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USSR REPORT
MILITARY AFFAIRS

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 12, December 1985

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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ACHIEVING HIGH RATES OF ADVANCE IN FRONT OPERATIONS OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 85 (signed to press 9 Oct 85) pp 8-13

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Lt Gen A. A. Sokolov, published under the rubric "Soviet Military Art"]

[Text] One of the most important prerequisites for the successful development of an offensive operation and for achieving the set goal is the conduct of the operation at a rapid pace. An analysis of the experience of the Great Patriotic War indicates that high rates of advance made it possible for the troops of the fronts to deeply breach the enemy defenses, to split up its troops into individual isolated groupings, to surround and destroy them piecemeal, to anticipate the enemy in maneuvering, to deprive it of initiative and impose one's will on the enemy.

The practice of front operations has shown that the development of a rapid offensive was achieved by the following: by establishing powerful shock groupings for carrying out the breakthrough and increasing the force of the strike; by the broad maneuvering of the troops; by launching powerful fire strikes against the enemy; by the active combating of enemy reserves; by conducting the offensive during the day and at night; by crossing water obstacles without a halt; by dependable support for the troops; by clear cooperation of the men and weapons; by firm and continuous command and control of the troops.

The decisive massing of the men and weapons on the breakthrough sectors provided an opportunity to establish not only first echelons but also provide powerful second echelons, mobile groups and reserves for the fronts (see the Table).

Such a configuration of the troops made it possible to achieve superiority over the enemy in men and weapons on the sector of the front's main thrust to the entire depth of the operation, to break through the deeply echeloned enemy defenses, to promptly increase the effort from in depth for developing the offensive rapidly and achieve the decisive aims of the operation.

A very characteristic example of increasing the forces from in depth was the Vistula-Oder Operation. During it, by skillful maneuvering on the axes of the

Table

**Echeloning Men and Weapons From the Experience of Certain Front Operations
in the Great Patriotic War***

Name of Operations	Name of Fronts	First Echelon	Second Echelon	Mobile Group of Front (PGF)
Belorussian	3d Belo. Fnt.	4 armies	--	5th Gds. TA & KMG (III Gds. CC & III Gds. MC)
	1st Belo. Fnt. (rt. wing)	4 armies**	--	KMG (IV Gds. CC & I MC)
Iasi-Kishinev	2d Ukr. Fnt.	5 armies	1 army (53d)	6th TA, XVIII TC & KMG (Gds. CC & XXIII TC)
	3d Ukr. Fnt.	4 armies	--	IV Gds. MC, VII MC
Vistula-Oder	1st Belo. Fnt.	7 armies	1 army (3d Shock)	1st Gds. TA, 2d Gds. TA & II Gds. CC
	1st Ukr. Fnt.	6 armies***	2 armies (21st & 59th)	3d Gds. TA & 4th TA

*The commanders of the fronts had in their reserve in a majority of instances from one to two corps (rifle, mechanized, cavalry).

**A number of armies (3d, 65th) had army mobile groups consisting of a tank corps.

***In the 5th Guards Army there were the XXXI and IV Guards Tank Corps, but their mission was set by the commander of the front.

Key: TA -- Tank Army
 KMG -- Horse-Mechanized Group
 CC -- Cavalry Corps
 MC -- Mechanized Corps
 TC -- Tank Corps

main thrusts, a many-fold superiority over the enemy was established and this

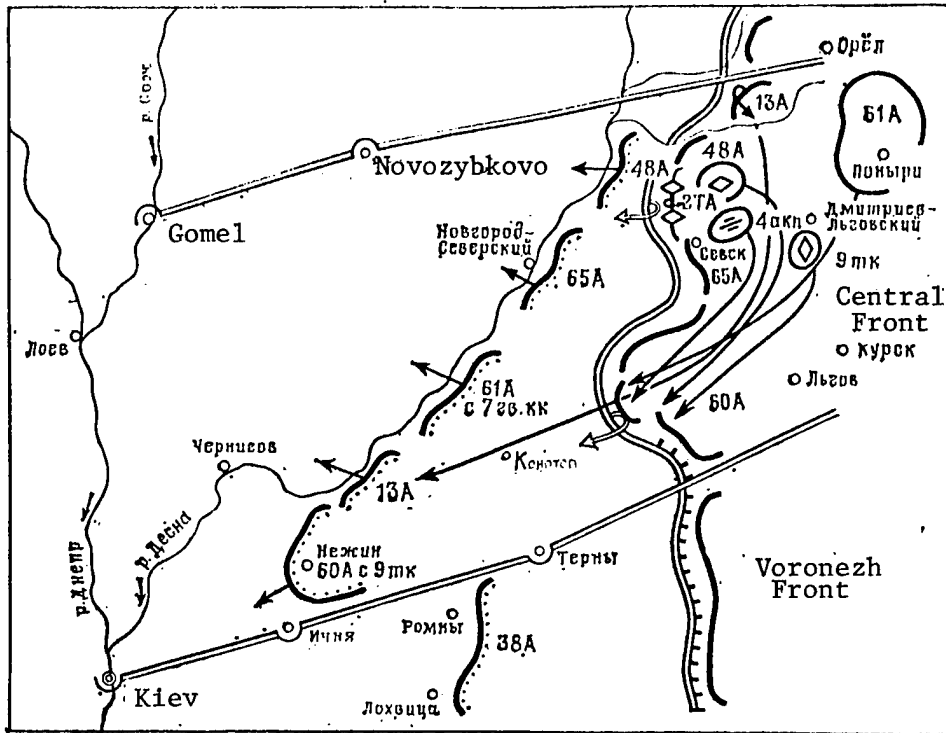
made it possible to develop the tactical breakthrough into an operational one at a rapid pace, to defeat the approaching enemy reserves piecemeal, to cross the rivers without a halt and successfully capture bridgeheads on them. Thus, the First Ukrainian Front in the course of the operation committed to battle 15 divisions from the second echelons of the armies, 16 divisions from the second echelon armies (21st and 59th Armies), the mobile group of the front including the 3d Guards and 4th Tank Armies and 5 separate corps (3 tank corps, a mechanized corps and a cavalry corps). The enemy over this same time brought into the area of the front up to 10 divisions (tank, motorized and infantry).(1) Regardless of their higher manning rate, the front nevertheless had an almost 3-fold superiority over the enemy in terms of the committed reserves. This, undoubtedly, had a very positive impact upon achieving a high rate of advance.

An important role in achieving a high rate of advance was played by the tank and mechanized troops from which the mobile groups of the fronts and armies were primarily organized. Their main missions were: the exploitation of the achieved tactical success into an operational one, maneuvering to encircle large enemy groupings, to defeat its reserves and achieve the ultimate aim of the operation quickly. Consequently, the development of the offensive in depth at a rapid pace to a significant degree depended upon the prompt commitment of the mobile groups to battle and their flexible maneuvering. They were committed, as a rule, after the breakthrough of the enemy tactical defensive zone by the all-arms armies. In truth, there were instances when the tank field forces and formations further broke through the tactical defenses, after which they rushed deep into enemy territory. This was the case, for example, with the IX and XI Tank Corps from the Third Belorussian Front and the 3d Guards and 4th Tank Armies of the First Ukrainian Front in the Vistula-Oder Operation. In the Belorussian Operation, on the second day of the offensive, the Third Belorussian Front committed to the breach its horse-mechanized group [KMG] in the area of the 5th Army, and on the following day the 5th Guards Tank Army was also committed in the same place. The commander of the front carried out a bold and decisive maneuver of the tank army, having shifted it to be committed in the area not of the 11th Guards Army, as had been planned, but in the area of the 5th Army.

Also of great interest is the experience of committing the 6th Tank Army of the Second Ukrainian Front to battle during the Iasi-Kishinev Operation. According to the plan of the front's commander, it was to be committed to the breach on the morning of the second day of the operation after the rifle formations had captured the line of the Bahlui River. But the results achieved by the 27th and 52d Armies created favorable conditions for committing the tank army on the first day of the operation. Its appearance was a complete surprise for the Nazis.

Of major importance in rapidly developing offensive operations was the **broad maneuvering of the men and weapons**. For example, in the Chernigov-Pripyat Offensive Operation, the troops of the Central Front on the main Novgorod-Severskiy Axis reduced the rate of advance due to the increased enemy resistance. At the same time, on the auxiliary (Konotop) sector, the 60th Army was successfully developing the offensive. Under the developing situation the commander of the front decided to shift the efforts of the

troops to this axis. Regrouped here were the 13th and 2d Tank Armies which were pulled out of battle and also subsequently the 61st Army which was turned over to the front from the Reserve of the Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] (see the diagram).(2) The carrying out of such a maneuver created good conditions for developing a rapid drive on Kiev. It is also important to point out that with the overall insignificant superiority in men and weapons for our troops over those of the enemy (on the left wing of the front the enemy had the advantage), the commander of the Central Front on the selected sector achieved a decisive superiority in forces, ensuring the rapid development of the operation.



The Shifting of a Front's Efforts to a New Axis

In the East Prussian Operation, the commander of the Third Belorussian Front, in the aim of exploiting the incipient success in the area of the 39th Army, shifted the I Tank Corps here and later the 11th Guards Army which was in the second echelon and had been previously assigned to be committed to battle in the area of the 5th Army. In this manner, a high rate of advance and the successful outcome of the operation were ensured.(3)

The experience of the front offensive operations indicates that the rate of advance dropped primarily when enemy resistance stiffened. This occurred chiefly due to the regroupings to the breakthrough areas and the bringing up of fresh reserves from the rear. For this reason the combating of enemy reserves was one of the most important conditions for achieving a high rate of advance. The enemy reserves were defeated in the concentration areas, in moving up to the front line, in taking up the defensive on intermediate lines

and in the deployment and launching of counterstrikes. Aviation and mobile troops played an active role in destroying them. These hostilities commenced with the isolating of the area of the operation being conducted from the approach of fresh enemy forces, the upsetting of the lines of communications and the routes of maneuvering the reserves. Aviation of the First Ukrainian Front played an important role in neutralizing and defeating the enemy reserves in the Lvov-Sandomierz Operation. The 2d Air Army, in launching massed strikes, made 1,848 aircraft sorties during the second half of the day of 15 July 1944.(4) As a result of this, the Nazi grouping suffered heavy losses and by the end of the day its offensive capabilities had been sharply reduced.

The mobile troops held a major role in combating enemy reserves. Most often they defeated the reserves when they were moving up to the front line. A meeting engagement was the most characteristic form of defeat. With the hurried taking up of intermediate defensive lines by enemy reserves, attacks were conducted and they were broken through without a stop. An example of a meeting engagement of a front's mobile group with enemy operational reserves would be the engagement of the 4th Tank Army of the First Ukrainian Front with the XXIV German Tank Corps in the area of Kielce during the Sandomierz-Silesian Operation (1945). As a result, all three divisions of the corps were completely routed.

One of the examples of the breakthrough by a front's mobile group of defenses hurriedly occupied by enemy reserves was the actions of the 2d Tank Army in breaking through the positions of enemy troops on the approaches to Praga (a Warsaw suburb) in the Lublin-Brest Operation of the First Belorussian Front. The 2d Tank Army was advancing on Warsaw with the mission of capturing the Praga area. In its zone on the near approaches to Praga, with the forces of approaching reserves the enemy hurriedly occupied the intermediate line of Siennica, Otwock. The breakthrough was carried out by tank corps with brief softening up on three independent sectors and this led to the crushing of the opposing Nazi forces and their piecemeal destruction.(5)

The experience of the front offensive operations shows that a **continuous offensive** was of great importance in achieving a high rate of advance as this deprived the enemy of a breathing space needed for bringing the troops to order, carrying out regroupings and moving up reserves from the interior.

In the aim of maintaining continuity and increasing the rate of advance, combat operations in the course of these operations did not halt at night. Here they were conducted not only by subunits and units but also often by formations. The missions were given ahead of time to the troops which were to fight at night, with the granting of the necessary time, including daylight, for organizing nighttime combat, for training and resting the personnel. Specific objectives to be captured at night as well as lines to be reached by dawn were set for the units and subunits. The unit commanders endeavored to carry out, as a rule, the combat mission set for the night in a single battle formation. Second echelons (often the main forces) were committed to battle most often for exploiting the success at dawn. Thus, in the Iasi-Kishinev Operation, the special group of the Third Ukrainian Front, in being comprised basically of the 83d and 225th Separate Brigades of naval infantry and a

separate motorcycle regiment, during the night of 22 August 1944, without artillery softening up, suddenly crossed the Dniester Estuary. The shock detachments (forward groups) by morning had captured a bridgehead on its western bank up to 4 km wide along the front and 2-3 km in depth, ensuring the landing of the main forces of the party at dawn.(6)

Another example might be the fighting of the 8th Guards Army in the Lublin-Brest Operation during the night of 19 July 1944. Having commenced the offensive in the morning of 18 July, the 88th Rifle Division during the day, together with other formations, had broken through the main enemy defensive zone and by the end of the day had reached the second zone. The commander of the division decided to break through this zone during the night of 19 July. By 2030 hours, after a 10-minute intense shelling, by committing the second echelons of the regiments, the division had crushed the enemy resistance. By 0500 hours, the attacking subunits had advanced 4 km deep into the enemy defenses. At dawn, the main forces of the division joined battle and they completed the breakthrough of the tactical defensive zone.

In the Kiev Operation (November 1943), the 3d Guards Tank Army of the Voronezh Front entered battle during the night of 4 November. The tanks went into the attack with headlights on and sirens working, conducting intense fire from the guns and machine guns. Here the attacks combined with bold maneuvering stunned the enemy which began a hurried retreat. By the morning of 5 November, the army's formations had cut the Kiev--Zhitomir Highway, having established good conditions for liberating the capital of the Ukraine.(7)

The crossing of rivers on a broad front without a halt helped to achieve a high rate of advance. The advancing troops crossed them, as a rule, with forward detachments which captured bridgeheads. With the approach of the main forces of the first echelon divisions, the bridgeheads were widened and the offensive resumed with the crossing of the army second echelons.

In the Belorussian, Iasi-Kishinev and Vistula-Oder Operations, the troops of the front demonstrated an example of conducting offensive operations with the crossing of several rivers without any substantial decline in the rate of advance. At the same time, as experience was to show, the crossing of water obstacles by large formations was impossible without a sufficient amount of crossing and pontoon-bridge equipment.

Close cooperation of the men and weapons participating in the operation was one of the most important conditions for successfully carrying out the tasks of defeating the enemy and conducting a rapid offensive operation. The bases for this were established when the plan was adopted. The commander of a front determined the missions and methods of actions for the all-arms field forces and formations, the units and formations of branches of troops in breaking through the enemy tactical defensive zone, in committing the mobile groups to the breach and in their operations in the operational depth, the crossing of water obstacles, the committing of the second echelons to battle, and the repelling of counterstrikes to the depth of the immediate tasks of the armies. Clear cooperation between the all-arms, tank and air armies, the units of the branches of troops was achieved by a mutual knowledge of the situation, by personal contact among the commanders and staff officers, by the combined

placement of observation (command) posts for the commanders of the all-arms, artillery, tank and air units and formations as well as by constantly operating communications.

A major factor in achieving a high rate of advance and successfully conducting the operations was **firm and continuous command and control**. This was achieved by the anticipating of the development of the operation on the part of the commanders and the staffs; by their knowledge of the situation at each stage and by prompt response to changes in the situation; by the strengthened centralization of command and control. The operational staffs provided for everything down to the last detail which concerned the actions of the troops, including: the use of artillery, aviation, armored troops and the various types of reserves; careful organization of cooperation among the troops and the maintaining of this in the course of the operation; greater inspection and checking work in the troops using the officers from superior staffs; the bringing of command posts closer to the troops and their regular shifting.

As the rate of advance increased in an offensive, the armies and fronts widely made it a practice of sending out operational command groups with radios to the troops. Their functions were extremely diverse. They maintained contact with the troops and the staffs, they received reports and transmitted the orders of the superior command.

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], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 4, 1959, pp 108-109, 133-134, 154, 159-160.
2. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 1, 1976, pp 14-15.
3. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 10, 1979, p 101.
4. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu opyta voyny" [Collection of Materials on Studying the Experience of the War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 22, 1946, p 46.
5. A. I. Radziyevskiy, "Tankovyy udar" [Tank Attack] Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 147.
6. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1977, pp 207-209.
7. See: "Sovetskiye tankovyye voyska 1941-1945" [Soviet Tank Troops in 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1973, p 159.

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AIRBORNE ASSAULT FORCES IN FRONT OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 85 (signed to press 9 Oct 85) pp 14-21

[Article by Army Gen D. S. Sukhorukov]

[Text] The theory of employing airborne assault forces arose in the Soviet Armed Forces in the 1930's and was a component part of the general theory of a deep offensive operation. Large airborne assault groups were to be dropped in the operational depth of the enemy defenses in the aim of seizing important objectives and lines and supporting the successful offensive by the mobile groups of a front or army.

Prior to 1941, the Airborne Forces (VDV) of the Soviet Army were few in number and there were not enough military transport planes to drop them in the enemy rear. The party and government decided to initiate immediate measures to increase the size and improve the organization of this mobile branch of troops. In April 1941, five airborne corps (I, II, III, IV and V) were established including more than 10,000 men in each.(1) These were established on the basis of the then existing airborne brigades. In organizational terms, each corps consisted of three airborne brigades, a battalion of light tanks, an artillery battalion and subunits of special troops.(2) During this same period, work was carried out intensely on improving the design of the air transports used for dropping the troops as well as parachute equipment for dropping group weapons on parachutes. Unfortunately, it was impossible to fully complete this work by the start of the Great Patriotic War. By the time of the attack by Nazi Germany on our nation, the airborne corps were in the stage of formation and development. Nor was it possible to improve the transport aviation in accord with the designated plan and because of this its capabilities for landing troops were not sufficiently high.

The difficult situation which developed on the Soviet-German Front during the first days of the war forced the Soviet Command to use the airborne corps as ordinary rifle formations. In truth, in the course of the defensive engagements which occurred in the summer and autumn of 1941, small tactical and reconnaissance-sabotage landing forces were employed. They were dropped in the regions of Bobruysk, Kiev, Odessa, on the Kerch Peninsula and on certain other sectors of the front. A larger assault force was landed at Orel, where, at the beginning of October 1941, a very difficult situation had

arisen. The forward formations of the Nazi 2d Tank Group had reached the city, by the end of 3 October they had captured it and were rushing toward Moscow along the Orel-Tula Highway. It was essential at any price to check the enemy before the reserve formations of Soviet troops had been brought up. The success in carrying out this mission depended largely upon quick actions. For this reason its execution was entrusted to the V Airborne Corps.

At 0510 hours on 3 October, the corps commander, Col S. S. Guryev, received his battle order. At 0700 hours, they began moving the first units of the formation to the area of Optukha (10 km to the northeast of Orel).(3) By the end of 4 October, the 10th Airborne Brigade (commander, Col S. N. Kireyev) and the 201st Airborne Brigade (commander, Lt Col S. M. Kovalev) were dropped here. The airborne forces securely held the captured lines until they could be reached by formations of the I Guards Rifle Corps with the 4th and 11th Tank Brigades which had been attached to it. By joint actions the enemy was held in the area of Orel and Mtsensk and suffered significant losses.

The designated example was not characteristic for the use of airborne assault forces during the years of the war. For front offensive operations, most typical were operational and operational-tactical assault forces. These were landed in the aim of assisting the troops in achieving a higher rate of advance, for providing them with help in encircling and destroying enemy groupings, and for capturing bridgeheads on major water obstacles as well as important objectives in the enemy rear.

