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4 MARCH 1987

USSR REPORT
MILITARY AFFAIRS

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 10, October 1986

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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RISE, DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICER CERTIFICATION IN USSR ARMED FORCES

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 10, Oct 86 (signed to press 23 Sep 86) pp 12-19

[Article by Col V.G. Lebedev; text enclosed in slant lines originally in italics]

[Text] The USSR Armed Forces are ending their regular officer certification. This is a measure of great political importance which should increase in the officers, generals and admirals their feeling of personal responsibility for carrying out the decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress. This, undoubtedly, is an important time in the professional development of the military personnel and an active incentive for them to achieve new heights in military service. It has made it possible to clarify the prospects for their placement and further growth. Starting now is the next, equally important stage in certification work involving the elimination of the disclosed shortcomings and the implementing of the certification conclusions.

Officer certification which is periodically conducted in the USSR Armed Forces is a historical tradition of many years and creative in its development. This arose as one of the important components in the system of measures of the Communist Party to develop and strengthen the military personnel in the world's first socialist state. From the very outset certification has been based upon the Leninist principle of the recruitment and placement of personnel according to their professional and political qualities and these are the cornerstone of all party personnel policy. In constantly affirming and developing these principles, the CPSU and the Soviet government have shown constant concern for improving the officer certification system.

The study and greatest possible creative employment of the rich historical experience gained in conducting certification work undoubtedly will help in a better quality solution to the problems of further strengthening the military personnel at the present stage in the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces.

* * *

The first step which marked the start to the certification of Red Army command personnel was the organizing of the special certification commission under the

People's Commissariat in accord with the Order of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs of 5 April 1918, No. 268, with the task of drawing up lists and collecting information on the persons invited to work in the military department. All the military units and facilities were obliged within a 2-week period to send to the people's commissariat lists of candidates which they considered possible to recommend for specific positions with the listing of combat achievements and other data describing these individuals. The lists were to be published in the press so that each person could inform the people's commissariat of their comments on one or another candidate. Assignment to all positions in the military department without fail was to be carried out solely from the candidates included on the lists and "against whom there had been no substantiated criticisms verified by the certification commission."

Such a procedure for manning the Red Army with command personnel, in being based upon the extensive publicizing and discussion of the candidates, was to ensure a complete study of the individuals assigned to leading military posts and restrict the possibility of the access of elements which were politically unreliable or even hostile to the socialist revolution to the Red commanders.

The development of extensive fighting on the fronts of the Civil War and the related necessity of effectively resolving personnel questions demanded changes in the initially adopted system for filling command positions. An assessment of the matching of command personnel to the positions held and the promotion of them to higher positions began to be carried out through certification procedures directly by the commanders and commissars of the troop units and formations considering the personal combat qualities and dedication to Soviet power shown by the servicemen on the Civil War fronts.

/It must be pointed out that a predominant majority of the commanders and commissars has shown a responsible attitude to assessing the combat qualities of subordinates. This, in particular, can be seen from the certification written by the member of the RVS [Revolutionary Military Council] of the 4th Army of the Eastern Front concerning the Div Cmdr V.I. Chapayev. It points out that V.I. Chapayev excels "in the ability in a combat situation to master the modern mass" and the ability "by feats of total bravery, by firmness of will and decisiveness to force the carrying out of orders." It was pointed out that he possesses "a clear understanding of the necessity of coordinating the actions of the combat units for victory. He has an understanding of maneuver and attack. He has boldness in taking decisions. He possesses military good sense."(1)/

Such a practice of certifying military personnel was approved by the 8th RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Congress.(2) This was reflected in the military legislation. In accord with the "Provisional Rules on Promotion of Individuals From the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Command Personnel to Superior Command Positions and on the Certification of These Individuals" put into effect by the Order of the People's Commissar for Military Affairs of 19 September 1919, No. 1494, the right of promoting servicemen to command posts began to be granted to the commanders and commissars of the units and formations, and to the positions of the latter, by the military councils of the armies and fronts. Promotion was carried out

using candidate lists drawn up on the basis of the quarterly certification of command personnel by special commissions. At the same time, minimum times were set for serving in basic positions and providing the right with an affirmative certification to a service promotion. The rules emphasized the strict responsibility of individuals for the objectivity of the certifications and the soundness of recommendations for promotion to superior positions.

But this procedure for recruiting and placing military personnel under wartime conditions did not ensure effectiveness in filling the command positions. In line with this, by the order of the Republic Revolutionary-Military Council [RVSR] of 23 May 1920, No. 899, the certification commissions were temporarily abolished. The questions of appointment to positions began to be settled directly according to the ideas of the commanders and commissars, without preliminary certification.

In March 1921, the RVSR, having studied the state of affairs in the recruitment and placement of military personnel, paid special attention to the necessity of the primary promotion to higher positions of command personnel who in the recent past had been rank-and-file Red Armymen. "These superiors who emerged from the ranks of the proletariat," stated the Order of the RVSR of 1 March 1921, No. 504, "being true defenders of the revolution and the victories of worker-peasant Soviet power, are particularly valuable for the army; it is essential to value them and with the first opportunity to promote them to the next higher positions."

The provisional nature of the measures related to abolishing the system of periodic certification of the command personnel and the elimination of the certification commissions was confirmed by the decisions of the 10th RKP(b) Congress which pointed to the necessity of the extensive renewal and strengthening of the Army and Navy commanders and political bodies.(3) For carrying out this task, by the Order of the RVSR of 2 September 1921, No. 1915, certification political commissions were created under the political bodies and military councils. They were entrusted with the drawing up of completely sound recommendations (certifications) for the political personnel with sound, well-reasoned conclusions for each certified person. The conclusions should reflect: conformity of the political worker to the held position, the advisability of transferring him to another unit, sending to studies, promotion, or transfer to command, military-administrative soviet work and other questions.

The experience of political personnel certification carried out in accord with the decisions of the party congress was later widely drawn upon in preparing the "Rules for Certification of Command and Administrative Personnel of the RKKA" issued in 1921. These Rules, in being formulated on the basis of Leninist demands on work with military personnel, maintained their fundamental importance over all the subsequent organizational development of the Armed Forces.(4)

The Order of the RVSR of 25 September 1921 which put the new Rules into effect emphasized that certification was one of the most important forms for strengthening the command personnel and for increasing the combat capability of the Red Army. All commanders and superiors should approach the question of

the certification of command personnel with a sense of high responsibility and conscientiousness. "Certification can produce the necessary results only when," the order stated, "the commanders and superiors of all levels show a most serious attitude toward it, when they will think through and firmly assimilate those demands which should be made in filling command and administrative positions in the Red Army and will take measures for the most careful, detailed and thorough familiarization with their subordinates for a correct and objective assessment of them."

According to the new procedure, certification was to be carried out annually. The text of the certifications were to show the political convictions, volitional qualities, the degree of discipline, energy, decisiveness, initiative and quick-wittedness of the commander, his ability to understand a situation, dealings with subordinates, attitude toward official duties, level of general educational and technical training, combat experience and revolutionary accomplishments. The drawing up of certifications in the form of questionnaires without the specific establishing of the various qualities of the person being certified was not to be permitted. The certifications were to be written in the form of a "complete, terse, graphic and complete essay" on the commander and containing a well-reasoned conclusion concerning his further service employment.

Each certification was to be reviewed at a session of the certification commission and approved by the commander and commissar. Here chief attention was to be paid to the conformity of the certification to the actual professional and moral qualities of the person being certified. The drawing up of a certification which did not conform to actuality due to the fact that the certifier had poor knowledge of the subordinate was viewed as one of the indications that the certifier did not meet the qualifications of the position held. Prejudice or unobjectivity of the certifier "out of malicious intent" would mean turning over to a military tribunal. The person certified was to be acquainted with the conclusions of the certification commission (the complete certification text was not made available to him). In the event that he did not agree with the conclusions, he had the right to submit a complaint up the line of command. Candidate lists were drawn up from the results of the certification and in accord with these the certification conclusions were carried out.

The introduction of the new system for certifying the command personnel had a positive effect upon carrying out Lenin's instructions concerning the careful recruitment and placement of military personnel and the indoctrination of high moral and professional qualities in them. The role of certification was raised to the level of the most important military and political measures aimed at strengthening the Armed Forces.

A number of enactments issued by the military department shows the increased importance of certification and its active role in strengthening all levels of command personnel and these categorically prohibited any shifts whatsoever in the commanders and superiors outside the candidate lists compiled on the basis of the certifications. The final conclusion of the approved certification was declared to be the sole official document describing an officer. "Certification serves as the basic means for ascertaining the service

qualities of the servicemen and in the general procedure for the standing of service by the superior personnel is the chief aspect determining the service advance of a military worker," pointed out the Order of the RVSR of 2 January 1925, No. 1.

/As an example of carrying out these demands in practice, one might note the certification written during the same year for the company commander, N.F. Vatutin: "Strength of will has been developed to a superior degree. Mind is questioning and developed. In terms of energy, stands out among the command personnel of the regiment and serves as an example. Strong and healthy. Understands a situation well, assesses it correctly and is able to give strictly and accurately analyzed decisions.... Knowledge of military affairs is firm and broad...loves military services. As an outstanding commander in terms of energy, strict attitude toward himself and his job, abilities and practical knowledge of military affairs and educational and teaching methods, he should be promoted out of turn to the position of commander of the regimental school."(5)/

/The certification of the regimental commander, K.K. Rokossovskiy, written in 1926 states: "Being well developed and possessing a broad mental viewpoint, Comrade Rokossovskiy has always excelled in an exceptionally clear and precise understanding of the tactical situation and has always shown outstanding qualities....In having a calm, balanced and seemingly mild nature, a thoughtful, analytical mind, Comrade Rokossovskiy at the same time possesses great decisiveness, iron energy and unshakable firmness in carrying out the adopted decision. Personally brave and unstinting.... In commanding a regiment and a brigade for 5 years, Comrade Rokossovskiy has undoubtedly long outgrown the scope of regimental work. Being extremely humble and devoid of any careerist desires, he is content with his situation, however, in considering his combat accomplishments, great command experience and excellent knowledge of affairs, his broad tactical viewpoint and outstanding abilities, I feel him worthy of promotion out of turn to the position of the commander of a separate brigade, and intern, to the position of division commander."(6)/

/These certifications show a careful and complete approach to analyzing and assessing the qualities of young commanders who subsequently became prominent military leaders in the Great Patriotic War./

The search for new forms and the improving of certification methods were also carried out in subsequent years. At one time (in 1925) there was even the practice of so-called "self-certification." In parallel with the certification written by the superior, the certification commission had the right to oblige the person being certified to set forward in a written form all that he considered possible to relate on his service, personal shortcomings, desires, difficulties in work and results achieved. These documents were examined at sessions of the certification commissions together with the official certifications and were used in the aim of a more thorough study of the personnel.

Somewhat later the practice of self-certification was replaced by summoning to sessions of the certification commissions those persons in whose

certifications there were serious critical comments or conclusions on the inability to fill the held position.

The summonses of the persons being certified to the commission sessions and the holding of individual comradely talks with them pursued not only the aims of a more thorough investigation of the command personnel but also were of important indoctrinational significance. This aspect of certification work over time assumed a very definite importance.

The commanders and superiors of all levels were obliged to widely employ the process and results of certification for eliminating the shortcomings existing in their subordinates. This significantly enriched the content and sense of the certification measures and raised their role in the work of strengthening the military personnel. The degree of eliminating shortcomings in the period between certifications became not only an indicator of the greater moral and professional qualities of the persons being certified but was also an indicator of the level of the leadership and indoctrinational activities of his immediate and direct superiors. Attempts to transfer to another unit commanders who, according to the conclusion of the certification commissions, had various shortcomings were viewed as the avoidance by their superiors to carry out indoctrinational functions and the inability of the latter to establish firm proper order and military discipline.

At the beginning of the 1930's, a new stage started in developing work on certifying Army and Navy command personnel and this was brought about by the commenced technical reconstruction of the Armed Forces carried out upon the decision of the Communist Party confronted with the looming threat of the start of World War II and aggression against the Soviet Union. On the basis of the first achievements of socialist industrialization, motorization and mechanization of the army were started, new Armed Services and branches of troops began to be organized while tactics and operational art were quickly developed.

All of this required a sharp rise in the level of troop leadership, stronger military discipline, greater military-technical skills on the part of the command personnel and a further vitalization of work involved in the qualitative improvement of the Soviet military personnel. "The mastery of the art of controlling the combat of united branches of troops," pointed out the Order of the RVSR of 26 April 1932, No. 70, "with a significant rise in the technical equipping of the army and the ever-increasing demands upon the leadership in terms of their political and cultural growth, urgently demand from the leadership a further deepening and improving of their military, military-technical knowledge and high Marxist-Leninist training. The resolving of this central task is inconceivable without a constant and thorough study of the command personnel from the top to the bottom."

In line with this, certification assumed an even broader and more effective nature. Incorporated in the certification system was the firm principle of evaluating the professional and moral qualities of a commander depending upon the level of the combat and political training of his subordinate subunit, unit or formation. In determining the degree of meeting the qualities of the held position and promotion to a higher position, it was considered obligatory

to take into account both the personal discipline of the person being certified as well as his ability to maintain iron military discipline among subordinates.

An indispensable condition for promotion in service in the certification area was the presence of a commander's high military-technical knowledge. The certifications of commanders from the different branches of troops (services) began to reflect the degree to which they had mastered their specialty and improved their skills in the selected type of military profession. For example, certifications for military engineers without fail should show the following: the level of technical leadership and the state of subordinate work areas, the growth of professional viewpoint, the capacity to combine technical work with operational and so forth.

The texts of the certifications could be given completely to the persons being certified. The new certification principle during the period of the extensive technical reconstruction of the Armed Forces helped to significantly strengthen the Army and Navy command personnel. Well trained, promising commanders and superiors began to be promoted to leading positions in the troops and command bodies.

Unfortunately, during the last prewar years, under the influence of subjective factors, the scope and effectiveness of certification work were somewhat narrowed. There was a certain schematicism and routine permitted in writing out the certifications. They stopped acquainting the persons being certified with their texts. Certain restrictions were imposed over the submitting of complaints by persons being certified on the issue of the inobjectivity of the assessment of their professional and moral qualities.

/Precisely this must explain, for example, the fact that Maj Gen I.V. Panfilov not long before the start of the Great Patriotic War was certified for transfer to military administrative work as having supposedly insufficient tactical preparation and finding it difficult to meet his duties in the position held.(7) However, the subsequent combat activity of Maj Gen I.V. Panfilov showed the inobjectivity of such conclusions. Having taken over the division organized by him, he proved to be a courageous and skillful formation commander during the period of the historic Battle of Moscow and was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union./

However, as a whole the certification work carried out during the period of the Civil War and in the subsequent years made it possible to spot and promote to leading command positions an entire galaxy of talented and promising representatives of the Soviet military school who subsequently received nationwide recognition for heroism and high military skill shown during the period of the Great Patriotic War.

/For example, the deputy commander of a tank division, Lt Col I.D. Chernyakhovskiy, who 4 years later had become an army general and commander of a front, in 1940, was certified in the following manner: "A highly cultured commander. Has perfectly mastered the operational calculations and specific knowledge in combat training.... He has mastered the methods of weapons and tactical training. In terms of knowledge and experience is worthy of

promotion to the position of tank division commander. Worthy of receiving the military rank of 'colonel' out of turn."(8)/

/In the certification written during the same year for Lt Gen Engr Trps D.M. Karbyshev, it was pointed out that "rich erudition for all questions of military affairs, great knowledge in the area of operations and tactics make Comrade Karbyshev not a narrow specialist but rather a combined-arms commander and general staff officer."(9)/

/Many other officers and generals who subsequently became famous military leaders received analogous certifications in prewar times./

During the years of the Great Patriotic War in the aim of a more effective solution to the questions of the recruitment and placement of officer personnel, particularly in the operational army, combat recommendations became widespread and these were drawn up for the commanders and superiors at least once every 6 months. Along with certification these were an important means for evaluating the personal qualities of the officers and resolving questions of their service employment. There were also verbal recommendations for subordinates by commanders and these were based upon personal observation of their actions in a combat situation.

The command personnel of the Soviet Armed Forces during the war years grew even stronger, they were spiritually tempered, their military skill grew immeasurably and they showed their irrefutable superiority over the command personnel of the Nazi Army and the armies of the other capitalist states involved in World War II.

The new, postwar stage in the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces confronted the command personnel of the Army and Navy with even more complex and crucial tasks.

The deterioration of the international situation caused by the imperialist states, the initiating of the arms race by them and the growing threat of the unleashing of a new world war significantly increased the demands placed upon the officer personnel, their ideological tempering, discipline, level of military, technical and special knowledge and the ability to successfully resolve the very complex questions of modern warfare. The problems of the recruitment and placement of military personnel as well as their training and indoctrination assumed particularly urgent significance. The role of certification increased correspondingly as the most important means for resolving these problems. In line with this, the rights of the certification commissions were broadened and they, in particular, gained the right to invite to their sessions not only those being certified but also their commanders (superiors). This contributed to a more thorough and complete study of the officers and to the elaboration of sound recommendations for their further service employment.

Extensive preparatory work began to precede the regular certifications and in the process of this work the commanders and superiors were able to carefully analyze the personal qualities of their subordinates, the level of their military and political training, their service experience, attitude toward

service, discipline, the state of the assigned work area and other data characterizing the professional, political and moral qualities of the certified officers. An obligatory practice was introduced of having the certifiers repeatedly hold talks with their subordinates and this significantly increased the indoctrinational role of certification. In the aim of excluding subjective evaluations and conclusions as well as preventing elements of schematicism, formalism and protectionism, there was to be compulsory participation in the work of the certification commissions of representatives from the political bodies and the party organization secretaries. Particular importance began to be given to eliminating the detected shortcomings as well as to the complete and prompt implementing of the certification conclusions.

All of this helped to make the certification of officer personnel to presently be one of the most important means governing the entire work process in the area of strengthening the Soviet military personnel in accord with the Party Program (New Edition) approved by the 27th CPSU Congress and which demands "that everywhere, from top to bottom, without fail they observe the Leninist principles of recruiting and evaluating the cadres according to political, professional and moral qualities...."(10)

Thus, in the process of creative development in the Soviet Armed Forces an ordered system has come into being for certifying the officer personnel. The aim of this is to provide an objective description of the qualities of the persons being certified and to ensure the correct placement and growth of the military personnel.

The regular certification of officer personnel undoubtedly not only contributes to an improvement in personnel work at the present stage but will also help to bring about a further, creative improvement in the certification system itself which should provide the best conditions for carrying out the party's personnel policy in the Armed Forces.

The high organizational level achieved in preparing and conducting certification of officer personnel and the active involvement of the political bodies and party organizations in this work provide every reason to feel that the realization of the results of certification presently being concluded will conform fully to the responsible aims and tasks posed for them.

In constantly developing and improving, the officer certification system in the future will serve as an effective factor ensuring the successful carrying out of the tasks posed by the Communist Party for the Soviet Armed Forces.

FOOTNOTES

1. Tsentralnyy muzey VS SSSR [Central Museum of the USSR Armed Forces], inv. No 4/38219/4; see also VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 1, 1939, p 99.
2. "KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK (1898-1986)" [The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums (1898-1986)], 9th Revised

and Supplemented Edition, Moscow, Politizdat, Vol 2 (1917-1922), 1983, p 101.

3. Ibid., Vol 2, pp 375-379.
4. By the Order of the RVSR of 25 April 1922, No 1040, the Rules were also extended to the Navy.
5. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], inv. No 1831560, sheet 16.
6. Ibid., inv. 1308, file 44, sheet 9.
7. Ibid., inv. No 575383, sheet 12; inv. No 510153, sheet 3.
8. Ibid., inv. No 187102, sheet 22.
9. Ibid., inv. No 507662, sheet 26.
10. "Materialy XXVII syezda KPSS" [Materials of the 27th CPSU Congress], Moscow, Politizdat, 1986, p 184.

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ELIMINATION OF NAZI TROOP YELNYA SALIENT IN 1941

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 10, Oct 86 (signed to press 23 Sep 86) pp 20-28

[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Col A.M. Bazhenov, published under the rubric "Soviet Military Art"]

[Text] The first successes of the Soviet Army in the Great Patriotic War are tied to the Yelnya Offensive Operation (30 August - 8 September 1941). Carried out in a situation very unfavorable in operational terms, this was a severe testing of the prewar views of the Soviet Command on conducting hostilities. In the course of it new procedures were worked out for fighting against a strong and experienced enemy.

Having captured the town of Yelnya on 19 July 1941, the Nazi units pushed deep into the defenses of the Soviet troops. A staging area was formed which was of important significance for the Nazis. From here ran routes to the north, northeast and southeast. The advantageous hills and forested areas made it possible for them to bring up and concentrate large forces prior to the leap against Moscow. However, the Nazi troops were unable to either expand the staging area or even more importantly develop an offensive on the Vyazma axis. Under attacks by formations of the 24th Army of the Reserve Front, they were forced to go over to the defensive.

The repeated attempts by the army in July-August to cut off the salient and liberate Yelnya had not produced results. It had been impossible to restore the situation primarily due to the fact that there were not enough forces, the attacks were launched hurriedly by divisions which had been weakened in the previous fighting. In order to avoid useless losses, the commander of the Reserve Front, Army Gen G.K. Zhukov, on 21 August ordered a breaking off of the offensive and the starting of preparations for a new, more organized attack. Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC], having approved his proposal, on 25 August issued a directive which ordered the 24th Army on 30 August to go over to the offensive, to crush the Yelnya enemy grouping and by 8 September reach a line of Dolgiye Nivy, Khislavichi.(1)

In carrying out this directive, the command of the front worked out a plan for eliminating the Yelnya Salient. The overall concept of the operation was based on the most decisive form of an operational maneuver, a two-sided

envelopment in the aim of surrounding and defeating the enemy in the Yelnya area piecemeal. Since the line of the enemy defenses had the form of a large arc, they planned to cut it off on both sides by simultaneous attacks which would converge to the west of Yelnya. In order to deprive the enemy of an opportunity to shift forces from one sector of the defenses to another, there were plans to intensify operations along the entire length of the Yelnya arc.

Having received the directive from the front on 26 August, the army commander, Maj Gen K.I. Rakutin, decided to employ in carrying out the mission the forces of 9 divisions out of the 13 existing in the army at the start of the operation (4 divisions were preparing defenses along the Uzha River to the north of the Yelnya Salient). These numbered around 60,000 men, up to 800 guns and mortars with a caliber of 76 mm and over, and 35 tanks. For breaching the defenses and surrounding the enemy grouping (around 70,000 men, 500 guns and mortars with a caliber of 75 mm and over and up to 40 tanks), 2 assault groups were organized consisting of 5 divisions: a northern (2 rifle divisions and a tank division) and a southern (a rifle division and a motorized division). These were to launch meeting attacks on the general axis of Vys. Leonov (see the diagram).

The crucial role in the operation was assigned to the northern group which had the largest number of reinforcements. For example, the 107th Rifle Division (commander, Col P.V. Mironov) was reinforced by the 275th Corps Artillery Regiment, the 272d Cannon Artillery Regiment and the 544th Howitzer Artillery Regiment (minus one battalion) and by two rocket launcher batteries (BM-13). This was to operate in a zone of up to 4 km long and was to breach the defenses on a sector of up to 2 km. The 102d Tank Division (commander, Col I.D. Illarionov) and the 100th Rifle Division (commander, Maj Gen I.N. Russiyanov) were to advance, respectively, in zones up to 4 and 8 km wide, making a breakthrough on sectors of 1.5 and 3 km.

