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JPRS-UMJ-88-002
22 FEBRUARY 1988



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JPRS Report

Soviet Union

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 8, August 1987

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A

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Soviet Union
Military History Journal
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MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 8, August 1987

[Except where indicated otherwise in the table of contents, the following is a complete translation of the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL published in Moscow by the Krasnaya Zvezda Publishing House.]

Establish Leninist Style in Work of Military Personnel

18010011a Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press 23 Jul 87) pp 3-10

[Editorial, published under the heading "Toward the 70th Anniversary of Great October": "To Establish a Leninist Style in the Work of Military Personnel"]

[Text] The process of complete restructuring of our society which was commenced on the basis of the decisions of the April (1985) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and the program theses of the 27th Party Congress is picking up strength and assuming ever-greater scope and depth. The political line and the course of accelerating socioeconomic development and restructuring as elaborated by the party have gained strong support from the people as an expression of their unanimous will.

The renewal and changes occurring in the nation have inspired millions of Soviet people and Army and Navy personnel to active and creative work to successfully carry out the designated plans and to properly celebrate the 70th anniversary of Great October. Supported by the people, the party has boldly set out to restructure, to carry out extensive democratization in all spheres of our life, to develop glasnost as much as possible, to strengthen discipline and order in the nation and to improve the social atmosphere. In terms of its profound revolutionary essence, in terms of the Bolshevik daring of the plans and in terms of its humanistic social focus, the work presently being carried out, as was pointed out at the January (1987) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, is a direct continuation of the great accomplishments begun by the Leninist party during the October days of 1917.

In the system of measures to improve leadership and management of the economic, social and spiritual processes of social development, the party has assigned a primary role to establishing a Leninist work style. The CPSU has constantly sought a Leninist work style in all its diversity become and irreplaceable and effective tool for the party, soviet, economic and military personnel. "At present, a great deal, in essence everything," stated

the 27th Party Congress, "will depend upon how effectively we are able to employ the advantages and possibilities of the socialist system, its economic might and social potential, to update obsolete social forms, style and work methods and bring these into accord with the altered conditions."(1)

A Leninist work style is an invaluable achievement of the party and its permanently working weapon. Its importance is determined by the historical role of the working class and its party in the revolutionary transformation of society. Historical experience teaches that any ruling class works out a system of principles, methods and procedures of control which corresponds to its class interests. The Leninist style was shaped and developed on the basis of the unity of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice, a profound knowledge of the laws of social development and a harmonious combination of revolutionary scope and communist professionalism. It incorporates the enthusiasm and optimism of the victorious working class, the historical experience of the party and the practice of the world communist movement.

Lenin's teachings about the party comprise the monolithic and unshakable basis of the work style. V.I. Lenin not only left us an exhaustive ideological and theoretical heritage but also provided brilliant examples of party leadership, the management of society and the organization of its armed defense. "The importance of the party organization and party leaders is...", pointed out Vladimir Ilich, "by protracted, stubborn, diverse and complete work of all thinking representatives of the given class, to work out the necessary knowledge, the required experience, the required...political sensitivity for quickly and correctly resolving complex political questions."(2)

V.I. Lenin's contribution to developing the theory and practice of management is invaluable. His works such as "The Development of Capitalism in Russia," "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," "The Coming Catastrophe and How to Combat It," "How to Organize the Competition?" "How We Must Reorganize the Rabkrin [Worker-Peasant Inspectorate]," "Better Less But Better" and many others set out the principles and methods of leadership and management and they indicate the specific ways for introducing a scientific organization of labor and the principles of recruiting and educating personnel.

V.I. Lenin worked out and put into practice a system of scientifically based procedures, methods and means of party leadership over military organizational development and the Armed Forces and he defined the system's goals and tasks. Lenin's idea on the necessity of party leadership of the Armed Forces was reinforced in the well-known Decree of the RKP(b) Central Committee "On the Policy of the Military Department" in December 1918.

The 27th Party Congress and the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee have creatively developed and enriched the vital essence of the principles elaborated by V.I. Lenin for party policy and the style and methods of work under the conditions of the irreversible process of renewal and radical changes which have begun and which are caused by fundamental restructuring. "The strength of the party," commented the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee M.S. Gorbachev, "lies in the fact that it feels the times, the pulse of life, and is always in the thick of the masses. And each time when new tasks confront the nation, the party finds the ways to resolve them, it adapts and alters the methods of leadership, demonstrating the capacity to be equal to the historical responsibility for the fate of the nation, for the cause of socialism and communism."(3)

The Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee, the Party Program and Rules, and the decisions of the Central Committee plenums held after the congress and the speeches of M.S. Gorbachev outlined the practical ways for restructuring the work, methods and style of leadership.

The party's demands on the style of work relate completely and fully to the activities of the military personnel and the entire Army and Navy party aktiv and oblige them to work even more steadfastly and purposefully in carrying out the tasks confronting them. The realization and deepening of restructuring by improving the work style should comprise the basis to all the practical activities of the Soviet military personnel.