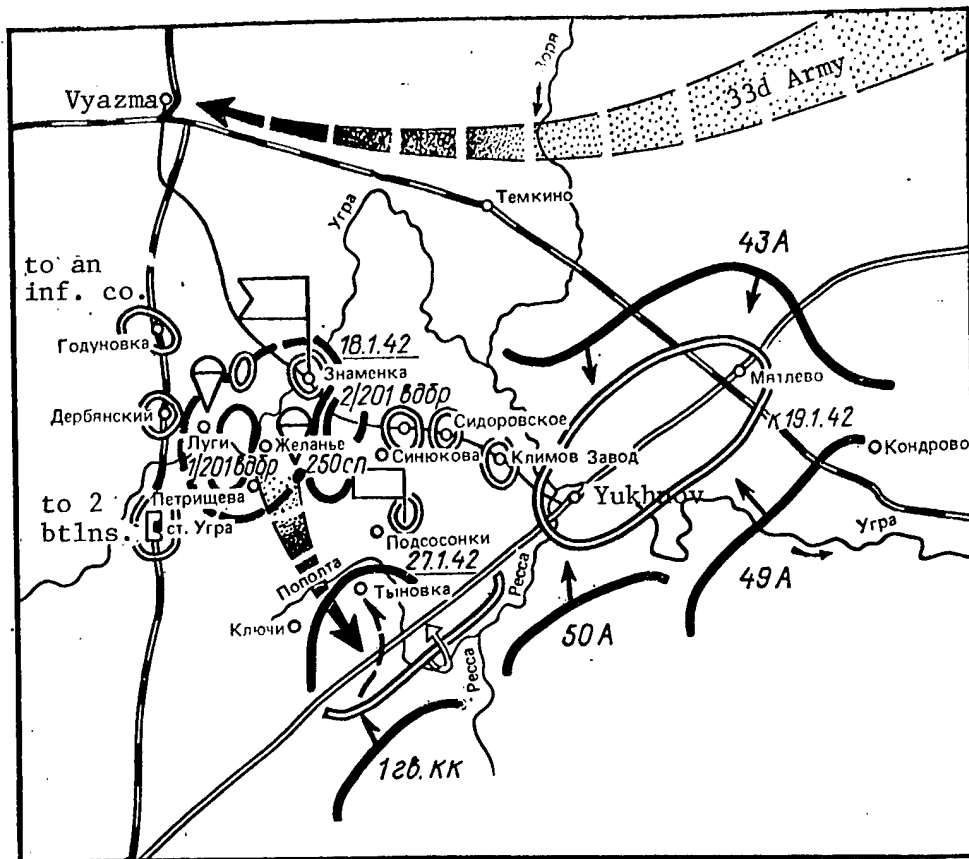
Operational-tactical and operational-assault forces were employed for the first time in the concluding stage of the Battle of Moscow in the Vyazma Operation, with the mission of cutting the Vyazma--Smolensk Railroad and Highway and ensuring the closing of the ring around the Vyazma Nazi grouping by troops of the Kalinin and Western Fronts.

Participating in the airborne operation were the IV Airborne Corps, the 202d Airborne Brigade of the V Airborne Corps and the 250th Rifle Regiment of the Western Front trained for landing in the enemy rear. The assault force was to be dropped in the region of Ozerechen, to the southwest of Vyazma.(4)

The plan for the airborne operation was worked out by the command and staffs of the Airborne Troops and Air Forces. The commander of the airborne troops was directly in charge of the preparation of the troops for the landing. Responsibility for the prompt and precise dropping of the assault force rested on the Air Forces' commander. The commander of the Western Front, Army Gen G. K. Zhukov, drew up the combat mission for the assault force and its formations. He also directed the assault force in the course of the fighting in the enemy rear.

On 21 January 1942, they planned to begin landing the IV Air Corps, however, due to the delay of its formations in reaching the jump-off area for the landing (airfields in the Kaluga area), its start was put off until 27 January. For this reason, in order to facilitate and accelerate the advance of the formations of the 33d Army and the I Guards Cavalry Corps on the Vyazma Axis, the commander of the front decided to first drop an assault force in the Yukhnov area consisting of the 250th Rifle Regiment and a portion

of the forces from the 201st Airborne Brigade with the mission of cutting the lines of communications over which the enemy Yukhnov grouping was supplied.



Airborne Assault Force to the Southeast of Vyazma (January 1942)

The landing of the assault force commenced during the night of 18 January. By the end of 20 January, the subunits of the 201st Airborne Brigade led by the commander of the 1st Battalion, Capt A. I. Surzhik, had prepared a landing area in the Zhelanye area and organized the receiving of aircraft with subunits of the 250th Rifle Regiment. As a total from 18 through 22 January, some 1,643 men were landed.

In carrying out the set mission, the assault force captured a number of population points to the southeast of Vyazma and cut the Yekhnov--Vyazma Highway in the region of Zamoshye and Murashovka and knocked out several sections of the Vyazma--Kirov Railroad. On 28 January, a detachment of landing troops headed by Capt I. A. Surzhik began moving into the combat area of the I Guards Cavalry Corps, and on 30 January, the 250th Rifle Regiment also linked up with the cavalry troops. Subsequently, until the conclusion of the airborne operation, the assault forces fought together with the cavalrymen.

Characteristically, in the combat practices of the Soviet VVV, this was the first parachute assault force. As the experience of the war was to show, such a type of assault required careful preparations.

The IV Airborne Corps by the end of 26 January 1942 had completed its preparations and was concentrated in the jump-off area for the landing at airfields located not far from Kaluga, some 30-40 km from the front line. Such a significant bringing of the jump-off area close to the front line was due to the fact that only 40 PS-84 transports and 22 (instead of the 25 planned) TB-3 aircraft had been assigned for dropping the force. For this reason, in order to make maximum use of their capabilities, the shallowest landing depth was set. The main forces of the party were to be dropped at night. Only the forward detachment was to be landed during the day of 27 January.

By the start of the drop of the IV Airborne Corps, the rifle formations from the 39th and 29th Armies of the Kalinin Front had surrounded the Olenin enemy grouping and its XI Cavalry Corps was moving forward rapidly from the north toward Vyazma. Troops from the 43d, 49th and 50th Armies of the Western Front by hard fighting had tied down the enemy Yukhnov grouping and this made it possible for its 33d Army to the north of Yukhnov and the I Guards Cavalry Corps to the south of this city to break through into the enemy rear and develop the strike on Vyazma.(5) "The absence of a solid front gave us grounds to feel that on this sector the Germans did not have sufficient forces to securely defend Vyazma. For this reason, the decision was taken: while the enemy was still bringing up its reserves, to capture Vyazma without a halt as with the fall of this city the entire Vyazma enemy grouping would be in an exceptionally difficult situation."(6)

The formations of the corps (commander, Maj Gen A. F. Levashov) were given the following missions: the 8th Airborne Brigade was to capture the line of Rebrovo, Gridino, Berezniki and prevent the retreat of the Nazis from the Vyazma area along the Vyazma--Smolensk and Vyazma--Dorogobuzh roads; the 9th Airborne Brigade, in holding the line of Goryanovo, Ivaniki, Popovo, was to prevent the moving up of reserves from the west; the 214th Airborne Brigade and a separate artillery battalion from the corps were to be concentrated in the area of Vekhotskoye, Pleshkovo, Uvarovo ready to carry out counterattacks and strengthen the defenses of the 8th and 9th Airborne Brigades.

Prior to the start of the dropping of the force, on the corps--brigade level all questions related to the landing had been coordinated with the commanders of the air transport units. Upon the decision of the corps commander, the 8th Airborne Brigade was the first to be dropped. The 2d Airborne Battalion (commander, Maj M. Ya. Karnaukhov) was to fight as its forward detachment. It was dropped with the mission of selecting and preparing a landing area for the brigade's main forces. Due to the poor orientation of the flight personnel, the battalion was dropped in the region of the population point of Tabora instead of Ozerechen, that is, 20 km to the south of the planned drop area. The battalion was slow to assemble. By the morning of 28 January, only 478 men out of the 648 dropped had assembled. A large portion of the weapons, ammunition, food and other types of military property could not be found. Regardless of this as well as the lack of contact with the brigade command,

the battalion reached the Ozerechen area and prepared an area for receiving the main forces of the brigade the dropping of which commenced on the night of 28 January and lasted until 1 February 1942. As a total 2,497 men, 120 light machine guns, 72 antitank guns, 20 82-mm mortars, ammunition for them and other military cargo were landed. Subsequently, due to the shortage of air transport and bad weather conditions, the landing of the corps was broken off.(7)

The landed units of the 8th Airborne Brigade linked up with the I Guards Cavalry Corps and fought along with it.

Weakened by long fighting the Soviet troops on the western sector began to lose their offensive capability. Having assigned from its reserve to the Kalinin Front a guards rifle corps, 7 rifle divisions and 4 air regiments, and to the Western Front a guards rifle corps, 3 rifle divisions, 2 airborne brigades of the IV Airborne Corps, as well as other men and weapons, Hq SHC in its directive of 16 February 1942 demanded that the High Command of the Western Sector mobilize all the forces for completing the defeat of the Army Group Center. In following the instructions of Headquarters, the commander-in-chief of the Western Sector decided to initially defeat the Olenin and Yukhnov enemy groupings and then by combined efforts of both fronts to complete the defeat of the enemy's main grouping in the region of Rzhev and Vyazma.(8)

For assisting the troops of the Western Front in defeating the Yukhnov grouping, the Soviet Command decided to land the 9th and 214th Airborne Brigades of the IV Airborne Corps with reinforcements in an area to the west of Yukhnov. After landing in the area of Zhelanye, Velikopolye, Shumshin, the assault force was to attack the enemy defenses from the rear in the general direction of Klyuchi, Tynovka, Leonovo (25-30 km to the southwest of Yukhnov) and link up with troops from the 50th Army of the Western Front advancing from an area to the north of Mosalsk. The link-up of the assault force with the 50th Army not only provided an opportunity to complete the encirclement of the Yukhnov enemy grouping but also opened the way for the subsequent bringing of our troops into the combat area of the 33d Army, the I Guards Cavalry Corps and the 8th Airborne Brigade which were heavily engaged away from the main forces of the front in the area to the south and southwest of Vyazma.

The jump-off area for the landing of the corps included airfields in the Moscow area and these were located not far from the permanent positions of the formations and units involved in the assault force. For landing the personnel and the weapons, some 72 aircraft were assigned. In the aim of achieving an accurate landing of the assault force, provision was made to first drop the support groups which were equipped with guidance radios.

The first to drop during the night of 16 February was the 4th Battalion which had not been landed previously from the 8th Airborne Brigade. The dropping of the 9th and 214th Airborne Brigades was carried out from 17 through 24 February also during the night. Some 612 aircraft sorties were made as a total, and 7,373 men and 1,525 packs with weapons, ammunition, food and various supplies were dropped.(9)

After landing the units of the main forces from the IV Airborne Corps provided great aid to the troops of the 49th army of the Western Front in defeating the enemy Yukhnov grouping and liberating the town of Yukhnov, however they did not succeed in linking up with the 50th Army. On 20 April, the troops of the Western and Kalinin Fronts, in accord with the plans of Hq SHC, went over to the defensive. The airborne units together with the cavalry of Gen P. A. Belov and the partisans, continued to fight in the enemy rear and launch tangible strikes against the enemy, destroying personnel and combat equipment. During the night of 26 May 1942, they broke through the perimeter of encirclement and began to raid the enemy rears. In skillfully bypassing major enemy groupings and destroying small ones on the way, the airborne troops and cavalry on 24 June linked up with the troops of the 10th Army of the Western Front to the north of the town of Kirov in Kaluga Oblast.(10)

For 149 days the airborne troops had fought courageously and heroically in the enemy rear. They had liberated around 200 population points from the Nazi invaders, they had tied down significant enemy forces and destroyed up to 15,000 enemy soldiers and officers and a great deal of military equipment.

The aim of the Vyazma Airborne Operation was not fully achieved but the airborne forces which landed in it played a positive role in defeating the Nazi troops around Moscow. However, the shortage of transport aircraft led to the great drawing out of the landing of the troops over time and made it possible for the enemy to bring up men and weapons to the paratrooper landing areas and attack the paratroopers at the moment of their landing and assembly. For this same reason, guns and mortars were not landed in the enemy rear, although the plan for the operation envisaged their moving by air.

Another negative factor was the insufficient training of the crews of the aviation assigned for the landing to carry out the set mission under difficult conditions, particularly at nighttime. Poor navigation and technical support led to mistakes in leading the aircraft to the landing area and influenced the reliability of recognizing the areas for the landing of the force.

Significant shortcomings also occurred in organizing the tactical air support for the assault forces. Nor was cooperation between the assault forces and the troops advancing from the front properly established. The combat of the assault forces was not supported by the artillery of the field forces and formations even if the advancing troops of the front were only an insignificant distance away from the assault force.

In the autumn of 1943, the Dnieper Airborne Operation was carried out. This was conducted in the aim of assisting the troops of the Voronezh Front in crossing the Dnieper in September 1943.

From 19 September, the Nazi resistance in the front's area had grown noticeably weaker and the rate of advance of the troops on its right wing and center increased sharply. During the night of 22 September, Soviet troops reached the Dnieper and captured small bridgeheads on its right bank in the regions of Velikiy Bukrin and Rzhishchev. However, the enemy endeavored to bring up reserves and throw the Soviet troop units which had crossed over back from the bridgeheads. A particularly difficult situation arose in the area of

way and increased the speed and altitude for the dropping of the paratroopers. This led to the scattering of the assault force over a large area. Instead of an area of 10 x 15 km, the assault troops were dropped on an area of almost 30 x 90 km and the paratrooper subunits (battalions, companies and platoons) were broken up as fighting units. The assault troops were forced to fight individually or in small groups. And although they formed stronger groups and detachments as they assembled, they continued to fight in isolation, without overall leadership. Contact with the dropped brigades was lost. The measures initiated by the staff of the front and the VDV Staff did not produce any positive results and further dropping of assault troops was halted.

During the first days of October, the commander of the 5th Airborne Brigade, Lt Col P. M. Sidorchuk, succeeded in bringing together several separated groups of assault troops and establish contact with the staff of the front and the VDV Staff. In cooperating with the partisans, the assault troops conducted active reconnaissance and sabotage operations in the enemy rear, they attacked enemy garrisons, destroyed the Nazi lines of communications, hit their staffs and annihilated personnel, combat equipment and weapons. As a total over the 52 days of fighting, they destroyed more than 4,000 enemy soldiers and officers, they knocked out a large amount of combat equipment and tied down a portion of the forces of the 72d, 112th and 167th Infantry Divisions and the 3d, 7th and 19th Tank Divisions, thereby making it easier for our troops to broaden the captured bridgeheads on the Dnieper in the Bukrin Bend.

In the concluding stage of the airborne operation the paratroopers by attacking from the rear aided the formations of the 52d Army of the Second Ukrainian Front in crossing the Dnieper in the region of Cherkassy. Subsequently, they were involved in defeating the Kanev--Cherkassy Nazi troop grouping.

The experience of using airborne assault forces in the war against Nazi Germany was widely employed by Soviet Troops in defeating the Kwantung Army of imperialist Japan. In the course of the fighting, more than 20 airborne assault forces were employed as a total, involving more than 5,000 men. Landing troops were landed basically in the aim of rapidly capturing the main cities on enemy territory, preventing the destruction of important installations, capturing Japanese lines of communications for preventing the pullback of their troops, the withdrawal of military equipment, industrial equipment, as well as supplies and food.

Careful reconnaissance preceded the landing of the assault forces. The regions and airfields designated for this were photographed ahead of time by air scouts. Air representatives landed with the assault forces for providing cooperation between aviation and the assault force. All airborne assault forces landed in the course of the Manchurian Operation carried out the missions set for them completely and with great effectiveness. The Great Patriotic War was a severe testing of the theory of employing airborne assault forces in front offensive operations as it had been elaborated in the prewar years. The war confirmed the correctness of the views of Soviet operational art on their role, the significance, principles of employment and nature of

combat in the enemy rear. The airborne troops gained significant experience in landing in the enemy rear and fighting there against a strong enemy.

A study of the experience of the Great Patriotic War makes it possible to draw the following conclusions. In the first place, airborne assault forces should be employed for carrying out only those tasks in the enemy rear which cannot be carried out by any other combat forces and means. Secondly, the success of carrying out an airborne operation depends upon the carefulness of its planning and preparation, since it is virtually impossible to alter anything after it has started. The assault forces can be landed in any period of an offensive operation, but the time of their landing must always be most carefully coordinated with the planned time for the advancing troops to reach the assault force.

Thirdly, the experience of the war showed that the reliability and flexibility of command and control over the men and weapons participating in an airborne operation increased when this was the prerogative of one command level. For the front offensive operations, such a level undoubtedly was the commander of the front.

Present-day conditions of employing airborne assault forces in offensive operations will differ largely from the previous ones. However, a thorough consideration of the experience of the Great Patriotic War will provide inestimable aid to the assault forces in raising the combat readiness of the airborne troops to a qualitatively new and higher level.

FOOTNOTES

1. TsGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], folio 71, inv. 301224, file 1, sheets 10-15, 98, 203.
2. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1974, p 422.
3. TsGASA, folio 875, inv. 210578, file 1, sheet 1.
4. See: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 4, 1975, p 307.
5. See: Ibid., pp 308-309.
6. G. K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Remembrances and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 1969, p 373.
7. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 4, p 309.
8. Ibid., pp 311-312.
9. TsAMO [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 35, inv. 11290, file 146, sheets 32, 35.
10. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 2, 1976, p 446.

11. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 7, 1976, pp 212-213.

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NAVAL FORCES

ORGANIZATION OF COMBAT SUPPORT FOR SUBMARINES IN WORLD WAR II

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 85 pp 22-28

[Article by Flt Adm V. N. Chernavin, chief of the Navy High Staff]

[Text] During the years of the Great Patriotic War, submarines represented a serious threat to enemy sea shipments. On the Baltic, their active operations restricted the delivery of Swedish ore to Germany as well as German troops to the Baltic. In the North, the subs prevented the shipping of nickel from Petsamo and Kirkenes and the moving of troops to the Arctic. The Black Sea submariners actually interdicted the movement of personnel and oil products from Romania to the enemy-held ports in the southern part of our country. All of this forced the enemy to constantly improve antisubmarine warfare (ASW) while the Command of the Soviet Navy undertook the appropriate measures to support combat operations by the submarines.

The comparatively small size of the marine theaters and the relatively shallow depths in the combat areas favored the enemy's organization of shipping defenses and made it possible to utilize for this not only surface vessels, including the smallest ones, but also aviation, mines, nets as well as other positional and shore facilities. For this reason the destruction of enemy vessels and ships by submarines required all-round support for the security of the latter.

In turn, the enemy further strengthened its antisubmarine defenses by sending out a significant number of ships and aircraft, covering its sea lanes with minefields and strengthening the escorts for convoys. Regardless of this, the losses of enemy submarines, particularly toward the end of the war, had declined. Such a situation was achieved due to the improved skill of the submariners and to the better organization of command and combat support. For example, on the Baltic in 1942, the enemy ASW ships destroyed only one of our subs.(1)

One of the factors which contributed to the success of the Soviet submarines was the constant development and improvement of support for submarine combat operations and reconnaissance was the most important type of this support in all stages of submarine employment on enemy sea lanes (deployment, the conducting of combat and the return to base).

The Soviet submarines from the period of the Great Patriotic War (particularly the K class of series XIV, L of series VIII and S of series IX bis) had good combat qualities. However, inherent to all of them was limited search capability. In this context the importance of operational and tactical reconnaissance increased as this most determined the methods for the combat employment of the subs and the results of their combat.

The Navy Command in the course of the war repeatedly drew attention of the fleet commanders to the need of conducting continuous reconnaissance generally and in the interests of submarine operations particularly. One of the orders of the people's commissar of the Navy, for example, demanded "a decisive improvement in reconnaissance...and the establishing of the compulsory rule of the early providing of the submarines with reliable data on the enemy."(2)

Accurate information on enemy minelayings was of great importance in ensuring the safety and effectiveness of submarine operations. Reconnaissance of the sea lanes also disclosed the points of origin and destination of enemy convoys and individual transports, the time of their setting to sea and route, the degree of communications traffic as well as the composition and tactics of the escort forces. For these purposes the fleets used various forces including aviation, submarines and surface vessels, shore radio intercept stations and visual observation posts as well as reconnaissance groups landed on the enemy shore.

Air reconnaissance was considered to be the most important type. However, at the outset of the war, its operations were limited as the basic forces of naval operation were involved in supporting the actions of the ground forces. Moreover, the activity and effectiveness of air reconnaissance over the sea lanes could not help but be influenced by the fact that up to mid-1943, the enemy had superiority in aircraft. Often air reconnaissance was carried out in parallel with other missions. The result of such actions was insignificant. Thus, in 1941, in the Northern Fleet only around 10 percent of the detected enemy ships and vessels was due to air reconnaissance. The 118th Air Reconnaissance Regiment which basically carried out this mission had obsolete aircraft of the MBR-2 and GST type. Air reconnaissance of the enemy sea lanes under these conditions was carried out irregularly and basically in the area of Varangerfjord. Its effectiveness was slight and to a certain degree this was compensated for by information which was secured by the submarines themselves. They collected the most reliable data on the movement of enemy convoys and transports, the mine situation in the areas of the sea lanes and the operational equipping of the theater.