In the southern group the main role was to be played by the 303d Rifle Division (commander, Col N.P. Rudnev). Attached to it was a rifle regiment from the 106th Motorized Division, two battalions of the 488th Corps Artillery Regiment, the 24th Mortar Battalion and a rocket launcher battery (BM-13) and subsequently the 103d Separate Tank Battalion. Its zone of advance reached 8 km and the breakthrough sector 3 km. The 106th Motorized Division (commander, Maj K.S. Monakhov) was to operate in an area of around 10 km wide and the enemy defenses were to be breached on a sector of 2 km.

In the plan of the army commander, an important place had been given to the central group which included the 19th Rifle Division (commander, Maj Gen Ya.G. Kotelnikov) and the 309th Rifle Division (commander, Col N.A. Ilyantsev). In attacking from the east, these were to split the surrounded grouping into parts and in cooperation with the other formations, destroy it.

The 103d Motorized Division (commander, Maj Gen I.I. Birichev) and the 120th Rifle Division (commander, Maj Gen K.I. Petrov) by active operations were to tie down the enemy and prevent the maneuvering of its forces to other sectors.

In preparing for the operation, particular attention was paid to reconnaissance. The previous fighting had made it possible to ascertain the system of enemy defenses and their nature. It was established that the Nazi divisions were on the defensive in wide zones, having a single-echelon configuration of the battle formations and insignificant reserves in depth. The corps reserves were positioned 15-25 km away from the salient.

The Nazis had turned the Yelnya staging area into a unique fortified area. All the commanding heights and population points were organized for all-round defense. The engineer fortifications, the tanks, armored vehicles and guns dug into the ground in a number of places were covered by minefields and wire obstacles.(2) The strongest defensive positions had been organized on the forward edge to a depth of 1.5-2 km. The enemy had prepared particularly strong defenses on the northern face of the salient. Here all the strongpoints had an ordered plan for flanking fire with a command over each meter of ground around them. The loss of a single strongpoint could be compensated for by calling in the weapons from adjacent sectors.

Consequently, strong initial attacks had to be made for quickly breaching such defenses. For this purpose assault groups were organized and relatively narrow breakthrough sectors assigned. In an attack on any elevation, it was essential to securely neutralize the enemy also on the adjacent strongpoints otherwise they could end up in a fire pocket.

In the course of preparing for the operation, the command personnel of the front and army made a great effort to completely support the combat operations. However, by the start of the offensive it was not possible to carry out the designated measures completely due to the limited time assigned for preparing the operation. In particular, the situation did not permit the complete recovery of battleworthiness by the units and formations. The newly arrived draft of recruits was poorly trained and had not been under fire. In line with this the rifle divisions which were 20-30 percent understrength did not possess significant fire and attack force. The 103d and 106th Motorized Divisions(3) in essence differed little from rifle divisions, while the 102d Tank Division had just 20 tanks in working order, and with a rather limited engine life.(4)

For eliminating these and other shortcomings, additional time was required. But it was impossible to put off the start of the operation as the Nazi troops could have strengthened the defenses further on this sector. In the interests of things it was also essential to utilize the results of the August offensive fighting as quickly as possible. In addition, the attacks by the Reserve Front would also aid the counterstrikes of the Bryansk Front launched against the enemy 2d Panzer Group advancing on the southern axis.

A matter of particular concern was the practical work of all command elements in the field. In the course of reconnaissance with the commanders of the divisions, regiments, battalions and companies (batteries), all questions were worked out related to elucidating the combat missions and organizing their fulfillment. Tactical drills were conducted in the subunits and the habits of cooperation of the forces in combat were instilled. Prior to the start of the offensive and during the fighting effective party political work was

constantly carried out in the units and subunits and aimed at the unswerving fulfillment of the combat mission confronting them. Proper attention was also paid to individual work with the men.

A positive feature in the planning of the Yelnya Offensive Operation was the establishing of clearly expressed assault groups as this ensured the concentration of the main efforts on the crucial sector. The northern and southern groups included all the tanks in operating order and around 75 percent of the army artillery. The strongest in fire terms was the northern group which had around 400 guns, mortars and rocket artillery combat vehicles, that is, over 50 percent of all the army artillery.(5) Such a grouping made it possible to create in this group a density of artillery with a caliber of 76 mm and over of more than 60 guns and mortars per kilometer of breakthrough sector. This surpassed by 2-3-fold the artillery density during the offensive by the Western Front at Smolensk in August 1941.(6) The artillery softening up and support for the infantry and tank attack were carefully planned. But there was no detailed planning for the support of the troops in fighting deep in the enemy defenses.

As a weak point in the preparations for the operation it must be pointed out that due to the overall shortage of forces, the army command could not establish a second echelon (reserve) and a mobile group with the mission of exploiting the success on the main axis or carrying out other tasks in the course of the offensive. The necessity of assigning forces for this was determined by the decisiveness of the operational plan (the surrounding of the Yelnya enemy grouping was to be carried out on the second day of the operation). For achieving this goal, it was essential not only to quickly breach the enemy defenses but also continue a rapid offensive in depth and toward the flanks considering the repelling of numerous enemy counterattacks and counterstrikes. But the capabilities of the attacking divisions were limited.

Nor could they count on surprise. Although the depth of the tasks of the assault groups was comparatively shallow, for the enemy the axes of their strikes were not unexpected. This was determined by the configuration of the Yelnya Salient and by the fact that the 24th Army in the first half of August had already undertaken an offensive on the northern face of the salient from the area of Dubovezhye, Ushakovo. The two-echelon configuration of the battle formations for the battalions, regiments and divisions in the given, specific instance did not ensure the launching of a strong initial attack involving the main mass of weapons. Out of the 27 Rifle Companies of the division, only 8 were involved in the simultaneous attack at the start of the operation, while the remaining 19 and a large portion of the infantry weapons were echeloned in depth. As a result all of this influenced the course of the operation and served as one of the reasons complicating the complete realization of the plan of the front commander.

On 30 August, at 0700 hours in the morning, the army artillery, regardless of the heavy fog, unleashed fire against the targets previously reconnoitered in the enemy defenses. After 10 minutes of intense shelling of the personnel and firing points on the forward edge, the artillery for 40 minutes carried out battery fire, it neutralized the enemy artillery and destroyed the enemy

defensive works by firing guns set for direct laying. During this time, under the cover of the artillery fire, the infantry and tanks reached the attack line. Then, after a concluding heavy 10-minute shelling, the army formations along the entire front of the Yelnya Salient went over to the offensive. With the going over of the infantry and the tanks to the attack, the artillery supported them by the successive neutralization of enemy personnel and surviving weapons using concentrated fire and then the fire of individual batteries and guns from direct firing positions. Simultaneously, the long-range artillery group neutralized the enemy batteries and its detected reserves.

Using the results of the artillery softening up and the fire of the supporting artillery, the southern and central assault groups on the first day of the offensive achieved major successes. The 303d and 120th Rifle Divisions, for example, almost completely carried out their immediate tasks.(7) The formations of the northern assault group fought less successfully on this day. At 0800 hours, tanks from the 102d Separate Tank Division successfully attacked the enemy, but the infantry lagged behind and the tanks had to move back in order to bring up the infantry instead of exploiting the success. In benefiting from this, the enemy put up stubborn resistance. Over the day of fighting the division succeeded only in pushing into the defenses. Due to shortcomings in command, the other formations were unable to achieve substantial results. Since not all the subunits of the 107th Rifle Division had been able to promptly take up the jump-off point for the offensive, a simultaneous strong attack was not obtained.

However, all the Soviet Unions endeavored steadfastly to carry out the combat missions. The soldiers and commanders demonstrated mass heroism, unprecedented valor and courage. Here is one example from the actions of the 100th Rifle Division. The battalion of Sr Lt V. Pustovit broke into the Pergalovskiy Woods and, hanging over the Nazis on the flank, forced them to retreat.

In recalling the events of those days, the former commander of the Reserve Front, MSU G.K. Zhukov, in his book "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Remembrances and Reflections], has written: "Our 19th, 100th and 107th Divisions fought particularly courageously. From the observation post of the commander of the 107th Division, P.V. Mironov, I saw an unforgettable picture of the fierce combat of the rifle regiment under the command of I.M. Nekrasov.

"The regiment of I.M. Nekrasov quickly captured the village of Voloskovo but was surrounded. It fought for 3 days. With the support of other units from the 107th Division, the artillery and aviation, the regiment not only broke out of the encirclement but also crushed the opposing enemy, here capturing an important strongpoint, the railroad station.

"Examples of such mass heroism and valor were present nearby, around, everywhere, during the day and at night...."

In the course of the active fighting, the formations of the northern group caused the Nazis significant harm. The artillery alone neutralized and

destroyed a large amount of machine guns, 14 artillery and mortar batteries as well as 3 dugouts and 6 pillboxes.(8)

Inspired by the success, the rifle regiments did not break off the attack at night. In conducting stubborn bloody battles on the main axes, in the morning of 31 August, they crushed the enemy resistance. On the second day of the offensive the greatest results were achieved by the 107th Rifle Division which broke through the deliberate enemy defenses. The southern assault group of the army did not have enough forces for advancing in depth. Over the 2 days of the offensive, both groups had moved up to 2 km into the individual sectors.

The low breakthrough rate was basically caused by the following: the insufficient detection of the enemy defenses by reconnaissance; low effectiveness of artillery fire due to the limited amount of ammunition; the lack of experience in certain commanders in commanding their forces in combat; the significant losses among the command personnel. In a critical situation, by their intrepidity and valor, the commanders and political workers inspired their subordinates and led them forward. Often only the experience, willpower and authority of the battalion, regimental and divisional commanders could save the situation and they, fighting against confusion and checking panic, constantly endeavored to carry out the combat mission. "If for this they had to personally lead the men into the attack, then this had to be, there was no other way out." The main thing was "at any price, to carry out the received order...."(9)

In endeavoring not to allow the continuation of the offensive and to hold the throat of the Yelnya Salient, the enemy during the following 2 days launched a series of strong counterattacks and intensified air operations. It succeeded in somewhat constraining the subunits and units of the assault groups. However, the 586th Rifle Regiment (commander, Col I.M. Nekrasov) of the 107th Rifle Division, in driving most deeply into the defenses, held the occupied line regardless of the fact that it was counterattacked from several directions. In this fighting the artillery troops particularly distinguished themselves. Near the village of Sadki the regiment's artillery caused heavy damage to two enemy companies and as a result of this their counterattack was checked. Furious by the unexpected rebuff, the Nazis committed the tanks to battle. Up to ten armored vehicles rushed against the subunits of Nekrasov's regiment. However, with precise artillery fire three of these were hit and the remainder turned back. The regiment not only repelled the enemy attacks but was able to capture an important strongpoint.

On 31 August, the commander of the 24th Army for exploiting the insipient success decided to establish in the northern group a composite detachment consisting of a tank group, an assault company, a motorized battalion and an artillery group (10 guns) which by a rapid attack on the axis of Sadki, Bol. Nezhoda was to come out in the area of Novo-Tishovo, Petrovo, to cut the Yelnya, Baltutino Highway, organize an all-round defense and prevent the moving up of enemy reserves to Yelnya.(10) This was a sort of improvised army mobile group.

In using the success of the 107th Rifle Division, this detachment by 0600 hours on the morning of 2 September had reached the village of Sadki and halted. The reconnaissance sent out from it (3 tanks) established gaps in the enemy defenses. But the main forces were unable to utilize its results, since on 3 September, in being committed to battle, they came under air strikes and heavy artillery shelling and suffered heavy losses in personnel and equipment. On the battlefield, 7 tanks were hit and of the 13 remaining only 1 was in working order. The enemy, having moved up reserves and launched counterattacks, forced the detachment to go over to the defensive. The offensive was broken off. The reconnaissance detachment of the 107th Division operated more decisively on that day. It had succeeded in reaching Sofiyevka.

The formations of the southern assault group, having repelled numerous counterattacks on 3 September also resumed the offensive. Regardless of the difficulties of the wooded-swampy terrain, they captured Leonov and Shchpelev, thereby narrowing the throat of the Yelnya Salient to 6-8 km. It was impossible to continue the offensive further. Due to poor reconnaissance of the terrain, 15 tanks from the 103d Separate Tank Battalion fighting together with subunits of the 303d Rifle Division, had become stuck in the swamp to the south of Leonov. By the morning of 4 September, only 9 vehicles had been pulled out of the swamp.

The aviation of the front did not provide substantial aid to the ground troops. The aviation had 11 air regiments (7 fighter, 3 bomber and 1 ground attack) (11) and was employed in the interests of not only the 24th Army but also the lefthand adjacent unit, the 43d Army. The fighters fought skillfully but were employed chiefly for a cover. Only on 4 September did the bomber aviation destroy 35 aircraft at an enemy airfield, a crossing and up to an infantry battalion.

The enemy, unable to withstand the army attack and threatened with encirclement, on 3 September began to pull a portion of its forces out of the Yelnya area. A turning point was reached in the course of the operation. In line with this the front commander demanded an acceleration in the encirclement of the enemy and the liberation of Yelnya and ordered the commander of the 24th Army to use one regiment from the 127th Rifle Division (commander, Col A.Z. Akimenko). From this division located to the north of the salient, for building up the attack the 395th Rifle Regiment (commander, Maj A.Kh. Babadzhanyan) was employed; this unit was reinforced with a rifle battalion, 4 artillery battalions and a tank battalion (8 tanks). Introduced into battle in an organized manner in the area of the 102d Second Tank Division, the regiment on 5 September shattered the enemy resistance, captured the villages of Bogadilovo and Guryevo and reached the railroad in the area of the Nezhoda siding, while the tank battalion with the infantry cut the Yelnya, Baltutino road.

The enemy, trying to avoid encirclement and putting up fierce resistance on the flanks, began retreating ahead of the front of the 103d, 19th, 309th and 120th Rifle Divisions. The army formations immediately went over to pursuing the enemy and by the end of the day, the 100th Rifle Division occupied Gantsovo and the 19th had broken into Yelnya. On 6 September, the city was liberated completely by Soviet troops.

In pursuing the retreating Nazi units, the 24th Army, on 8 September, by the end of the day had eliminated the Yelnya Salient and had reached the newly prepared enemy defensive line along the line of Novyye Yakovlevichi, Novo-Tishovo, Kukuyevo. Repeated attempts to break through this were unsuccessful. It was necessary to go over to the defensive.

As a result of the fighting, the formations of the 24th Army had eliminated the enemy staging area on which up to 10 enemy divisions had operated at different times. Thus ended the first offensive operation by the Soviet troops in the Great Patriotic War. It was of important political and military significance. A rather strong enemy grouping (5 divisions) had suffered tangible losses which reached up to 45,000 men killed, wounded and captured.(12) The occupiers were expelled from a significant part of Soviet territory. Their military machine had broken down and this showed the possibility of defeating it.

The success of the Soviet troops at Yelnya made a definite contribution to thwarting the Nazi plan of a blitzkrieg against the USSR. High military skill was demonstrated and experience was gained in offensive operations to break through the deliberate enemy defenses. With the elimination of the Yelnya Salient, there was a substantial improvement in the operational situation of both the 24th Army and the Reserve Front as a whole.

However, it was not possible to completely carry out the plan for encircling and destroying the enemy at Yelnya. The main reason for this was the lack of forces, primarily tanks. In addition, in preparing for the operation, forces had not been assigned to exploit the success and the attempt to create these in the course of the fighting did not produce the expected results. The low rate of advance for the army was caused by the poor training of the personnel, particularly the arrived recruits, as well as by the inability of the command personnel of many regiments and divisions to organize and completely support combat in a short period of time, by the absence of clear cooperation and troop command as well as by the sharp limitation on ammunition.

The experience of preparing and conducting the Yelnya Operation showed that a focal shallow enemy defense could be successfully breached with the launching of a strong initial attack by the formations and by concentrating main efforts on the chief sectors. In the event of supplying the artillery with ammunition, a dependable neutralization of the defenses would have been achieved with a density of 60-80 guns, mortars and rocket launcher vehicles per kilometer of breakthrough sector. The conclusion was also drawn that for surrounding an enemy grouping it was essential to have a high rate of breaking through the tactical defensive zone. In addition, in the infantry battle formations it was essential to have close support tanks and mobile equipment capable of sharply increasing the rate of advance. It was essential to utilize the temporary disruption of cooperation and sometimes the confusion of the enemy in order to deprive it of escape routes. Here the army or front command should support the commitment of the mobile forces to battle. Also of crucial significance for the success of an operation was carefully thought out and correctly organized cooperation as well as firm, continuous troop command.

Also linked directly to the Yelnya Offensive Operation is the glorious page in the chronicle of the USSR Armed Forces of the birth of the Soviet guards. The guards were born not in the roar of salutes but rather on the battlefield. The first guards formations appeared at Yelnya in the course of the mortal clash of the Soviet people with Naziism. They arose at the time of the most difficult period of the Great Patriotic War when under extremely bad conditions our troops had to check the advance of an experienced and strong enemy.

The local population also provided whatever help they could to the Armed Forces. Thus, many inhabitants of the Yelnya villages, in risking their lives, crossed the front line, they studied the position of the enemy troops and their defenses and provided valuable information concerning the enemy. The kolkhoz workers tended the wounded and supplied them with clothing and food. Shops were set up in the kolkhoz forges to repair weapons and equipment.

This could not help but tell on the combat zeal of the personnel in the 24th Army. The patriotism of its soldiers and commanders, their wholehearted dedication to the fatherland and growing combat skill were fully apparent in the fighting. Each day new heroes were born. Even wounded commanders and soldiers did not leave the battlefield. The motherland had high regard for the accomplishments of its defenders. State decorations were presented not only to many soldiers but also to a whole series of units and formations which had demonstrated examples of steadfastness on the defensive, courage and valor on the offensive, mass heroism, discipline and resourcefulness. It was no accident that the 100th and 107th Rifle Divisions of the 24th Army were the first in the Soviet Armed Forces to receive the title of guards. On 18 September 1941, by the order of the USSR People's Commissar of Defense, they became the 1st and 2d Guards Rifle Divisions. Soon thereafter, on 26 September, two other divisions of this army also became guards: the 107th and 120th which were renamed, respectively, the 5th and 6th Guards Rifle Divisions.

The experience of the 24th Army and the other formations and field forces made it possible to draw important conclusions contributing to the success of the subsequent major offensive operations.

FOOTNOTES

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 132-A, inv. 2642, file 95, sheets 9-12.
2. Ibid., folio 219, inv. 699, file 6, sheet 108.
3. On 28 August 1941, these became the 103d and 106th Rifle Divisions.
4. TsAMO, folio 219, inv. 679, file 28, sheets 1-2.
5. Ibid., inv. 699, file 16, sheets 118-121.
6. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 3, 1972, p 13.

7. TsAMO, folio 219, inv. 679, file 38, sheet 53.
8. Ibid., inv. 699, file 16, sheets 155-156, 159-160.
9. P.N. Lashchenko, "Iz boya -- v boy" [Out of Battle -- Into Battle], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1972, p 14.
10. TsAMO, folio 219, inv. 679, file 39, sheet 48.
11. Ibid., folio 35, inv. 1282, file 29, sheet 15.
12. Ibid., folio 219, inv. 679, file 24, sheets 131-135.

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REPELLING ENEMY COUNTERATTACKS FROM EXPERIENCE OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

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[Article by Lt Col I.N. Venkov]

[Text] One of the central places in the general system of measures to achieve an ongoing offensive during the years of the Great Patriotic War was held by the repelling of enemy counterattacks which consisted of the fighting of the advancing troops conducted in the aim of defeating the counterattacking enemy groupings, depriving them of the opportunity of breaking through deep into the battle formations of the advancing troops and establishing good conditions for continuing the offensive.

The repelling of counterattacks was a frequent phenomenon. The enemy held on to each beneficial line and with the first opportunity went over to the counterattack. For example, on just one day, 7 August 1943, in defending the approaches to the Dnieper on the Novgorod--Seversk axis (Chernigov-Pripyat Offensive Operation), it counterattacked 12 times the advancing units and formations of the 65th Army and the 2d Tank Army of the Central Front(1) while in the East Prussian Operation, each day it undertook from 10 to 30 counterattacks with a force from a company to a regiment. Particularly fierce fighting developed for installations which were tactically important such as prevailing heights, crossings and road junctions.

The combating of counterattacking enemy groupings required great art from the commanders.

The archival documents, the military history literature and memoirs as well as the descriptions of numerous battles convince one that there was no uniformity in the actions of our commanders to repel counterattacks. However, regardless of their uniqueness, the battles did have common traits: discovering the plan of the defending enemy to launch a counterattack; selecting the most effective method for repelling the counterattack; dependable fire damage to the counterattacking enemy grouping; high activeness and decisiveness of operations by the advancing formations, units and subunits.

For discovering the plan of the defending enemy for launching a counterattack, the commanders carefully studied the enemy defenses and along with resolving

other questions endeavored to establish from what direction the enemy might counterattack with what forces, from what lines and on what axes. The solving of this problem was aided by a knowledge of enemy tactics as well as the procedures and methods of enemy actions.

A majority of the enemy counterattacks was aimed at holding the second and third positions in the main defensive zone. As an average our troops repelled: 11.3 percent of all the enemy counterattacks in fighting for the first position, 58.4 percent in fighting for the second position and 30.3 percent in fighting for the third position.(2) The enemy, as a rule, launched counterattacks in the flank and at the base of the advancing grouping. In anticipating this, the commanders ahead of time allocated the appropriate forces to the flanks.

The Nazis prepared carefully for the counterattacks and launched them only when the overall stability of the defenses would not be disrupted and the advancing side would suffer significant losses, when the near reserves of the advancing side had already been committed to battle and the deep ones held up. A knowledge of these aspects of enemy activities provided the commanders with an opportunity to determine the time for the launching of the counterattack and to ready the forces required for repelling it ahead of time and form up the battle order. This was particularly important because any reorganization of the offensive impeded the creation of groupings of forces to repel the counterattacks. Time was spent on adjusting the plan, redirecting the troops and coordinating their actions.

In studying the enemy, the commanders endeavored to detect the possible start of the departure of the counterattacking groupings from the concentration areas to the deployment lines and to determine the presence of routes of advance, their equipment and state.

Discovering the enemy's intention to launch a counterattack and the start of the moving up of the troops made it possible to take action against the counterattacking group with air strikes and artillery fire long before direct contact with it. This created good conditions for the maximum weakening of the grouping's combat capabilities and for completing the defeat by decisive actions of the advancing units.

Of important significance in determining the enemy's intention to launch a counterattack and for repelling it was well-organized reconnaissance. Where this was conducted continuously, actively and effectively, the command and the staffs discovered the enemy's plans ahead of time, took prompt measures to thwart them, correctly determined the methods of repelling the counterattack and assigned the necessary forces for carrying out this task.

The following combat episode from the Tallinn Operation is a successful example of the prompt discovery of such groupings and determining the time for the launching of their counterattacks.