The establishing of a Leninist style presupposes a profound understanding of its essence and content. This is all the more important as "in essence we must all pass the political exam of maturity, in mastering the new methods of work and leadership in all areas of socialist construction."(4)

A Leninist work style embodies the most rational forms and methods of activity by the party, soviet, economic and military personnel. A Leninist style is high ideological loyalty, party principledness, a scientific approach, communist professionalism, unity of word and deed, efficiency, a feeling for the new, an inseparable link with the masses, constant concern for satisfying their needs and requests and a personal example in work and everyday life.

A thorough, scientific, creative and innovative approach to solving urgent problems is a characteristic and distinguishing trait of the 27th Party Congress and the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee. The USSR Minister of Defense, Army Gen D.T. Yazov, has pointed out that the officer cadres plays a particular role in successfully carrying out these responsible tasks. The quality of the training and educational process, the combat readiness of the subunits, units and ships expressed in the ability at any moment to successfully

carry out the set tasks depend to a decisive degree upon the political maturity of the officers, their professional preparedness and competence.(5)

The creative development of military science and military art is a matter not only for the Army and Navy leadership and the military scientists. In virtually all elements of the Army and Navy organism the officers are showing growing interest in military theoretical knowledge and scientific research methods and are conducting a creative search for the most efficient forms and methods for mastering modern weapons, for making maximum use of their capabilities and the best methods of conducting combat actions.

To learn to work in the new manner means to overcome inertia and conservatism in any of their manifestations, to assess the situation soberly and be able to draw the proper conclusions. The commander of the leading tank training battalion, Guards Maj A. Tikhonenko, approaches all phenomena precisely from this standpoint. Here they live strictly according to the regulations, planned exercises are well organized in all the subunits and competitions are systematically conducted for the best specialist and the best crew. The service experience of the pacesetters is studied by all the personnel and is clearly reflected in the Lenin rooms and classrooms. In the collective great attention is given to organizing and ensuring glasnost for the tasks and standards of the socialist competition. All the companies strictly account for and propagandize the results of carrying out the standards by each soldier, sergeant, warrant officer and officer. This maintains a spirit of competitiveness among the men and their desire to be among the best.

The commander, the party and Komsomol activists are seriously concerned with a restructuring of their work. Reasonable exactingness for subordinates and concern for them, a systematic analysis of training as well as education by personal example are bringing the desired results.

Everyday life indicates that at present the new and promising is colliding implacably with the old and obsolete. The search for new forms and methods of work which meet the requirements of today does not occur easily. There are leaders who from the podium argue for a restructuring in work but in fact continue to follow the trodden path. But at present it should be totally clear that it is impossible to achieve success without changing anything. Each new day requires new steps along the path of restructuring. Only thoughts which are free and not fettered by dogma and taboos, only truly creative search are really beneficial and ensure progress.

At present, all our personnel more than before should show an inherent heightened feeling for the new and the ability to promptly spot and effectively use advanced experience. These traits of the Leninist work style are of particular significance for the military personnel. While

previously additional training and retraining for a certain portion of the commanders and soldiers were carried out in the course of the war, in a modern war, if the imperialists unleash it, there may not be such an opportunity. For this reason, at present one of the most important demands is to teach the personnel what is necessary in a war, to constantly improve field, air and sea skills and master new procedures of operational art and tactics.

The meeting of the party aktiv of the USSR Ministry of Defense which discussed the results of the January (1987) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee emphasized that the realization and deepening of restructuring should step by step lead us to a new level of Army and Navy combat capability. This is precisely the purpose of the restructuring in troop training. We are obliged to do this by the present-day international military-political situation which remains complex and explosive due to the fault of the imperialist circles.

The determining trait in the work of the military personnel is their communist ideological loyalty. This is shaped under the impact of the entire Soviet way of life. The 27th CPSU Congress, having defined the general line of the party's domestic and foreign policy, pointed out that the crucial condition for carrying it out is the human factor and the vital creativity of the masses. In following the Leninist tradition, the party views the activation of the human factor as a natural result of improving all aspects of human activity. The demands on ideological work grow with the increasing complexity of the tasks in the socioeconomic and spiritual spheres. This should be closer to life and ensure to a greater degree the fulfillment of specific tasks by the personnel. The party is counting on a further intensification of the entire ideological front and its organizing strength which unites millions for the sake of the common cause.

The party has always seen class conviction as a source in the high effectiveness of managerial activity of personnel, including the military. The January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee pointed out that one must not underestimate the political and theoretical training and the ideological and moral conditioning of the personnel. At the same military cadres should constantly remember that during the years of the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars the source of the mass heroism and self-sacrifice of the Soviet people lay primarily in their political awareness and dedication to the cause of communism.