Observations of vessel movements and the situation at sea was carried out visually and with the aid of direction-listening systems. Beginning in 1943, the submarines armed with sonars were in essence the only branch of naval forces which conducted reconnaissance on the enemy defensive minefields. The results of their observations were most reliable, as they remained for a long time in the areas of active sea movements. In the course of the war, the submarines mastered the photographing of detected objects through the periscope and due to this the information secured by them became even more reliable.

In a majority of instances submarines conducted reconnaissance also in the course of carrying out combat missions. At times, special subs were sent out to conduct reconnaissance at sea. Thus, at the end of 1941, submarines from the Black Sea Fleet reconnoitered the shores of the Crimea and in the first half of 1942, also the area of the Bosphorus Straits.

As the situation changed on the Soviet-German Front and as naval aviation was released from carrying out missions in the interests of the ground forces, air reconnaissance began to be carried out systematically and with large forces. By this time the reconnaissance aviation was now equipped with the most modern aircraft and the personnel had gained rich combat experience.

As a rule, in the interests of air reconnaissance, the enemy sea lanes were divided up into areas which were swept from the air at least twice a day. Upon detecting convoys or individual transports, the reconnaissance aircraft immediately reported this to the fleet. The information obtained could be received immediately not only by the command post on shore but also by submarines in the combat areas using the periscope antennas (VAN-PZ) which began to be received in 1943. Ongoing observation was established over the detected convoy or individual transport when necessary and this provided the staff of the fleet or the submarine brigade with the possibility of directing submarines and other attack forces to the enemy.

A weak point in air reconnaissance was the fact that in darkness and under bad weather conditions, its effectiveness and intensity declined sharply. Only in the second half of 1944, in line with the arming of the aircraft with radars, was this shortcoming partially eliminated.

Radio intelligence also played an important role in the system of reconnoitering the enemy sea lanes. For example, in the Black Sea Fleet with the outbreak of war, a network of shore stations was organized and this included a total of 32 radio listening posts.(3) Using these it was possible to determine the fact and the time of the setting to sea of the enemy convoys and ships, their place in the move and constantly obtain valuable information on the situation at sea as a whole. In the course of the war, fleet radio reconnaissance had more than 1,400 sightings of enemy convoys and individual transports.(4) However, only the integrated use of the data from the various types of reconnaissance provided an assessment of the situation which was most complete and closest to the actual state, and the fleet commands endeavored to use this.

One of the most important types of support for submarine operations was **antimine defense**. On all seas where military operations were conducted, there was a serious mine threat. This was most complex in the Baltic, particularly in the Gulf of Finland, where the belligerents had set out around 50,000 mines and antisweep mines. As a total in this theater, over 80,000 mines had been set out.(5)

In the North, in addition to crossing offensive enemy minefields, our submarines, from 1942, were forced to cross powerful defensive minefields which covered the entire length of the sea lanes off the Norwegian coast. In

the Black Sea, the submarines also had to operate on coastal enemy sea lanes running over shallow water, where an increased mine danger existed.

For reducing the mine danger in the fleets, a whole range of operational-tactical, organizational, technical and other measures was carried out. The questions of antimine defense were reflected in specially elaborated documents for each combat cruise of the submarines. Considering the mine situation in the theater, a voyage planning table was drawn up and this gave the courses and conditions for the movement of the subs. Sometimes an addition was appended to the planning table which gave detailed recommendations on the deployment of the sub to battle stations. Thus, the Staff of the Baltic Fleet worked out an additional route for the movement of escort ships accompanying submarines on the leg Kronshtadt--Lavensari Island.(6)

The setting to sea of the submarines from the bases for actions on enemy sea lanes was supported by a preliminary monitoring sweep or by a direct escort behind the sweeps. The routes for deployment were chosen considering the assumed mine situation in the theater and the experience of the previous cruises. Escorting behind the sweeps was carried out, as a rule, in daylight and this made it easier for the submarines traveling on the surface to keep in formation and avoid spotted mines.

In areas where it was impossible to organize escorting behind the sweeps, the submarines traveled independently in darkness on the surface. Thus, the move from Leningrad to Kronshtadt was carried out at night on the surface due to the fact that the only narrow channel was located in a shallow area within the range of enemy artillery shelling and air operations. The Nazi Command constantly endeavored to seal the subs in Leningrad by setting influence mines in this channel. However, the well organized antimine observation, the effective combating of the set mines and the reduction in the physical fields of the submarines nullified the enemy's efforts. Over the entire war on this most complicated leg just 2 percent of the escorted submarines was lost. In 1942, 41 escorts with submarines traveled without losses on the Kronshtadt--Lavensari Island leg.(7)

Considering the ever-increasing mine danger directly off our coast, the people's commissar of the Navy, in an order of 25 May 1942, demanded a strengthening of antimine defenses and the organizing in the fleets of dependable observation of the enemy minelayings. The numerous posts played a major role in carrying out this mission and they conducted around-the-clock antimine observation. With the aid of the PPN [antimine observation post], the sites of minelaying were spotted and this facilitated minesweeper operations. Under the conditions of the increased mine danger, a great responsibility rested on the minesweepers. In 1942 alone, the high-speed minesweepers had to make 173 trips for supporting the moves of submarines on the Baltic.(8)

In the interests of antimine defense of the submarines the fleets, from the very outset of the war, organized reconnaissance minesweeping and this was carried out most frequently on the submarine deployment routes. In 1941, after the mine situation in the Gulf of Finland had become more complex, the fleet command began designating submarine deployment routes in areas with

greater depths. Thus, on 4 August, five high-speed minesweepers under the command of Capt 3d Rank P. T. Rezvantsev carried out a reconnaissance minesweeping of the deep-water channel in the mouth of the Gulf of Finland through which 17 submarines then passed without losses.(9)

Reconnaissance minesweeping proved effective subsequently. On legs of the deployment routes and directly on station the submarines crossed minefields independently.

In the fleets, in order to minimize losses from mine weapons, various methods of crossing minefields were worked out and improved. In the Northern Theater, where basically anchored contact and antenna-type mines were laid, the minefields were crossed at maximum possible diving depths. Here the courses of the submarines were to run perpendicular to the line of the mines. In poor visibility and darkness, the minefields were to be crossed on the surface at high tide. Under the conditions of the shallow depths of the Gulf of Finland and the threat of hitting influence bottom mines, the submarines traveled at diving depths of at least 15 m from the bottom. They recharged their batteries during a move in areas where, according to reconnaissance data, the mine danger and the danger from enemy ASW ships was the least.

In line with the equipping of the submarines with more advanced communications and navigation equipment during the war, new methods for using them were worked out and measures planned making it possible to maximally reduce the mine danger. In the Northern Fleet, with the use of the "hanging screen" method in mid-1944, the submarines were given positions beyond the outer edge of the minefields. They appeared in an area of a mine danger only in coming into contact with an enemy convoy. Due to this the mine danger was significantly reduced.

Among the technical measures for antimine support of the submarines were: the demagnetizing of their hulls, reducing noise, installing sonars and design changes in the submarines.

Hulls were demagnetized in all fleets from the very outset of the war, as soon as it became known that the enemy was using mines with a magnetic fuze. This process was labor-intensive and protracted. But, in 1942, Prof A. P. Aleksandrov, now president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, developed a method of coilless demagnetizing which was used with particular success for reducing the magnetic field of submarines. With the aid of scientists the fleets established 25 coilless demagnetizing stations.(10) On the Baltic, before a cruise the submarines were demagnetized twice: the first time in Leningrad and the second in Kronshtadt. The necessity of a repeat demagnetizing was caused by the fact that the submarines were not fully loaded in the aim of reducing draft in moving from Leningrad to Kronshtadt. For monitoring the magnetic field of submarines the fleets also set up special testing ranges and due to this the probability of the exploding of submarines on influence mines was significantly reduced.

Sonars were also used in the aim of direct detection of enemy mines. In 1942, our submarines began to be armed with the Drakon-129 sonars which were used very successfully for detecting mines and in crossing minefields. For defense

against contact and antenna-type mines, a portion of the submarines was equipped with very simple mine-deflecting devices.

The experience of the war showed the great danger of the mine threat. Regardless of the measures taken by the fleet commands, submarines suffered the highest losses. Almost 58 percent of their total losses occurred from striking mines.(11) As experience was gained and as the devices and organization of combating the mines were improved, submarine losses declined year by year. In 1941, these were 24.4 percent; in 1943, 6.7 percent; and in 1944, 1.1 percent.(12)

In the system of combat support for the submarines, an important place was held by their **antisub and air defenses**. The necessity of such defense was caused by the fact that the Nazi Command even during the most intense periods of the so-called "Battle for the Atlantic," kept in the seas adjacent to Soviet territory a significant submarine grouping the size of which increased every year. Thus, by the start of the war the enemy had 6 submarines in the Northern Theater, 21 in 1943, 34 in 1944 and 65 in 1945.(13) These were used both for disrupting the sea lanes as well as for combating Soviet submarines, primarily upon leaving the bases. As for the air threat, this remained the main one for our fleet during the entire war.

In the battle stations and in moving, the questions of air and antisub defense were resolved by the submarines chiefly by self-defense. However, in leaving the bases and returning to them, particularly where the submarines could not travel submerged, and this was characteristic for the Baltic Fleet, it was not possible to ensure their security by such a method. In these instances, the escorting of submarines by surface vessels was employed and this, as was shown by the experience of the war, provided all types of defense (antimine, air, antisub and antisubchaser) with sufficient reliability, it reduced the deployment time and helped to save the resources of the submarines being deployed. Even in the very difficult situation of 1941, with the escorting of submarines, the enemy did not succeed in sinking a single one.

Camouflage was also of important significance in supporting submarine operations. The main thing in providing this was the greatest possible improvement in the main tactical property of the submarines, concealment in their deployment and remaining at battle stations. For these purposes, a large number of measures was carried out to reduce the possibility of enemy detection of the submarines. As a rule, the submarines left base in darkness. The deployment routes ran, wherever possible, outside the range of enemy coastal antisub defenses. Communications sessions were carried out (until the appearance of periscope antennas on the subs) usually also in darkness. Shore-to-sub radio contact was organized by the no-response method, that is, it was one-sided. At bases the submarines were spread out, their berths and they themselves were protected by camouflage nets.

Navigation and hydrographic support for submarine operations was provided in a decentralized manner by the fleet hydrographic services. Here chief attention was paid to establishing conditions which would ensure safe navigation. For this, special conditions were introduced for navigating under wartime sailing conditions and this included a system of channels with manipulator equipment

for navigation security, the organizing of military pilot services and other measures. Due to the complex geographic conditions and the operational-strategic situation, it was particularly difficult to organize navigation-hydrographic support for the deployment and combat activity of submarines in the Baltic Theater.

An analysis of the development of submarine and antisubmarine forces in the imperialist navies during the postwar years shows that, regardless of the sharp increase in submarine combat capabilities with powerful weapons and nuclear power, the necessity of organizing their combat support has increased.

The foreign press has repeatedly stated that the Command of the U.S. and NATO Navies has established special ASW forces which are armed with various types of special weapons, and has set up a stationary system of sonar submarine surveillance. In this context the experience of combat support for the submarine forces as gained during the years of the Great Patriotic War is of important significance. Proceeding from an analysis of it, it can be concluded that effective operations of the submarines and their security depend primarily upon reconnaissance. Shortcomings in its organization led to the delayed obtaining of reliable information on the enemy sea lanes, the composition and tactics of its ASW forces and thereby impeded submarine operations and substantially reduced the results of their combat activity. This was felt particularly during the first two years of the war. Reconnaissance could provide the command with complete and accurate information in the interests of taking sound decisions, planning and organizing submarine actions only in the event that this was carried out constantly by different forces and means.

The experience of the war showed that over all of it the main threat to our submarines was the mine danger. For this reason in organizing submarine operations, particularly close attention must be given to antimine support.

During the war years the crossing of antisubmarine barriers by the subs was extremely difficult. Practice showed that the success of these actions was possible only with the integrated use of diverse naval forces.

The problem of combat support for the submarines rested in the insufficient balancing of the naval forces. It should have been resolved prior to the start of hostilities, as it was extremely difficult to eliminate the disproportion in the strength of the attack and support forces during the war.

The war showed that difficulties arose repeatedly in organizing the operational and tactical cooperation of forces assigned for combat support of the submarines. In order to avoid these the appropriate complex missions must be constantly worked on in the course of peacetime operational and combat training.

FOOTNOTES

1. V. F. Tributs, "Podvodniki Baltiki atakuyut" [Baltic Submariners Attack], Leningrad, Lenizdat, 1963, p 325.

2. TsVMA [Central Naval Archives], folio 2, inv. 1, file 38, sheet 14.
3. Ibid., folio 2, inv. 1, file 809, sheet 203.
4. Ibid., sheet 236.
5. Ibid., folio 9, file 33109, sheets 1-48, 49-86, 87-122.
6. V. F. Tributs, "Baltiysy srazhayutsya" [Baltic Sailors Fight], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985, pp 234-236.
7. V. F. Tributs, "Podvodniki Baltiki atakuyut," p 286.
8. TsVMA, folio 2084, inv. 14, file 6, sheet 268.
9. "Krasnoznamenny Baltiyskiy flot v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg. Stati i ocherki" [The Red Banner Baltic Fleet in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. Articles and Essays], Moscow, Nauka, 1981, p 188.
10. B. V. Levshin, "Sovetskaya nauka v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Soviet Science During the Years of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Nauka, 1983, p 235.
11. L. A. Yemelyanov, "Sovetskiye podvodnyye lodki v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Soviet Submarines in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1981, p 145.
12. Ibid.
13. S. G. Gorshkov, "Morskaya moshch gosudarstva" [Seapower of a State], Moscow, Voenizdat, 2d Supplemented Edition, 1979, pp 203-204.

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QUESTIONS OF PARTY WORK IN FRONT OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

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[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Col Gen F. A. Mazhayev, published under the rubric "Party Political Work"; the article is written from the experience of the political directorates of fronts]

[Text] In the course of the Great Patriotic War the offensive was the main type of military operations by the Soviet Armed Forces. Out of the 210 front operations, 160 of these were offensive.(1) They developed, as a rule, along a broad front and to a significant depth. A majority of these was marked by an originality of conception as well as new methods of preparing and conducting combat.

Each offensive operation of the Soviet Army was carefully prepared for both in operational and logistical terms as well as in the area of conducting party-political work which was an important means of supporting high morale in the troops and one of the factors for achieving victory over the Nazi invaders.

The basic tasks of party-political work in the front offensive operations were: to rally the personnel around the Leninist party, to indoctrinate them in a spirit of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, wholehearted loyalty to the socialist motherland, ardent Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism, burning hatred for the Nazi invaders, the maintaining of the high moral and political state of the troops and indoctrinating the men in great offensive zeal and confidence in our victory.

Party-political work was organized and conducted in accord with the decrees of the party Central Committee and the State Defense Committee [GKO] on the basis of the orders and directives of the Supreme High Command, the people's commissar of defense and the directives of the Main Political Directorate.

The work of the political directorate in preparing an offensive operation started with its planning. The plans established the basic measures of party-political work aimed at carrying out the directives and orders of the command as well as the missions for subordinate political bodies. Moreover, instruction sessions were conducted for the commanders, political workers and the party aktiv of the field forces, formations and units, the procedure was

instituted for training the workers of the political directorate, groups were established for working in the troops, a reserve of political personnel was established and trained and the troops were provided with printed publications as well as cultural and educational facilities. For example, the plan for party-political work of the political directorate of the First Ukrainian Front (chief, Lt Gen F. V. Yashechkin) during the Vistula-Oder Operation planned for measures to support the rapid breakthrough of the enemy defenses to the entire depth, the providing of help to commanders in recruiting and indoctrinating the personnel of the shock battalions and the mine-clearing groups, the training of the men of the tank formations and units fighting deep in the enemy defenses. In accord with the plan, a meeting was held for the chiefs of the political sections of the armies, corps and divisions and here the results were summed up of party-political work conducted during the winter offensive and the missions were set to prepare for the Vistula-Oder Offensive Operation. Also 2-day seminars were conducted for instructors, lecturers and agitators from the political sections of the armies. Here they reviewed the questions of party organizational and agitation-propaganda work in the forthcoming operation. The workers of the political directorate provided help to the political section of the 3d Guards Army in planning the work and in improving the style of leadership over the political bodies.

Specific tasks for party-political work during the operation were given to the corresponding commanders and chiefs of the political bodies, as a rule, personally by the commanders, by the members of the military council and by the chiefs of the political directorates of the fronts as well as with the aid of the corresponding directives and instructions from the military council and political directorate.

In preparing the personnel for an offensive the political directorates of the fronts provided great aid to the commanders, political bodies, the party-political apparatus and the party organizations of the units. In preparing for the counteroffensive at Stalingrad, the political directorate of the Southwestern Front sent groups of its officers into the troops. They conducted seminars with the agitators from the armies, formations and regiments, they helped the commanders and their deputies for political affairs in placing the communists and Komsomol members in the subunits and they gave reports, lectures and talks in the units which were to fight in the first echelon of the formations. Experienced political workers had a great impact upon creating the high offensive drive of the troops of the front.

In the course of preparing the operation to liberate the Donets Basin, the Chief of the Political Directorate of the Southern Front, Maj Gen M. M. Pronin, held a meeting for the workers of the directorate. This summed up the results of the work done by the political bodies, the party and Komsomol organizations in the July battles and set tasks for political support for the forthcoming operation. On the same day, the chiefs of the sections, the inspector and instructor personnel of the political directorate traveled to the armies and corps and participated in the meetings being conducted there for the party activists, the regimental and battalion party and Komsomol meetings with the agenda "On the Results of the July Battles and the Tasks of the Communists (Komsomol Members) in the Forthcoming Operation." On 12 August, the order for the offensive was received. In the units where the situation

permitted, meetings were held and talks were conducted on the forward defensive edge. The personnel was given the task of liberating the Donets Basin by a decisive offensive.

Before crossing the Dnieper, the political directorate of the Voronezh Front for organizing agitation and propaganda work sent 60 political workers into the subordinate and attached formations and units. They were all broken up into groups of 8-10 men each. They were headed by the chief of the political directorate, his deputies and the section chiefs.(2) Particular attention was given to the reconnaissance units and subunits, to the shock groups, to the units and subunits of the assault crossing equipment, to the commandant service and the traffic control service. A large number of leaflets, and instructions devoted to the crossing of the Dnieper was disseminated among the personnel of the front.

The military councils and political directorates of the fronts, in carefully preparing the command and political personnel for the operation, gave particular attention to developing their organizational abilities and the capacity to conduct effective political work in the masses of soldiers in the course of the offensive. The training of political workers was a matter of particular concern for the political directorates of the fronts. For this purpose front, army, corps and divisional seminars, assemblies and conferences were held where they examined the specific questions of the content and organization of party-political work in the forthcoming operation and the particular features of the military political situation. Here they also studied the guiding documents, the experience of work on the offensive, they analyzed the committed shortcomings and outlined measures to prevent these.

In preparing for the Iasi-Kishinev Operation, the military council and political directorate of the Second Ukrainian Front (commander, Army Gen R. Ya. Malinovskiy, military council member, Lt Gen I. Z. Susaykov, and chief of the political directorate, Lt Gen A. N. Tevchenkov) conducted a 3-day assembly for the military council members and the chiefs of the political sections from the armies. Here they discussed the content, forms and methods of party-political work in all the stages of the operation. Its participants heard reports and statements on the international situation, the party decisions on ideological questions, and on the methods of subversive activities by enemy agents; experience was exchanged in organizing party-political work with the new recruits, logistical support for the troops, the selection and ideological and political indoctrination of the cadres as well as work among the enemy troops and population.

The political bodies of the fronts gave unflagging attention to organizing political support in cooperating units and formations from the different branches of troops. Joint meetings, assemblies and conferences of combat cooperation were conducted with the political workers of the attached and supporting units and formations, and meetings were organized for the infantry with the artillery troops, tank troops, pilots and combat engineers. The political directorates were constantly concerned with the organizational strengthening of the company and battery party organizations which provided an effective political influence on all the personnel of the subunits.