On 17 September 1944, the enemy was preparing a counterattack by the retreating units of the 207th Infantry Division and the newly arrived units of the 77th Infantry Division. Reconnaissance promptly established this. Firing

by six artillery regiments of conventional artillery and one regiment of rocket artillery was prepared against the positions of the enemy reserves. Upon signal the artillery troops opened up mass and barrage fire. With the start of the enemy's advance, artillery fire was strengthened; having come under it, the enemy infantry suffered great losses. As soon as the counterattacking enemy reached the range of direct laying by the artillery, it was met with fire by the guns with direct laying. The counterattack died out at its beginning without ever developing. In order to put an end to it, the artillery opened fire against the remnants of the counterattacking enemy subunits and soon thereafter, virtually without any lull, the 128th and 134th Guards Rifle Regiments resumed the offensive.(3)

Air reconnaissance provided effective results in detecting the counterattacking enemy groupings. Thus, in the Iasi-Kishinev Operation, at 1040 hours on 20 August 1944, reconnaissance announced that up to a regiment of enemy infantry with artillery was advancing from the southwest into the area of the 180th Rifle Division of the 27th Army. The army commander, Gen S.G. Trofimenko, reassigned two groups of ground attack planes from the II Ground Attack Air Corps which were approaching the battlefield to defeat the enemy columns. As a result, the enemy suffered significant losses in personnel and equipment and abandoned the counterattack.(4)

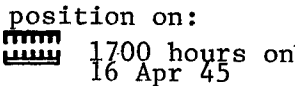
The choice of the most effective method of repelling a counterattack was the most crucial moment in the activity of each commander in organizing the rebuff of counterattacks. All the subsequent work of the staffs and the troops was carried out on a basis of the chosen method, the combat missions were given, actions coordinated among the forces involved in the repulsion and, finally, the repulsion itself was carried out.

The methods of defeating a counterattacking enemy were continuously improved and each time determined by the specifically developing situation. The most characteristic of these were: going over to the defensive and repelling the counterattack by fire from a halt, defeating the counterattacking enemy on the move and, finally, repelling the counterattack with a portion of the forces firing from a halt with a simultaneous attack by the main forces against the flank (flanks) of the counterattacking enemy.

The going over to the defensive was carried out to repel a counterattack by superior enemy forces or in those instances when according to the situational conditions it was better to initially launch a fire strike against the enemy from a halt and then complete its defeat by active offensive operations.

On 16 April 1945, in the Berlin Operation, the 50th Rifle Division of the 42d Army by 1700 hours had completed the breakthrough of the main defensive zone and was successfully continuing the offensive (Diagram 1). The enemy moved the Tank Division "Herman Goring" up to this axis. It was not possible to repel the counterattack by superior forces (5 infantry regiments and up to 100 tanks) on the move. For this reason, the commander of the LXXIII Rifle Corps ordered the division commander to dig in on the achieved line, to defeat the enemy by firing all weapons from a halt and to prevent the enemy from breaking through to the Neisse River. For direct support of the division, the corps commander deployed the 8th Self-Propelled Artillery Brigade, the 124th Tank

Emmerichswalde.(5)



to Repel Enemy Counterattack on 16 April 1945

certain subunits had to fight their way forward or retreat to better areas.

were interconnected in terms of fire.

In the process of studying the terrain on the forward edge, the division's commander indicated to the 2d and 94th Rifle Regiments which had gone over to the defensive in the first echelon the defensive areas, the reinforcements, the places for concentrating the main efforts, the tasks for engineer organization of the terrain, the grouping of antitank weapons along the front and in depth, the tasks for supporting the boundaries between them and the locations of the control posts. The 359th Rifle Regiment (second echelon) occupied a line 1.5-2 km behind the first echelon regiments in such a manner that the enemy tanks which broke through the first echelon would immediately come under the artillery fire of the second echelon. In addition, the division's commander ordered the preparation of a maneuver for the regiment in the aim of attacking the left flank of the counterattacking enemy grouping.

The divisional artillery (DAG-50) was given missions to support the first echelon regiments, the main likely tank approaches and areas of fixed barrage fire ahead of the forward edge and deep in the division's defensive area. The weapons of the first and second echelons together with the artillery moved up for direct laying and the antitank artillery reserves were echeloned to a depth of 4 km.

All the measures related to the organizing of the defenses were carried out quickly and were characterized by high effectiveness. The enemy counterattack was repelled and the division's units together with the second echelon of the corps (the 111th Rifle Division) at 1800 hours on 16 April resumed the offensive. (6)

On 26 December 1942, the 478th Rifle Regiment of the 320th Rifle Division by 0600 hours had broken through the first enemy position to the northeast of Mozdok (Diagram 2) and had reached the second. The enemy, in endeavoring to recover the lost position, moved up a reserve consisting predominantly of tank subunits.

Having assessed the situation, the regiment's commander decided to repel the counterattack from a halt. The basis of the decision was the overall concept of operations in which the following were set: the line for the defensive; the succession of launching a fire attack against the enemy using all weapons on the axis of its counterattack; the areas of terrain the holding of which determined the stability of the defenses; the battle formation of the regiment and the configuration of the defensive area considering the terrain; the nature of the maneuver. Without going into all the above-listed questions in the plan, we would take up just two: the choice of the line for the defenses and determining the sequence of fire damage to the enemy.

Instructive in the actions of the regimental commander is the fact that before giving the order to reinforce the achieved line, he moved up into the battle formations of the first echelon battalions and studied the field. The position held was not advantageous for repelling the counterattack. Then he took a bold decision, he ordered the commanders of the 1st and 2d Rifle Battalions to pull back somewhat and take up a better line. He moved all the antitank rifles, regimental artillery as well as his own antitank artillery reserve into the battle formations.

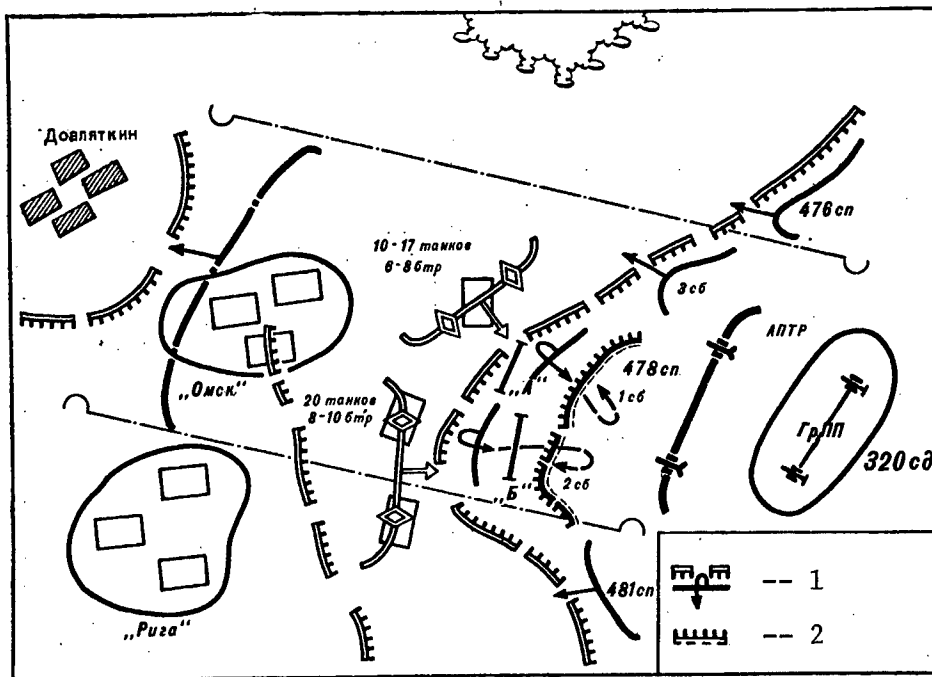


Diagram 2. Repelling of Counterattack by 478th Rifle Regiment to Northeast of Mozdok at End of 1942

Key: 1--Early retreat to advantageous line
2--Line for repelling counterattack

At 0930 hours, the regiment was counterattacked from two directions by a force of up to 32 tanks and 18 armored personnel carriers. The fight against them commenced at the distant approaches. Initially from indirect firing positions the artillery opened fire and then as the enemy closed in, the antitank groups joined battle. When there were just 300-400 m to the enemy, a storm of small-arms, machine gun and automatic fire was released against it. As a result, the enemy suffered heavy losses and the regiment's subunits resumed the offensive.(7)

The repelling of a counterattack on the move (if the counterattack was carried out with small forces) most often developed in meeting engagements. Such combat was characterized by abrupt and rapid shifts in the situation, by speed and the desire of the sides to seize the initiative.

Meeting engagements with a counterattacking enemy sometimes broke out as a result of poorly organized reconnaissance and for this reason ended unsuccessfully.

Thus, on 28 February 1942, the 15th Tank Brigade was operating together with the 216th Rifle Division in the area of the 57th Army of the Southern Front on the axis of Ocheretino, Golubovka. Reconnaissance had not been organized in the process of the fighting. As a result, the brigade's subunits came under surprise enemy artillery and tank fire and suffered heavy losses.(8)

Those commanders were in a better position when, in the development of the offensive and pursuing the retreating enemy, their vigilance was not dulled, they constantly conducted reconnaissance and fought boldly and decisively. Thus, the 45th and 102d Tank Brigades from the IV Tank Corps in the Stalingrad Operation, in carrying out the mission of the second day, pursued the retreating enemy. From reconnaissance data it was learned that enemy reserves had assembled and were beginning to move up toward the front. The brigade commanders, without breaking off pursuit, intensified reconnaissance, adjusted the missions for the battalion commanders and coordinated their actions to defeat the counterattacking enemy. On 21 January 1943, in approaching the line to the south of Mayorovskiy, Sukhanovskiy, the brigades were counterattacked by 18 tanks with a battalion of infantry. Deploying without a pause, the brigades halted the enemy with a rapid attack, defeated it and, without being held up, continued the pursuit.(9)

Finally, the repelling of enemy counterattacks was carried out by a portion of forces firing from a halt with the simultaneous launching of an attack by the main forces in the flank (flanks) of the counterattacking enemy.

By 1100 hours on 20 November 1942, units of the 293d Rifle Division of the 21st Army in the Southwestern Front, in the counteroffensive at Stalingrad, captured the population point of Gromkiy. In endeavoring to recover it, the enemy carried out a counterattack.

Having assessed the developing situation, the division's commander decided to encircle and destroy the counterattacking enemy by attacking the flanks combined with actions from the front. In accord with the adopted plan, the 1036th Rifle Regiment with its main forces attacked the left flank while the 1034th Rifle Regiment attacked the right flank of the attacking enemy as well as its arriving subunits from the area of Verkhne-Solomanovskiy with a simultaneous offensive by a portion of its forces from the front. The left-flank 1032d Rifle Regiment, in using the success of the lefthand adjacent 76th Rifle Division, continued to advance on its section thereby supporting the left flank of the 1034th Rifle Regiment. As a result of the simultaneously launched attacks against both flanks and from the front, the counterattacking enemy infantry battalion was cut off from the remaining forces and completely destroyed.(10)

Fire damage to the enemy. During the first period of the war the advancing subunits, units and formations carried out the mission of destroying enemy personnel and weapons basically in close combat. The advantage of such fighting was that the results of the fire were immediately employed by the tanks and infantry for moving forward and as a consequence of this the enemy was unable to restore the disrupted fire plan; this ensured the success of the attack. But at the same time the enemy weapons, its second echelons and reserves assigned for the counterattack often remained outside the fire range of the advancing troops. This provided an opportunity for the defending side virtually unimpeded to maneuver its forces from in depth in the aim of launching counterattacks.

This circumstance caused the growing proportional amount of the fire fight on the distant approaches and the greater depth of the simultaneous fire neutralization of the defenses, particularly the hitting of the established counterattacking groupings. Thus, in 1941-1942, by massed artillery fire the enemy defenses were neutralized to a depth of 1.5-2.5 km, while in 1943, to a depth of 3-4 km. In 1944-1945, the depth of neutralization had increased up to 6-8 km and more while in the concluding operations of the war it often reached 8-10 km and more. For example, in the Berlin Operation, in the zone of advance of the 8th Guards Army, the enemy defenses were neutralized to a depth of 17-18 km. (11)

In preparing an offensive and in the course of it, the commanders gave great attention to establishing the position of the enemy second echelons and reserves in order to cause them great losses even before the counterattacking subunits reached the deployment line and thereby thwart the counterattack or at least substantially weaken the force of the enemy attack. This, in turn, facilitated the repelling of the enemy forces in direct contact. Long-range artillery was employed for carrying out this mission. Ground attack aviation made strikes against objectives which were beyond the range of artillery fire or could not be observed from the ground (to a depth of up to 20-30 km) upon request of the corps and divisional commanders.

In those instances when the enemy, having maintained its combat capability, deployed and went over to a counterattack, the artillery fire and operations of the ground attack aviation reached their highest pitch.

On 13 January 1945 (East Prussian Operation), the 144th Rifle Division went over to the offensive. During the day it broke through the first and second positions of the enemy's main defensive zone and by the morning of 14 January was already fighting for the position of the divisional reserves.

The enemy was endeavoring to hold the Kattenau area at any price as it rose above the surrounding terrain. It moved up from the Gumbinnen area (25 km to the southwest of Kattenau) the 31st Tank Regiment and 13th Motorized Regiment from the 5th Tank Division and at 1400 hours went over to a counterattack in the aim of recovering the lost position.

The artillery played the crucial role in repelling the counterattack. The cannon batteries of the 398th Artillery Regiment, in being carefully camouflaged, let the enemy tanks come close and fire on them at point-blank range. The antitank artillery was echeloned on several antitank lines, creating a 3-4-km depth of the division's antitank defenses. All the SAU were also involved in repelling the counterattacks. A portion of the tanks and batteries of the cannon regiments was moved up for direct laying. Barrage artillery fire was prepared ahead of time on the likely tank approaches and massed fire against the tank concentration areas.

Activeness and decisiveness of operations. A counterattack and its repelling are two mutually exclusive actions. In determining on a counterattack, the enemy undertook everything to halt the advancing side while the advancing side did everything to crush the resistance of the defending side and to continue the offensive. All of this determined the exceptionally fierce nature of the

fighting and required great courage, high steadfastness, activity and decisiveness in actions by the commanders and all the personnel.

Fierce enemy counterattacks had to be repelled by the men of the XVI Rifle Corps of the Maritime Army in the Fourth Ukrainian Front in May 1944 during the Sevastopol Offensive Operation. In the course of the fighting, the enemy undertook a counterattack for the main defensive zone from the side of Mounts Kaya-Bash and Mramornaya. In the course of repelling it, the soldiers, sailors and officers showed exceptional heroism. After the wounding of the platoon commander, Sn Shotin took over command of the platoon and led it into the attack. In the course of the fighting, the platoon captured two enemy guns and, having turned them toward the enemy, destroyed over 30 Nazis.(12)

The repelling of counterattacks was an exceptionally complicated task the execution of which required great preparedness by the commanders and staffs and their close teamwork.

In October 1943, in the course of stubborn fighting to breach the defenses at Melitopol, the chief of staff of the 308th Guards Rifle Regiment from the 108th Guards Rifle Division, Maj P.I. Shcherbakov, having assessed the information received at the end of the day concerning enemy actions, decided that in the morning the enemy might counterattack with the forces of at least a reinforced regiment and reported this to the division staff. The division's chief of staff, considering the importance of the information received, reported to the division's commander who ordered a request for data from the adjacent units, the artillery troops and scouts. Having studied and compared them with the available, the division's commander and staff took the appropriate measures. The enemy in the morning did launch a counterattack with an infantry regiment and 30 tanks and this was repelled with great losses for it.(13)

* * *

The repelling of enemy counterattacks during the years of the Great Patriotic War was an inseparable part of offensive combat and a major condition for achieving its goals. By the skillful carrying out of this mission, the commanders achieved a continuous offensive.

The question examined in the article of repelling enemy counterattacks and certain methods of resolving it do not encompass the entire range of measures carried out during the war years. A further study and creative employment of combat experience in the process of troop training and indoctrination are an urgent task for us.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1964, p 305.

2. See: "Razvitiye taktiki Sovetskoy Armii v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg." [Development of Soviet Army Tactics in the Years of the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 255.
3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 1178, inv. 1, file 132, sheets 1-13.
4. "Deystviya voyenno-vozdushnykh sil v Yassko-Kishinevskoy operatsii" [Air Forces Operations in the Iasi-Kishinev Operation], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1949, p 41.
5. "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh. Diviziya" [Tactics in Combat Examples. The Division], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, pp 79-80.
6. Ibid., pp 79-80.
7. "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh. Polk" [Tactics in Combat Examples. The Regiment], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 102.
8. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Combat Documents From the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 21, 1954, pp 31-32.
9. "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh. Polk," p 105.
10. TsAMO, folio 375, inv. 9763, file 14, sheet 81.
11. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 1, 1976, p 266.
12. TsAMO, folio 459, inv. 20330, file 47, sheet 5.
13. Ibid., folio 1299, inv. 1, file 9, sheet 49.

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CERTAIN QUESTIONS OF CONTROL OF ARMY REAR SERVICES IN OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 10, Oct 86 (signed to press 23 Sep 86) pp 37-41

[Article by Candidates of Military Sciences, Docents, Cols K.K. Yeremenko and V.V. Osvyannikov]

[Text] At the start of the Great Patriotic War, all the functions of organizing and carrying out rear support rested on the army staff and this included a section for the organization of rear services, supply and road service. The army staff was responsible for organizing the rear services, for planning logistical support and for organizing transport. At the same time, the supply services were directly subordinate to the chiefs of the branches of troops, services and to other officials. In the course of combat this led to a situation where command over the rear services was often disrupted.

From the first days of the war, the question arose of improving the organizational structure of the command of army rear services. By the Order of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense] of 1 August 1941, incorporated in the army field headquarters was the position of the army chief of rear services (he was the deputy commander for rear services) and entrusted with personal responsibility for the continuous supply of the troops with all types of materiel. Under him was organized a rear services headquarters. This included an organizational-planning section, a military railroads section, a motor transport section and a road service as well as an inspectorate.(1) The combined-arms staff began to provide only operational leadership over the rear services as well as control over the supply of materiel for the troops. For this purpose the operations section of the army staff included positions of a senior assistant and an assistant chief of the section for rear services.(2) The reorganization carried out in the command bodies of the rear services contributed to a more successful execution of the tasks of rear support for the armies.

The scope of work for rear support of the army troops in the operations constantly increased. In order to provide more flexible planning of rear support for the troops as well as clearer work of the rear services, by the NKO Order of 15 May 1942, the organizational-planning headquarters of the army rear services was converted into the staff of the rear services(3) becoming

that command body which coordinated the efforts of the rear services in the area of logistic support for the troops and organized cooperation with the other command bodies not subordinate to the army chief of the rear services but involved in supplying the troops. Through the staff of the rear services they began to more effectively receive the essential information, to employ the subordinate men and weapons more efficiently and promptly incorporate changes in the plans for supporting troop combat.

In the second period of the Great Patriotic War, command over the rear support of the troops became more complex and this was due not only to the increased amount of tasks carried out but also to the change in the organizing of the delivery of materiel in the army.

The experience of the 1942-1943 winter campaign showed that the procedure existing up to that time of responsibility for supplies (on one's own) on the offensive with a distance between the troops and the rebuilt railroad sections ceased to meet the needs of the troops. Under the developing situation the transport of the formations and units could not handle its task. As a result, regardless of the sufficient supplies of materiel at the army depots, prompt delivery of them to the troops was often disrupted. In order to eliminate this shortcoming, the transport procedures were altered. By the NKO Order of 12 June 1943, responsibility for the delivery of all types of materiel from the army to the divisional dumps was entrusted to the army chief of the rear services, and from the divisional to the regimental to the divisional chief of rear services. In this context, during the period of preparing for the offensive, the head departments of the field army depots began to be deployed more and more frequently on the line of the divisional dumps which continued to be called exchange points. For carrying out suddenly arising tasks, mobile supplies of materiel were established. These were kept on the army motor transport and comprised the reserve of the army commander.

The change in the procedure for delivering materiel demanded the bringing of the rear units and facilities of the army closer to the supplied troops, greater coordination in the work of all the rear services and precise planning of the movement of the rear units and facilities depending upon the missions being carried out by the troops during one or another period of an operation.

An important task for the army rear services staff was planning the delivery of materiel as well as organizing the prompt moving up of the dumps closer to the supplied troops. The rear services staff determined the total amount of the delivery of materiel, it allocated these to the types of transport and coordinated the work of all the services. From them the rear services staff received all the necessary data on the rear services as well as reports on changes in the situation.

The staff and services of the army rear in planning the rear support of an operation determined the procedure for stockpiling the established supplies of materiel as well as the composition of the reserve on the major sectors, they organized the system for controlling the rear units and established operations groups for organizing rear support on the individual axes. Command over the army rear services in each operation had, as a rule, its own particular

features. For example, here is how the rear services staff operated in the 11th Guards Army during the counteroffensive at Kursk in July-August 1943.

In the aim of achieving secrecy in preparing for the operation, no order for the rear services was issued to the troops while the chief of the rear services personally acquainted a limited group of individuals with its content, including: the chiefs of the rear services of the divisions and the individual units. For supervising the course of carrying out the rear support plan, operations groups from the army rear services staff were repeatedly sent out to the formations as well as to the rear army units and facilities. These on the spot resolved questions arising in the course of preparing the rear units for the operation. The necessary information was issued to the rear services. In the course of the offensive, command of the army rear services was chiefly provided by individual orders and by sending officers from the rear services staff into the troops.(4)

An underestimation of prompt and complete planning of rear support in certain operations led to a situation where the rear bodies were late in starting to move the rear units and could not always stockpile the essential materiel by the designated date and promptly move these closer to the troops.

In the course of the operations, the staff of the army rear services often experienced difficulties in coordinating the efforts of the rear services and in giving them tasks. This was particularly true of the rear services staffs of the tank armies. First of all, it was essential to ensure precise cooperation and coordinated work of the rear services with those supply sections of the army field headquarters and which were directly under the army commander or the chiefs of the branches of troops. In particular, this applied to the deputy commander of a tank army for technical affairs and to the deputy artillery commander for artillery supply.(5)

In order to achieve dependable command of the rear services, certain armies began to assign an operations group to the first echelon of command. Thus, in the Lwow-Sandomierz Operation, an operations group of the rear headquarters was established for clearer control of the rear units in the 1st Guards Tank Army, and this included representatives from the army sections and rear services. The operations group was located at the army command post.(6) The necessity and utility of assigning such a group are obvious. In receiving constant information from the chief of the group, the rear services chief was able to better understand the situation and more efficiently direct the rear bodies.

Constant and dependable communications of the army chief of staff with the rear services chief and their reciprocal exchange of information as well as precise cooperation and coordinated work of the rear headquarters with those supply sections of an army field headquarters which were directly subordinate to the army commander or to the chiefs of the branches of troops were essential conditions for the successful operation of the rear services and for the prompt maneuvering of supplies and transport. The questions of planning, the disposition of the rear units and facilities as well as transport were to be coordinated by the sections of the army staff (regardless of subordination)

with the army chief of rear services, informing him of all the changes in the course of the operation.

The experience of the operations in the second period of the war showed that in the aims of increasing the effectiveness of rear command, it was essential to bring the rear command bodies closer to the first echelon of the army headquarters. At first, this played a positive role, however it subsequently led to a distance of the rear command bodies from the supply bases and created the idea of establishing independent command posts for the rear services. The need arose of providing wider leadership over the disposition and moving of the rear services of the corps and even the divisions (brigades) by the rear services staff. For this reason, in the orders on the army rear services more and more often one began to encounter instructions on lines where the rear services of the divisions (brigades) should be located.