Ideological conviction and a love for the motherland among the Soviet people are inseparable from proletarian, socialist internationalism. Educated by commanders, political workers, by the party and Komsomol organizations and by all our way of life, the Soviet military do not separate the fate of their motherland from the fate of the other fraternal countries. The feats by our soldiers and officers in Afghanistan in terms of their spirit are similar to the feats carried out during the years of the last war. Guards Sr Sgt Aleksandr Mironenko who was twice

wounded and surrounded by dushmans with the last grenade blew up himself and the attacking bandits. Guards Sr Lt Vladimir Zadorzhnyy used his body to cover a bandit grenade, saving the lives of his subordinates. Communist V. Zadorzhnyy and Komsomol member A. Mironenko was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

A Soviet officer is an ideological fighter and a political educator. The ideological fighter must be in the vanguard of the restructuring by which the party has set an acceleration in all areas of our social development. Indisputably the innovative nature of ideological education activities at present is determined primarily by how profoundly the propaganda aktiv and military personnel have inculcated the entire wealth of our party's creative ideas. It is the duty of the command and political personnel to bring the ideas of the 27th Party Congress and the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee to the minds and hearts of each serviceman and mobilize the men to carry out their decisions.

At the same time, one cannot help but see that the effectiveness of propaganda is being seriously impeded by formalism and didacticism, by idle twaddle and prattle and by the inability to speak to the men in a simple and convincing language. Many of these shortcomings have risen out of the force of inertia and the deep-bedded habit of the personnel of working in the old manner.

Frequently there still are violations of such a most important principle of political work characterizing the style of personnel activities as the unity of word and deed. Scarcely anything does as much harm to the authority of a leader or the education of personnel as a flippant word not backed up by practical activity. At times, a commander or political worker may say one thing but proceed differently in fact. Such an approach, such an inclination to sham and boastfulness does not help things but merely hinders the solving of many problems. No one should forget the severe warning by Lenin: "A false phrase, false boasting is moral death, a dependable guarantee for political death." (6) At present, as never before, there must be concrete deeds in a spirit of restructuring in order not to drown this in words there must be a more responsible and dependable approach to things, a real and not merely a verbal increase in work. "At present," as was pointed out by the Chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy, Army Gen A.D. Lizichev, "no one should be misled by verbal assertions on support for party decisions and plans. There must be practical deeds to carry them out. It is essential to work in the new style. And the style of work should be energetic, professional and aimed at organizing the enterprising activities of the masses." (7)

One of the most important traits in a Leninist style in the work of the military personnel is party principledness. An important lesson of the 27th CPSU Congress and the period since then has been the lesson of truth. A realistic

assessment of the achieved has served as a starting point for promoting a constructive program aimed at raising the efficiency of our socialist social system. The truth has become the driving force of renewal and has opened up scope for social dynamism, initiative and the creativity of the masses. It alone indoctrinates people with a developed feeling of civil duty, while lies and half-truths distort awareness, misshape the individual and prevent the development of realistic conclusions and judgments. The ability to act in a spirit of the lesson of truth is of fundamental significance for military cadres and opens up new opportunities for Soviet military historians.

Party principledness is inconceivable without criticism and self-criticism. Where the word is not too exacting, a situation of indifference and permissiveness is created and stagnation sets in. The task of the commanders, the political bodies and the party organizations is to prevent criticism and self-criticism from being turned into a farce and into mere fashion. Unfortunately, this at times happens. They indulge in self-flagellation, they confess their sins but there is no change for the better. Criticism and self-criticism require action. After a confession of errors there should come their rapid rectification. This is the demand of our times. It must be emphasized that the opponents of restructuring often oppose it by endeavoring to discredit honest people. An illustration of this is the case of Maj Yu. Danigevich and what happened in a training regiment of the Borisoglebsk Higher Air Force Pilots School imeni V.P. Chkalov. Critical comments directed against the command and party committee of the regiment served as a pretext for pursuing the communist. This case was reviewed by a bureau of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy. The guilty parties were held strictly responsible. There is only one conclusion from this unseemly story. Conceit and ambition, fear of glasnost and a desire not to wash dirty linen in public and establish one's authority by methods of force—these are indications of yesterday's psychology and yesterday's thinking.(8)

An inseparable feature of Leninist style is professionalism, that is, the ability to practically organize work and achieve good results from one's activities. Leninist professionalism embodies the ability of the military cadres to combine revolutionary scope and creative initiative with concrete organizational work. At present, when the nation lives by the intense pace of acceleration, Bolshevik professionalism is expressed by the meaningful formula: the energy of ideas into the energy of practical deeds.

Leninist professionalism requires reasoned planning of the work, as this makes it possible to clearly define key problems, ways and sequence of their solving. The professionalism of a military leader is inconceivable without the greatest organization, the ability to value and save each minute of training time and to introduce into life the most effective methods of training and educating personnel.