The military councils and political directorates of the fronts, along with the rear bodies, gave great attention to constantly providing the troops with everything necessary for conducting offensive battles, they showed constant concern for the men, their equipping, medical and sanitary services and rest, and made certain that the personnel received food according to the established standards and in the course of battle promptly delivered hot food to the soldiers, sergeants and officers.

The propagandizing of Marxist-Leninist ideas and Leninist teachings about the defense of the socialist fatherland underlay party-political work in the area of indoctrinating in the men high ideological-political, moral and combat qualities and offensive zeal. During the war years, the works of K. Marx, F. Engels and V. I. Lenin on the questions of party military policy were put out in mass editions. As a total in 1941-1945, more than 500 editions were published for the works of the founders of Marxism-Leninism with a total run of around 17 million copies.(3) The press played an important role in this. The Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army each month forwarded to the troops 19.3 million copies of the central newspapers and a million copies of various magazines.(4) In addition to the central newspapers, front newspapers were published (in Russian and two or three languages of the Soviet peoples), as well as army, corp and divisional papers. This made it possible to fully satisfy the need of the troops for periodicals.

The ideological work of indoctrinating love for the socialist motherland and hate for the enemies multiplied the force of the offensive drive of the soldiers, sergeants and officers, it mobilized them to defeat the enemy and contributed to the manifestation of mass heroism. In the counteroffensive at Moscow, the 1,319th Rifle Regiment from the 185th Division received the order of taking the village of Ryabinki. Repeated attempts to drive the Nazis from it had not been successful. Machine gun fire from a pillbox prevented the subunits from moving up. Sgt V. V. Vasilkovskiy decided to destroy the firing position with a grenade. But after the explosion the machine gun continued to chatter. Then the sergeant rushed forward and with his own body closed the firing slot of the pillbox. All the men witnessed the self-sacrifice of Vasilkovskiy. In a single rush they went over to the attack and carried out the combat mission.(5) During the war, the immortal feat of the infantrymen V. V. Vasilkovskiy, A. A. Pankratov and A. M. Matrosov was repeated more than 300 times and the feat of the pilot N. F. Gastello [a mid-air ram] over 350 times.(6)

The military councils and political directorates of the fronts in carrying out the front offensive operations gave specific military-political slogans to the troop personnel.

Of great indoctrinational significance was the awarding to outstanding men of orders and medals and orders from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief with commendation for the formations and units, the awarding of guards titles and the names of cities liberated by them, as well as ukases of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on presenting orders to the units and formations. Also widely employed were such forms of work as appeals from the command and political bodies to the personnel, congratulatory letters and commendations, combat leaflets, express leaflets, the awarding of the names of great Russian

military leaders, legendary heroes of the Civil War and heroes from the unit to individual tanks, aircraft and guns, the reading to the men of patriotic letters received from the rear, the photographing of the men with the unfurled colors of the unit and so forth.

The political directorates gave great importance to preparing and publishing photographs, leaflets and instructions for the men of different specialties (infantrymen, tank troops, artillery troops, pilots, assault troops, signal troops, combat engineers and scouts) which contained practical advice needed for the men in a combat situation.

The experience of the war showed how essential it was in an offensive operation to have a constant party influence on the personnel. Continuity of party political work was achieved by having the commanders, military councils and political bodies give specific tasks in the area of party-political work; by the correct determining of its forms and means, by their skillful combination and creative application considering the nature of the combat tasks, the developing situation, by an active political influence on each man, by the effective placement of the communists and Komsomol members, by the ensuring of the example set by them in combat; by the prompt review of applications to join the party and Komsomol and by the effective replacement of out-of-commission political workers.

In the course of the offensive operations, the political directorates of the fronts supervised party-political work in the troops, they took practical measures to ensure its continuity and purposefulness and they promptly directed the political bodies and party organizations to carrying out new tasks which had arisen in the context of the altered combat situation.

Of definite interest in this regard is the directive of the chief of the political directorate of the First Belorussian Front, Lt Gen S. F. Galadzhev and received in the troops in August 1944 under the title "On Improving Party-Political Work in the Period of the Offensive." It obliged the chiefs of the political sections from the divisions and armies to constantly know: how many party and Komsomol organizers of the companies and batteries and the regular political workers had been lost and who had replaced them, how many persons there were in the reserves; how many applications to join the party had been submitted and reviewed and how many party cards had been issued. The directive also demanded that they be up on the political mood of the personnel and know how the men behaved in battle, who distinguished himself, what awards had been received, how the combat deeds of the outstanding men had been popularized, whether the most important events of the press and radio had been brought to the attention of the personnel, what had been done to improve the food of the soldiers and to evacuate wounded and in the event of necessity to provide help. "The chief of a political body not concerned with these specific questions, who in this regard does not inspect the work of his subordinate political workers," the directive pointed out, "cannot feel that he is politically ensuring the success of combat."(7)

The political bodies of the fronts and armies in the course of an operation took the necessary measures to replace the rather significant losses of political personnel. For example, during the Berlin Operation, 1,164

political workers were lost just in the troops of the First Belorussian Front.(8) It is important to emphasize that the battleworthiness of the party and political apparatus was restored within the shortest time.

The political directorates worked smoothly with the staffs of the fronts. Constant contact and the exchange of information were maintained between them and the basic measures conducted in the troops and field headquarters were coordinated. They jointly carried out such tasks as indoctrinating in the staff workers a feeling of responsibility for the planning of the operation, the prompt issuing of the battle tasks to the troops, ensuring the maintaining of military secrecy, the generalizing and dissemination of combat experience and the carrying out of measures to strengthen military discipline, order and organization in the troops.

The systematic informing of the personnel on the course of combat was of great mobilizing importance. For example, during the Berlin Operation the political bodies and party organizations each day informed the units and subunits on the results of the offensive by the Soviet troops toward the capital of Nazi Germany. Leaflets were distributed in the troops on our combat successes. One of them contained a map of Berlin and the following text: "Look at the map, comrades! Seventy kilometers separate you from Berlin. This is eight times less than from the Vistula to the Oder. Today the motherland is expecting new feats from you. One more powerful blow and the capital of Nazi Germany will fall.... Glory to him who is the first into Berlin! Glory to him who raises our banner over the enemy capital!" Here are the concluding words from another leaflet: "Today the colors of our heroic units already fly victoriously over the outskirts and suburbs of Berlin. The crucial hour of battle has arrived!"(9)

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of such an effective form of information. In reading such a leaflet, the men were not left indifferent. It left a deep trace in their conscience and urged them to decisive actions.

Immediately before going over to the offensive and in the course of it the troops received appeals from the military councils of the fronts and armies and these disclosed the main aim and missions of the operation and the personnel were urged to show courage and self-sacrifice in combat, to fight decisively and honorably carry out their military duty. The appeals of the military councils as well as the information on the offensive by our troops brought about an enormous political upsurge in the men and assisted in forming a high offensive drive in them.

With the shifting of combat outside our motherland, the political bodies carried out such tasks as establishing the standards and rules of relations for Soviet troops with the population of the countries liberated from Naziism, the working out of the forms of contact with the administration existing there, the conducting of political work among the local population and the providing of material aid to it. Particular attention was given to indoctrinating our men in a spirit of Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism, national and military pride. Active and purposeful work was done to explain to the personnel the great liberating mission of the Soviet

Army, the standards of conduct abroad and the necessity of respecting the sovereignty of peoples in other countries.

The military councils and political directorates of the fronts, to help the commanders and political bodies of the units and formations, published military-political and economic reviews as well as instructions to the men on the states and peoples of the liberated countries and on the standards of conduct and the observance of the rules of public order established by the communist authorities in the countries saved from enslavement. Thus, the political directorate of the Third Ukrainian Front, from April through November 1944, prepared and published reference materials on Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Hungary. The political directorate of the First Belorussian Front worked out and distributed to the troops military-political and economic reviews on Poland and Germany.(10) All personnel was issued instructions on dealing with the local population.

In the concluding stage of the war, Soviet troops cooperated with the soldiers of the friendly armies of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Romania. Party-political work in our troops was aimed at strengthening international solidarity, combat cooperation and mutual understanding with the men of the fraternal armies.

The victories of the Soviet Army on the fronts and the severe defeats of the Nazi armies created exceptionally favorable conditions for more effective political work among the enemy troops and population. The Main Political Directorate in a directive of 8 April 1944 demanded that the political bodies make maximum use of these conditions and strengthen political propaganda and agitation among the enemy troops and population.(11) In 1944, around 450 million copies of leaflets, newspaper, pamphlets, posters and slogans were published and disseminated for the troops and population of foreign countries.(12) Immediately from the forward positions of the front, many thousands of agitation broadcasts were made to the troops of the enemy armies.

In the liberated areas of occupied countries, there was the urgent task of organizing political work among the population. The unmasking of the Nazi slander about the Soviet nation and its army, the explaining of the policy of the Soviet government vis-a-vis the peoples of these countries and the disclosure of the great liberating mission of our army were in the forefront here.

The experience of party-political work in the course of the front offensive operations comprises an inestimable wealth for the Soviet Armed Forces. The importance of it is that it was gained in a fierce struggle against a strong and perfidious enemy and the victory over this enemy confirms the effectiveness and actuality of party-political work.

The Great Patriotic War again convincingly showed that without such a powerful party weapon as party-political work, our Armed Forces would not have been able to live, fight and conquer. Regardless of the fundamental transformations in military affairs and the particular nature of a possible war, party-political work in it will have much in common with political work from the period of the last war.

The creative use of the experience of party-political work during the years of the Great Patriotic War increases the effectiveness and actuality of party-political work under present-day conditions and helps to indoctrinate the personnel in a spirit of ardent patriotism and socialist internationalism and to carry out the complex tasks posed by the Communist Party and the Soviet government for the Army and Navy personnel.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Velikaya Pobeda sovetskogo naroda 1941-1945" [The Great Victory of the Soviet People in 1941-1945], Moscow, Nauka, 1976, p 198.
2. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 32, inv. 11318, file 76, sheets 24-25.
3. "Istoriya KPSS" [History of the CPSU], Moscow, Politizdat, Vol 5, Book 1, 1970, p 409.
4. "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 6, 1965, p 361.
5. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945. Kratkaya istoriya" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945. Brief History], Moscow, Voenizdat, 3d Edition, 1984, p 119.
6. Ibid., p 517.
7. TsAMO, folio 233, inv. 2374, file 13, sheets 125-126.
8. V. D. Vorobyev, et al., "Posledniy shturm" [The Last Attack], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, p 108.
9. "Partiyno-politicheskaya rabota v Vooruzhennykh Silakh SSSR. Istoricheskiy ocherk" [Party-Political Work in the USSR Armed Forces. A Historical Essay], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 263.
10. "Partiyno-politicheskaya rabota v Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Silakh v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Party-Political Work in the Soviet Armed Forces in the Years of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 421.
11. TsAMO, folio 32, inv. 11302, file 202, sheets 79-80.
12. "Istoriya KPSS," Vol 5, Book 1, p 590.

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FROM EXPERIENCE IN COORDINATING TROOP OPERATIONS OF ANTI-HITLER COALITION

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[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Lt Gen S. I. Radziyevskiy, published under the rubric "World War II"]

[Text] World War II was a coalition war. The Nazi bloc was opposed by the anti-Hitler coalition, a military alliance of states and peoples united in the struggle against Nazi aggression. The Soviet Union was in this coalition the only socialist state and the expresser of the interests of the working masses. It was the main and decisive force of the coalition. By its consistent and firm policy, the USSR achieved a unity of the Allied countries and a unifying of the efforts of all peoples to defeat Naziism.

In favoring the creation of an anti-Hitler coalition, the party proceeded from the instructions of V. I. Lenin on the possibility of "military agreements with one of the imperialist coalitions against another in those instances when this agreement, without violating the fundamentals of Soviet power, could strengthen its position and paralyze the pressure on it by any imperialist power...."(1) Also considered was the Leninist thesis that for winning a victory in the fight against a strong enemy, it was essential to utilize any opportunity, even the slightest, to gain an ally "even a temporary, shakey, unstable, unreliable and conditional one."(2) The party utilized these Leninist instructions skillfully and flexibly in the new historical situation where Nazi Germany created a serious threat to the independent existence of the peoples of not only Europe but also other continents.

The just, liberating nature of the Great Patriotic War was a decisive factor in uniting the peoples. In speaking over the radio on 3 July 1941, I. V. Stalin pointed out: "In this great war, we will have dependable allies in the person of the European and American peoples.... Our war for the liberty of our fatherland will merge with the struggle of the European and American peoples for their independence and for democratic freedoms. This will be a united front of peoples...."(3) The party's scientific prediction and its belief in the force of the masses of people were justified. By the end of the war, the anti-Hitler coalition included more than 50 states. The experience of the establishing and activity of the anti-Hitler coalition affirmed one of the most important principles of Marxism-Leninism on the possibility and

necessity of successful collaboration among states with different social systems in the aim of resolving the historically arisen tasks of defending the freedom and liberty of peoples.

The prerequisites for the establishing of such a coalition had been prepared by the consistent struggle of the USSR for organizing a collective security system and thwarting aggression even in the prewar years. Although the governments of the Western powers did not support the efforts of the Soviet Union, the idea became firmly established in the conscience of the masses of people of the need to side with the USSR for rebuffing the Nazi aggressors. The flexible and far-sighted policy of the CPSU and the Soviet government thwarted the founding of a unified anti-Soviet front of the imperialist powers. This led to the development of events whereby the Western countries, unable to halt the Nazi aggressors, were forced to make an alliance with our socialist state for a joint struggle against the Hitler bloc. Between the USSR, the United States and Great Britain the corresponding political agreements were signed on a joint struggle against the fascist state. These treaty obligations became the political basis for organizing the coalition leadership of the war.

States the territories of which were occupied by the Nazis also joined the anti-Hitler coalition. In 1941, the Soviet government signed agreements with the emigre governments of Czechoslovakia and Poland. During the very first days of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet government established contacts with the National Free France Committee which was then in Algeria and established diplomatic relations with Norway and Belgium the governments of which had also gone into exile.

The Soviet Union which played the leading role in establishing and strengthening this coalition remained the main element of it up to the war's end. This role was determined by its crucial contribution to the armed struggle against the Nazi militaristic bloc and by the consistent defending of the program for a postwar peace settlement which would meet the interests of the peoples who had fought for freedom, national independence and democracy.

The joint actions of the USSR and the other nations of the anti-Hitler coalition against the Nazi-militaristic bloc required the search for and elaboration of the appropriate forms and methods for coordinating military-political efforts as well as for coordinating and directing the hostilities of the Allied armies.

A most important form of coordinating the efforts of the three Great Powers was the inter-ally conferences of the heads of state where they settled the major political and military questions related not only to the conduct of hostilities but also to the postwar peace settlement. During the war years, three such conferences were held: Tehran (November-December 1943), Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July-August 1945).

The most widespread and constantly active form of coordinating the war efforts was the personal correspondence between the chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, the U.S. presidents and the British prime ministers. The heads of the governments and states were simultaneously the supreme commanders-in-chief

of their armed forces. This correspondence was carried out during the entire war and realized in the form of the exchange of encoded telegrams through the appropriate embassies. Individual messages were delivered by diplomatic mail or by authorized representatives of the USSR, United States and Great Britain. The correspondence touched upon a broad range of questions. As a total during the war years, over 800 documents were sent and received containing secret and top-secret data.(4)

The correspondence made it possible to effectively settle questions, including on the employment of the armed forces. This was the case, for example, in the winter of 1945, when a critical situation developed for the Allies in the Ardennes. Loyal to its Allied duty, the USSR responded to the request of W. Churchill for help. The Soviet Command shifted the date for the start of the Vistula-Oder Operation from 20 to 12 January 1945. The powerful strike by the Soviet troops forced the Nazis to halt the offensive in the Ardennes and shift a larger portion of its troops which had been involved in the counteroffensive from the West to the Soviet-German Front. Just from 15 through 31 January, 8 divisions and 800 out of the 900 tanks and assault guns involved in the counteroffensive were regrouped to the east.(5) This made it possible for the Allies to escape from the critical situation.

Another effective form of cooperation was the bilateral meetings of the heads of government as well as the bilateral or multilateral meetings of the chiefs of the general staffs or their authorized representatives. Members of the GKO [State Defense Committee], the leading workers from the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff frequently participated in the meetings of the head of the Soviet government with the heads of the Allied governments. The meetings resolved the most important questions of a military-political nature, in particular the questions of military deliveries, the organization and opening of a second front and as well there was a reciprocal exchange of information on the course of the hostilities. At the bilateral and multilateral meetings of the chiefs of the general staffs the plans were adjusted for the combined actions of the ground, air and sea forces on the fronts and theaters of the war. There was also an exchange of correspondence between the representatives of the general staffs on specific questions of military operations. Thus, in the course of the correspondence between the commanders-in-chief of the Allied troops in Western Europe, Gen D. Eisenhower and the Chief of the General Staff, Army Gen A. I. Antonov, the question was resolved concerning the actions of Allied and Soviet troops in the region of the Lower Elbe and in Czechoslovakia. (6)

Soviet military missions existed under the U.S. and English general staffs as well as under the staff of Gen De Gaulle. There were the corresponding military missions under the Soviet Army General Staff. The U.S. Military Mission was headed by Gen Dean, that of Great Britain by Gen Burrows and the government of Free France by Gen Delattre de Tassigny, Norway by Col Dahl, the Czechoslovak Republic by Gen V. Pika, and the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia by Gen V. Terzic. Leadership of the Soviet military missions in the countries of our Allies was provided by the Directorate of Foreign Relations of the General Staff headed by Gen N. V. Slavin. The Soviet military missions in the Allied countries during different periods were headed by F. I. Golikov, N. M. Kharlamov, A. F. Vasilyev, I. A. Susloparov, N. V.

Korneyev and others. Under the Staff of the Commander of the Mediterranean Allied Expeditionary Troops was a Soviet military mission headed by Maj Gen A. A. Kislenko.(7)

The basic tasks of the military missions were to provide reciprocal information on the course of hostilities, to exchange experience, to monitor the observance of agreements on reciprocal deliveries and participate in their organization. In addition, the Soviet Army General Staff had its representatives on the staffs of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, Gen D. Eisenhower, the armed forces of Free France as well as with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific.(8)

As Army Gen S. M. Shtemenko has pointed out in his memoirs, cooperation of the Soviet Armed Forces with the Allies became widely developed after the Tehran Conference. The victories of the Soviet troops at Stalingrad, Kursk and on the Dnieper had a substantial influence on the U.S. and English positions. The major question of opening a second front in Europe was finally settled. This served as the determining principle in the crushing attacks coordinated by a single plan by the troops of the anti-Hitler coalition on the European fronts. "In the second half of 1944," wrote S. M. Shtemenko, "when the Soviet Armed Forces had initiated a great liberation campaign outside the Soviet frontiers and a second front had been opened, the question of the coordinating of the coalition forces began to be resolved practically and fully.... Each day the Allies had to be informed on the situation of our troops on the front, the objectives and lines for bombing strikes by Soviet and Allied aviation had to be determined, and the dates of action and the axes of the efforts of the troops and fleets had to be coordinated. For Anglo-American aviation flying on bombing runs against enemy objectives from Italy and England we provided several airfields in the Poltava region."(9)

Cooperation was closer and more complete between the Soviet Armed Forces and the troops of the Central and Southern European countries fighting on the Soviet-German Front as well as the troops of Mongolia, China and the Korean partisans in the war against Japan.

In accord with the agreements, on Soviet territory two armies, a tank corps and an air corps of the Polish Army, a Czechoslovak army corps, two Romanian infantry divisions, a Yugoslav infantry brigade and a tank brigade and two air regiments as well as the French Normandy Air Regiment were established. After the victory of the armed anti-Fascist revolts on 23 August 1944 in Romania and on 9 September 1944 in Bulgaria, two Romanian armies and an air corps and three Bulgarian armies fought alongside the Soviet Army against Nazi Germany. In the concluding stage of the war in Europe, Hungarian units also participated in battles against the Nazis. Cooperation was established between the Soviet Army and the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia which had been fighting courageously against the Nazi occupiers since 1941.