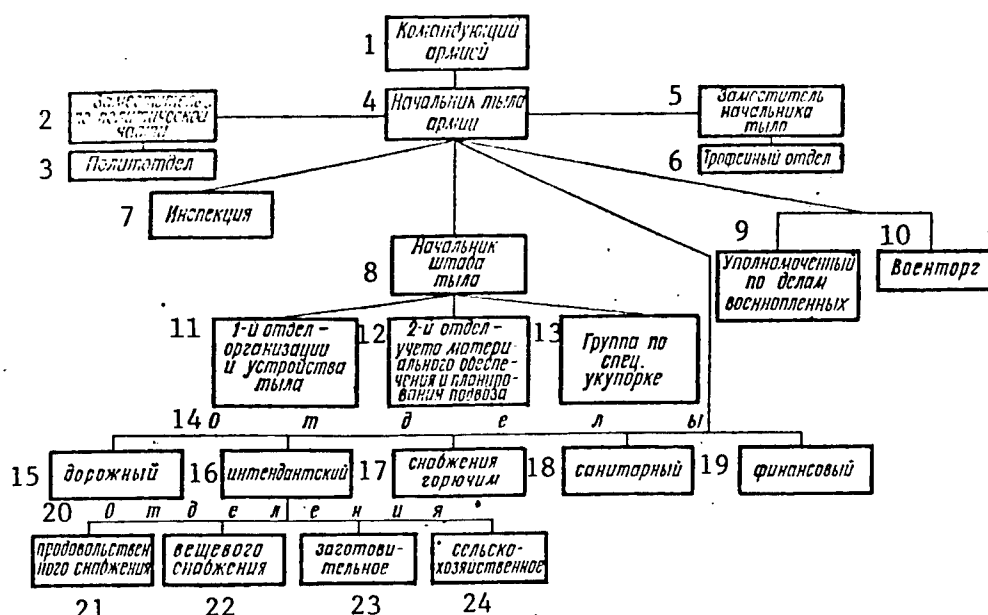
During the third period of the Great Patriotic War, the increased volume of rear support for the troops and the highly fluid nature of the offensive operations required a further improvement in the command of the army rear services. In planning the operations, the times for carrying them out began to be coordinated particularly closely with the capabilities of the rear bodies to promptly and fully supply the army formations with equipment, weapons and materiel. Command over the rear services, in comparison with the previous period, was marked by greater stability, closeness, by better communication of the rear services staffs with the army staffs, with the bodies of the headquarters of the chiefs of the branches of troops and services.

A plan for the organization of rear services and logistic support was the chief planning document which was worked out by the staff of the army rear services and supply plans perform the same role in the services. The planning documents related to the rear services in addition reflected such questions as the procedure for collecting and utilizing captured materiel, organizing procurement from local resources, the procedure for employing the supply stations in the concentration areas of the armies after their regrouping in the forming-up places for an offensive, measures to increase the fuel supply for combat vehicles, organizing support for prisoners of war and repatriated individuals and so forth.

As in the previous period, command of the army rear services was provided from the rear control point (TPU) (7) with the position and movement of this being made depending upon the movement of the army command post. Concentrated at the army TPU was the necessary information on the operational and rear situation, various rear calculations were made here, and the commander's decisions were drawn up for those matters concerning the rear support of the troops. Orders and instructions on the questions of organizing rear support were issued from the TPU.

The operations groups for the command of the rear services underwent further development during the third period of the war. For example, in the Belorussian Operation, each army had an operations group consisting of officers from the staff and rear services. This was located at the army command post. In using the communications of the army staff, the group

collected information on the rear situation, it responded immediately to a change in it and carried out the instructions of the army command. The chief of the operations group reported on the received instructions and measures taken to the deputy commander for the rear services and who directed the work of the rear services from the army TPU. A second operations group headed by an officer from the staff of the army rear services was concerned with the questions of rear support for the mobile group when it was fighting away from the main forces. Usually this group had available 20-30 motor vehicles. In moving along the axis of the mobile group, it provided delivery of materiel to the troops of the mobile group from the forward departments of the army dumps.



Structure of Command of Rear Services for Combined-Army (Tank) Army by the End of the Great Patriotic War

- | | |
|---|---|
| Key: | 12--Second section for logistic support and planning of transport |
| 1--Army commander | 13--Group for special packing |
| 2--Deputy for political affairs | 14--Section |
| 3--Political section | 15--Road |
| 4--Chief of army rear services | 16--Intendant |
| 5--Deputy chief of rear services | 17--Fuel supply |
| 6--Capture equipment section | 18--Medical |
| 7--Inspectorate | 19--Finance |
| 8--Chief of rear services staff | 20--Department |
| 9--Representative for prisoner of war affairs | 21--Food supply |
| 10--Military trade | 22--Clothing supply |
| 11--First section for organization of rear services | 23--Procurement |
| | 24--Agriculture |

By the end of the Great Patriotic War, an ordered structure had developed for the command of the rear services of the combined-arms (tank) armies (see the

diagram) and this on the level of the missions carried out by the rear services met the requirements of organizing the support for the troops.

In the course of the war, particularly during the third period, the troops gained rich experience in locating and moving the TPU under various combat conditions. This experience indicates that both the deployment and moving of the command posts are subordinate to definite rules. The TPU in the armies were deployed, as a rule, on the sector of the main thrust some 10-15 km from the command post. The TPU was moved upon orders of the commander or the chief of staff of the army. The frequency of the moves was determined by the rate of advance. With a rate of advance of 20-25 km a day, the TPU was usually moved once every 1 or 2 days. Command of the rear services during the movement of a TPU to a new area was provided by the operations group located at the army command post.

* * *

The system of command for the army rear services in the course of the Great Patriotic War was continuously improved depending upon the objective conditions and the experience acquired in organizing rear support. An independent system of command of the army rear services was established and this functioned in close contact with the combined-arms staff, the commanders and chiefs of the branches of troops, special troops and services. All of this established favorable conditions for the successful operation of the rear services.

FOOTNOTES

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 2, inv. 795437, file 5, sheets 545-547.
2. Ibid., folio 240, inv. 2779, file 878, sheets 42-45.
3. Ibid., folio 67, inv. 12022, file 84, sheet 81.
4. "Tyl Krasnoy Armii v Otechestvennoy voyne. Sobornik materialov" [Rear Services of the Red Army in the Patriotic War. Collection of Materials], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 1, 1944, pp 17-18.
5. Ibid., pp 57-59.
6. TsAMO, folio 299, inv. 76781, file 11, sheet 112.
7. We have employed the modern term instead of the various terms encountered during the third period of the war such as "second echelon of the staff," "second echelon of command," "rear echelon of command" and so forth.

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EXPERIENCE OF PARTY-POLITICAL WORK IN CROSSING WATER OBSTACLES IN OPERATIONS
OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 10, Oct 86 (signed to press
23 Sep 86) pp 42-48

[Article by Lt Gen G.A. Stefanovskiy, military council member and chief of the
Political Directorate of the Turkestan Military District, published under the
rubric "Party Political Work"]

[Text] During the years of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet soldiers often
had to cross various water obstacles, and many of them without a pause.
During these operations, in addition to high combat and special skills, such
qualities as determination, courage, initiative and a readiness to surmount
any difficulties for the sake of victory over the enemy assumed special
importance. During the period of preparing for the forthcoming crossing,
party-political work was aimed at indoctrinating these qualities.

The commanders and political bodies gained great experience in organizing
party-political work in preparing for and in the course of the crossing of the
Dnieper. In September 1943, Hq SHC set the tasks for the troops of crossing
the Dnieper without a pause, capturing bridgeheads on the right bank and
subsequently continuing the offensive into the Right Bank Ukraine. The
Directive of the Main Political Directorate issued to the troops pointed out
that party-political work would bring results only when it was related to the
immediate tasks being carried out by a unit or subunit. The ultimate result
of the operation would show a true and not merely formal reorganization of
party work in the Soviet Army as was required by the Central Committee of our
party. (1)

Participating in the crossing of the Dnieper was the 40th Army(2) (commander,
Col Gen K.S. Moskalenko; army military council members, Maj Gens A.A. Yepishev
and K.V. Kraynyukov; chief of the political section, Col P.V. Sevastyanov).
In the period of preparing for the Battle of the Dnieper, the army military
council reviewed and approved the plan of party-political work which
encompassed all stages of the operation. In analyzing this plan, it might be
emphasized that the forms and content of the ideological and organizational
work derived from the very essence of the offensive operation. The plan
envisaged possible deviations from the set actions and the corresponding
specific measures for the moral-psychological and professional training of the

personnel. Also considered was the fact that the army troops for the first time would be crossing such a major water obstacle as the Dnieper.

Before the crossing, the commanders, political workers, the party and Komsomol activists carried out explanatory work on the forthcoming actions. The officers from the political bodies and staffs as well as the leadership of the army and the divisions visited the subordinate units, spoke with the commanders, political workers and aktiv, they helped them in the explanatory work among the personnel and were involved in preparing and holding party meetings as well as placing the communists and Komsomol members in combat. The personnel meetings and talks with the men before the crossing of the Dnieper, recalled the former chief of the political section of the 47th Army, Col Gen M.Kh. Kalashnik, helped better understand the forthcoming combat missions and the ways for carrying them out and were also enriched by the experience of the troop leaders. For this reason the army commander and the military council member frequently spoke in the formations and units sparing neither effort nor time for this.(3)

The army military council prepared and sent out to the troops instructions for the soldier on crossings as well as a series of leaflets. The commanders and political workers organized the reading and explaining in companies (batteries) of the experience of crossing water obstacles published in large-run army newspapers. Veteran soldiers and order winners whose word had special authority were actively involved in the mass agitation work as well as in passing on experience concerning the crossing of rivers. The command, political workers and activists gave great attention to work in the combat engineer, reconnaissance and rifle subunits which were to carry out the main tasks of seizing and holding bridgeheads on the opposite bank. Experienced, combat-tested communists were incorporated in the established assault detachments, companies and battalions which were to be the first to cross the river.

Visual agitation also played an active role in preparing the personnel for crossing the water obstacle. On the sides of roads which were used by the troops in moving up, they set up panels with inscriptions such as "The Dnieper is Very Near. Forward!", "Heroes of the Volga and Don, the Dnieper Awaits You! Pursue the Enemy and Allow Him No Rest!" and "One Move to the Dnieper. Forward, Soviet Soldiers!"

The route to the Dnieper ran over land which had been destroyed by the Nazi aggressors. The commanders, political workers and agitators used this situation for indoctrinating hate for the enemy. An enormous poster erected on the outskirts of Pereyaslav-Khmel'nitskiy proclaimed: "The Nazis executed and hung 900 persons during the first months of their rule in Pereyaslav. 5,300 young men and women were sent to German imprisonment. Some 90 percent of all the houses were burned up, blown up and destroyed by the Nazis.... Over 200 inhabitants were buried under the fragments of houses as a result of barbarian bombing.... The blood of Pereyaslav, its ashes and ruins call for sacred retribution. Forward, soldier! Avenge the tears and bitterness of our citizens. Death to the Nazi occupiers!"(4)

Widely propagandized were the materials of the Extraordinary State Commission on Investigating Atrocities of the Nazi Hordes on Soviet Land. Meetings, reports and talks were held on this subject and letters to the soldiers from relatives or close friends on occupied territory were read and discussed. "The gray Dnieper has seen many great deeds carried out for the glory of the motherland on its banks," wrote the newspaper PRAVDA on 17 October 1943. "But all former feats pale before the men of the Red Army. Never before on the banks of the Dnieper has there been what is now being carried out by the intrepid Soviet soldiers. Glory to the heroes of the Dnieper!"

The men of the 6th Company from the 2d Battalion of the 212th Guards Rifle Regiment in carrying out the set mission were able to capture an enemy steamer traveling down the Dnieper and use it for crossing the river by the division's units. For high combat skill, for the shown initiative, resourcefulness, courage and valor, 15 men from the company received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The political bodies, the party and Komsomol activists showed great concern for strengthening the party and Komsomol organizations and for increasing the vanguard role of the communists and Komsomol members in combat. During the period of preparing for the crossing of the Dnieper, there was a marked rise in the desire of the soldiers to join the party. Thus, just during the first 20 days of December 1943, the party bureaus and commissions of the units and formations in the 40th Army reviewed over 2,000 applications for the admission of members and candidate members of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] "...The greatest influx of applications was observed not during a front lull," noted K.V. Kraynyukov, "but during a period of the most difficult trials. During that difficult hour before an offensive, many men wrote: 'I want to enter combat as a communist'." (5)

In analyzing party-political work during the preparatory period, it must be pointed out that this was organized on the basis of the requirements of Headquarters and the Main Political Directorate as well as considering the existing situation and the combat tasks confronting one or another unit.

Constant attention was given to organizing party-political work in the combat engineer units as their actions would determine both the initial success as well as the further development of the crossing. Here the main efforts were directed at instilling in the combat engineers a high feeling of duty, courage, initiative and creativity in carrying out the received missions. Thus, in preparing for the crossing of the Oder by the 65th Army, the personnel of the engineer and combat engineer units had to show not only high moral-combat qualities to carefully reconnoiter the terrain and the enemy system of defenses and obstacles but also show boldness and resourcefulness in preparing the crossing equipment.

Regardless of the extremely limited time, the combat engineer and engineer units of the army before the start of the crossing were able to make 625 wooden boats, assemble and repair 399 fishing boats, prepare elements for 3.9 km of dirt-track roads and bridge elements for 820 linear m. Moreover, together with the personnel of the rifle divisions, they participated in preparing the system of trenches, communications trenches and command posts.

Of important significance for the success of the crossing was the careful selection of the command-political cadres and the personnel of the subunits assigned for the first push across the water barrier as well as those carrying out the main tasks. For example, the military council and political section of the 65th Army before the crossing of the Oder personally reviewed and approved all the commanders of the forward battalions and their deputies. The command of the corps and divisions personally prepared the company commanders and their deputies essentially from among the heroes of the fighting on the Volga, Dnieper, Narev and Vistula. With the active participation of the party and Komsomol organizations, the regimental commanders chose the NCO and rank-and-file personnel for the first echelon companies and battalions from among the soldiers, communists and Komsomol members who had combat experience, were politically mature and morally strong. The subunits organized in this manner underwent practical exercises to develop cohesiveness. These measures ensured the successful crossing of the river. (6)

The experience of the Great Patriotic War shows that the communists were the immediate and dependable assistants of the commanders and political workers in combat, including in the crossing of rivers. Precisely they strengthened the combat morale of the subunits and by their personal example led their comrades. In preparing for a crossing, particularly during the concluding operations of the war, extensive use was made of such a form of work as assigning the most experienced and bravest communists at a party meeting to be the first to raise red flags on the opposite bank of the river. The communists handed on their combat experience to the soldiers and armed them with the skills of employing equipment and weapons under the most diverse combat conditions. For example, on the eve of the crossing of the Narev River in the subunits and units of the 4th Tank Army, communists conducted individual talks with young soldiers and participated in Komsomol meetings on the questions: "What the Party Demands From the Frontline Komsomol Members During the Days of the Patriotic War," "How to Cross a River on Improvised Equipment," "Across the Narev to the Nazi Liar," "Glory to the First Who Crosses the Narev," and others. (7)

Thus, party-political work during the period of preparing the troops for the crossing of water obstacles was an important means in the ideological-political, moral-psychological and combat preparation of the personnel for decisive actions and for achieving victory over the enemy.

With the start of the crossing of water obstacles and in the course of the fighting, the party-political work assumed a more specific nature, it was carried out purposefully and closely coordinated with the combat missions and the center of it was shifted to where the fate of the struggle for the water obstacle was determined. As the operation developed, the forms of party-political work changed and there was a noticeable definite shift from mass measures to organizing an individual effect on the men.

In the crossing the general assignment of the political workers, the party and Komsomol aktiv was adjusted. Officers from the political sections of the armies and divisions were, as a rule, in the first echelon units and subunits. They helped the commanders, the political workers, the party and Komsomol

organizers in mobilizing the personnel to successfully carry out the combat mission. The political personnel of the regimental level during this period worked in the platoons, squads, teams and crews. As in the preparatory period, chief attention was given to the forward detachments, to the reconnaissance and assault groups and to the combat engineer subunits. The political bodies provided for the assigning of political workers to the crossing with the task of helping in the organization of the party-political work with the personnel of the crossing troops and the commandant service.

The political directorates of the fronts worked decisively against the practice of sending political workers into the troops without a precise assignment and did not allow the scattering of forces. Groups of political workers were sent out to the divisions and regiments carrying out the main missions and each of these was responsible for a definite section. Workers from the party organizational sections were concerned with the strengthening of the company party organizations and the instructing of party bodies and took measures to bring outstanding men in combat into the party. The instructors for propaganda and agitation saw to it that fresh newspapers and the leaflets and instructions issued by the political bodies were delivered without delay to the units and subunits and they promptly prepared and held talks. Officers from the personnel section resolved the questions of selecting and placing the political personnel, replenishing losses, preparing a reserve to fill vacant positions and so forth. (8)

The experience of the Great Patriotic War shows persuasively that a majority of workers from the political sections in the troops with the start of the crossing landed together with the forward subunits on the opposite bank and were involved in the fighting for the bridgehead.

For increasing the offensive drive and for encouraging the men to fight successfully in crossing the water obstacle, of important significance was the presenting of Red Banners to the units and subunits for erecting on the captured bridgeheads. The terse but memorable appeals of our party: "For the Motherland!", "Death to the Nazi Invaders!", "The Dnieper is Ours!", "Forward to the Vistula!", "Surrender the Oder!" and others resounded constantly at the meetings and in the talks and were used in the visual agitation and by all mass information media.

During the period of the crossing and in developing the offensive, a major role in indoctrinating the personnel was played by the divisional newspapers, the combat leaflets, the express leaflets as well as the political and combat information bulletins. For example, after the first days of the crossing of the Oder, the large-run newspaper BOYEVOY TEMP of one of the divisions was published under a general headline of "They Were the First to Cross the Oder River." The entire material of the issue was devoted to the courage of the heroes of the crossing. Just during the period of the fighting for the Oder line, this newspaper published 28 comments on the experience of party work and 5 propaganda materials. (9) With good reason the prompt delivery of the newspapers to the troops was a matter of special concern for the commanders and political workers. For these purposes, the field post offices were brought as close as possible to the battle formations; special transport was assigned and the number of mailmen for each unit was increased. All of this

helped to accelerate the delivery of correspondence from the post office to the soldier and vice versa.(10)

The maintaining of a constant political influence on the men of the combat subunits and units carrying out the main tasks in crossing the water obstacles was aided by the constant concern of the political bodies for preparing a reserve and promptly replenishing the losses of the junior political personnel which increased as our troops moved deep into the enemy defenses. The turnover of party organizers was particularly high. Just in the troops of the Third Belorussian Front, from 13 January through 20 March 1944, some 865 company party organizers were put out of commission in the 9 rifle formations. In certain subunits they were replaced two-three and more times.(11) Anticipating this, the political bodies prior to the start of each offensive operation replenished the reserve of company and battery party organizers and this was a group of 10-15 persons under the formation's political section. Thus, on 1 January 1945, there were 90 trained subunit party organizers in the divisional reserves of the 3d Guards Tank Army.(12) In addition, the deputy party and Komsomol organizers of companies and batteries were widely used to make up losses.

One of the important conditions for ensuring continuous political work in combat operations was the maintaining of close ties of the political bodies with the political workers and aktiv of the formations and units involved in the operation (combat), mutual effective information provided on the developing combat situation, the decisions taken by the commanders and the political-moral state of the personnel. Usually this work was carried out by TOE and volunteer agitators as well as by the representatives of the superior command sent by the political bodies to the crossing areas and to the bridgeheads. In turn, it was a practice to have daily written and more rarely oral reports to the political sections on the state of affairs in the units and separate subunits. This made it possible for the political bodies to have a good knowledge of the situation on the spot and quickly influence any changes in it.

The indoctrination of a high offensive drive in the personnel was the main aim of the party political work on the bridgeheads along with ensuring the steadfastness of the troops and the closing off of sections won from the enemy on the opposite bank. For these purposes the most mobile forms of work and an individual effect on the men were employed. In the course of the fighting to broaden the bridgehead on the Vistula, in the units of the 3d Guards Army not general party meetings but rather delegate ones were held, in the units of the 5th Guards Army there were brief Red Army assemblies and in the units of the 48th Army, express meetings and individual talks with the men carrying out the most crucial tasks. In the aims of mobilizing the personnel for a decisive offensive, on a number of bridgeheads they made it a practice to bring the colors of the units into the battle formations of the subunits.(13) The personal example of valor and dedication of the commanders, political workers, the communists and Komsomol members played an enormous mobilizing role.

In crossing water obstacles, particularly in organizing the combat on the bridgeheads and in continuing the offensive the problem of rear support for the troops, primarily the tank and mechanized units, was more acute than at

any other time. Thus, in the Vistula-Oder Operation which was marked by a high pace, the mobile troops of the First Belorussian Front on the 7th day of the offensive were 100 and more kilometers away from the supply depots. Interruptions in the supply of fuel, lubricants, ammunition and food started in the tank and mechanized formations and units. (14)

In order to rectify the state of affairs and to prevent a failure of carrying out the combat missions, experienced and skilled officers, well-trained drivers of transport vehicles and other specialists were assigned to the rear subunits. Particular attention was given to the recruitment of party and Komsomol organizers and the party-Komsomol aktiv. The political workers participated in the organizing of special columns for delivering fuel, ammunition and food and they carried out great explanatory work with the drivers and men in charge of the columns. Prior to the departure of the columns, the deputy commanders for political affairs and the party organizers assembled the communist and Komsomol drivers as well as the non-party activists, they explained to them the combat situation on the routes and in the crossing areas, they summed up the results of the previous trips and made practical recommendations for the successful fulfillment of the forthcoming mission.

For the drivers delivering ammunition and fuel to the troops, the military councils established special types of commendations and government decorations.

In order to study the situation in the field and take effective measures for the prompt and complete supply of the troops as well as for providing the necessary aid in organizing repairs on combat equipment and weapons, groups of political officers were sent out to the repair facilities and shops.

Also among the most important tasks of the political bodies and political personnel was the providing of twice-a-day hot meals for the troops. The former chief of the political section of the 47th Army, Col Gen M.Kh. Kalashnik, has recalled that on the first days after the crossing of the Dnieper, difficulties arose in providing the troops with hot meals. In a particularly difficult situation were those subunits the field kitchens of which were still on the left bank because of the developing situation. The political workers took things in hand. They turned to the party and Komsomol organizations and they to help the rear workers assigned their activists, the boldest soldiers and sergeants. Two or three times a day under enemy fire the brave men crossed the river in fishing boats in order to promptly deliver breakfasts, lunches and dinners in thermoses to their combat comrades.

The political bodies and political workers of the units took an active part in organizing aid to wounded soldiers and promptly evacuating them to the rear. Additional assembly points were set up in the areas of fighting, they organized the supply of wounded with clothing, the necessary medicines and hot food and assigned transport for evacuation to the rear. During the fighting on the bridgehead, it was exceptionally important to move the wounded across the river to the medical battalions and hospitals promptly and without delay. This task was not easy as evacuation was often carried out under enemy fire both during the day and at night.