V.I. Lenin called the recruiting of personnel and the inspection of actual execution to be the key to all work. At present, the CPSU considers supervision to be a most important component in organizational work and has focused the communists on strengthening this. This problem was posed with particular acuteness by the 27th Party Congress and the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee. Within the party there are none and cannot be any organizations outside of supervision, which are closed off to criticism and there are no and should not be any leaders who are protected against party responsibility.

Four years ago Officer Yu. Badalov was appointed unit commander. It was a high position. In order to fill it, it was essential to work on self-improvement and develop on the professional level. Badalov did not particularly assert himself. Sensing his falling behind, he began to conduct exercises with subordinates more rarely and he reduced exactingness on them and this, naturally, was not long in being felt on the results of combat training. At one time the leadership pointed out these shortcomings to the officer hoping that he would understand and shape up. But he did not. He had to give up the position held. The cause and interests of combat readiness cannot be allowed to suffer because of one man.(9)

At the present stage the CPSU gives exceptionally great importance to the publicizing of control and checking on execution. The 27th CPSU Congress pointed out that those who are in the habit of working half-heartedly or who engage in deception will find it difficult with glasnost when everything done in the state and in society is under the supervision of the people and in the view of the people. For this reason we must make glasnost a dependably operating system. The party uses glasnost of control to create a state of intolerance for any negative phenomena, against violations of party, labor and military discipline and socialist legality, for preventing errors and for correctly educating people. It forces the guilty parties to accept responsibility, to better realize and more quickly rectify errors. The high dignity and honor of the Soviet officer are generally known. At the same time, the shortcomings described at the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee to a certain degree also occur among the officers. "Instances of periodically repeating major incidents show a weakness in discipline and a lack of proper order. The reasons are, as a rule, the same: a lack of discipline, sloppy workmanship, inefficiency and irresponsibility. This is seen from the violation of Soviet air space and the landing in Moscow of the West German private plane. The instance is unprecedented from all viewpoints. It again reminds us how strong and vital are the negative phenomena which were disclosed by the April Plenum of the Central Committee and the 27th Party Congress in our society and even in the army. This emphasizes the necessity of increasing vigilance, acting more decisively, and strengthening discipline, organization, responsibility and efficiency on all levels everywhere, as was pointed out at the June (1987)

Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee. "...Neither in the party nor in the people should there be any doubt as to the ability of the USSR Armed Forces to protect the nation."(10)

The daily activities of military cadres and the carrying out of their difficult tasks are inconceivable without organization and discipline. Advancement becomes all the faster the higher the discipline and responsibility of each for the assigned job and for its results.

A further strengthening of discipline is one of the most important and essential areas of restructuring in the Armed Forces. The questions of increasing the organization of the personnel, unifying multinational troop collectives and the ubiquitous establishing of strict prescribed order should be at the center of attention for the military. The duty of the commanders, the political bodies, the staffs and party organizations is to so carry out work in this area that not a single serviceman remains outside a daily, active and effective influence.

A distinguishing trait of the Leninist style in work is an unbreakable tie with the masses. V.I. Lenin saw an inexhaustible source of strength for our party and state in the deep and constantly strengthening link of the party and its cadres with the masses. Closeness to the people based upon class unity is a party trait. Lenin's thought of the need to live in the thick of the masses, to listen to them, to catch their mood and reflect their aspirations in practical activities for us has a ring of invaluable advice which in our times is assuming particular urgency.

Life again and again shows that closeness to the people is a most important indicator for the party and professional maturity of a commander, political worker or staff officer, an obligatory condition for effective work in the area of improving combat readiness and strengthening discipline.

The main tool of restructuring from the viewpoint of resolving all problems, as was pointed out at the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, is a further development of socialist democracy. Democratization presupposes a decisive abandonment of administration by naked decree and is based upon a closeness of the leaders to the people and upon encouraging within the military organization the work of such social institutions as officer meetings, officer courts of honor, warrant officer councils, general serviceman assemblies and the women's councils. The main path of democratization under Army and Navy conditions is a thorough consideration of the opinions of the social organizations on the part of the commanders and superiors and carrying out by orders, directives and instructions the proposals of the servicemen and employees of the Soviet Army and Navy aimed at further raising combat readiness and strengthening military discipline.

Establishing a Leninist style in the activities of military personnel is inconceivable without reliance on the party organizations which act as a model of organization and unity of action. In this context increasing the militancy of the primary party organizations assumes particular importance.

The 27th Congress pointed out that the vanguard role of the communists is expressed in specific practical actions. It is essential to see to it that the party organizations lead a full life characterized by openness, by glasnost of plans and decisions, by humanness and mutual exactingness. Precisely organizational work in the masses makes it possible to best activate the role of the human factor in carrying out the tasks set by the party for the USSR Armed Forces.