In the East in the war against imperialist Japan, the Soviet Army collaborated with the Mongolian People's Army, the Chinese People's Army and the Korean patriots. This was a new type of combat cooperation. It was marked by a high degree of coordination of military-strategic efforts, by complete mutual understanding and mutual trust, by fraternal mutual aid, by reciprocal respect

for national interests and by a consideration of the particular features of combat and revolutionary traditions.

The troops of the Allied armies, as a rule, fought as part of the Soviet fronts and army field forces or cooperated with the Soviet Army. For this reason, leadership over them from the Soviet Command was carried out by the principle of their temporary operational subordination. Thus, the Kostyushko 1st Polish Infantry Division fought as part of the 33d Army of the Western Front in the course of the fighting in October 1943, while the 1st Polish Army was operationally under the First Belorussian Front and the 2d Polish Army under the First Ukrainian Front.(10) The 1st Separate Czechoslovak Infantry Battalion in March 1943 fought as part of the 25th Guards Rifle Division of the Voronezh Front while the I Czechoslovak Army Corps was operationally subordinate to the 38th Army of the First Ukrainian Front.(11) The Tudora Vladimiresku 1st Romanian Infantry Division fought as part of the XXXIII Rifle Corps of the 37th Army on the Second Ukrainian Front.(12) The correspondence between the Soviet Command and the national commands of these troops was carried out, as a rule, in Russian. The Soviet side supplied them with all sorts of weapons, ammunition, combat equipment and materiel. The senior Polish, Czechoslovak and Romanian military leaders from these national formations on operational and organizational questions could turn directly to the command of the armies and fronts to which they were subordinate as well as to the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces.

Cooperation with the Romanian and Bulgarian armies which had a different organization, combat training and combat capabilities than the Soviet Army was provided somewhat differently. In accord with the truce agreement and the approval of the Romanian government, at the beginning of September 1944, the 1st and 4th Romanian Armies, the IV Separate Army Corps and the I Air Corps in operational terms were put under the command of the Second Ukrainian Front. A particular feature of their use was that the Romanian armies were turned over by the commander of the front to operational subordination to the Soviet armies: the 4th Romanian Army was made operationally subordinate to the 27th Army; the 4th Romanian Army to the 27th Army and later the 40th Army, the 1st Romanian Army to the 53d Army and the IV Army Corps to the LXXV Rifle Corps of the 46th Army. The Romanian air corps was part of the 5th Air Army. The Romanian armies were assigned sectors of operations within the boundary lines of the Soviet armies. In those instances when the separate divisions or corps were part of Soviet corps, they were given sectors of action within the boundary lines of the Soviet corps. Such a procedure for cooperation was most effective as it contributed to the better use of the combat capabilities of the Romanian troops and at the same time allowed the Romanian generals, officers and staffs to more quickly adopt Soviet principles for planning, preparing and conducting operations.

For coordinating combat Soviet liaison officers were temporarily assigned to the Romanian staffs of the field forces, formations and separate units with the necessary communications equipment and translators. At the same time, Romanian officers and generals with communications equipment were also on the staffs of the Soviet troops. This provided constant operational leadership over hostilities and a unified understanding of the procedure for carrying out combat missions.

Approximately the same system for leadership of combat operations was realized between the Soviet and Bulgarian troops.(13) After the victory of the uprising of 9 September 1944, the 1st, 2d and 4th Bulgarian Armies as part of the Third Ukrainian Front fought in the Belgrad Operation, and then the 1st Bulgarian Army fought in the Budapest, Balaton and Vienna Operations. A particular feature of cooperation with the Bulgarian troops was that virtually from the very first days, by agreement between the Soviet and Bulgarian governments, Soviet military advisers and instructors were sent to the Bulgarian formations and the superior command levels of the Bulgarian Army. They provided help to the Bulgarian commanders and staffs and turned over to them the rich combat experience of the Soviet Army.

Strategic leadership over the combat operations was provided by the Soviet Supreme High Command. Neither on the strategic nor on the operational scale were any special coalition bodies organized for directing the hostilities. No necessity was seen for this either by the Soviet Union or by its allies fighting on the Soviet-German Front as well as on the Soviet-Japanese Front, where a horse-mechanized group of Gen I. A. Pliyev fought as part of the Transbaykal Front and this group included also Mongolian troops.

The Soviet Union showed respect and confidence in its allies on the Soviet-German and Soviet-Japanese Fronts. In working out the plans for the operations, the Soviet Supreme High Command, as a rule, coordinated them with the governments and superior military command of the fraternal countries. In this way the plans were approved for the Vistula-Oder, Debrecen, Balaton, Belgrad, Vienna, Manchurian and other operations conducted on the territory of a number of states of Central and Southeast Europe and the Far East.

The experience of coordinating and conducting hostilities by the troops of the anti-Hitler coalition indicates that with common goals and good will it is possible to have collaboration between states with different social systems. This is also affirmed in our days when a number of the non-socialist states are acting together with the Soviet Union to prevent a new world war, to ban nuclear weapons and prevent the militarizing of space. "To good will," emphasized the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Comrade M. S. Gorbachev, in his speech at the Extraordinary March (1985) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, "the Soviet Union always responds with good will, and with trust to trust."(14)

Under the conditions of the threat of the unleashing of a new world war by the imperialists of the United States and their NATO allies, major importance is assumed by the early settlement of questions concerning the command and control of the coalition troops and naval groupings, and the working out in peacetime of cooperation between the armies of the countries comprising the military-political alliance of the socialist countries, the Warsaw Pact.

The reaching of a unity of political and military-strategic views is of enormous significance in carrying out the tasks of the command and control of the socialist commonwealth armies and the CPSU, the fraternal communist and worker parties have always given primary attention to this. This is an enormous advantage of the combat alliance of the socialist countries over any military-political blocs of the imperialist states.

FOOTNOTES

1. V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 36, p 323.
2. Ibid., Vol 41, p 55.
3. I. V. Stalin, "O Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne Sovetskogo Soyuza" [On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union], Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1950, p 16.
4. See: "Perepiska Predsedatelya Soveta Ministrov SSSR s Prezidentami SShA i Premyer-Ministrami Velikobritanii vo vremya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg." [Correspondence of the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers With the U.S. Presidents and the British Prime Ministers During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Gospolitizdat, Vols 1-2, 1957; 2d Edition, Moscow, Politizdat, Vols 1-2, 1976.
5. "Vtoraya mirovaya voyna. Kratkaya istoriya" [World War II. A Brief History], Moscow, Nauka, 1984, pp 418-120.
6. See: "Na vechnyye vremena" [For Eternal Times], "Na vecne casy" [In Czech], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, p 229-231.
7. See: S. M. Shtemenko, "Generalnyy shtab v gody voyny" [The General Staff in the War Years], Moscow, Voenizdat, Book 2, 1981, pp 21-31.
8. Ibid., pp 26-31.
9. Ibid., p 31.
10. "Bratstvo po oruzhiyu" [Fraternity in Arms], "Braterstvo broni" [In Polish], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, pp 89, 218, 288.
11. "Na vechnyye vremena," pp 89, 157.
12. "Boyevoy soyuz bratskikh armiy" [The Combat Alliance of the Fraternal Armies], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 169.
13. For more detail on cooperation between the Bulgarian People's Army and the Soviet Army, see: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 9, 1984, pp 36-45.
14. PRAVDA, 12 March 1985.

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BORDER-GUARDS CADETS IN COMBAT ON LENINGRAD FRONT

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 85 (signed to press 9 Oct 85) pp 49-54

[Article by Hero of the Soviet Union, Col (Ret) N. V. Kalutskiy, published under the rubric "Mastery and Heroism": "An Unknown Page of the War"; the material was written up on the basis of the memoirs of direct participants in the described events: Commander of the 2d Battalion A. A. Zolotarev, Platoon Commander N. A. Yukhimets, the Cadets I. G. Dovganyuk, B. A. Serednyakov and others using archival and other sources]

[Text] The Nazi troops, in mid-August 1941, having broken the Luga Defensive Line, initiated a broad offensive against Leningrad.

The Soviet Command initiated the most decisive measures to halt the further enemy advance. During this period, two battalions from the Novyy Petergof Border Military-Political School imeni K. Ye. Voroshilov among other units and formations, received orders to quickly take up the defensive on the threatened sector.

The 2d Battalion under the command of Capt A. A. Zolotarev drove out of the school along with the 1st and then separated and by 1900 hours on 17 August 1941 took up positions in the region of the villages of Zapolye, Smolkovo, Dylitsy. A large group of Nazi troops pushing to Krasnogvardeysk, now Gatchina, was aimed precisely here.

village of Zapolye. Its commander, Sr Lt Y. A. Pimenov, a school graduate, had excellently commanded a platoon. He had recently been entrusted with a company. The 5th, 6th and 7th Companies occupied the defensive line of Smolkovo, Dylitsy.

The battalion commander gave great importance to digging in and to camouflage. On the very first night he checked the reliability of the foxholes, the trenches and the cover for the boundaries between the companies. He visited all the subunits and wanted to make personally certain what the mood of the cadets was and how the defensive work was being carried out. He took an interest in the food of the men and the work of the medics. Nor were the questions of vigilance disregarded. He ordered the company commanders to strengthen the security and to check the posts more frequently.

"If one sentry goes asleep at his post on the front," said Zolotarev, "it is death for the entire subunit."

At dawn on 18 August, under the pressure of the superior enemy forces, our rifle subunit which held the defenses to the right began to retreat, leaving the battalion's flank exposed. This created a serious threat. Then the well-knit figure of a captain of the Border Troops appeared before a large group of retreating infantrymen. It was Zolotarev.

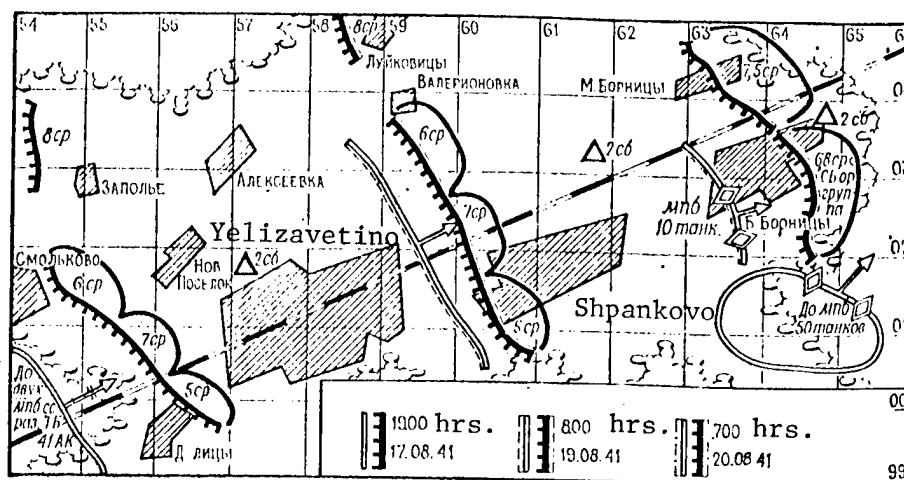


Diagram of Combat Actions of 2d Battalion of Cadets, August 1941

"Eagles! Have you not lost your way?" he asked, laughing maliciously. "Go for a stroll here and you'll prevent the Border Troops from firing."

The men involuntarily halted and looked at each other. On their faces was an obvious confusion. The angered appearance of the officer, his words and easy actions were so contrary to their conduct that they immediately captured the attention of the soldiers.

Out of the crowd came a hoarse excited voice:

"The hell with losing our way. The Nazis are just a jump behind us. It is no laughing matter..."

"Right behind, you say?" broke in Zolotarev with disdain. And then sharply and severely: "Where are your commanders?"

"Killed," replied the same voice, sadly and quietly.

"Killed? You abandoned them to desecration you yourselves fled?" rebuked Zolotarev.

"We did not want to, but that is how it happened," broke in another soldier. The captain realized that the crisis had passed and that he had to act decisively.

"Do you have cartridges and grenades?"

"We do," replied several voices.

"Then follow me. In an extended line! After me!" urged Zolotarev.

The firm, sure voice of the commander had a sobering affect upon the men. Quickly they formed into an extended line. Ahead, carrying a rifle taken from a wounded man, picking up the pace, walked the unfamiliar captain. Somehow the men trusted him immediately, they felt his strong will and power over them and immediately followed him toward the danger. Then they overtook the captain and opened fire against the Nazis who had driven into our defenses and with a strong attack threw them back and occupied their foxholes.

Around 0600 hours in the morning of 18 August, Nazi aircraft flew over. Heavy bombing commenced. When the aviation had left, the artillery opened fire. The enemy shells hit the battalion's positions accurately. A dense black cloud of smoke and dust rose into the air. Suddenly someone shouted: "Tanks!"

The enemy vehicles were approximately a half-kilometer away followed by infantrymen in close lines.

"Hold back, comrades," said the battalion commander N. N. Danilin to the cadets.

Then the German tanks crossed the battle outposts and firing on the move set fire to the battalion ammunition point. The village of Pulyevo burst into flames. From the exploding shells, earth changed places with the sky and smoke filled your eyes.

The cadets prepared for battle. From behind the brush, four 45-mm guns fired at the Nazis with direct laying. Our machine guns swung into action. The machine gunner N. N. Gudimenko fired accurately at the infantry. The ranks of the Nazis began to thin before our eyes but the enemy drew closer. When they had reached a distance of around 100 m, Gudimenko was severely wounded. Lt N. A. Yukhimets rushed to the machine gun and began firing at the Nazis at point-blank range. Cadet I. G. Dvogyanyuk crawled up and reported to the battalion commander that the Nazis were outflanking to the left. Zolotarev ordered them to swing round the flanks and take up a circular defense. The cadets intensified their fire. Strings of grenades and bottles with burning liquid flew at the tanks. The enemy attack was driven off.

Having encountered the stubborn resistance of the cadets, the Nazis broke off the attack on this sector of the defenses and strengthened their pressure on the adjacent unit to the left. At a price of great losses the enemy succeeded in pressing our soldiers here and creating a major threat to the battalion's left flank.

In endeavoring to exploit the success, the Nazis resumed their attacks against the cadets. But now they were carried out from both the front and the flank. The battalion found it difficult to maintain the occupied positions. Only with the onset of darkness was there a certain lull. Our command realized that in the developing situation it would be very difficult for the Border Troops to hold the occupied positions and gave the order to change them during the night.

By 0800 hours on 19 August, the 2d Battalion held a new defensive line: Luykovitsy, Shpankovo. And again shovels flashed and picks and crowbars could be heard at work. Without straightening up, the men worked full-force, realizing that a good foxhole was a soldier's fortress.

The cadets were tired. The men had to rest. But, as the regimental commissar P. M. Gorskiy said, soldiers must not be regretted, they must be protected. And the earth would protect them. The standard for one cadet per day was 8 linear meters of full-depth trench. The defense was all-round designed first to combat tanks. The lull did not last long. By midday the Nazis resumed the attacks.

A particularly bad situation had arisen on the right flank of the 7th Company. The enemy unleashed its main strike here.

The enemy tanks, with their tracks clanking, moved in zig-zags, changing direction, in order to put off our artillery troops. B. A. Seredyakov was the first out of the foxhole. He threw a string of grenades under the tracks of one of the vehicles. An explosion resounded. The tank came to a halt. Immediately bottles with burning fluid flew toward the motor compartment. Flames engulfed the armor. Choosing a convenient moment, Vasiliy Poddubnyy threw a string of grenades under another vehicle. His comrades helped. They also hit the mark. The Nazi submachine gunners lost their momentum. The company commander, Lt A. I. Zharikov, decided that a good moment had come for a counterattack. He gave the signal and rushed forward, followed by the political instructor I. I. Ovchinnikov and the entire company. The Nazis retreated. But soon thereafter, having regrouped their forces, they again (for the nth time!) went over to the attack.

The Nazis moved silently, with their automatics at the ready. When some 300-400 m remained to our positions, they opened up with solid fire and then rushed forward. The cadets did not open fire but waited for the Nazis to come closer.

"Fire!" rang out the command.

Rifle shots whistled. The machine guns chattered feverishly and the company mortars opened fire. The rear extended lines of the Nazis moved forward now out of inertia but in the forward ranks everything was in confusion. In vain the officers, waving pistols, tried to instill order. The Nazis hit the dirt. And then the German tanks and armored personnel carriers moved ahead. And again the strings of grenades and bottles with burning fluid went into use.

On the adjacent sectors of our defenses the enemy had moved far forward and in order not to be encircled, the cadet battalion upon the order of the command by 0700 hours on the morning of 20 August retreated and dug in on a new line to the northeast and east of the village of Bolshiye Bornitsy, where a highway and railroad ran. These tracks connected Kingisepp with Krasnogvardeysk and opened the road to Leningrad.

The day was windy and raw. The battalion commander N. N. Danilin, having sought the advice of the commander, decided to hold a party aktiv meeting. This was always the case: when a difficult situation arose, they turned to the communists.

The meeting was professional and brief and the statements were more like vows. Speaking at the meeting was the chief of the school political section, Regimental Commissar P. M. Gorskiy, who together with Zolotarev and Danilin directed the combat of the cadets from the 2d Battalion.

Certain commanders wanted to conceal from the cadets that the battalion was in a difficult situation. They felt that then the soldiers would feel more confident. Gorskiy said:

"A false opinion. People must always know the truth. Soldiers do not fear difficulties if they believe that their commander knows how to surmount them."

The party activists went into the trenches to explain the situation to the men as well as the reasons which had forced them to resort to the saving of ammunition and food.

At 1400 hours on 20 August, the Nazis attacked the cadets on their new defensive line. The attacks were carried out by rote. The Nazis had not bothered to master diverse procedures and methods of fighting. The cadets already knew that the attack was always preceded by an air strike at the end of which the tanks and infantry would immediately rush forward. Now Zolotarev determined to use this particular feature of initiating combat. Hearing the roar of aircraft coming in to bomb, before the very eyes of the Nazis rapidly led the cadets from their occupied positions. The Germans decided that finally the cadets were retreating, they took heart and rushed after them. And then came the raid by their aviation. The junkers circled over our trenches. The leader made a steep dive and dropped his bombs. The remaining aircraft dove behind him, releasing the bombs on the heads of their own soldiers.

The Nazis, suffering great losses, returned to their positions and the Border Troops again retook their abandoned trenches. But still the enemy attacks did not cease. Strengthened by reinforcements from the reserves, this time the Nazis acted more decisively. The tanks and infantry outflanked the battalion subunits.

"Prepare for a counterattack," came the word down the trench.

The chief of the political section, Regimental Commissar P. M. Gorskiy attacked with the 7th Company. The school instructors, Sr Political Instructors P. A. Vasilyev and Z. A. Samokhvalov, Capts A. G. Terenin, V. M. Stepenkov, T. D. Strutsenko, N. T. Malyshev, the editor of the school newspaper, Political Instructor L. A. Svistunov, and the signals chief, Lt P. P. Voloshko were in the first extended lines of attackers. Hand-to-hand battle broke out.

The cadets of the 6th Company fought bravely. Its commander, Sr Lt D. M. Ostanniy, in leading his subordinates, rushed up to a burning Nazi tank around which were four Germans as the enemies had evidently run out of cartridges. The senior lieutenant destroyed two and the cadets who hurried up helped in dealing with the remainder.

As a result of this battle, six enemy medium tanks were blown up or burned up, wrote Zolotarev in the report, seven officers were killed, two machine guns as well as many automatics, rifles, pistols, grenades, cartridges and so forth were captured. However, the 6th and 8th Companies which were on the left flank had been cut off. On the defensive sector of the Bolshiye Bornitsy--Gatchina road, their remained the 7th and 5th Companies as well as a combat engineer subunit.(1)

On 22 August, from 1400 to 1600 hours, the enemy again carried out heavy artillery and mortar fire. Shrapnel fell like rain. But the Regimental Commissar P. M. Gorskiy was able to make his way through the solid sheet of fire to the surrounded 8th Company. He visited all the wounded who were in craters and trenches, addressing them with the words:

"Comrades! A handful of men remains from your company. I ask everyone who can to keep his weapon and take his place in battle formation."

The political instructor of the 8th Company, G. G. Smirnov, was the first to respond. His head was bandaged and of his face only his eyes could be made out and in a sling across his neck hung a broken right arm. He held his rifle in the left. A few other cadets came up; the remainder lay on the ground, some groaning softly and others asking for water.