The chiefs of the divisional political sections, their deputies and other political workers regularly visited the hospitals and medical battalions, they spoke with the wounded, they drew up petitions for governmental decorations, they presented orders and medals to outstanding men and organized performances by lecturers, concerts by artists and participants of amateur artistic activities.

Party-political work in the crossing of water obstacles during the offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War was diverse in its forms and methods. This was carried out in accord with the overall plan of the operation and the developing combat situation and helped in successfully carrying out the set missions. The experience of party-political work in a combat situation represents an invaluable treasurehouse which should be carefully studied and more fully utilized by the commanders, political bodies, the party and Komsomol organizations in the practical training of the personnel of the units and subunits.

FOOTNOTES

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 32, inv. 11309, file 183, sheet 15 verso.
2. See: K.V. Kraynyukov, "Oruzhiye osobogo roda" [A Special Type of Weapon], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 7.
3. M.Kh. Kalashnik, "Ispytaniye ognem" [Trial By Fire], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1971, p 245.
4. K.V. Kraynyukov, op. cit., p 15.
5. Ibid., p 9.
6. See: P.I. Batov, "Operatsiya 'Oder'" [Operation "Oder"], Moscow, Voenizdat, pp 49-50, 54-56, 73.
7. TsAMO, folio 237, inv. 2414, file 23, sheet 187.
8. See: A.D. Okorokov, "Slovo, vedushcheye v boy" [The Word Leading Into Battle], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1980, pp 209-210.
9. TsAMO, folio 32, inv. 11318, file 190, sheet 120.
10. Ibid., file 192, sheet 110.
11. Ibid., folio 241, inv. 2656, file 188, sheet 238.
12. Ibid., folio 32, inv. 11318, file 175, sheet 27.
13. Ibid., folio 237, inv. 2412, file 40, sheet 195.

14. See: "Partiyno-politicheskaya rabota v Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Silakh v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Party-Political Work in the Soviet Armed Forces During the Years of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 362.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTER SUPPLY DEPOTS IN THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

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[Article by Col (Ret) S.N. Skryabin, published under the rubric "Memoirs and Essays"]

[Text] The role of the rear services of the Armed Forces in supporting the combat operations of the troops in the course of the Great Patriotic War increased continuously. They not only received defense products from the national economy and delivered them to the operational army and military districts, as was envisaged by the prewar views, but also established their own depots and dumps with military supplies assigned rear areas between the fronts for procuring food and fodder and supported operational and troop movements. The diversity of tasks which the various rear bodies of the Center had to carry out without unified leadership had a negative effect during the first months of the war on the rear support of the troops.

The fundamental reorganization carried out upon the decision of the GKO [State Defense Committee] in August-September 1941 in the rear bodies of the Soviet Army at the Center, in the fronts and armies(1) helped to improve the work of all the rear elements. The bringing together in one body the organization and control of the rear services, transport and evacuation made it possible to resolve more effectively the questions of the operation of the rear services, to systematize the supply of materiel for the troops, to more rationally utilize all types of transport and institute firm military order in the rear.

As a result of the measures carried out, as is known, many rear units and facilities were abolished. There was a sharp reduction in the number of stationary dumps, depots and shops. Certain facilities of the army rear services were incorporated in the front rear services while a portion of the front rear units and facilities was put under the main and central supply and support directorates of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense].(2) Because of this the NKO directorates and the rear services of the Center in a number of instances had to assume concern for supplying the troops of the fronts and even the individual armies with materiel, bypassing the front and often the army element. This was the case, for example, during the Battle of Moscow when the troops were directly supplied from central dumps. In line with this, by a decision of Hq SHC, on the major strategic axes central

regulating stations (TsRS) were established and these were directly under the chief of the Rear Services. Precisely at that time, in the course of conducting the 1941-1942 winter campaign, the Chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services, Lt Gen A.V. Khrulev, had the idea of establishing depots of the NKO Center on the major strategic sectors. This was due to his trip to the operational army....

At the beginning of 1942, Hq SHC began receiving from certain fronts warnings about interruptions in the delivery of food and fodder to the troops. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief I.V. Stalin called in Gen A.V. Khrulev and ordered him to immediately leave for the troops and study the state of affairs on the spot.

Taking with him from the staff of the Rear Services Cols K.F. Remizov and I.V. Vorobyev and Capt I.I. Kryukov, the chief of the Rear Services on the following day left for the Kalinin Front and then the Western Front where he made a detailed study of the state of the rear support of the troops. He inspected the organization of the food for the men in the units and hospitals, the supply of winter clothing for the personnel, the procedure for providing medical aid to the sick and wounded as well as the supply of fodder for the horses.

After returning to Moscow, Andrey Vasilyevich [Khrulev] reported the results of the inspection to I.V. Stalin and proposed further improvements in the work of the rear bodies as well as the idea of the advisability of creating supply bases of the Center which would supply the fronts (armies) operating on the individual strategic sectors. At the depots of the Center, the staff of the Rear Services would provide the supplies of materiel essential for the fronts and this would ensure uninterrupted supply of the troops in the course of an operation.

On the basis of these proposals on 1 March 1942, the GKO approved the Decree "On Improving the Delivery of Food and Fodder to the Units of the Operational Army" (3) and ordered Gen A.V. Khrulev to work out a regulation on the depots of the NKO Center. In practical terms all the work of preparing the draft of this document was carried out by the Organizational Section of the Staff of the Soviet Army Rear Services which at that time was headed by Col K.F. Remizov.

We set to work during the last 10 days of March. (4) First of all, it was essential to determine the scope of the tasks which should be carried out by the depot of the Center and then work out approximate TOE for the Directorate of the NKO Center Depot. As for the rear units and facilities to be incorporated in the depot, this question, as we proposed, would be determined in each specific instance by instructions of the chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services and by the chiefs of the appropriate main and central directorates of the NKO depending upon the situation. The Deputy Chief of the Organizational Sector, Col G.N. Dankov, thoroughly discussed the main initial data with the Chief of Staff of the Rear Services, Gen M.P. Milovskiy.

For participating in working out the basic documents on the rear services and which concerned the activities of not only the Rear Services Staff but also

the other services involved in the rear support of the troops, Maj Gen M.P. Milovskiy regularly invited to conference representatives of these services, usually the chiefs of the appropriate sections or their deputies. The representatives of the central (main) directorates after a meeting at the Rear Services Staff reported to their superiors on the results and coordinated all disputed or unclear questions with them and after this themselves revised the drafts of the prepared orders or directives. This was the case now.

On the date stipulated by Gen M.P. Milovskiy (25 March 1942), the regulation governing the work of the NKO Center Depot was readied. However, for a long time it was impossible to submit the document to Gen A.V. Khrulev for signature since the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense and Chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services, Gen A.V. Khrulev, by the GKO Decree of 25 March had been appointed also the People's Commissar of Railroads and during this time was busy becoming acquainted and settling in with his new position. Only on 12 April was he able to sign the NKO Order announcing the "Regulation Governing the Administration of the NKO Center Depot in Wartime." The Soviet Army Rear Services began organizing the NKO Center depots on the major strategic sectors and these depots brought together the dumps for all types of materiel.

In the summer of 1942, the Nazi troops succeeded in reaching the approaches to Stalingrad and the foothills of the Northern Caucasus. The organization of supply for the troops fighting on the Stalingrad sector and in Transcaucasia was very complicated. Thus, the supply of the Stalingrad and Western Fronts from the central depots and dumps from the Urals and from Siberia ran just along the Ryazan-Urals Railroad with a single-track spur of Saratov--Urbakh--Baskunchak which was heavily overloaded. Freight moved to the Transcaucasian Front initially along the Aschkehabad Railroad which had a low capacity and then by sea transport to Baku.

In line with the arising situation, Hq SHC decided to relieve the railroads and more widely employ the waterways of the Volga and the Caspian Sea for supplying the fronts of the southern sector. In accord with this the Rear Services of the Center set up depots for the supply and transloading of freight from rail to water transport in Volsk and Saratov (for the Bryansk and Voronezh Fronts), Kamyshin (for the Stalingrad and Don Fronts) and Makhachkala (for the Northern Caucasus Front) and initiated energetic measures to provide aid to the fronts in the early stockpiling of the essential supplies of materiel and moving them closer to the troops. In the Transcaucasian Republics a number of central dumps was additionally deployed. On the agenda was the question of establishing a depot of the Center in Transcaucasia where the difficulties of supplying the troops were related to the distance of the theater of military operations from the central regions of the country.

On 25 July 1942, a meeting was held at the staff of the Soviet Army Rear Services where the question was raised of establishing a depot of the Center in Transcaucasia. Invited to it were representatives from the main and central supply directorates. In opening the conference, Mikhail Pavlovich Milovskiy briefly informed those present on the situation on the Stalingrad, Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasian Fronts.

"The German Command," he pointed out, "has concentrated its main forces on the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front. The enemy troops are continuing to advance against Stalingrad and the Northern Caucasus. Our troops are carrying out heavy defensive battles on the Stalingrad sector and in the foothills of the Caucasus. It is becoming more and more difficult to supply the troops of the Transcaucasian Front with everything necessary."

Picking up a pointer, the general went up to a map hanging on the office wall and pointed to an approximate line where the fighting was underway and then resumed the discussion of troop supply.

"The delivery of freight for the Transcaucasian Front from Astrakhan and Guryev is limited by the poor development of port facilities on the western coast of the Caspian Sea and for this reason the military freight must be transported by a circuitous route by rail across Central Asia. The question of how to improve the organization of logistic support for the Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasian Fronts is also of concern to Hq SHC."

Milovskiy made a short pause, looked at his notes and states:

"Hq SHC has decided to create a NKO Center depot in Transcaucasia. Our task is to organize this depot. My request to you is to think out the particular features of the operations of the Transcaucasian depot and in accord with the 'Regulation on the Administration of the NKO Center Depot in Wartime' prepare a draft order for the organizing of the depot."

The Regulation on the Administration of the NKO Center Depot of which Gen Milovskiy spoke was still fresh in our memory and we used it as the basis in considering the specific features of the theater of operations. The Transcaucasian NKO Center Depot was designed for receiving and storing supplies of ammunition, fuel, food and other military property according to the plans of the main and central directorates of the NKO; organizing and delivering supply freight to the fronts (armies) by rail, highway and waterways; assisting the fronts in evacuating sick and wounded, captured and unusable military equipment into the nation's rear; repairing combat equipment and military supplies; the upgrading and operation of dirt and paved routes for delivery and evacuation in the zone of the depot. As can be seen, the range of tasks carried out by the NKO Center Depot was rather extensive.

Proceeding from the scope of the tasks, the TOE for the Headquarters of the Transcaucasian NKO Center Depot was set and included: four sections (planning-organizational, supply, shipments and highway), three departments (administrative-housekeeping, operations and cipher) and a communications center. Under the headquarters of the base there were plans to maintain a distributing station, central dumps for the main types of materiel, repair shops, transport units and service and security subunits which were assigned to the base depending upon the situation and the scope of the tasks.

The depot headquarters was a body of the Main Directorate of the Soviet Rear Services for logistic support of the fronts (armies) operating on the transcaucasian sector. Proceeding from the experience of the Central NKO Depots, it was decided to entrust supervision over the requests of the fronts

(armies) for materiel in accord with the supply standards set for them to the chief of the Transcaucasian Depot. The depot chief was to report daily by 2200 hours to the chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services and to the corresponding chiefs of the main (central) supply directorates of the NKO on the established reporting concerning the movement of transports. The chiefs of troop transport and the military commandants of the railroad junctions and stations in the area of the central NKO depot were to provide the depot chief with all the necessary reporting data on troop movements since according to the regulation the depot chief had the rights of the front VOSO [Military Railroads] chief.

The regulation emphasized that all the freight delivered to the base was to be immediately dispatched to the field dumps of the corresponding fronts (armies) or spread out over the dumps of the NKO depot.

The role assigned to the Transcaucasian Depot of the Center in the system of rear support of the troops can be seen eloquently from the fact that the depot chief according to the TOE was simultaneously the deputy chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services. The chiefs of the main and central NKO directorates were obliged to inform him of the front supply plans for their types of materiel.

On 27 July, Gen M.P. Milovskiy submitted the prepared document to the chief of the Rear Services. Having carefully studied it, Andrey Vasilyevich ordered that it be added to and assigned the chief of the Transcaucasian NKO Center Depot to supervise the carrying out of defense orders by Azerbaijan industry and the leadership of the dispatch of these orders to the fronts as well as responsibility of the operations of the transloading base in Pahlavi(5) which received and dispatched freight arriving from the Allies under Lend-Lease.

Gen A.V. Khrulev explained the necessity of the given addition by the fact that a portion of the freight arriving under Lend-Lease would be sent to the troops operating in the Transcaucasus and to the Stalingrad sector. The role of the chief of the NKO Center Depot, as the representative of the chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services, was enormous in this question.

This addition and certain other minor adjustments were made in the text of the regulation and on 1 August 1942 the order of the NKO was issued and signed by the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Gen A.V. Khrulev. It stated: "For logistic support of the Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasian Fronts, the NKO Center Depot is to be organized in Baku headed by the deputy chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services, Maj Gen F.N. Zelentsov."

The depot was to include all the central dumps with materiel deployed in the Soviet Transcaucasian republics, the motor transport units and maintenance units from the reserve of the Soviet Army Rear Services and Hq SHC as well as the repair shops. The headquarters of the Transcaucasian Depot was constituted by the Personnel Section of the Main Directorate of the Soviet Army Rear Services drawing on personnel from the rear units of the Center stationed in the Transcaucasus as well as officers in the reserve of the personnel section.

With the formation of the Transcaucasian NKO Center Depot, the supply of troops on the Stalingrad, Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasian Fronts began to be carried out also partially under Lend-Lease. The cargo was delivered to ports in the Persian Gulf and were then transported by rail and road across Iran to the Soviet border towns of Dzhulfa, Astara and Kizyl-Atrek by the resources of the Soviet Transport Headquarters in Iran.

The situation on the fronts of the southern sector continued to grow more complex. Difficulties also arose in troop supply. The Soviet Command planned to make up a portion of the materiel from Lend-Lease deliveries, however the Allies did not completely carry out the assumed obligations to supply the Soviet Union with combat equipment, weapons and other materiel. Moreover, the cargo arriving in the Iranian and Iraqi ports moved very slowly through Iran as the local railroads and dirt roads had a very low capacity.

In order to accelerate the delivery of imported freight, it was decided to dispatch a portion to the Iranian Port of Pahlavi on the Caspian Sea and then by sea to Baku and Makhachkala, thereby somewhat relieving the rail and motor transport. A transshipping depot was organized for the transloading to maritime transport in Pahlavi. Responsibility for its operation was assigned by the chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services to the chief of the Soviet Transport Headquarters in Iran, Gen A.N. Korolev. The chief of the Transcaucasian Center Depot, Gen F.N. Zelentsov, received orders to ensure the acceptance of the cargo at the Ports of Baku and Makhachkala.

As Gen A.N. Korolev reported to the chief of the Rear Services Staff, preliminary reconnaissance of the Port of Pahlavi showed unpromising results. In the port itself and on the roads running to it extensive construction work had to be carried out and this would require significant men and equipment. In the first place, the sea bottom at Pahlavi was shallow and our ships could not reach the piers. It was essential to dig a 3-km channel across the sea bottom. Secondly, in the port there were virtually no warehouses and even simple awnings for covering the arriving cargo as well as quarters for housing the security and workers. Thirdly, it was impossible to rely on local facilities. Diverse equipment, dredges, facilities and building materials would have to be brought in from the Soviet Union. Without the aid of the staff of the Soviet Army Rear Services the Soviet Transport Headquarters [STU] in Iran could not carry out such a large amount of work to equip the port and establish a transshipping depot in Pahlavi.

In realizing the state importance of the rapid delivery of imported cargo to the Soviet Union, Gen Khrulev with his inherent energy personally took an active part in the work. The staff of the Rear Services received orders to provide the necessary aid to the transshipping depot in Pahlavi and to the Transcaucasian Depot of the Center in Baku. As deputy people's commissar of defense, Khrulev issued the corresponding instructions to the chiefs of the main and central NKO directorates while as the people's commissar of the railroads he contacted the people's commissar of the Navy and agreed with him on providing the necessary ships and equipment to the STU in Iran for building the canal. Work got underway in Pahlavi.

Sometime at the end of August, I was summoned by Gen Milovskiy and ordered to fly to Pahlavi in order to see how work was going at the transshipping depot to prepare for the receiving and dispatching of imported cargo. I made my way to Pahlavi by a circuitous route: by passing transport aircraft via Saratov and Krasnovodsk. I was met by a representative of the STU.

What I saw at the Port of Pahlavi was most impressive. On the shore an enormous construction site was going up. At it there was the unceasing chatter of jackhammers, the crunch of the dredger buckets, the clank of bulldozer tracks, the roar of engines, the deafening blows of the pneumatic hammers driving in the pilings and the piercing whistles of launches. Work was in full swing. Everyone burned with the sole desire of completing the port more quickly.

The transshipping depot at Pahlavi had already begun to receive various cargo but there still were no warehouses or even covered lean-tos. A portion of the crates with food was stored under tarpaulins. Our conversation with the major who was the STU representative (his last name I unfortunately do not recall) was chiefly over the measures essential to increase the flow of cargo from Pahlavi to the ports of the Soviet Union.

"What needs to be done in addition," I asked him, "to increase the turnover of the port?"

"It seems to me that the delay in the delivery of cargo will involve not the operation of the port but chiefly the capacity of the Iranian roads."

Having described in detail the state of the railroads and motor roads on Iranian territory and also having listed the measures which the STU must carry out to increase the capacity of the roads and railroads, the major asked me to inform Gen Khrulev of this.

"Precisely the roads and railroads are the weakest link in the chain for delivering cargo via Iran," he emphasized.

Soon thereafter, having become acquainted with the state of the dirt roads and railroads running to Pahlavi, I was persuaded that the conclusions of the STU representative were correct. In order to organize continuous delivery of freight via Iran, both by land and by sea, it was essential to first fundamentally improve the transport routes here.

I went back to Moscow also by a circuitous route. Having heard my report, Col Dankov ordered me to set out all proposals to improve the operation of the transshipping depot in Pahlavi in a written form. Two or 3 hours later the report was on its way up the line of command. On the following day, Gen Milovskiy cautioned me that I should be ready to report the results of my trip personally to Gen Khrulev. Here one can clearly see the work style of the chief of the Rear Services as he always endeavored to gain information not secondhand but directly from eyewitnesses.

I reported in detail to the chief of the Rear Services on the course of readying the port and the transshipping depot in Pahlavi to receive the

imported cargo, without forgetting to mention the request of the STU for improving the transport routes. Andrey Vasilyevich was particularly interested in the state of the roads and railroads which were to be used to deliver the imported cargo to the USSR.

The chief of the Rear Services and his staff took every measure to ensure normal operation of the railroad and motor transport in Iran to deliver the cargo. In particular, additional sidings, water towers and communications lines were built on the railroads. In addition, the dirt road between Tehran and Pahlavi was widened and paved. The measures taken significantly increased the capacity of the roads.

The Transcaucasian NKO Center Depot, along with the materiel received from the rear of the nation, began also receiving imported cargo delivered to the Transcaucasus by land and sea. During the difficult period of the autumn of 1942 until the spring of 1943, the Center Depot played a major role in supplying the troops of the southern fronts with everything necessary, including materiel, weapons and combat equipment.

After the defeat of the Nazi troops at Stalingrad and the general offensive by the Soviet Army in the winter of 1942-1943, the situation on the Soviet-German Front changed fundamentally. On the threshold of the major offensive operations, it was necessary to bring the Center's supplies of materiel closer to the troops. Upon the decision of Hq SHC, in the spring of 1943, the central depots and dumps began to be shifted behind a line to the west of Moscow and the Volga. On the most important strategic sectors the staffs of the Rear Services began concentrating ahead of time rear units and facilities as well as supplies of materiel. This made it possible subsequently during the most intense days of preparing and carrying out the operations to significantly free the transport from carrying supply freight and also establish better conditions for maneuvering the materiel. Since the fronts did not have sufficient capacity for storing fuel, a portion of the front supplies was kept in stationary dumps of the NKO and at oil depots a significant distance away from the front line.

With the entry of the territory of neighboring states, the Soviet troops each day had to deliver thousands and then tens of thousands of tons of different materiel. Upon a decision of the GKO, on the frontier transshipping depots of the NKO Center were organized for transloading combat and transport equipment, weapons, ammunition, fuel and food from the Union-gauge track to the Western European. The Transcaucasian NKO Center Depot and the transshipping depot in Pahlavi continued operating for receiving and storing imported cargo transiting across Iran. (6)

* * *

During the years of the Great Patriotic War, the NKO central depots played a major role in supplying the troops of the fronts with everything essential to conduct major strategic operations. The experience of the war reaffirmed the importance of the presence of a reserve of rear resources on all levels. Ever-greater importance was assumed by a reserve of resources directly available to the rear bodies of the Center within the theaters of operations.

Hq SHC widely employed these reserves in the course of the operations for replenishing losses of the operational rear, for increasing its effort on the main sectors, for quickly moving up and establishing groupings of rear support resources on the new axes of troop operations (Belorussian, Vistula-Oder, Eastern Pomeranian and other operations) as well as for carrying out other immediate missions.

FOOTNOTES

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 2, inv. 795437, file 5, sheets 545-547; folio 67, inv. 12018, file 147, sheets 1-10.
2. "Ty1 Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." [Rear Services of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 82.
3. TsAMO, folio 67, inv. 12018, file 26, sheet 31.
4. During the described period, Maj S.N. Skryabin worked as the senior assistant of the chief of the Organization Section of the Staff of the Soviet Army Rear Services.
5. The transshipping depot in Pahlavi was run by the STU in Iran and this was under the chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services. The STU was headed initially by Maj Gen A.N. Korolev and later Maj Gen I.V. Kargin. Mil Engr 3d Rank L.I. Zorin who was also the chief of Iransovtrans [Iranian-Soviet Transport] of the USSR People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade was the deputy chief of the STU.
6. TsAMO, folio 67, inv. 12022, file 846, sheets 10-11.

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MEETING OF NAVY LEADERSHIP, SPECIALISTS ON STUDYING COMBAT EXPERIENCE OF FIRST YEAR OF WORLD WAR II

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 10, Oct 86 (signed to press 23 Sep 86) pp 68-72

[Article by Capt 1st Rank A.P. Aristov and Capt 2d Rank A.G. Nazarenko]

[Text] With the outbreak of World War II, the hostilities developed on the continental and naval theaters of operations and employing various Armed Services and branches of troops and the most modern military equipment for those times. The combat experience gained over the first year already provided a definite picture of the forms and methods of preparing and conducting combat actions. For this reason the People's Commissar of the Navy, Adm N.G. Kuznetsov, decided to hold a meeting on the subject "The Experience of Modern Operations" and this was held on 7-14 October 1940 under the leadership of the 1st Deputy People's Commissar of the Navy, Adm I.S. Isakov. Participating in it were representatives from the Naval High Staff, the Air Forces Directorate of the Navy and the Naval Academy. (1)

For the meeting participants the goal was set, on a basis of a thorough analysis and discussion of the experience of the naval battles and operations conducted by the belligerents, to work out recommendations for improving the combat training of the naval forces and combat equipment and to submit to the people's commissar and the high military council of the navy specific proposals to further increase the combat capability and readiness of the naval forces. (2)

In their reports and speeches the representatives of the Naval High Staff (GMSH), the Air Forces Directorate of the Navy and the academy provided a profound and complete analysis of the situation which arose after the first year of World War II on the continental, oceanic and sea theaters of operations, the experience of conducting joint naval operations and the employment of surface ships, submarines and air forces in the naval battles and operations.