Socialist competition is a powerful lever for increasing the effectiveness and quality of military and political training and for improving the combat readiness of the troops and naval forces. The Appeal of the CPSU Central Committee to the Soviet People and the Decree of the Central Committee "On Preparations for the 70th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution" have caused a new influx of labor and sociopolitical activeness among the workers and the Army and navy personnel. It is the duty of each man to respond to the Appeal of the CPSU Central Committee by a steady struggle to increase combat readiness and strengthen military discipline.

Footnotes

1. "Materialy XXVII syezda KPSS" [Materials of the 27th CPSU Congress], Moscow, Politizdat, 1986, pp 5-6.
2. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 41, pp 52-53.
3. "Materialy XXVII syezda....," p 77.
4. "Materialy Plenuma Tsentralnogo Komiteta KPSS, 27-28 yanvarya 1987 g." [Materials of the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, 27-28 January 1987], Moscow, Politizdat, 1987, p 64.
5. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 7, 1987, p 5.
6. V.I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 11, p 330.
7. KOMMUNIST VOORUZHENNYKH SIL, No 14, 1986, p 12.
8. KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 19 February 1987.
9. See: *ibid.*, 5 February 1987.
10. PRAVDA, 26 June 1987.

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Classic Example of Offensive by Group of Fronts
*18010011a Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press
23 Jul 87) pp 12-19*

[Article, published under the heading "Soviet Military Art" by Army Gen V.A. Varennikov: "A Classic Example of an Offensive by a Group of Fronts"]

[Text] More than 42 years have passed since the guns have fallen silent on the fields of war-devastated Europe and a crimson Victory Banner flew over the prostrate citadel of the Nazi Reich, Berlin. But time does not erase from memory the events of those days and memories of the heroism and courage of Soviet soldiers who honorably withstood the harsh testing of the bloodiest war have thankfully survived.

The path to victory was long and difficult. It ran through the fire of fierce engagements of unprecedented scope.

I, like other participants in these events, remember very well the last days of the war. And I always recall with pride the intrepid Soviet soldiers who demonstrated great skill, courage and valor in the Berlin Operation which has gone down in history as a classic example of an offensive by a group of fronts carried out with a decisive aim. In assessing it from the standpoint of today, I would like to emphasize particularly that many methods of preparing and conducting the operation are pertinent for modern military art. Numerous good books and articles have already been written about this. For this reason I would take up certain questions of military art in the operation.

For carrying out the operation, the Supreme High Command had concentrated in the First and Second Belorussian Fronts and the First Ukrainian Front some 2.5 million men, 41,600 guns and mortars, 6,250 tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery system] and 7,500 combat aircraft, including 800 long-range aircraft(1) which ensured achieving the set goal.

The Soviet soldiers had to carry out rather difficult tasks to defeat a strong, well-armed enemy who had in addition established a strong, deeply echeloned defense in the Berlin sector and in the capital itself. And they successfully carried out these missions.

However, the bourgeois falsifiers, in endeavoring to distort the history of the Berlin Operation, have tried to refute this. Some of them assert that the Battle of Berlin supposedly never occurred at all, as there was no enemy ahead of the Soviet Army and as the city was basically defended by the civilian population. Others have endeavored to prove that while this operation did occur, it was only after the end of the war, which came about, in their opinion, as a result of the Ruhr Operation of the American and English troops. But facts are a stubborn

thing. Army Groups Vistula and Center, which had taken up the defensive ahead of the Soviet troops, numbered 1 million men, 10,400 guns and mortars, 1,500 tanks and assault guns and 3,300 combat aircraft. In Berlin itself were more than 200 battalions of Volksturmer while the total size of the city garrison exceeded 200,000 men.(2) Poisoned by false propaganda and fearing cruel repression, the Nazi troops resisted with unusual tenacity. The degree of desperateness of the fighting can be seen from the fact that from 16 April through 8 May we lost over 102,000 men. At the same time, the losses of the American and English troops on the entire Western Front in 1945 were only 260,000. Mr. falsifiers might remember that in the course of the Ruhr Operation, Army Group B was surrounded and this numbered just 18 divisions (around 325,000 men). Moreover, this grouping, cut off from many areas of Germany, was in acute need of combat equipment and weapons, ammunition and other types of supplies and its troops were completely demoralized. Under these conditions the commander of Army Group B issued the order to cease resistance as of 17 April 1945 and announced the disbanding of his troops.(3)

The encirclement and elimination of the Ruhr Grouping were carried out with predominant superiority of the Allied troops in men and weapons. At the same time, it is wise to emphasize again that the Nazi Command lacked reserves and because of the major defeats on the Soviet-German Front the battleworthiness of the Nazi troops had declined sharply. For this reason the offensive by the American and English troops was viewed as "peacetime maneuvers conducted with all the wartime equipment."(4)

The operation of the Soviet troops was prepared and carried out under completely different conditions. As is known, the rulers of Nazi Germany had set the task of preventing the capture of Berlin by the Soviet Army. They were endeavoring to split the anti-Nazi coalition, to make an agreement with the U.S. and English ruling circles and turn over their capital to the American and English troops. In this manner Hitler and those around him hoped to avoid an unconditional surrender.