The artillery shelling continued. The shells shattered the ground and raised clouds of dust in the air. Suddenly it was silent. The Nazis, having set a smokescreen, went over to the attack. The commissar gave the signal:

"Attention!"

Everybody got ready. Visibility was bad and it was hard to make out how many Nazis there were. They let them come up close and suddenly opened fire. The Nazis could not withstand the fire and rushed back. After an unsuccessful attack, the Nazis sent the tanks forward. Crossing our first trench they crushed a machine gun crew. All of this happened so quickly that nothing could be done. P. M. Gorskiy, pointing with anger at the killed cadets, said:

"This is what will happen to each of us if we do not exterminate the Nazi rabble. Fire!"

The battle lasted several hours. Two tanks became a bright bonfire. It was very difficult to figure out the situation. Hand-to-hand battle was going on in the trenches and foxholes. The commissar participated in this on equal grounds with the cadets.

Bolshiye Bornitsy changed hands several times. The tanks were let come to a distance of 10-15 m. How many times during these days did the Nazi tanks roll over our trenches and a fighter pressed himself to the ground and waited for a convenient moment to throw a string of grenades or a bottle with burning fluid. The ranks of the courageous border troops thinned. There was one salvation in a rapid rush forward. But how could you raise your head from the ground which reeked of powder while the fiery hurricane raged overhead?!

Another day passed in this manner at Gatchina, on the approaches to Leningrad. They did not sleep at night. They dug new foxholes and trenches and equipped machine gun nests.

The morning of 23 August came. The cadets met the next attack of the Nazi infantry with close accurate fire. Over the battalion's positions hung a solid haze and clouds of dust raised by exploding shells blanketed the skies more densely than the low clouds.

In the brief moments of lull, they shouted to the cadets from the German trenches over loudspeakers: "Cadets! Surrender! You are surrounded! We will spare you and give you vodka!" They were answered with fire.

Each hour the losses of the battalion grew. Many had been wounded, they had exhausted their cartridges and grenades and the bottles with burning fluid were used up.

The sections occupied by the companies could be fired on from all sides. The Nazis used their company mortars. Artillery and aviation were not used as they feared hitting their own troops. Under these conditions the battalion commander received permission to retreat and break out of the encirclement.

Beginning on the evening of 23 August until 1 September, the battalion in small groups escaped from encirclement. Many border troops, themselves being wounded and in observing the sacred fraternal law of the front, carried severely wounded comrades.

The cadets of the Novyy Petergof Military-Political School for 6 days held an important defensive line on the approaches to Gatchina. Repeatedly without support of artillery, tanks and aviation, in suffering heavy losses, they rushed into the attack, showing heroism and courage in these battles.

The grateful Leningraders did not forget their defenders. Recently at Gatchina, a monument was erected on the ground soaked with the blood of the cadets and the commanders from the school's 2d Battalion.

FOOTNOTE

1. "Pogranichnyye voyska v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [The Border Troops During the Years of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Nauka, 1968, pp 252-254.

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V. I. LENIN ON ESTABLISHING PROLETARIAN ARMED FORCES IN FIRST RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 85 (signed to press 9 Oct 85) pp 55-59

[Article by Doctor of Historical Sciences, Prof A. F. Danilevskiy, published under the rubric: "Scientific Papers and Information"]

[Text] The peoples of our nation and the progressive community of the entire world are celebrating the glorious 80th anniversary of the 1905-1907 Russian Revolution which has gone down in world history as the first authentically popular revolution in the age of imperialism. It awoke the broad masses of workers and peasants and the other strata of the Russian population to political life. The proletariat was the main driving force of the revolution and its dependable leader was the Bolshevik Party founded by V. I. Lenin. "The Russian working class under the leadership of the Bolsheviks," pointed out the Decree of the CPSU Central Committee "On the 80th Anniversary of the 1905-1907 Revolution in Russia," "raised high the banner of proletarian internationalism, establishing a single front of struggle for the workers of all nationalities against social and national suppression."(1)

During the years of the first Russian Revolution, the creative genius of V. I. Lenin became vividly apparent as a great theoretician and leader of the revolutionary masses. "Lenin's ideas on the particular features of a bourgeois democratic revolution in the age of imperialism," points out the Decree of the CPSU Central Committee, "and on its driving forces and ways for growing into a socialist one, on the hegemony of the proletariat and the strategy of class alliances, on the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, on creating a provisional revolutionary government, on the ways for resolving the agrarian and nationality questions, and on the leading role of a new type of proletarian party as a most important condition for the revolution's victory marked a new stage in the development of Marxist teachings."(2) Relying on the theoretical heritage of K. Marx and F. Engels and on the combat experience of the Paris Commune, V. I. Lenin in 1905-1907 elaborated a scientifically based military program for the proletariat and its party. In accord with this, one of the main areas of activity for the RSDRP [Russian Social Democratic Revolutionary Party] in the military realm was the establishing of the armed forces of the revolution and their correct employment on the basis of the teaching of insurrection as an

art. In order to overthrow Tsarism, to crush the resistance of the overthrown classes and carry out revolutionary transformations, V. I. Lenin taught, the proletariat should be armed and have its own revolutionary army. In his work "The Revolutionary Army and Revolutionary Government," V. I. Lenin pointed out that "a revolutionary army is needed for military struggle and for military leadership over the masses of people against the vestiges of the military force of the autocracy. A revolutionary army is necessary because only force can resolve the great historical questions and the organization of force in the present struggle is military organization."(3)

When, after the January 1905 events in St. Petersburg which marked a beginning to the first Russian Revolution, and the questions of the organizational and military theoretical preparation for armed insurrection had arisen, V. I. Lenin urged the intensifying of Bolshevik agitation in the masses and the activating of organizational activities to establish revolutionary detachments. In a number of works written in 1905-1907, V. I. Lenin voiced the notion that the sooner the proletariat armed, the larger the number of soldiers which would refuse the role of a blind weapon in the hands of the Tsarist autocracy.(4) In the article "Lessons of the Moscow Insurrection," he concluded: "...If the revolution does not become a mass phenomenon and does not encompass the troops themselves, then there can be no question of a serious struggle."(5) For this reason revolutionary social democracy was confronted with the task of propagandizing the Tsarist Army and from the army's aware members, establish the military force of the revolution which at the crucial moment would go over to the side of the rebelling people.

The Third RSDRP Congress held in April 1905 defined the tasks of the proletariat as the driving force and leader of the revolution. It also outlined a strategic plan for the first stage of the struggle, and according to this the working class, in alliance with all the peasantry and with the isolating of the bourgeoisie, was to struggle for the victory of a bourgeois democratic revolution. On the report concerning armed insurrection and the attitude of the Social Democratic Party to it, a resolution written by V. I. Lenin was adopted and it instructed all the organizations "to adopt the most energetic measures to arm the proletariat as well as to elaborate a plan for armed insurrection and direct leadership of such, creating for this, as was required, special groups from party workers."(6) The congress issued instructions to the RSDRP committees to establish and strengthen Bolshevik military organizations as this would be one of the most important conditions for the military and technical preparation of armed insurrection.

In urging the Bolsheviks and the working class to master the art of insurrection, V. I. Lenin taught that this should be prepared for thoroughly and concretely. In emphasizing the enormous importance of the revolutionary initiative of the working class, he demanded that they study the strong and weak points of the enemy, he cautioned against underestimating the military force of the exploiting classes and demanded that the party organizations assimilate and actually rework the military knowledge which the enemy employed.

At the Third Party Congress, great attention was given to the questions of military-combat work which was aimed at establishing the armed forces of the

revolution. Here military work represented revolutionary activity in the Army and Navy aimed at creating and strengthening Bolshevik party organizations in the armed forces and at winning the masses of soldiers and sailors over to the side of the working class and the revolution. Combat work included the work of the Bolsheviks in the area of military instruction and combat training of the working class and laboring peasantry for armed insurrection. In the 1905-1907 Revolution, this was aimed at creating combat teams and detachments as well as arming and training their members.

After the Third RSDRP Congress, the party's military work in the troops intensified. The congress resolution concerning armed insurrection was the leading directive for the Bolshevik organizations on the spot. For example, the conference held at the end of June 1905 for the organizations of the Northern RSDRP Committee discussed the question "of the apparatus for preparing for armed insurrection." This question split into two parts: work among the troops and the establishing of special groups.(7) The conference handed down a special decree where it was pointed out that under the specific conditions of the current moment, it was extremely important for the party organizations to establish contact with the soldiers and intensify agitation among them.

For directing the military and technical preparations for armed insurrection, the RSDRP combat organizations were established under the party committees. These were headed by prominent party workers such as M. I. Vasilyev-Yuzhin, A.Ya. Litvin-Sedoy, M. V. Frunze, K. Ye. Voroshilov, I. F. Dubrovinskiy, the Kadomtsev brothers and others. The structure and the name of the combat organizations varied. The leading one among them was the Combat Technical Group Under the RSDRP Central Committee.

The growth of political strikes and demonstrations, the swelling of the peasant movement and the series of defeats of the Tsarist troops in the Russo-Japanese War had a revolutionizing influence on the Army and created favorable conditions for the work of the Bolsheviks in the troops. To a significant degree this was aided by the revolt which occurred in the second half of 1905 in the Army and Navy, particularly the revolt on the battleship "Potemkin." The going over of a major troop unit to the side of the revolution was an outstanding event in which V. I. Lenin saw an attempt to form the nucleus of a revolutionary army. During this period the importance of the military Bolshevik organizations increased sharply. Primary importance was given to them in the struggle for the army. In 1905, military organizations or special groups under the local RSDRP committees were established in the major industrial centers and in the next year virtually in all cities where troop units were stationed.

Newspapers and leaflets of the Bolshevik organizations were an important means of revolutionary influence on the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers. In this regard of great importance were the activities of the central organ of the RSDRP, the newspaper PROLETARIY, which widely treated the revolutionary movement and military work of the Bolsheviks. Then revolutionary newspapers began to be published for the Army and Navy: KAZARMA, SOLDATSKAYA MYSL, REVELSKIY VOYENNYI LISTOK and so forth. As a total during the years of the first Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks published

around 50 soldier newspapers. More than 2,000 leaflets under various titles were also printed.(8)

The military organizations in the leaflets addressed to the soldiers, sailors and Cossacks acquainted them with the actual situation in the nation and told in detail about the tasks of the proletariat and the peasantry in the struggle against the autocracy, the landowners and the capitalists. Thus, the military organization under the St. Petersburg RSDRP Committee in the leaflet "What a Soldier Needs" wrote: "You need freedom from the suppression of the barracks, the working people need free troops for defense against all the people's suppressors. You and the workers have the same goals and the same desires. And let the struggle also be the same. Join, comrades, with yourselves and with the working people...."(9)

Under the influence of revolutionary events and the Bolshevik agitation and propaganda, the Army and Navy were drawn into the revolutionary movement. The soldiers and sailors elected their own representatives to the soviets. Soviets of soldier and sailor deputies arose in a number of cities and garrisons.

The Bolshevik military organizations headed a whole series of actions and revolts by the soldiers. In the autumn of 1905, soldier actions occurred in Kharkov, Kiev, Minsk, Voronezh, Pskov, Warsaw and other cities. Then also revolts broke out in Vladivostok and Sevastopol.

In struggling for the creation of the armed forces of the proletariat and the revolution in 1905-1907, V. I. Lenin demanded that the Bolsheviks study military affairs and disseminate military knowledge in the masses. At the same time, he pointed out that for the victory of the revolution, in addition to this, it was essential that the revolutionary classes possessed sufficient moral and material strength, that is, excel in a high degree of awareness, have their own military organization capable of crushing the autocracy and destroying it as well as possess a sufficient amount of weapons.

Immediately after the Third Party Congress, the Bolsheviks initiated active work to establish combat crews as well as hundreds and thousands of combat detachments. V. I. Lenin recommended that these be formed throughout the city: in each city, rayon and population point. Along with his fellow workers, he took energetic measures to organize the purchasing of weapons and demanded that the combat teams arm themselves independently. Thus, on 16 October 1905, in the letter "To the Combat Committee Under the St. Petersburg Committee," V. I. Lenin wrote: "immediately establish combat teams everywhere both among the students and among the workers particularly, and so forth, and so forth. Let us immediately organize detachments from 3 to 10, to 30 and so forth men. Let them immediately arm themselves, those who can, either with a revolver, a blade, a rag with kerosene for lighting a fire and so forth. Let these detachments immediately choose their leaders and establish contact, if possible, with the Combat Committee under the St. Petersburg Committee."(10)

V. I. Lenin said that the productiveness of the combat work of a committee must be measured by the number of combat detachments and teams created by it.

In this same letter and later in the article "The Tasks of the Detachments of the Revolutionary Army," he outlined the main tasks of the combat detachments, their organizational structure, the rules and procedures of struggle. V. I. Lenin considered the principles of flexible tactics and active offensive operations to be the guiding principle for the training and employment of the combat detachments.

The revolutionary actions of the workers and soldiers received great support in the countryside and helped develop the revolutionary struggle of the broad masses of peasantry and which in the second half of 1905 engulfed the Central Chernozem region, the Volga, the Ukraine, Transcaucasus and Baltic.

By the autumn of 1905, the revolutionary movement had spread virtually throughout the country. The October political strike, this true nationwide strike encompassing 2 million persons, paralyzed the state apparatus and all economic life in the nation.

In November 1905, V. I. Lenin, returning from abroad to St. Petersburg, headed the party's activities in directing the revolutionary masses. He unmasked the plans of the counterrevolution and urged vigilance and organization on the proletariat.

The high point in the development of the first Russian Revolution was the December 1905 armed insurrection in Moscow. The worker combat teams for 9 days waged a heroic struggle against the troops of the Tsarist autocracy. The Muscovites were supported by the workers of Ivanov, Krasnoyarsk, Chita, Perm, Novorossiysk, Nizhniy Novgorod, Kharkov and other cities. The armed struggle in Latvia had a stubborn nature. The workers of Finland created their own Red Guard and raised an insurrection. The Donets Basin, Georgia and other regions of the nation were also engulfed in insurrection.

V. I. Lenin gave particular attention to the questions of partisan warfare. He linked its increased role to the involvement of the broadest masses of people in the Russian Revolution as well as with the strengthening and deepening of the class struggle. V. I. Lenin pointed to the link between partisan warfare and armed insurrection, to the subordination of the former to the latter, as the main type of armed struggle.(11) In fighting against the Mensheviks which were opponents of partisan actions, V. I. Lenin pointed out that this was an inevitable form of struggle at a time when a mass movement had already grown into an insurrection. In the draft resolution proposed by V. I. Lenin at the Fourth (United) RSDRP Congress, partisan actions were recommended as a means for disorganizing the enemy, for the combat indoctrination and military instruction of the combat teams, for preparing for massed armed actions which should grow into armed insurrection.

In analyzing the course of armed struggle under the conditions of the first Russian Revolution, Lenin pointed to the enormous importance of the moral factor for the proletariat's army. "A disdain for death," he wrote, "should spread in the masses and ensure victory." Also made was the underlying conclusion that "attack and not defense should be the slogan of the masses...."(12)

The defeat of the December armed insurrection did not halt the military and combat work of the Bolsheviks. On the contrary, in 1906, it assumed an even greater scope. Work in the army intensified. The military organizations directed a series of revolts in the Army and Navy (Sveaborg, Kronshadt and others). The movement assumed such a nature that the necessity arose of summing up the results of activities by the military and combat organizations of the Bolsheviks and work out a uniform platform of action. For this purpose, in November 1906, the first conference was convened in Tammerfors for the RSDRP military and combat organizations. At that time that the Menshevik Central Committee assumed a negative attitude toward the Tammerfors Conference, V. I. Lenin gave it enormous significance. In a special article devoted to the publishing of the verbatim record of the military-combat conference, V. I. Lenin pointed out that "virtually one-half of the bulky book is devoted to reports on the work in the troops...and on former attempts at armed insurrection.... This is extremely valuable material and all politically conscious Social Democratic Workers thank the military-combat conference for the initiative of assembling and working out the materials."(13)

The revolution of 1905-1907 was unable to be victorious over the Tsarist autocracy. Nevertheless, it was a major event in the history of Russia and had an enormous impact upon all the subsequent development of the nation. In the course of the fierce struggle against Tsarism, the foundation of a united revolutionary front was established for all the exploited and suppressed peoples of Russia with the Russian proletariat standing at the head.

The experience of the first Russian Revolution substantially enriched the theory and practice of class struggle and helped the people overthrow hated Tsarism in February 1917 and destroy the rule of the bourgeoisie in October. "This experience," emphasized the Decree of the CPSU Central Committee "On the 80th Anniversary of the 1905-1907 Revolution in Russia," "at present keeps lasting importance for the peoples acting for social and national liberation, for socialism and peace."(14)

FOOTNOTES

1. PRAVDA, 3 January 1985.
2. Ibid.
3. V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 10, p 338.
4. See: P. A. Golub, "Bolsheviki i armiya v trekh revolyutsiyakh" [The Bolsheviks and the Army in Three Revolutions], Moscow, Politizdat, 1977, p 40.
5. V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 13, p 372.
6. "KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK" [The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums], Moscow, Politizdat, Vol 1, 1983, p 126.

7. See: "Vpered i Proletariy (pervyye bolshevistskiye gazety 1905 g.)" [VPERED and PROLETARIY (The First Bolshevik Newspapers of 1905)], No 4, Gosizdat, 1925, p 56.
8. "Listovki bolshevistskikh organizatsiy v pervoy russkoy revolyutsii 1905-1907 gg." [Leaflets of the Bolshevik Organizations in the First Russian Revolution of 1905-1907], Gospolitizdat, Part 1, 1956, pp VII.
9. Ibid., Part 3, p 733.
10. V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 11, pp 336-337.
11. See: Ibid., Vol 13, p 375.
12. Ibid., p 376.
13. Ibid., Vol 15, p 298.
14. PRAVDA, 3 January 1985.

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IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF ENGINEER TROOPS IN GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 85 (signed to press 9 Oct 85) pp 66-70

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Col A. A. Soskov]

[Text] The diversity of tasks carried out by the engineer troops during the years of the Great Patriotic War necessitated a constant rise in their combat capabilities. This required an improvement in the organizational structure and a strengthening of the technical equipping of the troop, army, front and RVGK [Reserve Supreme High Command] units and formations of engineer troops.

On the eve of the war, the engineer troops of the Soviet Army in the military districts were represented by engineer and pontoon bridge regiments. During wartime the armies were to have separate motorized engineer and motorized pontoon bridge battalions, four separate companies (field water supply, camouflage, electrical equipment and hydraulic equipment), a deep drilling detachment and a separate reserve N2P bridging train. There were also plans to establish for each field force a separate reserve engineer regiment and a separate reserve special equipment company. In each rifle corps and division there was a separate combat engineer battalion and in a rifle regiment a combat engineer company. A mechanized corps included a separate mechanized engineer battalion while a tank division had a motorized pontoon bridge battalion and a motorized division had a light engineer battalion.

As for the technical equipment, by the start of the war, it was not sufficient in the troop formations and in a significant part of the district combat engineer formations on the Western border military districts. Moreover, a large number of combat engineer battalions was involved in the defensive construction of fortifications on the Western frontier and was away from their formations. In the course of the border engagements, they came under attack by the Nazi troops and suffered serious losses. These circumstances required the rapid organizing and dispatch to the operational army of a large number of army and front separate engineer, combat engineer and pontoon bridge battalions which during the first months of the war became the main organizational unit in the engineer troops. Extensive work was also carried out to establish combat engineer battalions designed for the newly organized rifle divisions which were being sent to the operational army.

In conducting the strategic defensive in 1941, ten combat engineer armies were organized. Each of these consisted, as a rule, of two-four engineer brigades with six-eight battalions.(1) Initially they were under the Main Directorate of Defensive Construction but from the end of November 1941, were placed under the Chief of the Soviet Army Engineer Troops. The combat engineer armies played the main role in preparing the rear defensive lines of state significance on the western and southwestern strategic sectors, particularly in preparing for the defense of Moscow, Stalingrad and the Caucasus.