The experience of the first year of the war, pointed out Adm I.S. Isakov, has shown that fundamental changes had occurred in the area of the strategic, operational and tactical actions of the belligerents' armed forces. The actions of the German troops were characterized by decisiveness, by a great

depth of attack, by the speed and thrust of the breakthrough in the aim of destroying the headquarters bodies, reserves, paralyzing the enemy lines of communications and the surrounding and destruction of the enemy. The attacks were of a combined nature involving different forces. The actions of the motorized formations and units were supported by aviation. In major operations involving amphibious forces (for example, in the Norwegian), the naval forces, ground troops and aviation cooperated closely.

Proceeding from the concept of a blitzkrieg, the Nazi Command was wagering on the surprise attack and decisive concentration of forces on the main sectors. On other sectors only feints were carried out with the involving of an insignificant part of the aviation in them. For exploiting the success achieved in the first operations and for retaining the initiative during one operation, forces were built up for the subsequent large-scale actions.

The doctrines of the independence and strategic universality of the air forces capable of determining independently the outcome of a war as well as "rule of the sea" worked out prior to the war in the West proved to be groundless. Although the German Armed Forces had not carried out a single operation on the continental and naval theaters without massed employment of aviation, the latter was employed not independently but in operational and tactical cooperation with the troops and naval forces. In all the operations (on land and at sea) there was a tendency for a greater role to be played by the struggle for air supremacy as the decisive factor in achieving success.

The English Royal Navy formally maintained supremacy in the North and Norwegian Seas. However, this did not prevent the Nazi Command from successfully carrying out the Norwegian Operation and due to which the northern strategic flank of the nations in the anti-Hitler coalition was broken and the Nazi ships were able to come out into the Atlantic. The naval blockade set up by the English and the subsequent widening of its near zone in the aim of isolating the German Navy from the ocean did not produce any substantial result.

Among the reasons for the successful actions of the German Armed Forces and the failure of the coalition countries, Adm I.S. Isakov pointed out the most essential ones.

1. The political errors of the French and English governments which during the prewar period had continued to act in the Munich spirit and endeavored to direct German expansion to the east (to the USSR), that is, endeavored to employ the historically traditional method of English foreign policy of "having others do the dirty work." For concealing the colonial aspirations, the aim of the war was hypocritically formulated as the "defense of democracy and freedom." This led to a decline in the morale of the English and French peoples as well as the Anglo-French troops which ceased resistance with the first success of the enemy.

2. The qualitative superiority of the material base of Germany's armed struggle developed in the 1930s on the basis of the last achievements in science, technology and production considering the modern concepts of military science for those times. England and France had a great deal of old military

equipment which was "a shame to discard." The replacement of this was carried out gradually.

3. The canonizing in England and France after Versailles of the military doctrine and generalship of the military leaders of the times of World War I. At the same time, in Germany the leading positions in the Army and Navy were held by persons who had insignificant posts in the previous war. They were not blinded by the old canons of positional actions and aimed at decisive fluid actions in accord with Hitler's idea of a blitzkrieg.

4. The crisis in intelligence in the coalition countries. The English and French commands had only a general and incomplete notion of Germany's military-economic potential and its armed forces and aggressive plans. But the military-political leadership of Nazi Germany had a good knowledge of the enemy including its doctrines, capabilities, equipping, the skills of troops, traditions and so forth.(3)

At the same time, Adm I.S. Isakov cautioned the meeting participants against an indiscriminate infatuation with the German successes and pointed to the need of approaching an assessment of combat experience of the Nazi Armed Forces critically. In confirmation of this he gave examples of miscalculations by the German Command and the failures of the German troops and navy.

An analysis of the experience of the first year of the war showed that where the Nazi troops encountered heavy resistance, their actions were far from lightning-like. For this reason the war against an economically and militarily stronger state could be extended and consist of a series of rapid operations with lulls between them. The operations, Adm I.S. Isakov pointed out, would be successful when they were conducted rapidly and purposefully; the side which was first would be the winner. However, anticipation should not be reduced to formal surprise but rather anticipation in its essence.(4) He pointed out that for defeating the enemy "in conducting operations at sea, it was essential to thoroughly consider the actual situation at the given moment, on the given sector and, having calculated well, hit the enemy in its weak point, in endeavoring to anticipate the enemy and compensating for its numerical and strength superiority by employing speed, boldness and organization and not considering oneself bound to old doctrines.... Only a decisive offensive where it is possible to find a weak place in the enemy and a very strong and active defense where the enemy attempts to break through can ensure success."(5)

The attention of the meeting participants was drawn to one other noteworthy aspect in the combat actions of the German Army and Navy: the clear knowledge by each man of his place and his role in the operations, even with a temporary disruption of command. This showed the good organization of the operations. Consequently, in the aims of the complete support for carrying out the overall concept, it is essential to so plan the operation that the forces are allocated and the men placed, particularly with cooperation between different forces so that each executor knows to whom he is subordinate and for what he is responsible. The organizing of the forces, means and headquarters bodies into a single plan is required not only in an operations area but also to the

entire depth of the operational strike. "Organization generally is an indication of high culture," emphasized Adm I.S. Isakov.(8)

Landing and antilanding operations became the main forms of joint actions during the first year of World War II, pointed out Rear Adm V.A. Belli in his report. The new feature in landing operations was the following: the forces involved in them were landed simultaneously at several points; combat ships were employed for transporting them while aviation was used for shifting troops and food to captured areas over great distances; airborne assault forces were an inseparable part of large amphibious landing operations.

The landing of the amphibious force simultaneously at several points with a maximum concentration of forces in one of them provided, in the first place, a scattering of the enemy antilanding defense (PDO) forces and, secondly, excluded the failure of the operation as a whole if at some point there was a failure (such a method of landing operations was subsequently employed during the years of the Great Patriotic War, for example, in the Kerch-Feodosiya and Kerch-Eltigen Landing Operations, in landing amphibious forces in Southern Ozereyka, Stanichka, at Novorossiysk and so forth. -- Author's note).

The dropping of airborne forces in the course of amphibious landing operations made it possible to take by surprise large population points on the coast, airfields deep in the enemy rear and in employing these, quickly build up the effort. After capturing the airfield in Oslo, within 24 hours the Nazis has delivered around 30,000 men there. Subsequent actions by the Nazi troops in the Netherlands and Belgium confirmed the great importance of an airborne force in rapidly achieving success.(7)

The main particular features in the combat for the landing, pointed out Rear Adm V.A. Belli, was the threat from the air, the prompt laying of mines, including proximity, on the approaches to landing-accessible areas and their dropping by aircraft in the deployment areas of the landing craft in the course of the operation as well as the involvement of submarines in antilanding actions. As a whole, in conducting landing and antilanding operations, there was a tendency to organize operational and tactical cooperation between the aviation and naval forces. The experience of the Norwegian Operation indicated that air supremacy could ensure the coastal defenses against invasion by an enemy amphibious force even with weaker naval forces than the enemy's. The necessary depth of the antilanding defenses to seaward was achieved here by combined actions of the ships and aviation.

In line with the involvement of the army, naval and air forces in the landing and antilanding operations with operational and tactical cooperation, of great importance in quick, continuous and effective command over them was a unity of command from top to bottom in the operation as a whole, in the landing assault and at each landing point(8) (as the experience of combat in the following years was to show, the failure to meet the demands of the given principle for conducting landing operations led to a disruption of coordination in the employment of the forces, to a reduced rate of offensive actions and to an excessive loss of time and forces in carrying out the set missions. -- Author's note).

In speaking about the experience of employing surface vessels, Vice Adm S.P. Stavitskiy pointed out that the latter formed the basis of maneuverable formations in naval battle and an operation. However, the surface vessels cannot operate effectively independently, without air support. In line with the diverse composition of the maneuverable formations and the great distance of their operating areas from the bases, of great importance was a simultaneous execution of operational-tactical missions as well as a resolution to the problems of logistic support for the ships directly at sea. Consequently, Vice Adm S.P. Stavitskiy concluded, a unity of command is required in order to achieve coordinated actions of both the strike and support forces.(9)

It is essential to point out that the sporadic involvement of aircraft carriers in battles and operations at sea during the first year of the war did not make it possible for the meeting participants to bring out that important role which these ships subsequently came to play in armed combat at sea.

An analysis of the experience of the employment of submarines by the belligerents, said Capt 2d Rank V.I. Rutkovskiy, shows that they are most suitable for active and extended operations on the lines of communications. During the first year of the war they were responsible for approximately 45 percent of the sunken tonnage of transports. Over this same period they sank a total of around 20 fighting ships.

A new feature in the employment of submarines was the organizing of their operational cooperation with surface vessels (by the Germans in the Norwegian Operation) and with aviation (by the English in the Norwegian Operation and by the Italians in the Mediterranean). Aviation supplied the submarines with information on the location of enemy ships and vessels, it destroyed the antisubmarine forces and launched preliminary strikes against convoys in the aim of establishing good conditions for subsequent submarine operations.

The group method of submarine employment was used chiefly with operations on the sealanes. This was carried out employing screens (in vast areas of the ocean) and tactical groups (to the west of Gibraltar). With lone-wolf actions the submarines successively were moved from one designated station to another. Torpedoes were their main weapon (in open areas) as well as mines (in direct proximity to the enemy bases and coast). Artillery attacks were employed only at the very outset of the war, when the belligerents still did not have a sufficient amount of antisubmarine forces, including ASW aircraft. The increase in the antisubmarine forces, the arming of them with new hydroacoustical detection devices and weapons for hitting the submarines as well as the widening of the operational zones of antisubmarine actions almost completely excluded subsequently the possibility of the submarines employing artillery in attacking vessels and for self-defense purposes.

The development of the antisubmarine forces demanded great skill, boldness and initiative from the personnel of the submarines (primarily the commanders). This circumstance, Capt 2d Rank V.I. Rutkovskiy, pointed out, necessitates the training of submariners under conditions as close as possible to actual combat.(10)

In examining the experience of the employment of aviation, Capt 1st Rank V.I. Petrovskiy pointed to the sharp increase in its role in armed combat at sea and in the effectiveness of combat operations. Air forces had become an indispensable component of the forces involved in a naval operation while the winning of air supremacy had become an inseparable part of an operation in a naval theater of operations. Aviation had proven itself to be a universal means of combat in carrying out diverse combat missions such as: launching strikes (independently and in cooperation with other forces) at fighting ships and transports, naval bases, ports and coastal fortifications, in conducting reconnaissance, in laying minefields and so forth. Attack aviation was employed, as a rule, on a massed basis with a fighter cover. In the aim of ensuring the success of its actions in the operations, plans were made for feint actions to distract the air defense forces or there were to be pre-emptive bombing and strafing attacks on them. Participation of aviation in armed combat at sea led to a sharp rise in the spatial scope of naval operations.

"A delay in the employment of air forces or their indecisive employment," commented the speaker, "help to put operational initiative in the hands of the enemy and can lead to a direct defeat."(11)

The results of the meeting were made available to the commanders of the fleets and flotillas, the members of the military councils of the fleets and the members of the Navy Main Military Council on 2-10 December 1940 at meetings on the results of combat training for the current year and the tasks for the following year and were given high praise by the People's Commissar of the Navy, Adm N.G. Kuznetsov. He pointed out that the experience of the war had to be studied not for the sake of knowledge and not merely for science. This had to be done in order to figure out the probable enemy means and methods of combat and to promptly undertake countermeasures.(12)

The meeting made it possible to subsequently work out proposals on a broad range of theoretical and practical questions.

FOOTNOTES

1. TsGA VMF [Central State Archives of the Navy], folio 1549, file 172, sheet 71.
2. TsvMA [Central Naval Archives], folio 1, file 40243, sheet 12.
3. Ibid., sheets 21, 22, 34-39.
4. Ibid., sheet 44.
5. Ibid., sheets 44, 52.
6. Ibid., sheets 53, 54.
7. Ibid., file 40241, sheets 2, 3, 8, 13-15.
8. Ibid., sheets 11, 14, 16, 18, 20, 26.

9. Ibid., file 40245, sheets 10-18.
10. Ibid., file 40244, sheets 2, 9-14, 23.
11. Ibid., file 40242, sheets 2, 7-10, 13, 19, 20, 31.
12. TsGA VMF, folio 1549, file 180, sheets 41-42.

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RESTORING BATTLEWORTHINESS OF TANK (MECHANIZED) UNITS, FORMATIONS IN COURSE OF OFFENSIVE FROM EXPERIENCE OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 10, Oct 86 (signed to press 23 Sep 86) pp 73-77

[Article by Lt Col Yu.I. Zavatskiy]

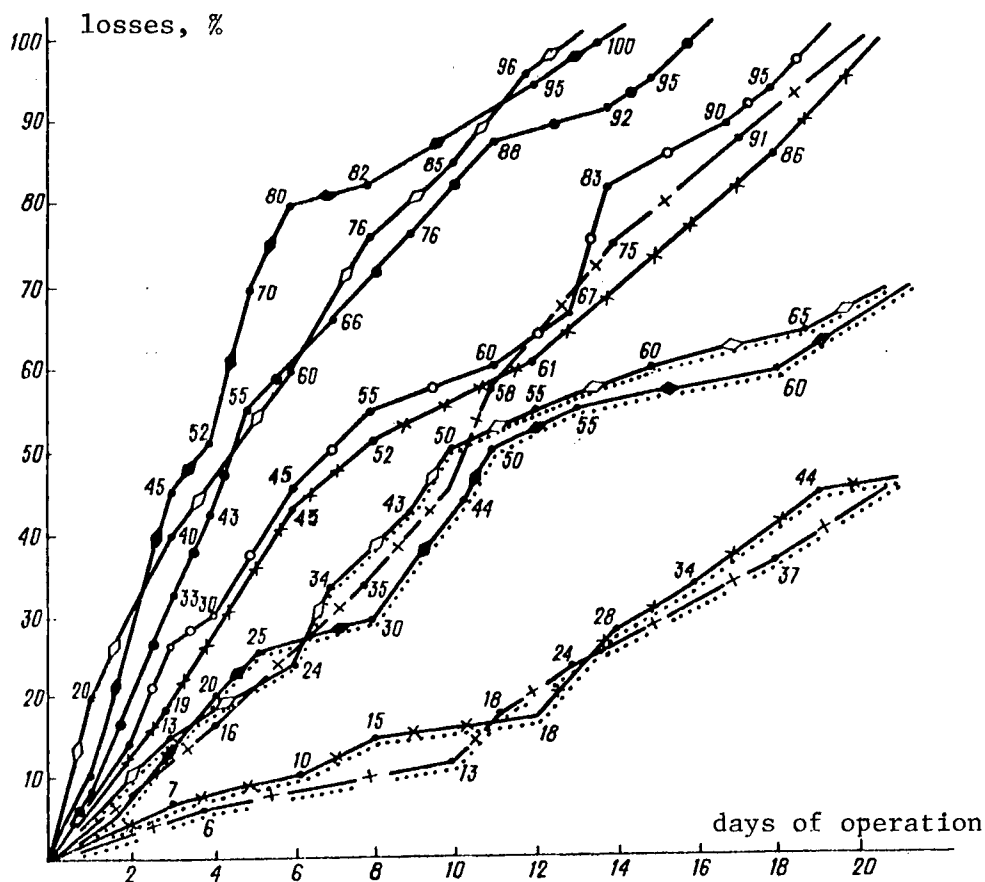
[Text] Battleworthiness is the ability of the troops, in accord with their purpose, to conduct combat actions and carry out combat missions. Depending upon the degree of enemy action, battleworthiness can be partially or completely lost. A unit or formation partially loses its battleworthiness with losses of 50-60 percent in personnel and combat equipment with the maintaining of command and completely with the disruption of command and the putting out of action of over 50-60 percent of the forces.(1) To restore battleworthiness means to bring the subunits, units and formations which have been hit to a state of readiness to carry out combat missions.

The experience of the last war shows that tank (mechanized) corps as a result of the losses suffered by the 8th-10th day of fighting in the operational depth of the enemy defenses and on the 4th-5th day in breaching the defenses had exhausted their initial capabilities and were forced to conduct measures to recover battleworthiness (see the diagram), that is, to restore disrupted command, to establish battleworthy formations, to make up losses in combat equipment, weapons and personnel and replenish expended supplies of materiel.

The restoring of command in the course of combat was carried out by different methods. For example, in the course of the Orel Operation, on 20 July 1943, as a consequence of the significant losses in the headquarters bodies of the XXV Tank Corps, temporary command of its units was provided by the commander of the 11th Guards Army, Lt Gen I.Kh. Bagramyan, who then transferred the brigades to the rifle divisions of the XXXVI Guards Rifle Corps and they began operating as close support tanks.

In the Belgorod-Kharkov Operation (3-23 August 1943), command over the composite brigade organized from units of the XXIX Tank Corps was provided by the commander of the 25th Guards Tank Brigade. Its staff was organized from officers of the 31st and 32d Tank Brigades as well as the operations and intelligence sections of the corps staff.

Graph of Losses in Tank (Mechanized) Formations
During Certain Offensive Operations of Great Patriotic War*



losses in Belgorod-Kharkov Operation:
+..... personnel, —+— tanks & SAU in IV Gds TC
+..... personnel, —+— tanks & SAU in I MC
 losses in Lwow-Sandomierz Operation:
+..... personnel, —+— tanks & SAU in XXV TC
+..... personnel, —+— tanks & SAU in VIII Gds MC
+..... tank, SAU losses in IX TC in Warsaw-Poznan Oper.
+..... tank, SAU losses in X TC in East Prussian Oper.

* The graph was compiled from materials of the Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense: folio 3402, inv. 1, file 49, sheets 10, 121; folio 3408, inv. 1, 70, sheets 151-299; folio 3410, inv. 1, file 6, sheet 113; folio 3419, inv. 1, file 44, sheets 13, 36; folio 3423, inv. 1, file 10, sheets 2-26.

Command was restored differently in the 219th Tank Brigade of the I Mechanized Corps in the Belorussian Operation. On 5 July 1944, as a result of an air raid, the observation post of the brigade's commander and a significant portion of the command bodies and equipment were put out of action. The brigade deputy commander who was alive reestablished the command post from surviving officers from the brigade's staff and continued control of combat.

In the Carpathian-Dukla Operation (8 September-28 October 1944), the commander of the IV Guards Tank Corps, Lt Gen P.P. Poluboyarov, as a consequence of heavy losses in the headquarters bodies of the 3d Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade, switched its subunits to the commanders of the 13th and 14th Guards Tank Brigades.

Composite formations were organized for continuing offensive operations from units and subunits which had lost their battleworthiness. As a rule, the units which lost their battleworthiness were moved into the rear for manning up and replacements, but not to full strength. Combat equipment such as tanks, weapons and mortars along with their crews were turned over for manning up the subunits and units continuing to fight. For example, the commander of the 111th Tank Brigade from the XXV Tank Corps was to restore battleworthiness in the Orel Operation. By 23 July, a minimum amount of combat equipment, weapons and personnel remained in the brigade. In addition, in the course of the fighting a large portion of the officers from the headquarters and staff and the commanders of the brigade's subunits were put out of action. The corps commander, Maj Gen F.G. Anikushkin, ordered the brigade commander to constitute a composite detachment and support the offensive of the 20th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade. The composite detachment of the 111th Tank Brigade included a tank battalion (15 tanks), a rifle company (109 men), two mortar crews, four antitank crews and two 76-mm cannon crews.(2)

In the Proskurovo-Chernovtsy Operation, on 5 April 1944, a limited amount of men and weapons remained in the IV Guards Tank Corps in the Zbarazh area. In the 12th, 13th and 14th Guards Tank Brigades there were, respectively, 3, 4 and 8 tanks, while in the 3d Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade there were a few more than 150 active bayonets, 24 mortars and 15 artillery pieces.(3) For destroying the Tarnopol enemy grouping, the corps commander constituted a composite 3d Motorized Rifle Brigade, a composite battalion from the 14th Guards Tank Brigade and a composite company from the 12th and 13th Guards Tank Brigades.

There were certain differences in the conditions for establishing the composite detachment in the XXV Tank Corps during the final stage of the Lwow-Sandomierz Operation. On 30 July 1944, the corps was given the mission of crossing the Wisloka River and capturing the highway at Ustravki in the aim of preventing the retreat of the enemy from Krosno. The corps which had fought its way some 610 km as part of the horse-mechanized group of Lt Gen V.K. Baranov, had 15 percent of its tanks and SAU, 50 percent of its guns and mortars, 19 percent of the rifles while the staffs of the brigades and the corps were at 40 percent of the communications equipment of the TOE numerical strength. The corps commander organized a composite corps group and began to carry out the set mission. The group included the composite 20th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade and a composite tank battalion organized from the tanks and SAU of the three corps brigades on a basis of the 162d Tank Brigade, since it had a larger amount of tanks and SAU, motorized riflemen and radio equipment.(4) In the Carpathian-Dukla Operation, the commander of the IV Guards Tank Corps by using an inactivated motorized rifle brigade filled out three tank brigades and they continued the offensive.

The establishing of composite formations was carried out by different methods. The simplest was to man them on a basis of the former organizational structure of the formations and units which had kept their control posts, a large portion of the combat equipment, weapons and personnel. Another method was to reduce the number of operational subunits and units and unite them as well as switch some of them to a lower organizational structure. Often a combined method was employed in organizing the formations and this represented a combination of the first two methods.