Our American and English allies were planning to capture Berlin. Regardless of the fact that there was an agreement between the countries of the anti-Nazi coalition according to which this city was to be part of the zone of operations of the Soviet troops, the Allied reactionary circles, particularly the English, endeavored at whatever the cost to move their troops to the east of the Elbe and capture Berlin before the Soviet Army. This is now proven by the known letters from Gen D. Eisenhower to Field Mar B. Montgomery and from W. Churchill to F. Roosevelt dated, respectively, 15 September 1944 and 1 April 1945. I will quote excerpts from both documents.

"From the political viewpoint," pointed out W. Churchill, "we should advance as far as possible into the east of Germany and take Berlin, if this is within our

range.”(5) The Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Western Europe, Gen D. Eisenhower, supported the same viewpoint. He wrote: “Clearly, Berlin is the main goal. In my opinion, the fact that we should focus all our energy and forces in the aim of a rapid rush to Berlin is beyond doubt.”(6) Thus, both Churchill and Eisenhower firmly intended to be the first into the German capital.

Such a complex military-political situation demanded that the Soviet Command immediately prepare and conduct an operation to defeat the Berlin Grouping and capture Berlin. For each extra day provided an opportunity for the enemy to improve its defenses and reinforce the troops on the Berlin sector from the other fronts and sectors as well as from new formations. And this would substantially complicate the breakthrough and surmounting of the enemy defenses and would lead to increased losses in the advancing fronts.

The necessity of breaching strong enemy defenses, defeating large forces and rapidly taking Berlin required the establishing of strong assault groupings and the employment of the most effective and decisive methods for conducting combat actions. Considering these factors, Hq SHC [Headquarters Supreme High Command] involved in the Berlin Operation the troops of three fronts, a portion of the forces from the Baltic Fleet, the 18th Air Army (the former long-range aviation), the National Air Defense Troops and the Dnieper Naval Flotilla which was in operational terms under the First Belorussian Front.

The aim of the operation was in a short period of time to defeat the main forces of Army Groups Vistula and Center, to capture Berlin and, reaching the Elbe, link up with the Allied troops, thereby forcing Nazi Germany to surrender unconditionally. In accord with this, the over-all plan of the Soviet Command was to breach the enemy defenses along the Oder and Neisse with powerful strikes by the three fronts and, in continuing the offensive in depth, to surround the main enemy grouping in the Berlin sector via the simultaneous splitting of it into several parts and the destruction of each of these in detail. Then the Soviet troops were to reach the Elbe.

The main efforts of the fronts were aimed initially at crushing the strong enemy defenses and subsequently at encircling and splitting up its main grouping defending on the Berlin axis. The encirclement of the main forces was to be carried out by outflanking Berlin to the north and northwest using the First Belorussian Front (commander, MSU G.K. Zhukov) and from the south and southwest by the First Ukrainian Front (commander, MSU I.S. Konev). The splitting of the surrounded grouping was to be carried out by a thrust of the 33d and 69th Armies from the First Belorussian Front on the general axis of Brandenburg. The First Belorussian Front was given the responsible task of capturing Berlin. The First Ukrainian Front, advancing to the southwest and with a portion of the forces against Dresden, was to defeat the

enemy grouping to the south of Berlin, isolate the main forces of Army Group Center and thereby support from the south the offensive of the First Belorussian Front as well as assist it in capturing the capital of Nazi Germany. The Second Belorussian Front (commander, MSU K.K. Rokossovskiy) was to split the 3d German Panzer Army away from Army Group Center and destroy it, thereby covering the right wing of the First Belorussian Front from the north. The Red Banner Baltic Fleet was to secure the maritime flank of the Third Belorussian Front, seal off the enemy Kurland Grouping and disrupt its sealanes.

The over-all concept and plan for the Berlin Operation worked out by Hq SHC and the forces assigned to conduct it ensured the defeat of the enemy grouping in the Berlin sector and the capture of Berlin. The end of the war in Europe was brought about by the reaching of the Elbe by the Soviet troops and the linking up with American and English troops. In the decisions of the front commanders, the carrying out of the tasks was planned in such a manner that in the course of the offensive not only would the opposing grouping be defeated but also it would be prevented from retreating behind the Elbe. For this purpose the Second Belorussian Front launched its main thrust using the armies of the left wing from an area to the north of Schwedt in a general direction to the northwest thereby preventing the link-up of the 3d German Panzer Army with the Berlin Troop Grouping and its retreat to the west.

The task of defeating the 9th German Army and the 4th Panzer Army defending the approaches to Berlin to the east and southeast was to be carried out by the joint efforts of the First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts. An analysis of the decisions of the commanders of these fronts indicates that the selected axes of the main and auxiliary thrusts made it possible to split the troops of both enemy armies and at the same time surround them in the area of Berlin and in the forests to the southeast of the city, and cut off the 4th Panzer Army and a portion of the 9th German Army from the capital. Only in this manner was it possible to accelerate its falling under the blows of the main forces of the First Belorussian Front.