With the transition of the Soviet troops from the strategic defensive to the strategic offensive, more maneuverable and technically equipped formations were required. For this reason, in February 1942, the GKO [State Defense Committee] adopted a decision to break up five of the combat engineer armies and put the remainder under the fronts. By November 1942, the remaining armies were also broken up. A portion of the formations comprising them was put under the fronts, while others were shifted to the RVGK, where from them 20 separate combat engineer and mining engineer brigades were organized.(2)

In April 1942, special-purpose engineer brigades were organized (up to May 1944, at varying times there were 14 such formations as a total in the operational army). They carried out their tasks with the aid of new engineer equipment such as remote controlled land mines, controlled minefields, electrified obstacles and so forth.

In the spring of 1942, the separate pontoon bridge battalions were combined into pontoon bridge brigades with N2P and DMP-42 bridging equipment. Pontoon bridge regiments were organized equipped with the new heavy TMP pontoon bridge train. These formations were essential for supporting the crossing of the numerous water obstacles on the course of the offensive operations.

During the first period of the war, the operational army also received 11 separate fleets of RVGK engineer vehicles where was concentrated the basic mass of earthmoving and road and bridge equipment. The fleets were assigned to the fronts and their subunits were assigned to the armies as reinforcements.(3)

For clearing the areas of the USSR which had been liberated from the Nazi invaders, upon instructions of Hq SHC, in February 1943, five rear mine-clearing brigades were organized consisting of five-seven engineer battalions in each.

On 30 May 1943, qualitatively new formations were established, the RVGK assault combat engineer brigades which were used in the interests of effective engineer support for the advancing troops in breaking through the heavily reinforced enemy defensive areas.

With the going over of the Soviet troops to offensive operations, the need for minelaying was significantly reduced and the RVGK mining engineer brigades were changed into broader-purpose formations, into the RVGK combat engineer brigades.(4) Simultaneously new combat engineer brigades were also organized.

Composition and Combat Capabilities of Engineer Formations of RVGK and Regular Brigades of Fronts and All-Arms Armies

Formations of Engineer Troops, Year of Their Formation	Composition	Weapons	Combat Capabilities of Brigades
1	2	3	4
Combat engineer brigade of RVGK (1942)	4 combat engineer battalions; crossing equipment	MLP pontoon bridging equipment -- 1 set; 16 LMN boats; 12 motorcycles; 80 mine detectors; 1,200 antitank mines; 1,200 antipersonnel mines; entrenching tool	During 12 hours to set 20,000-24,000 antitank mines; in 12 hours to equip 24-32 covered trenches (shelters); to make and maintain 108 passages in mixed enemy minefields; to dig up to 10 km of trenching in 12 hours; to put up a 9-14-ton floating bridge 80-100 m long in 1-1.5 hour; to carry across a water obstacle an assault force of up to 2 rifle platoons on LMN boats in 1 trip
Special-purpose engineer brigade (1942)	5-7 man-made obstacle battalions; 1 or 2 electrical equipment battalions; a special minelaying battalion; a detachment for electrification and mechanization of work	Sets of electrified obstacles; sets of controlled minefields; sets of radio-controlled land mines; equipment for mine-clearing and mine-laying; mobile electric plants; entrenching tool	To set electrified wire obstacles, controlled minefields, radio-controlled minefields, radio-controlled and wire-controlled land mines on the sectors of assumed enemy strikes in the area of a front; in 12 hours, depending upon the effective strength of the brigade, to set 20,000-25,000 or 28,000-35,000 antitank mines; in 12 hours depending upon the brigade's effective strength, to make 135 or up to 190 passages in enemy mixed minefields

1

2

3

4

RVGK pontoon bridge
brigade (1942)

4 pontoon bridge
battalions

4 sets of N2P
pontoon bridge
equipment; 4 saw
frames; 27 boats;
12 power saws;
24 mine detectors

To put up in 3-4 hrs a floating
bridge with a capacity of 16 tons
and 670 m long or a bridge for a
load up to 60 tons 244 m long; to
assemble over 3-4 hours 32 16-ton
or 20 30-ton rafts; to build a
low-level wooden bridge (80-100
linear m a day)

RVGK assault combat
engineer brigade
(1943)

5 assault combat
engineer battalions;
a separate motorized
engineer reconnais-
sance company;
crossing equipment;
a company of mine-
detector dogs (they
were previously not
in all brigades and
in 1944 they were
completely abolished)

675 steel vests;
1 set of MLP pontoon
bridge equipment;
22 LMN boats;
1 BMK-70 launch;
24 mine detectors;
entrenching tool

To strengthen 120-135 assault
groups or 40-45 assault detach-
ments with assault combat
engineers; to put up in 1-1.5 hr
a 9-14-ton floating bridge 80-
100 m long; in crossing a water
obstacle to move up to a rifle
company as an assault force on
LMN boats in a single trip; to
build a low-level floating bridge
(up to 80-100 m a day)

Motorized combat
engineer brigade of
front (1944)

3 motorized engineer
battalions; a elec-
trified obstacle
battalion; a special
minelaying company

7 power plants; sets
of radio-controlled
land mines;
entrenching tool;
mine detectors

To set radio-controlled land mines
at 50 objects and prepare for
detonation upon signal; to set
controlled mine and electrified
wire obstacles; to make and main-
tain 81-108 passages through enemy
obstacles; to erect 18-12 covered
trenches (shelters) in 12 hrs; to
set 12,000-15,000 antitank mines
in 12 hours

1
2
3
4

Combat engineer brigade of all-arms army (1944)

4 combat engineer battalions; separate motorized engineer reconnaissance battalion; bridging train

1 set of MLP pontoon bridge; 12 power saws; 16 LMN boats; 36 mine detectors; entrenching tool

In 1-1.5 hr to put up a 9-14-ton floating bridge; in 12 hrs to prepare 100-120 km of column track using existing roads; to build a low-level bridge (to 60-80 m a day); to make and maintain 108-144 passages through enemy mixed minefields; to lay over 12 hrs 16,000-20,000 antitank mines; to erect 24-28 covered trenches (shelters) in 12 hrs

The increasing saturation of the troop battle formations with tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount], particularly in breaching the enemy defenses, significantly increased the scope of missions for making passages through mixed minefields, including ahead of the forward defensive edge. This task was carried out by developing the PT-3 mine clearer which was mounted on a tank. The expanded output of clearers by industry made it possible from June 1943 to begin organizing engineer-tank regiments consisting of 22 tanks and 18 PT-3 clearers.(5) The mechanized method for making passages through mixed minefields was tested successfully for the first time in the 3d Guards Tank Army in the battles on the Bukrin beachhead and subsequently in the liberation of Kiev.

For increasing the maneuverability and rate of advance of the rifle, armored and mechanized troops in May 1944, the special-purpose engineer brigades were reorganized as motorized engineer brigades and put under the chiefs of the engineer troops of the fronts.

In the spring of 1944, as part of the 5 assault combat engineer brigades (the 2d and 22d Guards, the 20th, 21st and 23d), battalions of manpack flamethrowers were introduced and the amount of motor transport increased. The new brigades began to be called motorized engineer-assault. Engineer-tank regiments with the PT-3 clearers and regiments of flamethrower tanks were introduced in certain assault and motorized assault combat engineer brigades (1st, 2d, 4th, 10th and other).(6)

By the summer of 1944, due to the fact that the rear clearing brigades had begun to rebuild destroyed industrial enterprises, separate battalions of mine-detector dogs were organized. Each of these numbered 188 servicemen and 144 dogs.(7) Such units were used most effectively in the final inspecting of roads and installations. Moreover, around 30 separate mine-clearing detachments were organized in the system of the directorates of defensive construction. Each of these consisted of 4 mine-clearing companies and a company of mine-detector dogs (170 dogs).(8)

Of great importance was the organization in June 1944 of regular army combat engineer brigades the battalions of which were used both for reinforcing the corps as well as for carrying out the tasks of engineer support for the commitment of the second echelon to battle, for organizing crossings, for supporting the regrouping of troops and for establishing the army POZ [mobile obstacle construction detachment].(9)

In July-August 1944, motorized engineer brigades were established in the tank armies. In each such formation there were 2 motorized engineer battalions and a pontoon bridge battalion with a N2P train.

The composition and combat capabilities of the engineer formations of the RVGK, the fronts and the all-arms armies are shown in the Table.

The appearance of regular brigades in the fronts and armies increased their independence in engineer terms in all stages of the development of operations, particularly in carrying out such tasks as supporting the breakthrough of enemy defenses, preparing routes, establishing POZ and equipping the command

posts. If an army was to advance on the sector of the main thrust of a front, it usually was reinforced with additional engineer units and formations of the RVGK for carrying out the most important and extensive missions.

The increased number of engineer formations and the diversity of tasks carried out by them necessitated an improvement in the command bodies of the engineer troops, too. Under the Chief of the Soviet Army Engineer Troops, the position of which was introduced by the Order of Hq SHC of 28 November 1941, a staff of engineer troops was organized while in the fronts and armies the position of chief of the engineer troops and deputy commander of the front (army) and the staffs of the chiefs of the engineer troops were instituted.(10)

As a result of the measures carried out, the most acceptable organizational forms of the engineer troops were found and these met the requirements of those times; their TOE personnel on all levels was stabilized.

An important result in the search for new organizational forms for the engineer troops was their brigade organization. The number of formations during the war years constantly increased. Thus, while in November 1942, there were 37 brigades in the engineer troops, in January 1944, there were 58 and in September 1945, 109.(11)

The organizational measures carried out during the war years proved fully effective. The experience of their implementation has been successfully used also in improving the structure of the engineer troops during the postwar period.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 7, 1979, p 247.
2. "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol II, 1958, p 21.
3. "Inzhenernyye voyska Sovetskoy Armii v vazhnyeshikh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Engineer Troops of the Soviet Army in the Major Operations of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 7.
4. See: "Inzhenernyye voyska v boyakh za Sovetskuyu Rodinu" [Engineer Troops in the Battles for the Soviet Motherland], p 154.
5. TsAMO [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 69, inv. 24771, file 99, sheet 34.
6. Ibid., inv. 28975, file 2, sheet 110.
7. Ibid., inv. 12112, file 201, sheet 214.
8. Ibid., file 234, sheets 180-191.

9. See: "Inzhenernyye voyska Sovetskoy...", p 8.
10. See: "Sbornik voyevykh dokumentov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny"
[Collection of Combat Documents From the Great Patriotic War], Moscow,
Izd. Upravleniya izucheniya opyta voyny Generalnogo shtaba Vooruzhennykh
Sil SSSR, No 5, 1947, p 27.
11. "Inzhenernyye voyska v boyakh...", p 372.

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SEMINAR ON END OF NAZI OCCUPATION, CARRYING WAR INTO EASTERN EUROPE

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[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Docent, Col P. N. Bobylev, published under the rubric: "For Instructors of Military History": "Procedure for Holding a Seminar on the Subject 'The Complete Expulsion of the Enemy From the Frontiers of the Soviet Union. The Liberation of the European Peoples and the Final Defeat of Nazi Germany (January 1944-May 1945)'"]

[Text] In the procedural recommendations on studying the current subject(1), advice was given concerning the content and procedure for giving the lecture and in addition sample questions were offered for discussion at a seminar exercise (proceeding from the requirements of the standard curriculum for military history).

The educational and indoctrinational aims of a seminar exercise are to deepen and reinforce the knowledge of the officer candidates on the questions of the development of offensive combat tactics by the Soviet troops during the third period of the Great Patriotic War, to reinforce in them the skills developed for seeking out, generalizing and verbally setting out the teaching material, to develop in the future officers a feeling of pride for Soviet military art and to show its progressive nature.

At the seminar it is recommended that the following questions be reviewed: 1) the influence of changes in weaponry and the organization of the Soviet Army units and subunits in 1944-1945 on the development of Soviet military art; 2) the development of the art of breaking through a deliberate enemy defense in 1944-1945; 3) Particular features of Soviet troop combat in the storming of Berlin.

Considering the limited teaching time assigned for the seminar, it is important for the instructor to determine ahead of time the basic areas of discussing the questions. It is advisable to instruct one of the officer candidates to prepare an abstract for the first question.

A sample calculating of the time could be: the instructor's introductory speech up to 5 minutes; the hearing and discussion of the abstract up to 15 minutes; discussion of the second and third questions up to 30 minutes

each; a general conclusion by the instructor and a summing up of the results up to 10 minutes.

The difficulty of preparing the officer candidates for the exercise is that in the textbook the material on the development of tactics in the third period of the war has been given very concisely (pp 259-260) and can provide a guide only for the main areas of the question. In order that the officer candidates master the subject of the seminar profoundly, it is essential that the instructor assign them a list of additional literature. This can be the special aids on studying the development of tactics during the years of the Great Patriotic War written considering the specialization of the school as well as the books from the series "Tactics in Combat Examples" recommended for the officer candidates in the course of previous seminars and articles from VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL. The examples contained in the designated literature from the combat practices of 1944-1945 will make it possible to make the discussion at the seminar on the problems of military art more specific and also thorough.

The procedural recommendations given in the current article can be used as a guide for instructors from schools of varying specialization. Here the actual content of the questions examined at the seminar can be adjusted in accord with the specialty of the school, having paid the necessary attention to those tactical problems which determine the specific training features for the officer candidates.

In the **introductory speech**, the instructor should emphasize that during the third period of the Great Patriotic War, Soviet military art continued to develop, and in particular the tactics of all-arms combat. It would be beneficial to remind the officer candidates that all three campaigns of the Soviet troops during this period had an offensive nature and their content was comprised of the major strategic operations of the Soviet Army including the Belorussian, Iasi-Kishinev, Vistula-Oder, East Prussian, Berlin and others. The Soviet troops gained the most complete and diverse tactical experience in offensive battles. The commanders and staffs were guided by the instructions received in May 1944 for organizing the breakthrough of a positional defense.

Then the instructor should announce the goals and questions of the seminar and clarify the procedure of their discussion. Then the floor should be given to the officer candidate giving the abstract on the **first question**.

In giving the assignment to prepare the abstract, it is essential to recommend to the officer candidate, in the aim of ensuring the successiveness and consistency in studying the material, to briefly examine the main questions which were raised at preceding seminars on the first and second periods of the Great Patriotic War.

In the **abstract** it is essential to emphasize that the high moral-combat qualities of the men who had mastered the first-rate weapons made it possible for the Soviet Army to sustain outstanding victories in 1944-1945. In the designated period, due to the heroic labor of the Soviet people under the leadership of the Communist Party, the output of defense products reached high rates. There were changes both in many types of weapons and combat equipment

as well as their increased number in the units and formations. These changes were brought about by the demands of military art and at the same time themselves substantially influenced the further development of this art.

For example, it might be pointed out that the 7.62-mm carbine of the 1944 model with a fixed-hinged bayonet and which began to be received by the troops from February 1944 met the requirements of maneuvering combat better than a rifle. It is advisable to draw attention to the fact of the significant increase in the troops in the number of machine pistols (submachine guns) which made it possible at short ranges to provide a high density of fire, including in firing on the move, as well as the changes made in 1944 in other models of automatic weapons. As an illustration one might advise using examples from the book by D. N. Bolotin, "Sovetskoye strelkovoye oruzhiye" [Soviet Firearms] (Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, pp 43, 44, 122, 186, 272).

In the abstract it is essential to show the substantial qualitative changes which occurred in the artillery, armored equipment, aviation and means of control and to tell of their influence on the combat capabilities of the units and subunits, as well as the organization of combat.(2) Here it is essential to describe in greater detail the weapons and equipment which correspond to the area of training of the officer candidates.

Furthermore in the abstract it is essential to emphasize that in 1944-1945, the search was continued for the most effective organizational structure of the rifle formations and units in the aim of increasing their fire and attack capabilities. Particular mention must be made of the fact that at the end of 1944, a new TOE was introduced for a rifle division and this envisaged an increase in the number of the division's automatic weapons, artillery, motor transport and other equipment. Initially, only a portion of the formations, first of all the guards ones, was converted to the new structure. With insignificant changes the new TOE was adopted for the entire Soviet Army as of June 1945.

In order that the officer candidates could visibly trace the main changes in the TOE of a rifle division, it is essential to use Diagram No 1 found in the book "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh. Diviziya" [Tactics in Combat Examples. The Division] (Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976). This could be drawn ahead of time on the blackboard or on Whatman drawing paper.

If any of the officer candidates, after hearing the abstract and the answers of the speaker to the questions asked of him, wishes to make additions, in the aim of saving time it is possible to propose that this be done in the course of the further discussion of the seminar subject.

The **second question** of the seminar should be examined in the following sequence: a) the change in the combat missions of the subunits and units on the offensive; b) improving the battle formations of the subunits and units on the offensive; c) improving fire damage to the enemy in breaking through a deliberate defense; d) improving cooperation between the subunits and units in breaking through the enemy defenses.

In examining the first two subquestions, it is essential to use the diagram "Offensive Combat. Combat Missions and Battle Formations on the Offensive," and namely that portion relating to 1944-1945.

The attention of the officer candidates must be drawn to the fact that from the summer of 1943, for the rifle division not only the immediate and subsequent tasks were given but also the task of the day. This made it possible to more accurately establish the sequence of defeating the enemy and in accord with this to plan the use of the available resources as well as better organize cooperation and command.

In order to help the officer candidates understand the essence of the occurring changes, they might be asked the following question: why did the increase in the overall depth of the combat mission for a rifle division from 10-12 km in the second period of the war to 12-16 km in the third period occur basically due to the increased depth of the day's task, while the depth of the near and subsequent tasks remained virtually unchanged? In directing the course of thought of the trainees, it is essential to see to it that they realize that along with the increased capabilities of the Soviet troops during the third period of the war, the strength of the enemy defenses increased in the main zone, the depth of which changed insignificantly. Under these conditions, the rifle regiments carried out combat missions of approximately the same depth (5-6 km) as in the second period of the war. In carrying out the task of the day, the rifle division crossed enemy defenses to a greater depth than in 1943.

In discussing the question of the battle formations of the units and subunits in 1944-1945, it is important to emphasize that for breaking through the deliberate enemy defenses, significant men and weapons were required, particularly on the sectors of the main thrusts (this can be illustrated by the speakers at the seminar by using the table located on the recommended diagram).

Certain officer candidates, in discussing this seminar question, limit themselves to merely listing the elements of the battle formation designated on the diagram. At the exercise it is important that the instructor see to it that the trainees clearly understand the necessity and advisability of deep battle formations as recommended by the instructions for breaking through a positional defense. Such a configuration of them made it possible to increase the force of the strike in the course of combat. The power of the initial strike against the enemy defenses also increased (regardless of the drop in the number of battalions and companies in the first, attacking echelon), since the fire capability increased in the formations and units which, in addition, had been significantly reinforced. It is also essential to point out that the requirement of the deep echeloning of the battle formations did not apply to the subunits up to the company, inclusively. The officer candidates can find the necessary factual material for preparing for the seminar in the book "Proryv podgotovlennoy oborony strelkovymi soyedineniyami. Po opytu Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg. Sbornik statey" [The Breakthrough of a Deliberate Defense by Rifle Formations. From the Experience of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. A Collection of Articles] (Moscow, Voenizdat, 1957, pp 81, 88, 89, 90, 276, 279).

In examining the dynamics of offensive combat, it is advisable to use the diagram "Offensive Combat. Breaking Through the Enemy Tactical Defensive Zone by a Rifle Corps From the Experience of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945." For preparation it is recommended that the officer candidates turn to the book "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh. Polk" [Tactics in Combat Examples. The Regiment] (Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, pp 87-94, 96-100, 103-105, 109-110) and VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 5, 1975, pp 38-40.

In discussing the given problem, chief attention should be focused on the particular features of fire damage, the attack and defeat of the enemy at the first position of its defenses, the use of second echelons and reserves, the repelling of counterattacks, and the pursuit of retreating units in the operations of 1944-1945. If time permits, it is possible to examine the example of the combat of a rifle company in the enemy rear which is instructive in the enterprising and decisive actions of the subunit personnel.

For this purpose, the instructor must take care that the officer candidates in the course of their independent work read the appropriate chapter of the book "Boevyye deystviya strelkovoy rotы" [Combat Operations of a Rifle Company] (Moscow, Voenizdat, 1957, pp 188-192).

In moving on to a discussion of the **third question** of the seminar, it is essential to emphasize that combat in a city, particularly such a large one as Berlin, differed from combat under field conditions. The instructor should point to the most characteristic traits of combat in a city: the restricted nature of view and field of fire, the limited nature of maneuver not only for the subunits and units but also for fire, the difficulty of command, the close contact with the enemy and so forth.