Replacing losses and equipment, weapons and personnel. The average daily losses over an operation were 7-9 tanks and SAU in the tank formations and up to 15 tanks and SAU in the mechanized ones. Thus, the losses of the IV Guards Tank Corps over the 20 days of the Belgorod-Kharkov Operation were: 122 T-34 tanks and 60 MK-III and 15 SU-122, and over the 15 days of the Carpathian-Dukla Operation, 95 T-34 tanks and 12 self-propelled mounts. As an average, from the experience of the combat actions of the IV Guards Tank Corps, for every 10 km of fighting the losses were 11-12 tanks. Of these, 8-9 were irrecoverable losses. (5)

The formations suffered the highest losses in breaching the enemy defenses. For example, in the Belgorod-Kharkov Operation, the I Mechanized Corps in breaching the first defensive line (a depth of 6 km) lost 20 tanks. The overall losses over the 3 days of fighting for the first and second defensive line (depth of 23 km) were 90 tanks, including 47 irrecoverable losses. (6) The II Tank Corps in this same operation, in breaking through the enemy defenses in the zone of the 40th Army, during the first day of combat lost 47 tanks, having pushed to a depth of 8 km and on the second day, 12 tanks, having covered 12 km. (7)

In the course of the fighting the units and formations rarely received replacement tanks from the industrial plants and for this reason the rebuilding of damaged equipment in the course of an operation was the main source for replenishing losses. Thus, of the 25 tanks participating in the Vienna Operation (16 March-15 April 1945) from the 1st Guards Mechanized Brigade of the I Guards Mechanized Corps, 1 tank had been hit four times, 5 tanks were hit three times, 7 tanks were hit twice and they were all repaired by the repair subunits of the brigade and the corps. (8) Without obtaining a single tank for replacement from the deep rear, the corps successfully carried out the combat missions due to the unstinting work of the repairmen. In the course of the operation, 191 tanks and 11 SU-100 were repaired along with 36 guns, 77 mortars, 35 antiaircraft cannons and 42 tank cannons. (9)

From 1943, the corps began to include a reserve of tanks with crews (numbering 40 units) and these were a substantial source for replacing losses during fighting. Often in the course of an offensive, the replenishing of equipment was carried out by including in the brigades and corps other subunits and units, as was the case during the Orel Operation in the XXV Tank Corps. On 28 July, the commander of the 11th Guards Army, Lt Gen I.Kh. Bagramyan, sent the corps two tank regiments of 32 tanks each and these were turned over to the 111th and 162d Tank Brigades. (10) Often captured equipment was employed. Thus, in the Middle-Don Operation (16-30 December 1942), the I Guards Mechanized Corps using captured equipment was strengthened with artillery and

automatic weapons captured by the 1st Guards Mechanized Brigade at Belavin (12 cannons and shells) and by the 2d Guards Mechanized Brigade at Bokovskiy (18 guns, 28 vehicles with ammunition and weapons).(11)

Over the 15-20 days of an offensive operation, the casualties averaged 40-50 percent of the number of personnel at the start of the operation. Thus, during the Orel Operation, the XXV Tank Corps lost 40 percent of its personnel(12) while the I Mechanized Corps in the Belgorod-Kharkov Operation lost 50 percent.(13)

During the war years, personnel was replaced by several ways. In the Middle-Don Operation, for example, a composite detachment was organized from the 600 prisoners of war liberated by the XVII Tank Corps at Kantemirovka. From the local population under the corps they organized a partisan regiment (250 men armed with captured weapons)(14) and this was subsequently turned over to the brigades for manning up. During this same operation the I Guards Mechanized Corps was also strengthened by using partisans (300 men), while the companies of its 3d Guards Mechanized Brigade, when it had a minimum number of rifles, received 69 men from the rear and special subunits of the corps tank regiments.

In the Voroshilovgrad Operation, on 10 February 1943, the I Guards Mechanized Corps received 502 men from the 196th Army Reserve Rifle Regiment of the 3d Guards Army.(15) In the course of the Vienna Operation soldiers after recovering from injuries arrived in the corps. During the operation the medical subunits returned 1,765 men to battle, that is, over 40 percent of all the medical losses in the corps.(16) In the XXV Tank Corps in the Orel Operation, the numerical strength was restored by a corps reserve established prior to the operation and numbering 252 men of whom 75 were officers.

In the Belgorod-Kharkov Operation, the IV Guards Tank Corps fought without medical service reinforcements. The corps commander established in each brigade teams of recuperated personnel numbering up to 100 men in each under the technical maintenance companies and the separate motor transport company, and 200 men in a motorized rifle brigade. A physician, a medical instructor, a nurse and 2 orderlies were assigned from the medical platoons to these companies. Over the operation in the teams of recuperated personnel, medical assistance was received by 576 men, 506 of whom were returned to combat, including 79 officers.(18)

In the Lublin-Brest Operation (18 July-2 August 1944), the losses of the I Mechanized Corps were replenished by a draft of recruits numbering 790 men and 47 soldiers arriving from the hospital.

Compensation for losses of specialists from branches of troops was carried out by the certain reserve established in the corps and brigades of drivers, gunners, artillery troops, drivers and so forth as well as crews remaining without equipment and which were reassigned within the corps. For example, before the Belgorod-Kharkov Operation in the IV Guards Tank Corps a reserve of tank troops was established consisting of 137 men, of whom 20 were officers(19) while in the I Mechanized Corps there were 139 specialists including 37 officers.(20) In the course of the operation, for manning up the

tank crews all the tank troops remaining without tanks were sent to the 219th Tank Brigade from the tank regiments of the brigades in the I Mechanized Corps.

The high battleworthiness of the formations and units depended also upon the prompt replacement of supplies in the course of combat, particularly fuel and ammunition.

The difficulty of logistic support for the tank and mechanized corps which fought, as a rule, in the operational depth was in their significant distance from supply depots and as a consequence of this the great length of the transport routes, the relative vulnerability of the lines of communications as well as the limited supplies which could be carried by the transport of the brigades and corps.

In a number of operations materiel was delivered by air. For example, in the Belorussian Operation the fuel for the I Mechanized Corps which was part of the horse-mechanized group of Gen I.A. Pliyev was delivered by 30 PO-2 aircraft which each day made two or three trips each. In the Minsk Offensive Operation (29 June-4 July 1944), captured fuel was employed for fueling the equipment while oil and lubricants were delivered by U-2 aircraft from the corps air flight.

Combat training in the newly organized subunits and units was carried out in the aim of quickly shaping them up for the successful execution of tasks. The personnel was trained directly in the positions of the subunits. If the situation permitted and there was sufficient time, tactical exercises were conducted in the close rear.

A high political and morale condition of the troops in the newly organized formations was ensured by active and effective party-political work. The tank and motorized rifle companies were the center of party-political work aimed at restoring the psychogenic losses. The main areas of this work were: the personal example set by the communists and Komsomol members; the strengthening of inferior party organization; the popularizing of the feats and self-sacrifice of the men and aiming them at manifesting braveness, courage and valor; the combating of panic, defeatist attitudes and manifestations of cowardice among the personnel; mobilizing all resources to quickly repair damaged combat equipment and weapons, to return it to combat as well as good mastery of this equipment.

Thus, the Great Patriotic War has provided us with rich experience in restoring the battleworthiness of tank (mechanized) formations and units in the course of an offensive. A study of this experience is essential for further increasing the effective training of troops under present-day conditions.

FOOTNOTES

1. See: "Voyennyi Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar" [Military Encyclopedic Dictionary], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, p 92.

2. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 3419, inv. 1, file 29, sheet 6.
3. Ibid., folio 3402, inv. 1, file 78, sheets 134-136.
4. Ibid., folio 3419, inv. 1, file 103, sheet 8.
5. Ibid., folio 3402, inv. 1, file 109, sheets 47-48.
6. Ibid., folio 3423, inv. 1, file 10, sheets 7-10.
7. Ibid., folio 3407, inv. 1, file 91, sheets 2-7.
8. Ibid., folio 4324, inv. 1, file 96, sheet 332.
9. Ibid., file 102, sheets 68, 77.
10. Ibid., folio 3419, inv. 1, file 11, sheet 9.
11. Ibid., folio 3424, inv. 1, file 18, sheet 74.
12. Ibid., folio 3419, inv. 1, file 25, sheet 17.
13. Ibid., folio 3423, inv. 1, file 10, sheets 92-93.
14. Ibid., folio 3402, inv. 1, file 20, sheets 3, 51.
15. Ibid., sheets 338-339, 521.
16. Ibid., file 102, sheet 80.
17. Ibid., folio 3419, inv. 1, file 11, sheet 14.
18. Ibid., folio 3402, inv. 1, file 49, sheets 90-95.
19. Ibid., file 35, sheet 29.
20. Ibid., folio 3423, inv. 1, file 10, sheet 92.

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ALLOTMENT OF BATTLE TASKS

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[Article by Maj S.P. Ivanov]

[Text] During the years of the Great Patriotic War, the troops were confronted with specific tasks. For carrying them out an allotment of battle tasks was required and this was of a temporary nature. The essence of the allotment of battle tasks was to determine the "special (additional) duties of the servicemen in a subunit depending upon the nature of the task to be carried out. The allotment of battle tasks was carried out in a combat situation, at tactical exercises, in the event of an alert, on patrol and so forth."(1) Observers, messengers, ammunition carriers and so forth could be assigned under the allotment of battle tasks.

The need for the allotment of battle tasks most often arose in carrying out special, so-called "nonstandard" tasks, in breaking through fortified areas and in capturing large cities, in crossing water obstacles without a pause using improvised means, in carrying out combat tasks by non-T/O subunits (forward detachments), in organizing and conducting combat in wooded-swampy terrain, in mountains as well as at night, in conducting reconnaissance in force, sweeps and ambushes. With the skillfully carried out allotment of battle tasks, the combat capabilities of subunits were increased and conditions created for carrying out important tasks using small forces.

With the allotment of battle tasks, consideration was given not only to the specific features of the battle task but also to the individual traits of the soldiers, sergeants and officers. For example, one soldier possessed the quality of observativeness and recalled well what he had seen, another had a good sense of direction in the field, a third could move quickly in a crawl, a fourth had perfectly mastered the procedures of hand-to-hand combat, a fifth was adroit and hardy, he could ski skillfully and easily swim across a water obstacle and so forth. It was essential that each of them be utilized most effectively, advantageously and in full accord with his capabilities.

One of the so-called "nonstandard" tasks in an offensive was the clearing of trenches, foxholes and communications trenches of surviving small groups of enemy soldiers and individuals in the aim of preventing an attack on our

advancing subunits from the rear. This task, as combat experience showed, was not an easy one. The enemy could appear around any bend in a trench or communications trench, it could hide in a "foxhole," a trench, shelter or dugout. The slightest lack of caution and circumspection could lead to death.

The soldiers assigned to combat in clearing trenches, foxholes and communications trenches required not only high field skills. The boldest, strongest willed, most enterprising and agile soldiers were selected and from these the special groups were made up. The most experienced men were appointed group commanders. Inside each such group there was an assigning of battle tasks: some soldiers were assigned to move along the bottom of a trench and others outside the trench.(2)

The first group (usually two or three men), before descending into a trench, threw a grenade into it. In entering the trench, the soldier ahead by firing his submachine gun "combed" the trench, the man behind him upon the first's signal threw a grenade around the next bin and carefully inspected the recesses (foxholes) in the sides, making certain that the enemy was not concealed somewhere in them. The third man during this time guarded the group against surprise attack from the rear. The soldiers not in the group moving along the bottom moved along both sides of the trench, clearing a path for the first group using grenades and fire and cutting off the enemy's escape route.

The combating of antitank personnel armed with bazookas was also among the "nonstandard" tasks. The non-T/O improvised antitank teams numbered up to 30 men in each enemy battalion. Small groups and individual tank hunters were positioned on the likely routes of advance of our tanks and which were covered by two or three submachine gunners.

For detecting and destroying the bazooka troops, special observers and hunters were assigned, most frequently snipers, to the squads, platoons and companies. Moreover, groups of soldiers were assigned for covering the tanks. Each member of a tank crew was additionally assigned tasks for observing the field and detecting enemy tank hunters.(3)

In breaking through fortified areas and in capturing large cities, in the battle formations of the troops it was often necessary to organize temporary formations in the form of assault detachments and groups. Assault groups were organized in rifle battalions upon orders of a regimental commander. They were based upon the TOE rifle subunit (platoon, company) to which usually they assigned two or three tanks or SAU, two antitank guns, and two pieces of divisional artillery. Also in the group were up to a platoon of combat engineers, a squad of flamethrowers, chemical warfare troops (for setting smokescreens).(4) A combined-arms officer, usually the commander of a rifle company, was in command of the assault group. In a number of instances, the assault groups were led by officers of the engineer troops (the 11th Guards Army in breaking through the Stallupenen Fortified Area in October 1944).(5)

The specific nature of the task of reaching the fortified areas also required specific actions: in particular, the splitting of the assault group into subgroups. The reconnaissance and mineclearing subgroup consisted of combat engineers which had the task of engineer reconnaissance of the objective and

the approaches to it and cutting passages in the wire obstacles and minefields on the approaches to the objective being attacked; the fire subgroup was assigned to neutralize the objective being attacked; the destruction subgroup consisting of combat engineers for destroying the structure being attacked while the core (riflemen and submachine gunners) carried out the task of supporting the approach of the destruction subgroup to the structure being attacked as well as its immediate capture. The size of each subgroup depended upon the size and nature of the objective being attacked.(8)

Combat in a city was complex and unique. This came down to storming fortified buildings and other installations which had been turned into firing points, strongpoints and centers of resistance. The enemy had to be driven out not only from each block, street, square, park and building but also from each room, stairwell, attic and basement.

As in breaking through the fortified areas, the assault groups were split into subgroups. From the experience of the fighting for Poznan (Vistula-Oder Operation, January 1945), several assault subgroups (of three-five men each) and several covering subgroups (five-seven men) were organized. These were armed with submachine guns, medium and light machine guns, grenades, and thermite blocks. There were also: a reinforcement group including artillery, tanks and self-propelled guns; a reserve group consisting of riflemen and submachine gunners.(7)

The allotting of battle tasks in each assaulting subgroup consisted in determining who was the first to break into the building, who would fight inside the objective, who would check to see whether the building had been mined and who would hang a grenade on a door handle for blowing open a locked door. Soldiers were assigned for sweeping each bend of a stairwell with submachine fire as well as for observing and giving signals with the detection of the enemy. It was also set who would be assigned for holding the captured floors of the building. In the covering subgroup they determined who during the period of the assault by his fire would prevent enemy flanking fire from adjacent buildings and who would cover the actions of the artillery, the combat engineers, the flamethrowers and the tanks. In the reserve they determined who would be assigned for filling out and reinforcing the assaulting subgroups and for eliminating possible enemy counterattacks from the flanks. New additional assaulting subgroups were organized from the reserve and sent to the objective being assaulted.

The dynamics of the combat of an assault group in a city usually occurred according to the following scheme. The tanks opened destruction fire against the firing points and upper floors while the infantry at this time broke into the lower floors and basements, clearing the enemy from them. In certain instances the tanks blocked the machine gun firing slits with their armor, helping the infantry to run along the streets and blocks.(8)

Thus, in the fighting for Poznan on 30 January 1945, in taking a 4-story building the assault group consisted of 15 infantrymen, 2 chemical warfare troops with manpack flamethrowers, 2 T-34 tanks and 1 SU-152.

Under the cover of the fire of the tanks and self-propelled mounts, the infantrymen and flamethrowers broke into the first floor, they set the building afire and completely destroyed the enemy in the building. On 10 February 1945, in sealing off Fort No 5, the assault group consisted of 3 heavy artillery (BM) guns, 2 T-34 tanks, an infantry platoon, a combat engineer platoon and a squad of flamethrowers. The storming of the fort was carried out in the following manner: after the shelling of the upper story by the BM guns, the infantry, combat engineers and chemical warfare troops approached the walls while tanks with a combat engineer squad moved forward to the gates of the fort. The chemical warfare troops threw smoke charges and grenades over the walls, the moat and lower floor were covered in smoke while the tanks and infantry opened fire against the firing slits of the upper story, thereby supporting the combat engineers in detonating the exterior and central gates of the fort. After this the reserve machine gunner platoon went into action, initiating combat in the fort itself.

In-tact and destroyed buildings could equally conceal the actions of both the enemy as well as our own troops. For this reason commanders of all levels in controlling the combat of an assault group organized dependable surveillance. Regardless of the fact that each soldier could be an observer, the commanders assigned primarily those who excelled in observativeness and visual memory, who were able to correctly determine distance and get a fix on enemy firing positions as well as who had mastered the skills of observation in a city. In the roar of battle the places of machine gun nests in a large multistory building with scores of windows could only be determined from the momentary flashes and scarcely noticeable drifts of smoke. Only an experienced observer could catch this.

In September 1944, when our troops were preparing to storm the suburbs of Warsaw, Praga, intensified surveillance was organized of the surrounding buildings. The allotment of battle tasks consisted in determining the dummy soldiers and the observer soldiers. The first were to evoke enemy fire. Having put their headgear on sticks, they quickly exposed them around the corners of houses, fences and other shelters. As soon as the enemy opened fire, the observers from the sounds and the bursts of shells got a fix on the location of the machine guns. By artillery fire the enemy firing points were neutralized and our subunits could continue to advance.(9)

The specific conditions of the fighting of the assault groups demanded valor, steadfastness, resourcefulness and good physical conditioning from the men of the different branches of troops and primarily from the infantry which bore the main burden of the fighting. The assault groups were organized in accord with these demands. The personnel of the assault groups was armed with submachine guns, hand grenades and antitank grenades and supplied with bulletproof vests, picks, crowbars and small combat engineer shovels. In addition, the combat engineers had mine detectors, probes, wire cutters, hooks with ropes, sandbags, travois, bangalore torpedoes and shaped charges.

The allotment of battle tasks also occurred in the crossing of water obstacles. The enemy mined the banks, fords, the approaches and exits from the river, set out obstacles under the water, blew up bridges and crossings and turned the water barriers into strong defensive lines. For this reason

the commanders ahead of time, before reaching the river, set additional tasks for the men: for some the reconnoitering of obstacles, minefields and the making of passages through them and for others to seek out convenient places for crossings, fords, descents and exits from the river, while still others were to determine the depth of the water obstacles, current speed, the state of the bottom and so forth. If the subunit was to cross on improvised means, then men were assigned to locate fishing boats and building materials for building rafts while the men were assigned to the rafts and fishing boats, the rowers were assigned and it was established who would fire during the crossing and who would maintain communications. On the basis of the allotment of the battle tasks, rafts were built from planks and logs, floats from empty iron barrels, while tarps were stuffed with hay and straw. This provided effective results.

To the north of Kiev, in the Mnevo area, at dawn on 22 September 1943, subunits from the 13th Army of the Central Front crossed on rafts from beams and barrels, fishing boats and barges. During the night of 22 September, the forward motorized rifle units of the 3d Guards Tank Army of the Voronezh Front crossed the river to the southeast of Kiev, in the area of Velikiy Bukrin. One of the first to reach the opposite bank at the village of Grigorovka was a company of submachine gunners from the 51st Guards Tank Brigade under the command of Lt N.I. Sinashkin.(10)

In the course of liberating Belorussia, in pursuing the retreating Nazis, subunits from the 201st Guards Rifle Regiment under the command of Guards Lt Col Inozemtsev reached the Western Dvina River and without a pause began crossing it. The first to swim across were scouts headed by Capt Prokhorov. Among them was the signalman, Guards Sgt Rylov. He quickly ran a wire across the river and established communications and this played a major role in controlling the crossing units. The soldiers of Sr Lt Turushev crossed the river after Prokhorov's scouts. The subunit initiated combat on the left bank of the river, they pushed back the opposing Nazis and thereby significantly facilitated the crossing for the other subunits.(11)

The allotment of battle tasks was also essential in the carrying out of tasks by non-T/O subunits, in particular, by forward detachments. During the war years, these were organized from the subunits of different branches of troops, special troops and services. In making an allotment of battle tasks, the commander assigned those responsible for reconnaissance, for keeping to the axis of advance and determined who would fire when and at what targets and who would provide information within the forward detachment.

Commanders resorted to the allotment of battle tasks in fighting in forested-swampy terrain. A forest restricted a maneuver, it reduced vision and made orientation difficult. The enemy organized ambushes, it employed different types of obstacles and sent out small groups of soldiers into the rear of the advancing troops. For this reason, in organizing an offensive through a forest, the commanders designated guides, observers for spotting individual riflemen, wire cutters and messengers. During the period of the fighting in a forest, tanks, artillery and engineer equipment were made directly available to the commanders of the rifle units and subunits. To avoid hitting out own

troops from the air, specially trained men were assigned for giving mutual recognition signals to the aviation.

More often than usual, the allotment of battle tasks was required in fighting in the mountains. This was caused by the limited number of roads and by the difficulty of moving off the roads, by the complexity of orientation and by the presence of mountain rivers with a fast current, steep descents and ascents, passes, cliffs and gorges.

The allotment of battle tasks was essential primarily in the interests of establishing outflanking groups. Selected for these groups were soldiers, sergeants and officers who were skilled in climbing steep slopes and rock debris, crossing mountain rivers and gorges and able to use mountaineer equipment. Within these groups they appointed soldiers who would carry ammunition, food, water, medicines and fuel; spotters, guides and messengers.

Great importance was given not only to defining the additional duties, proceeding from the personal qualities of the men, but also to complete support without which in the mountains even with the most careful allotment of battle tasks, success could not be achieved. Thus, the scouts were supplied with compasses, ropes, hooks and ladders for ascending the mountains; combat engineers had saws, picks, probes and explosives; the soldiers assigned to provide hot meals had buckets, thermoses, baskets and bags for transporting food products and containers for water. Winches and drag ropes were prepared for mountain guns assigned to the outflanking group.

With a nighttime advance, the allotment of battle tasks was expressed in the assigning of guides. In a battalion a guide company was assigned, in a company it was a platoon, in a platoon it was a squad and in a squad a soldier. In addition, it was pointed out who would illuminate the terrain and set the light markers, who would observe the signals of the senior chief, mark his position, seek out wounded and evacuate them and who would bring ammunition to the subunit.

Particular attention was given to allocating duties in the interests of light support. Proceeding from the availability of illuminating devices and the training level of the personnel, the commanders determined who would illuminate the terrain on the axis of the main thrust, the zone of advance and the objects of the assault, the targets for the artillery and aviation; who would set the light markers (guidelines) for indicating the direction of advance of the subunits; who would give the light signals for mutual recognition of the troops, the target designation and support of cooperation; who would mark the designated lines, the passages through obstacles and crossings over a water obstacle; what forces would combat the enemy illuminants.

In the allotment of battle tasks, consideration was given to the specifications of the illuminating equipment, and above all the radius, intensity and duration of illumination. Also taken into account was which of them could be most successfully employed, when, against what objectives and in what number for carrying out definite tasks of light support.

The allotment of battle tasks was most directly tied to the organizing and conduct of the reconnaissance in force, sweeps and ambushes.

The allotment of battle tasks in the interests of a reconnaissance in force consisted in allocating duties between the servicemen, determining who would conduct observation from what observation posts, who would write down the results of the observations, the data of the artillery, engineer and chemical warfare reconnaissance and report to the senior chief.

In carrying out this specific task, the allotment of battle tasks went beyond determining the duties of the soldiers. In a battalion assigned for reconnaissance in force, the following groups were created: clearing, feint, attack and fire support from the mortar and artillery subunits.

The clearing group made passages through the system of enemy obstacles, the feint group diverted the enemy's attention, the attack group rushed the object of the attack and took prisoners while the fire group supported the actions of the scouts.

In organizing a reconnaissance sweep, the basis of the allotment of battle tasks was the assigning of duties among the men making it up. The allotment determined who would seize prisoners, documents, examples of weapons and military equipment, who would prepare passages through obstacles, support the sweep and what this meant specifically.

The allotment of battle tasks had different varieties brought about by the specific features of the particular tasks and by the situational condition in which one or another subunit or unit was.

In this regard, characteristic is the example from the experience of the XXI Mechanized Corps. By the start of the war in its positions were 95 guns (almost one-half of them of 45-mm caliber) without gun crews. On 23 June, all the guns were turned over to the corps. As a result of the allotment of battle tasks carried out, tank crews without vehicles became gun crews. The artillery antitank battalions organized from them were incorporated in the tank regiments.(12)

For dependable command in combat, the subunit commanders established a headquarters group under themselves and within this duties were allocated between the soldiers. For example, a headquarters group under a company commander usually consisted of two observer-messengers, one signalman and several messengers as well as reinforcements assigned by the commanders. The sectors of the company's advance were distributed equally between the observers or depending upon the importance of one or another sector. Usually one observed the subunits operating on the right and the other the subunits fighting to the left of the company's axis of advance. The observer-messengers were employed by the company commander as foot messengers for contacting the subunits which they were observing.