The commanders skillfully chose the axes of the main thrusts of the fronts and rationally allocated the forces between them. The First Belorussian Front launched its main thrust along the shortest route to Berlin, with some 60 km to cover. It had more troops than the other fronts and possessed a significant superiority over the enemy in men and weapons, as it had to break through the most densely occupied and deeply echeloned enemy defenses, defeat the strong enemy grouping and take Berlin.

The axis of the main thrust of the First Ukrainian Front was chosen in an area where the enemy defenses made it possible to cross more quickly and rapidly reach Berlin from the southwest to assist the First Belorussian Front

in capturing the city. The Second Belorussian Front focused its main efforts on supporting the right flank of the troop assault grouping operating on the Berlin axis.

Thus, we see that in working out the plan for the operation, the most decisive and effective methods were chosen to achieve its goals. The enemy was to be defeated by a simultaneous breakthrough of the enemy defenses in a series of widely separated sectors, by launching deep splitting thrusts and encircling the large enemy groupings with their simultaneous splitting and destruction in detail.

Some 13-15 days were provided to prepare the fronts for the operation. This decision was correct, regardless of the necessity of carrying out large troop regroupings, creating enormous supplies of materiel as well as an enormous amount of preparatory measures. "Let us recall," commented MSU A.M. Vasilevskiy, "that such operations as the Stalingrad, Belorussian, Iasi-Kishinev and Vistula-Oder, had been prepared in at least 1 or 2 months. The rate of preparing...the concluding operations shows that the Soviet defense economy and the Armed Forces by 1945 had reached a level which made it possible to do what previously would have seemed a miracle."(7)

Under the conditions of the limited time to prepare for the operation, the assault groupings of the fronts were organized by the covert shifting of large masses of troops from the reserve of Hq SHC and from other sectors and regroupings within the fronts. Particularly indicative in this regard was the regrouping of the Second Belorussian Front from East Pomerania to the Berlin sector. For taking up the forming-up position, its main forces wheeled 180 degrees and over a period of 6-9 days moved some 250-300 km. "This was a complicated maneuver by an entire front and the likes of this had not existed over the entire Great Patriotic War," recalled MSU K.K. Rokossovskiy.(8) On the other fronts, virtually all the tank and combined-arms armies also regrouped over a distance of 60-150 km and in individual instances 300-350 km. As a result this made it possible to provide a high operational troop density on the axes of the main thrusts.

We should also note the decisive massing of men and weapons on the breakthrough sectors. The width of the latter was 13-25 percent of the zone of advance of the fronts. On these sectors they concentrated 48-55 percent of the rifle divisions, 61-75 percent of the guns and mortars, 73-79 percent of the tanks and SAU. This made it possible to achieve superiority over the enemy of 3-4-fold in the area of the First Belorussian Front and 7-10-fold in the area of the First Ukrainian. Moreover, such massing of men and weapons made it possible to make maximum use of the fire and assault capabilities of the troops as well as have a deep operational configuration of the troops. In the First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts which were to play the main role in the operation, this was a double-echelon formation with a

mobile group, air armies and a reserve. This made it possible to launch a powerful initial strike and boost the effort in the course of breaching the defenses, in surrounding and destroying the large enemy grouping. The operational configuration of the Second Belorussian Front included a first echelon, a strong reserve consisting of tank, mechanized and cavalry corps and an air army. The presence of strong follow-up echelons, strong second echelons and reserves ensured a building up of the forces in the course of the operation and the development of it at a high pace. A majority of the combined-arms armies had a single-echelon configuration, while the battle formations of the corps and divisions were usually formed up in two and sometimes three echelons. This ensured a maximum force of the initial strike.

The measures to ensure camouflage and deception were characterized by great effectiveness. For example, the command of the Second Belorussian Front, in simulating the concentration of three tank armies and two combined-arms armies with a large amount of crossing equipment in the zone of the 2d Assault Army, confused the enemy on the axis of the main thrust. The First Belorussian Front successfully carried out a disinformation plan making it possible to create within the Nazi Command a certainty that the troops would go over to the defensive on the central sector and preparations for the offensive would be carried out on the flanks. As a result of this, the enemy did not reinforce the central sector of the front. The First Ukrainian Front acted differently. When the regrouping of its troops to the right wing commenced, numerous mock-ups of combat equipment were left in the former concentration areas of the tank armies and the radios continued operating under the previous conditions until the start of the offensive. The measures taken contributed to the success of the troops as did the setting up of smokescreens along the entire zone of crossing the Neisse River. The main groupings of the First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts went over to the offensive on the morning of 16 April while the Second Belorussian Front followed on 20 April. By 19 April, the Soviet troops had breached the Oder-Neisse enemy defensive line. However, in the zone of advance of the First Belorussian Front, the enemy had previously established heavily fortified zones of deeply echeloned defenses and this slowed down the advance of our troops. Considering this, Hq SHC decided to execute the maneuver of encircling the Berlin enemy grouping by a strike from the tank armies of the First Ukrainian Front from the south.

