completely justified the trust shown in you by the Worker-Peasant government. Your glorious work in commanding the ship and the Krasnaya Gorka events emphasize this particularly clearly."³ For decisive and skilled actions against the rebels, L. M. Galler received the Order of the Red Banner.

For a certain time Lev Mikhaylovich commanded a minelaying division and headed the staff of the Active Detachment which at that time brought together all the battle-worthy ships in the Baltic. In February 1921, he was appointed chief of staff of the Baltic Fleet.

In March 1921, the Tenth Congress of the RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] adopted a decision to rebuild the Navy. In several years, by the efforts of the Communist Party and the Soviet people, the Baltic Fleet was reborn. During this time, many difficulties rested on the shoulders of the young chief of staff, but experienced sailor, L. M. Galler.

For an extended time, starting in 1927, Lev Mikhaylovich commanded the largest formation of surface vessels, the battleship brigade. During this period he carried out an important government assignment "to move from the Baltic to the Black Sea the battleship "Parizhskaya Kommuna" and the cruiser "Profintern" (from 1929, "Krasnyy Krym"). Leaving Kronshtadt on 22 November 1929 under his flag, the ships encountered a fierce storm in the Bay of Biscay. However, the experienced sailors headed by L. M. Galler withstood all the hardship and on 18 January 1930, the battleship and cruiser entered Sevastopol Bay. Along the way, the Soviet sailors had visited a number of foreign ports where they were warmly welcomed by local inhabitants. During the voyage Lev Mikhaylovich showed great political tack, decisiveness and exceptional will power."⁴

In 1932, L. M. Galler was admitted as a member of the Leninist party. During the same year, he was appointed the commander of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet.

This was a time when the naval forces of the USSR were intensely increasing their combat might confronted with the growing threat from the imperialist states. For this reason Lev Mikhaylovich paid chief attention to improving the naval skills of the Baltic Sailors, to raising the combat readiness of the ships and shore units of the fleet and to developing cooperation among the naval forces. The experienced leader realized that the international situation was becoming hotter year by year and the nation could be confronted with a major testing.

The Red Banner Baltic Fleet, along with the modernizing of the old ships, also received new ones. Here there was the intensive mastery of the new combat equipment and weapons. Cooperation between the naval forces and the troops of the Leningrad Military District was developed. Chief attention was paid to ASW and air defense, to the cooperation of ships as part of tactical groups and to sea skills. The fleet commander was the soul of intense combat training.

In 1937, Lev Mikhaylovich was transferred to Moscow to the position of deputy chief of the Naval Forces of the USSR People's Commissariat of Defense and at the beginning of 1938, with the formation of the independent USSR People's Commissariat of the Navy, he headed the Main Naval Staff.⁵

Not long before the start of the war, in October 1940, Lev Mikhaylovich became the deputy people's commissar of the navy for shipbuilding. In the new position, as before, he continued working with great industry. Galler did not limit himself to settling the questions related just to shipbuilding and technical support. The range of his service interests and daily activities was significantly broader. He devoted a good deal of attention also to the questions of an operational nature, providing substantial aid to the Main Navy Staff.

In 1947-1948, Adm L. M. Galler was appointed the chief of the Naval Academy for Shipbuilding and Weaponry imeni A. N. Krylov.

In 1935, L. M. Galler was elected a member of the USSR Central Executive Committee, 7th Session. The motherland highly regarded his accomplishments in the organizational development of the Soviet Navy: Adm L. M. Galler received three Orders of Lenin, four Orders of the Red Banner, two Orders of Ushakov 1st Degree, the Order of the Red Star and medals.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Lev Mikhaylovich Galler [born 17 (29) November 1883 in St. Petersburg and died 12 July 1950 in Kazan. Rank of admiral awarded in 1940.

² N. G. Kuznetsov, "Nakanune" [On the Eve], Voenizdat, 1966, pp 222-223.

³ STRAZH BALTIKI, 21 February 1963.

⁴ MORSKOY SBORNIK, No 1, 1936, p 56.

- 5 The activities of L. M. Galler during this period have been described in detail in the memoirs of the former People's Commissar of the Navy N. G. Kuznetsov (see VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 3, 1963, pp 68-76).

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