The particular features of the storming of Berlin should be examined in the following areas: a) the tactics of the shock detachments and groups; b) the use of artillery, tanks and aviation; c) command and control of combat in a city.

In beginning the discussion of the particular features of the fighting of the shock detachments and groups, the following question might be asked: why was precisely this tactics employed in fighting in the city?

In the course of reflecting over this, the officer candidates would realize that an offensive with a solid front around the entire perimeter of the city could lead to a significant scattering of men and weapons and to a slowdown in the rate of advance. With such a method of action of our units and subunits, the enemy could count on bleeding the Soviet troops white in stubborn battles for each house. The tactics of fighting with reinforced subunits along axes made it possible to split the Nazi defenses into individual centers and paralyze their command and control.

Then the seminar should examine the fighting strength and actions of the shock detachments.(3) In particular, this could be done in greater detail from the example of the 1st Battalion of the 756th Rifle Regiment from the LXXIX Rifle Corps of the 3d Shock Army.(4) It is important to focus basic attention on an analysis of the configuration of the battle formation, the actions of the

subunits in attacking an objective and the use of all types of weapons by them. Particular emphasis must be put on the fact that fighting in a city under the conditions of the isolation of the subunits and even individual soldiers required initiative, boldness and valor.

The seminar must help the officer candidates in more profoundly understanding the particular features of employing artillery in the storming of Berlin. It is important to point out that a significant portion of all caliber of the artillery was employed for direct laying. Here the heavy guns took up firing positions, as a rule, at night, while the light ones did this at any time of the day. At the seminar attention should be drawn to the fact that in destroying buildings on narrow streets, when heavy guns could not be employed, large-caliber M-31 antitank guided missiles were used and these were launched from the ground or through window openings from jerry-rigged mounts and even directly from the carrying box.

A discussion of the question of the employment of tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount] should be restricted to an analysis of their joint actions with the infantry. It is important that the officer candidates realize why a motorized rifle battalion usually advanced along one or two streets while a tank battalion moved along two or three, as in this manner the tanks could be protected from close antitank fire from artillery and hand-held antitank grenade launchers (bazookas).

A characteristic feature in air operations in the storming of Berlin was that aviation maintained complete air supremacy. However, in the seminar it is desirable to point out that the employment of aviation was impeded by haze laying over the city from numerous fires as well as by the fact that the ground troops fighting in small subunits could not always precisely designate their position or the forward edge.

The talk on the question of command and control should be assigned ahead of time to one of the officer candidates. It is important to suggest that he bring out the specific features of command of combat in the city and these, in particular, consisted in the limited opportunities for observation and the existence in the immediate rear of the Soviet troops of unneutralized enemy subunits and individual soldiers which by various methods endeavored to disrupt command. Under such conditions the headquarters bodies moved as close as possible to the troops. As a rule, the commander and staff of a regiment were 200-300 m away from the forward subunits while the commanders of battalions, companies and platoons were directly in the battle formations of their subunits, controlling them by voice, signals and by messengers.(5) It is desirable to emphasize at the seminar that the personal contact of superior chiefs with subordinates was of great importance since the use of the then existing communications equipment was very difficult in the course of fighting in a city.

In summing up the results of the discussion of this question, the instructor must point to the importance of party-political work in mobilizing the personnel to storm Berlin, the vanguard role of the communists and Komsomol members who carried out the most responsible and dangerous missions and the

high morale of the Soviet soldiers who were determined to raise the Victory Banner over Berlin and carry out this historic mission with honor.

In conclusion, the instructor must assess the exercise as a whole, the abstract and the comments by the officer candidates and (when necessary) provide additional information on the questions which were not sufficiently taken up in the seminar.

It is also important to point out that much from the combat experience of the Soviet troops during the third period of the Great Patriotic War (the organization and implementation of breaking through the deliberate enemy defenses, the achieving of a high rate of advance and its continuity, the crossing of water obstacles without a pause and so forth) have not lost their importance for improving the tactical training of the subunits and units under present-day conditions.

FOOTNOTES

1. See: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 3, 1984, pp 83-89.
2. See: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 8, 1977, pp 356-357; Vol 9, 1978, pp 395-396; Vol 10, 1979, pp 412-416, 439.
3. See: "Berlinskaya operatsiya 1945 g." [The Berlin Operation of 1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1950, p 454; "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 10, p 339.
4. "Boyevyye deystviya strelkovogo polka. Sbornik boyevykh primerov" [Combat Operations of a Rifle Regiment. Collection of Combat Examples], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, pp 204-228.
5. "Berlinskaya operatsiya 1945...", p 468.

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3. "Boyevyye deystviya strelkovogo polka. Sbornik boyevykh primerov" [Combat Operations of a Rifle Regiment. Collection of Combat Examples], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, pp 73-139, 204-228.
4. "Proryv podgotovlennoy oborony strelkovymi soyedineniyami. Po opytu Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg. Sbornik statey" [Breaking Through a Deliberate Defense by Rifle Formations. From the Experience of

the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. A Collection of Articles], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1957, pp 108-373.

5. "Razvitiye taktiki Sovetskoy Armii v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg." [The Development of Soviet Army Tactics in the Years of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, pp 111-117, 126, 147, 174-180, 184-188.
6. "Sovetskiye Vooruzhennyye Sily. Istoriya stroitelstva" [The Soviet Armed Forces. The History of Organizational Development], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1978, pp 341-368.
7. "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh. Polk" [Tactics in Combat Examples. The Regiment], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, pp 7-138.
8. "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh. Diviziya" [Tactics in Combat Examples. The Division], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, pp 7-146.
9. F. D. Vorobyev, et al., "Posledniy shturm (Berlinskaya operatsiya 1945 g.)" [The Last Storm (The Berlin Operation of 1945)], 2d Edition, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, pp 303-412.
10. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 5, 1975, pp 36-43.

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MAR ARMORED TRPS O. A. LOSIK

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 85 (signed to press 9 Oct 85) pp 78-80

[Article by Hero of the Soviet Union, Army Gen P. N. Lashchenko, published under the rubric: "Military History Dates"; the article was written on the occasion of the 70th birthday of O. A. Losik]

[Text] 4 December marks the 70th birthday of the Soviet military leader, Hero of the Soviet Union, Prof, Mar Armored Trps Oleg Aleksandrovich Losik. His career in many ways is similar to the biographies of other Soviet military leaders who emerged from the people and were trained by the CPSU.

O. A. Losik was born in the town of Yartsevo, Smolensk Oblast, in a teacher's family. After completing the Slavyansk Railroad School for Factory-Plant Studies in 1933 in the specialty of steam locomotive engineer, he held positions in elective Komsomol jobs. In 1935, under Komsomol recruitment, he was sent to the First Saratov Tank School. After completing his studies in 1938, Oleg Aleksandrovich was appointed to the position of tank platoon commander in the Leningrad Military District. The young officer received his baptism in fire in the war against the White Finns, while holding the position of assistant chief of staff of the 112th Separate Tank Battalion. For courage and steadfastness shown in the battles on the Karelian Isthmus, he was awarded the Order of the Red Star.

At the beginning of June 1941, O. A. Losik was appointed to the 43d Tank Division of the Kiev Separate Military District. In holding the position of assistant chief of the operations department of the formation staff, he dedicated all his energies to introducing the combat experience gained in the war against Finland into the troop training and indoctrination practices.

From the very first days of the Great Patriotic War, Oleg Aleksandrovich was involved in combat against the Nazi invaders, including in the tank engagement in the area of Brody, Dubno, Rovno as part of the Southwestern Front. At the peak of the fierce clashes with the Nazis in August 1941, he was admitted to the party. Oleg Aleksandrovich also fought the Nazis on the Stalingrad and Don Fronts, respectively, in the positions of the chief of staff and the deputy commander of the 10th Tank Brigade. In 1943, O. A. Losik as part of the troops of the Western Front, took an active part in the Yelnya Offensive

Operation. In the battles for Yelnya, the 119th Separate Tank Regiment which he led distinguished itself along with other units. For successful combat the regiment was awarded the name Yelnya, and its commander was given the Order of Suvorov, 3d Degree. In the petition to award O. A. Losik the military rank of colonel, the commander of the armored and mechanized troops of the 10th Guards Army wrote: "...Personally Comrade Losik is brave in combat, he shows boldness, self-sacrifice and restraint, he is strong-willed, demanding and has good military and political development."(1)

In December 1943, Col O. A. Losik became the commander of the 4th Guards Tank Brigade of the II Tatsinsk Guards Tank Corps. The appointment to this position was recognition of his combat achievements and talent as a commander.

A vivid page in the history of the Great Patriotic War was the expulsion of the Nazis from the capital of Belorussia, Minsk. On 3 July 1944, at dawn, the 4th Guards Tank Brigade was the first to break into the city and reach the center. For skillful command of the formation and for courage shown, the brigade's commander, Col O. A. Losik, was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. The famous T-34 tank raised on a granite pedestal in the center of Minsk became a worthy monument to the heroism and courage of the formation's men. To the base a marble slab has been attached with the inscription in gold letters: "The the valorous men of the 4th Minsk Guards Tank Brigade of the II Tatsinsk Guards Tank Corps, the first to enter Minsk on 3 July 1944 in liberating it from the Nazi invaders."

The 4th Guards Tank Brigade led by O. A. Losik together with the other formations from the corps also participated in the Kaunas, Insterburg and Konigsberg Operations.

During the war years, the 119th Separate Tank Regiment and the 4th Guards Tank Brigade under the command of O. A. Losik were repeatedly mentioned in the orders of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief as among the distinguished units and formations.

After the war, O. A. Losik completed the Military Academy of the General Staff with a gold medal, he was in command of a mechanized division, a rifle corps and an all-arms army and was the first deputy and later the commander of the Red Banner Far Eastern Military District.

From May 1969, Oleg Aleksandrovich led the Military Academy of the Armored Troops. He is the author of a number of scientific-theoretical works and important scientific research has been carried out under his leadership. In 1972, O. A. Losik was awarded the academic title of professor and in 1975, the military rank of marshal of armored troops.

Oleg Aleksandrovich is engaged in great party and social work. He was a delegate to the 22d, 24th, 25th and 26th CPSU Congresses and has been elected a deputy of the supreme soviets of the Union and autonomous republics. He has been repeatedly elected and presently is a deputy of the Moscow City Soviet. He was elected an honorary citizen of the towns of Yelnya and Yartsevo. By the order of the USSR minister of defense, in April of this year, Oleg

Aleksandrovich was entered as an Honorary Soldier of the Guards Tank Unit of the Order of Lenin, Transbaykal Military District.

All the life of Mar Armored Trps O. A. Losik has been closely tied to the communist party and he has been a member for over 40 years. Oleg Aleksandrovich effectively and constantly carries out the CPSU decisions into life. In his practical activities he has relied skillfully on the political bodies and party organizations, combining collectivism in leadership with high personal responsibility for the assigned job.

For achievements to the motherland, O. A. Losik has been awarded two Orders of Lenin, the Order of the October Revolution, three Orders of the Red Banner, the Order of Suvorov Third Degree, two Orders of the Patriotic War First Degree, two Orders of the Red Star, the Orders "For Service to the Motherland in the USSR Armed Forces" Second and Third Degrees and many USSR medals as well as foreign orders and medals.

Oleg Aleksandrovich is celebrating his 70th anniversary full of creative forces and energy and is devoting all his knowledge and great combat experience to the cause of training and indoctrinating the officer personnel for the Soviet Armed Forces. We cordially congratulate him on his anniversary and wish him many years of life and further successes in strengthening the defense capability of the Soviet motherland.

FOOTNOTE

1. Personal file of O. A. Losik.

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REVIEW OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR ENCYCLOPEDIA

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 85 (signed to press 9 Oct 85) pp 81-83

[Review by Lt Gen (Ret) K. F. Kalashnikov of "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945. Entsiklopediya" (The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. An Encyclopedia), Moscow, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1985, 832 pages, 35 pages of illustrations]

[Text] Izdatelstvo Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya together with the Military History Institute of the USSR Ministry of Defense has published a fundamental work "Belikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945. Entsiklopediya" [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. An Encyclopedia]. The single-volume publication includes reference materials on the events of the last war on the front and in the rear, on many individual military leaders who have gone down once and for all in the history of our nation, on the valorous heroes of the battles and engagements, the partisans and the members of the underground, on the leaders of the defense industry, the workers of production and agriculture, on the scientists and designers of military equipment, on writers, composers and artists -- all of those who made their contribution to our victory, bringing it closer by their unstinting labor.

The encyclopedia opens with a brief military-political essay on the Great Patriotic War (pp 7-28). Here the basic information is set out on the dividing of the war into periods, its course and main events and the major strategic operations of the Soviet Armed Forces. All of this is correlated to the course of World War II as a whole.

The military-political essay provides a sound ideological and theoretical basis for the encyclopedically compressed and at the same time extensive explanation of all the historical facts and phenomena which occurred.

The encyclopedia articles bring out the great organizational activities of the Communist Party and its Central Committee in mobilizing the Soviet people to repulse the enemy, to turn the entire nation into a single military camp and provide the necessary conditions for a crushing defeat of the hordes of Nazi invaders.

In such articles as "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union" (pp 351-361), "Party Development" (pp 542-543), the party's activities during the war years are disclosed in all their diversity, the specific methods of its work, the work of the leading party bodies as well as the primary organizations on the spot, on the front and in all the national economic sectors are revealed.

The work provides information on the membership and practical activities of the State Defense Committee [GKO] and its representatives on the spot and on the defense committees set up in the cities located in the frontline zone.

All data concerning the life of the nation during the war years, taken in their aggregate and reinforced by the appropriate statistical material, recreate a picture of the historic feat of our people who under the leadership of the Communist Party in the fight against German Naziism defended the victories of Great October.

In the encyclopedia a great deal of attention is given to party political work which was carried out in the operational Army and Navy. However, one is perplexed by the fact that in the reviewed work there is no reference material on the political directorates of the fronts and fleets which played a primary role in organizing and carrying out all ideological, party organizational and political indoctrinational work among the Army and Navy personnel. The article on political bodies (p 571) mentions the political directorates of the fronts only in passing, without any description of their functions or the essence of the diverse work carried out by them. Incidentally, the article is wrong in its examination of the structure of the political bodies in the Soviet Armed Forces during the war years. The sections for party work in the mechanized units and the same sections in the Air Forces units as well as the positions of agitators for work among men of non-Russian nationality did not exist in all the political directorates. In certain political directorates of the fronts, the existing sections for party organizational work were only strengthened by introducing new positions of inspectors for aviation, armored troops and artillery.

Those using the encyclopedia will be aided by the list it contains of battles, operations and engagements of the Great Patriotic War articles for which are found in the single volume (p 31) as well as the list of the formations and units of all the Armed Services which particularly distinguish themselves on the front (pp 827-830).

As a total the encyclopedia contains around 3,300 articles on the most diverse questions related to the course of armed combat in 1941-1945.

Thoroughly examined are all the operations of a front scale as well as the battles which have gone down in history according to the names of the cities at whose walls they were fought. Among these one must mention first of all such articles as "The Battle of Moscow of 1941-1942" (pp 464-466), "The Battle of Leningrad of 1941-1944" (pp 402-404), "The Battle of Stalingrad of 1942-1943" (pp 682-685), "The Battle for the Caucasus of 1942-1943" (pp 100-101), "The Kursk Battle of 1943" (pp 392-394) and "The Battle for the Dnieper of 1943" (pp 98-100). Valuable factual material is also found in the articles on the Smolensk Battle, the Defense of Kiev, and on the major strategic

operations in the third period of the war including the Belorussian, Iasi-Kishinev, Petsamo-Kirkenes, Vistula-Oder, East Prussian and, finally, the Berlin. It must be said that, for example, such a term as the "Battle of Leningrad," both in terms of the very name and the encompassed period of combat, up to now has been employed only in popular military writing. The authors have put it into scientific use and we feel this is successful and completely justified.

The single volume shows also the great liberating mission of the Soviet Armed Forces which honorably carried out their international duty and brought escape from Nazi suppression for many European peoples.

The encyclopedia gives information on all the fronts and fleets which fought as part of the Armed Forces in 1941-1945 as well as the all-arms, tank, air and air defense armies and naval flotillas. Also given are the combat engineer armies (pp 633-634) and there is very little information on their existence in the military history literature. Data are also found on the most distinguished formations, units and ships and their campaign record is traced.

Of important significance in both cognitive and methodological terms are such encyclopedia entries as "Military Science" (pp 140-141), "Military Art" (pp 148-151) and "Strategic Leadership" (p 689). As for the entries on historiography found in the work (pp 304-309), this somewhat broadens the work's framework, making it possible for the readers when necessary to turn to additional sources which in greater detail trace the essence of the individual problems. At the same time, we would like to point out that military history literature in this entry is represented too selectively and it does not contain information on many books dealing with the actions of the Army and Navy in the last war.

An indisputable merit of the reviewed work is that virtually each article contains a bibliography on the given subject and essentially recently published sources are cited.

The book is well illustrated and it contains a set of multicolored diagrams for the major operations, it depicts the combat decorations struck during the war years, the insignias and uniforms of the servicemen of the Soviet Army and Navy as they existed in wartime.

At the same time, we would like to make several comments and voice certain requests for improving the work in a republishing.

The responses which have been received about the encyclopedia and the already published reviews have voiced the opinion that the articles contained on its pages dealing with the Heroes of the Soviet Union do not encompass all the participants of the war who received this honorary title. We feel that such a demand could scarcely be feasible as to give even brief information on each of the Heroes of the Soviet Union would require another several volumes. On the other hand, the encyclopedia for some reason did not include ubiquitously famous heroes the feats of whom are for all times linked with the history of the Great Patriotic War. The names of such war participants as M. Yegorov and M. Kantariya who erected the Victory Banner on the top of the Reichstag in

Berlin have long become legendary and in the encyclopedia their names are not found. The same can be said about the fighter pilot M. Devyatayev who carried out a daring flight from Nazi captivity on an aircraft captured from the enemy as well as about the three soldiers from the 225th Rifle Division of the Volkhov Front, Sgt I. S. Gerasimenko and Red Armymen A. S. Krasilov and L. A. Cheremnov who at the end of January 1942 carried out an immortal feat. In the course of an attack they simultaneously threw themselves into the firing slits of enemy pillboxes in order to block them with their body. Also remaining outside the view of the encyclopedia publishers are certain well-known military leaders such as Army Gen N. G. Lyashchenko, Mar Armored Trps O. A. Losik, Adm S. M. Lobov and Lt Gen K. N. Derevyanko who signed for the Soviet Union the Act of Unconditional Surrender for militaristic Japan.

Unfortunately, the encyclopedia has also made certain factual inaccuracies. Thus, on p 195, it is asserted that Army Gen K. A. Meretskov received the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union on 18 June 1944 while in fact the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet concerning this was published in the autumn of 1944, after the successful conclusion of the Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation by the troops of the Karelian Front under the command of K. A. Meretskov.

There are also definite flaws, in our view, in the make-up of the book. All the portraits for the biographical entries are of one format. We feel that the photographs of the members of the State Defense Committee and Hq SHC, the prominent leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet government, the commanders of the fronts and fleets as well as the outstanding military leaders should have been made larger. Space for this could have been found at the expense of numerous photographs which have no direct bearing to the published entries and at times duplicate one another. Thus, the photograph on p 523 which captures the moment of dropping a depth charge from a subchaser actually repeats the same frame found on an insert (p 21).

As a whole, one must note the high scientific level of the publication and its value as a fundamental general work which embodies the achievements of Soviet military history science and all the wealth of the Soviet historiography of the Great Patriotic War gained over a more than 40-year period. The editorial board has done great work in selecting the material and preparing the encyclopedia for publishing, having provided a high ideological and scientific level for the publication.

The encyclopedia is a valuable contribution to Soviet historical science. It will be not only a desk reference for specialist historians. Everyone interested in the history of the Great Patriotic War will turn to it. It will be of great use to the officer personnel of the Soviet Army and Navy in indoctrinating the men in the glorious combat traditions of the Soviet Armed Forces. Our youth will also find much that is of interest for itself in the encyclopedia in endeavoring to know as much as possible about the immortal feats of the older generations.

Along with solving other problems, this book undoubtedly will play an important role in further unmasking the bourgeois falsifiers of history who still endeavor to play down the contribution of the Soviet Union, its Army and

Navy to defeating German Naziism and Japanese militarism and nullify the results of the last war.

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