The signalman, in having equipment for giving all the signals set by the company commander (a rocket pistol with a set of rockets, flags, a horn and so forth) remained continuously with the company commander and upon his

instructions gave the signals. During the absence of the observer-messengers, the signalman replaced them.

The messengers from the attached and supporting forces, as a rule, received their mission from the company commander and observed the fighting of their subunits, they received signals from them and transmitted others to them. In individual instances, these messengers were also sent to other subunits.

The experience gained on the battlefields during the years of the Great Patriotic War in employing the allotment of battle tasks must be employed flexibly and diversely. To know the experience of the frontline veterans, to investigate this, to assimilate and creatively apply it in practice are the professional duty of all levels of commanders and chiefs.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 1, 1976, p 537.
2. "Obucheniye soldat i otdeleniya deystviyam v nastupatel'nom boyu. Biblioteka serzhanta" [Instruction of the Soldiers and the Squad in Actions During Offensive Combat. Sergeant's Library], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1959, pp 78-79.
3. See: "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Combat Documents From the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 15, 1952, p 33.
4. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945. Entsiklopediya" [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. An Encyclopedia], Moscow, Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, 1985, p 798.
5. See: K.N. Galitskiy, "V boyakh za Vostochnuyu Prussiyu" [In the Battles for East Prussia], Moscow, Nauka, 1970, p 115.
6. See: "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov...", Moscow, Voenizdat, No 1, 1947, pp 89, 96; No 18, 1953, pp 50-53; INFORMATSIONNYY BYULLETEN, Moscow, Voenizdat, No 17, 1944, p 17.
7. See: "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov...", Moscow, Voenizdat, No 11, 1950, p 26.
8. See: Ibid., p 82.
9. "Nablyudeniye. Biblioteka razvedchika" [Observation. The Scout's Library], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1952, p 71.
10. See: "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuz 1941-1945" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, pp 235-237.

11. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 32, inv. 11289, file 582, sheets 189-195.
12. D.D. Lelyushenko, "Moskva--Stalingrad--Berlin--Praga. Zapiski komandarma" [Moscow--Stalingrad--Berlin--Prague. Notes of an Army Commander], Moscow, Nauka, 1975, pp 15-18.

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50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDERS OF LENIN, SUVOROV USSR ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF
MILITARY ACADEMY IMENI K. YE. VOROSHILOV

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[Article by Prof, Col Gen F.F. Gayvoronskiy, published under the rubric
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[Text] November of this year marks the 50th anniversary of the glorious forge
of command personnel of the Soviet Armed Forces. The academy personnel is
greeting this jubilee under the conditions of a creative and work upsurge
brought about by the historic decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress.

The Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th CPSU Congress
emphasized that the threat of a new war hangs over mankind and this derives
primarily from the imperialists of the United States, the citadel of world
reaction. In line with this particular importance has been assumed by the
defense of the socialist fatherland and the socialist commonwealth countries
against encroachments by aggressive forces.

The party is making every effort so that our Armed Forces be on a level which
would exclude supremacy of the imperialist forces and so that the might of the
Soviet Union and the entire commonwealth of socialist fraternal countries is
constantly strengthening and the technical equipping of the socialist state
armies is rising. Along with the technical equipping of the Armed Forces, the
Communist Party has always given and does give great attention to training
personnel, particularly command and supervisory.

Soon after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia,
the party and government were confronted with the task of organizing an armed
rebuff of the intervention and suppressing the internal counterrevolution.
This was successfully carried out and in a short period of time the Worker-
Peasant Red Army [RKKA] was established and command personnel loyal to the
revolution was trained. An enormous contribution to the carrying out of this
task was made by V.I. Lenin. Upon his initiative in the autumn of 1918, the
Academy of the Red Army General Staff was founded.(1) From November 1918
through 1921, it trained hundreds of senior and middle-level commanders who
were completely dedicated to the cause of defending the young Soviet Republic.

In the fighting against the interventionists, its graduates showed their best, manifesting courage, boldness and the ability to command the troops.

In line with the new tasks, in August 1921, the General Staff Academy was changed into a combined-arms academy.(2) Training for the military leadership was continued in courses and then at the operations faculty of the Academy imeni M.V. Frunze.

The exacerbation of the international situation in the mid-1930s, the reorganization of the Soviet Army on a new technical base and the necessity of theoretical research and practical recommendations on the problems of preparing and conducting modern operations and a war as a whole (should the imperialists start it) demanded that special attention be paid to the training of the military leadership for the Soviet Armed Forces. In line with this the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee and the Soviet government took a decision to establish the RKKA General Staff Academy in Moscow with the task of training military specialists capable of working out and actually implementing army, front and larger operations as well as investigating and developing the theory of strategy and operational art. The faculty was chosen from among the most qualified instructors at other academies as well as well-trained combined-arms commanders. Leaders from the RKKA General Staff, the chiefs of the central directorates of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense] and the district commanders were involved for giving lectures on certain questions and for conducting individual operational games.(3) This tradition has been maintained at present. The minister of defense, the chief of the General Staff, the commanders-in-chief of the armed services who are also the deputy ministers of defense as well as other responsible workers from the General Staff and Ministry of Defense have and do give lectures and reports systematically to the instructors and the students.

Regular exercises commenced at the academy on 1 November 1936. The first chief and commissar of the academy was the divisional commander D.A. Kuchinskiy who prior to this had headed the staff of the Kiev Military District. Among the instructors and chiefs of the chairs at that time, we must mention Comrades M.I. Alafuzo, Ya.Ya. Alksnis, P.I. Vakulich, A.I. Gotovtsev, P.P. Ionov, G.S. Isserson, D.M. Karbyshev, A.V. Kirpichnikov, V.K. Mordvinov, Ye.A. Silovskiy and others who made a major contribution both to teaching the students as well as to the development of military art. A majority of the first-year students had participated in World War I or the Civil War and had experience in the operational level, command or leadership of a formation staff. Among them were the Brig Cmdrs L.A. Govorov, P.A. Kurochkin, G.K. Malandin, Cols A.I. Antonov, I.Kh. Bagramyan, A.M. Vasilevskiy, N.F. Vatutin, A.I. Gastilovich, M.V. Zakharov, V.V. Kurasov, A.P. Pokrovskiy, A.V. Sukhomlin, S.G. Trofimenko and Majors M.I. Kazakov and L.M. Sandalov. In subsequent years, the academy had various courses for increasing and improving the operational-strategic training of the senior and higher command personnel of the RKKA.(4)

The close ties with the General Staff, the central directorates of the NKO, the commanders and staffs of the branches of troops and military districts and the other academies contributed to a situation where the General Staff Academy

became a major military scientific center. Many instructors upon assignment of the General Staff became members of groups concerned with working out manuals, regulations, military-theoretical works and participated in operational-strategic and operational exercises. All of this enriched them and improved the quality of military-scientific work in which chief attention was given to elaborating such problems as the preparation and conduct of front and army operations; the struggle for air supremacy; the carrying out of an operational breakthrough and the exploitation of success in depth; the conducting of a meeting engagement; the employment of aviation, artillery and mobile troops in operations; the organization of command and support. At the end of 1939 as well as in 1940 and 1941, the questions were studied of the initial period of a war in light of the commenced World War II.(5) A majority of the created works, upon orders of the Chief of the General Staff, were sent out to the central directorates of the NKO, the military districts and other military academies. Among the useful and timely works one might mention the book by G.S. Isserson "Novyye formy borby" [New Forms of Combat] (1940) which investigated the experience of combat actions in Spain and the commenced World War II; the methods of the initiating of modern wars and the conduct of operations in the initial period of a war were examined. Ya.A. Shilovskiy made a major contribution to the development of an operation in depth and to operational art. His works "Operatsiya" [The Operation] and "Osnovy nastupatelnoy armeyskoy operatsii" [Principles of an Offensive Army Operation] (1938) and "Proryv i yego razvitiye" [The Breakthrough and Its Development] (1940), in being written on a basis of rich historical and modern material, established the major principles of operational art and examined the trends in their development as well as the possible nature of Air Forces and ground troop actions in the initial period of a war. In 1938, two works were published by the Div Cmdr N.V. Shvarts: "Rabota staba armii" [The Work of an Army Staff] and "Rabota komandovaniya fronta i armii i ikh shtabov po upravleniyu operatsiyami" [The Work of the Command of a Front and Army and Their Staffs in Controlling Operations] and which examined the structure and work of the staff sections during the preparatory period and in the course of operations. A large number of works was devoted to the employment of branches of troops and aviation in operations, including such as "Samostoyatelnyye deystviya tankovykh i motorizovannykh soedineniy" [Independent Actions of Tank and Motorized Formations] by A.I. Shtromberg (1939), "Konno-mekhanizirovannaya gruppa v razvitii proryva" [The Horse-Mechanized Group in Developing a Breakthrough] by A.V. Kirpichnikov (1940) and "Voyenno-vozdushnyye sily v sovremennoy voyne" [Air Forces in a Modern War] by B.P. Teplinskiy (1940). D.M. Karbyshev made a major contribution to the development of military engineering. His works "Kratkiy spravochnik po voyenno-inzhenernomu delu" [Concise Reference on Military Engineering] (1936) and "Ispolzovaniye inzhenernykh sredstv v sovremennom boyu" [The Use of Engineer Equipment in Modern Combat] (1939) were widely employed in the educational process and in the practical activities of the troops and staffs. As a total by the start of the war, the academy had written and published more than 1,700 different works and aides a significant portion of which was issued to the troops, the staffs of operational field forces, the central apparatus of the NKO and the General Staff. This helped to evolve a unity of views on the nature of a future war, operation and battles.

The General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, M.S. Gorbachev, in speaking at a ceremony devoted to the 40th anniversary of victory said: "The talent of our generals and military leaders was widely disclosed in the grandiose and previously unprecedented engagements.... In a clash against a strong, experienced enemy the superiority of Soviet military science and military leadership thought was apparent in strategic foresight, the creative nature of the decisions taken, the tenacity and activeness in achieving the set goals and the capacity to fuse into a single alloy the high combat morale of the soldiers and officers and the overwhelming might of the modern equipment." (6) Here a definite role was played by the General Staff Academy which provided its offspring with extensive operational-strategic knowledge and taught them to skillfully lead the troops, to creatively approach the taking of decisions and to show tenacity and courage in carrying out operations.

With the start of the Great Patriotic War, all the students and over 60 percent of the instructors were appointed to the operational army. But in September 1941, the academy was already being provided with students and began regular exercises under a 6-month training program and from June 1943, a 9-month program. (7) Over the entire war it continued to train senior and higher command personnel and remained a major center of military thought. In April 1942, it was given the mission of "training combined-arms commanders in the form of commanders of divisions, corps and armies, the chiefs of staff of these formations and the chiefs of the operational sections of the army staffs." (8) The People's Commissar of Defense I.V. Stalin demanded the training of a well-rounded combined-arms commander who would be a master in organizing combined-arms combat and able to effectively use all the branches of troops in a battle and an operation. In line with this the academy was renamed the Higher Military Academy. (9)

From 30 April 1942, Col Gen F.I. Kuznetsov was the chief of the academy and from 25 June 1943 until his death (26 March 1945) it was headed by MSU B.M. Shaposhnikov. From 1945 through 1949, the chief of the academy was Army Gen M.V. Zakharov and in 1949, he was replaced by Army Gen V.V. Kurasov. In following years the academy was headed by the following: MSU I.Kh. Bagramyan, Army Gens G.K. Malandin, V.D. Ivanov, S.P. Ivanov, I.Ye. Shavrov and M.M. Kozlov. At present, the academy is headed by Army Gen G.I. Salmanov.

Over the war years, the academy trained around 2,000 highly skilled senior and higher commanders of the Soviet Armed Forces. Many graduates proved to be great masters of military affairs and talented military leaders. Among them were: A.M. Vasilevskiy and A.I. Antonov (they headed the General Staff); I.Kh. Bagramyan, N.F. Vatutin, L.A. Govorov and P.A. Kurochkin (they commanded fronts); A.N. Bogolyubov, M.V. Zakharov, V.V. Kurasov, G.K. Malandin, A.P. Pokrovskiy and L.M. Sandalov (they headed front staffs) and others. Virtually all the academy graduates who participated in the war received leadership orders and A.M. Vasilevskiy (twice), A.I. Antonov and L.A. Govorov received the higher military Order of Victory.

The academy made a major contribution to the development of the theory of military art. On the basis of the Marxist-Leninist methodology of scientific cognition and the party program documents, the faculty has steadily studied

combat experience, it disclosed new trends in the development of military art and elaborated recommendations on the questions of preparing and conducting an operation and a battle, the most efficient employment of branches of troops and aviation, troop command and so forth.

A thorough investigation of the war's experience and its introduction into the training process and military-scientific work contributed largely to the attraction by the General Staff and the NKO central directorates of academy instructors in carrying out individual assignments in the operational army, in working out manuals, regulations, military history descriptions of major operations and so forth. All of this made it possible in 1941-1943 to work out and publish a significant number of military-scientific works and aids. Among the numerous works one must mention the work published at the beginning of 1943 "Nastupatel'naya operatsiya armii" [The Army Offensive Operation]. This was written by Gens G.K. Malandin, F.I. Isayev and A.I. Shtromberg, Cols V.P. Konokotin and M.F. Sochilov under the leadership of the academy chief, Col Gen F.I. Kuznetsov. All the theoretical concepts in the work were confirmed by concrete calculations, diagrams, tables and the combat experience of 1942 and the start of 1943. In 1943, the major work "Razgrom nemetskikh voysk pod Moskvoy. Moskovskaya operatsiya Zapadnogo fronta 16 noyabrya 1941 goda - 31 yanvary 1942 goda" [The Defeat of the German Troops at Moscow. The Moscow Operation of the Western Front of 16 November 1941 - 31 January 1942] was published; this was written by a collective of academy instructors (leader, Ye.A. Shilovskiy) under the overall editorship of MSU B.M. Shaposhnikov.

In 1944-1945, on the basis of a thorough study of combat experience and the changes which had occurred in the organizational structure and equipping of the troops, the academy worked out methods for conducting offensive operations and involving the breakthrough of deeply echeloned enemy defenses, the development of the offensive and pursuit and the crossing of major water barriers. During this period the academy published the works of Gen V.M. Zlobin, "Frontovaya nastupatel'naya operatsiya" [The Front Offensive Operation], Gen Ya.A. Shilovskiy "Proryv fronta" [The Breakthrough of a Front] and Gen A.I. Shtromberg "Vvod v proryv mekhanizirovannykh i tankovykh soyedineniy i deystviya ikh v glubine oborony protivnika" [The Commitment of Mechanized and Tank Formations to a Breach and Their Actions Deep in the Enemy Defenses] and "Razvitiye proryva tankovymi i mekhanizirovannymi soyedineniyami" [The Development of a Breakthrough by Tank and Mechanized Formations]; the works of Col M.F. Sochilov "Inzhenernoye obespecheniye v oboronitel'noy operatsii armii" [Engineer Support in a Defensive Army Operation] and "Inzhenernoye obespecheniye vvoda v proryv mekhanizirovannogo korpusa" [Engineer Support for the Commitment of a Mechanized Corps to a Breakthrough] and Col A.V. Tkachenko "Upravleniye i svyaz vo frontovoy nastupatel'noy operatsii" [Command and Communications in a Front Offensive Operation].

As a total during the war years, around 24,000 copies of scientific works, teaching aides and materials on the questions of military art were written and sent out to the troops, the NKO central directorates and other military schools. The party and government had high regard for the academy's activities in the area of training highly skilled military personnel and

developing military theory, having awarded it the Order of Suvorov 1st Degree in May 1945.

During the first post war years, the academy continued training generals and senior officers. In the aim of developing strategy and operational art, the very rich combat experience was investigated and generalized. Here they considered the new weapons and combat equipment which had been received by the troops.

In the mid-1950s, when the Soviet Army and Navy had begun to be armed with nuclear missile weapons, more advanced and efficient conventional weapons and equipment and means of communications and transport, a new stage commenced in the organizational development of the Armed Forces and in the development of military art.

The rapid development of scientific-technical progress dictated the necessity of creatively analyzing the revolutionary changes which had occurred in military affairs and to revise the views on the nature and methods of conducting a future war, operations and combat actions. The task was not only to work out the theoretical bases for the preparation and conduct of operations, the employment of the field forces and formations of the Armed Services under the conditions of a nuclear and non-nuclear war, but also to introduce the results obtained from this work into the training process. These tasks were successfully carried out. In recent decades the academy has trained a large detachment of higher-skill military specialists who are completely dedicated to the cause of the Communist Party and the socialist motherland. Many academy graduates are presently holding leading posts in the Armed Forces, including, S.L. Sokolov, S.F. Akhromeyev, V.G. Kulikov, P.G. Lushev, S.K. Kurkotkin, Yu.P. Maksimov, Ye.F. Ivanovskiy, A.I. Koldunov, A.N. Yefimov, V.N. Chernavin, V.L. Govorov, I.M. Tretyak, I.N. Shkadov, N.V. Ogarkov, A.I. Gerasimov, I.M. Voloshin, M.M. Zaytsev, V.I. Verennikov, A.I. Gribkov, M.A. Gareyev, I.A. Gashkov and others.

The academy has also made a substantial contribution to the development of the theory of the conduct of a war and major operations under the conditions where the enemy employs nuclear and conventional, including high-precision, weapons. The most important problem of investigation in the area of strategy has been the conduct of strategic operations in different theaters. The problem of Soviet military doctrine and military science, military economics and so forth has also been examined.

For the successes achieved in training officer personnel for the Armed Forces and for the elaboration of military theory, in 1968, the academy was awarded the Order of Lenin. It has won high authority not only in the Soviet Armed Forces but also in the socialist state armies and for which a large detachment of leading military personnel has been trained. In handing on to them its rich experience and in acquainting them with the recent achievements of socialist military science, the academy has made a substantial contribution to increasing the defense capability of the entire socialist camp. The beneficial work of training military specialists for the armies of the fraternal socialist countries is continuing. The communist and workers parties and governments of the socialist countries have had high regard for

the academy's activities in training their national personnel, having presented it with the orders of their states.

At present, the General Staff Military Academy has been confronted with new, more complex tasks. The arms race in the Western nations, the improvement of nuclear missile weapons, the development of control systems and the extensive employment of computers and other means of automation in the troops have inevitably led to an increased scope and decisiveness of military actions and to the employment of different, more effective forms and methods of preparing and conducting operations. This requires a further improvement in the programs and methods of training, indoctrinational and scientific work. The 27th CPSU Congress emphasized that the time has come when it is essential to train persons capable of showing a creative approach to solving the set problems and acting with initiative and independence as well as boldly assuming responsibility for the assigned job. This applies directly to the training of leading military personnel. In order to ensure the military-theoretical, technical and practical training of the students under present-day conditions, the command and faculty must systematically improve their ideological and theoretical level and raise their pedagogical mastery to a new stage.

The academy must solve a series of complex and important problems of military science and military art. For this purpose it is essential to broaden the front of fundamental and exploratory research and more rapidly introduce the obtained conclusions into the training practices of the students and the operational training of the generals and officers. "Party policy in the area of science," states the new version of the CPSU Program, "is aimed at creating good conditions for dynamic progress in all areas of knowledge, at concentrating the personnel, the material and financial resources in the most promising areas which should accelerate the achieving of the set economic and social goals, on the spiritual development of society and ensure dependable defense capability of the nation." (10) These theses of the Program apply fully to Soviet military science which "is one of the main factors in increasing the combat readiness of the Armed Forces." (11)

The 27th CPSU Congress confronted Soviet military science with the task of working out recommendations making it possible to prevent strategic supremacy by the United States and other imperialist states over the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries. An important problem is the elaboration of recommendations to organize a flexible system for maintaining high combat readiness of the troops, for carrying out mobilization, the moving up of troops, the maneuvering of reserves under a difficult situation. The central task remains of elaborating a theory for the preparation and conduct of independent and combined operations carried out by the field forces of the different Armed Services under the conditions of employing nuclear or just conventional weapons. There is the very pressing problem of elaborating the most effective methods of troop command employing automated systems and computers as well as strengthening the tie of theory with training practices.

A large detachment of military scientists at the academy is at work on solving the problems of military science and military art. This includes the Honored Scientists of the RSFSR, the Doctors of Sciences, Profs P.K. Altukhov, I.I.

Anureyev, N.A. Asriyev, P.P. Iavrik, V.V. Iarionov, N.G. Popov, V.G. Rog, V.I. Spasov, I.V. Timokhovich, M.I. Yasyukov and others. A major contribution to the development of military theory is being made by the collectives headed by: V.N. Karpov, M.I. Bezkhrebtyy, V.L. Avseyenko, A.P. Andreyev, R.A. Golosov, I.P. Korotchenko, V.A. Matsulenko, I.F. Mishchenko, M.D. Sidorov, N.S. Sonnov, M.I. Cherednichenko and others.

In accord with the decisions of the 27th Party Congress the instructors are mastering the Leninist style of military scientific work. Creative discussions are being held more and more frequently and this permits the elaboration of uniform views on the problems of military theory and practice. A characteristic trait in the scientific work of the faculty is the broad use of modern scientific research methods. The academy's scientists are solving such major problems as the extensive elucidation of the methodological importance of Marxist-Leninist philosophy for cognition and development of military theory and military affairs as a whole, research on the general philosophical questions of war and the army, on the laws of war, the laws and principle of military art and so forth. On these questions the academy has worked out and published a series of textbooks and works.

The academy is greeting its glorious 50th birthday in carrying out the grandiose tasks stemming from the party congress decisions. The organized and close work of the highly skilled leadership and faculty as well as the high party responsibility of each member of the collective for the assigned job are a dependable guarantee that all the posed tasks will be successfully carried out and the academy, as before, will make a worthy contribution to strengthening national defense and to raising the combat might of the Soviet Armed Forces.

FOOTNOTES

1. TSGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], Collection of Orders of the Republic Revolutionary-Military Council for 1918, Vol 1, pp 43-44; TsPA IML [Central Party Archives of the Marxism-Leninism Institute], folio 146, inv. 1, file 99, sheet 2.
2. On 5 November 1925, the RKKA Military Academy was given the name of M.V. Frunze.
3. TSGASA, folio 4, inv. 15, file 78, sheet 87.
4. As a whole, from 1936 through 1941, this institution of learning in its main course and in courses for the advance training of command personnel trained over 600 commanders for the operational-strategic and tactical elements and during the years of the Great Patriotic War, they comprised the main core of leadership personnel in the Soviet Armed Forces, they honorably carried out their sacred duty to the socialist fatherland and made a substantial contribution to defeating the armed forces of Nazi Germany and militaristic Japan.
5. TSGASA, folio 37963, inv. 1, file 25, sheets 60-61.

6. M.S. Gorbachev, "Izbrannyye rechi i stati" [Selected Speeches and Articles], Moscow, Politizdat, 1985, p 46.
7. TsAMO [Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense], folio 2, inv. 785437, file 11, sheets 550-551.
8. Ibid., inv. 11569, file 238, sheets 235-240.
9. In 1958, the academy again began to be called the General Staff Academy.
10. "Materialy XXVII syezda KPSS" [Materials of the 27th CPSU Congress], Moscow, Politizdat, 1986, p 167.
11. S.L. Sokolov, "Leninskiy stil v rabote voyennykh kadrov" [The Leninist Style in the Work of Military Personnel], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, p 12.

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