On 20 April, after midday, the artillery of the First Belorussian Front opened fire against the capital of Nazi Germany, beginning the final storming of the city. On 25 April, the surrounding of the entire Berlin enemy grouping had been completed. On the same day, troops from the First Ukrainian Front reached the Elbe in the Torgau area, where they met up with the forward detachments of the 1st American Army.

The destruction of the surrounded Frankfurt-Guben enemy grouping was carried out from 26 April through 1

May and by 1500 hours on 2 May, enemy resistance in Berlin had ceased. The fighting against individual enemy groups which were endeavoring to break out from the city suburbs to the west continued until 5 May 1945.

During the night of 9 May, at Karlshorst in the presence of the representatives of the command of the USSR, U.S., English and French armies, the representatives of overthrown Nazi Germany signed the Act of Unconditional Surrender of their armed forces. The bloody war in Europe which had been started by Nazi Germany and had lasted almost 6 years was over.

The Berlin Operation, one of the largest in World War II, was marked by high intensity of military operations. The Soviet troops in the course of the operation defeated 93 Wehrmacht divisions and captured around 480,000 soldiers and officers as well as a large amount of military equipment. The operation showed the high level of Soviet military art and the creative assimilation of the rich experience gained by the Soviet Army during the years of the Great Patriotic War.

The guiding, organizing and mobilizing role of the CPSU was manifested with renewed strength in the preparation and course of the operation. The party did everything to mobilize the Soviet people and their armed defenders for a decisive storming of the enemy for the sake of a just cause and freeing mankind from the threat of Nazi enslavement. Educated in a spirit of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, the Soviet soldiers unstintingly and without sparing their lives carried out their patriotic and international duty. An awareness of responsibility for the destiny of not only their own people but all the peoples of the world made them intrepid and courageous in the fight against the Nazi barbarians. The Soviet Army honorably carried out its historic mission, it carried on its shoulders the main burden of the fighting, it broke the back of the Nazi aggressor, it caught the enemy in its own lair and freed the European peoples of the brown plague. The defeat of Naziism and the victorious conclusion of the war became an event of world historical significance and which opened up new paths of social progress for rescued mankind as well as prospects of a just and lasting peace in the world.

In the Berlin Operation the methods of breaching the enemy defenses simultaneously on a number of sectors underwent further development and this deprived the enemy of the opportunity to maneuver and establish troop groupings for subsequent counterstrikes. As a result the enemy was able to actively utilize only a portion of the reserves for counterstrikes against the left wing of the First Ukrainian Front in the Gorlitz area. All the remaining enemy reserves were tied down as a result of our offensive. The attempts by the Nazis to employ the 12th Army for a counterstrike against Berlin was also unsuccessful.

The experience of the Berlin Operation clearly confirmed that the encirclement and destruction of large enemy groupings should comprise a single process. Here the successful execution of the task of eliminating the surrounded groupings in a short period of time was achieved by the non-stop offensive by the fronts during the day and at night, by squeezing the surrounded groupings and splitting them up into isolated parts, by maintaining superiority in men and weapons on the most important sectors of the internal and external perimeters of encirclement as well as by checking the enemy's attempts to relieve the surrounded troops.

The Frankfurt-Guben Grouping was basically destroyed not in the area of encirclement but in the course of thwarting its attempts to break through to the west. Here a particular role was played by the skillful maneuvering of reserve, by the early establishing of a defense in depth on the probable routes of the enemy's retreat and by the rapid and decisive actions of the troops to defeat it. At the same time the elimination of the Berlin Grouping in full accord with the situation was carried out by having our troops launch concentric strikes, by splitting up and destroying it in detail.

The Berlin Operation was instructive in the diversity of forms for utilizing the combat arms. Particularly characteristic was the employment of tank armies. At the start of the operation, for increasing the rate of advance of rifle divisions and boosting the force of the strikes against the enemy, their formations in cooperation with the other combat arms and aviation took an active part in breaching the Oder-Neisse Enemy Defensive Line. Thus, on the First Belorussian Front the 1st and 2d Guards Tank Armies were committed to battle during the second half of the day of 16 April. They participated in breaching the 2d and 3d enemy defensive lines. Their formations together with the infantry, artillery, aviation and engineer troops continuously stormed the enemy positions for 3 days. Subsequently, without having conditions for a disengagement, in the course of the entire operation they advanced together with the combined-arms armies.

On the First Ukrainian Front the 3d and 4th Guards Tank Armies for the final breach of the main enemy defensive zone, assigned only forward detachments from the first-echelon corps while they exploited the success in the operational depth using the main forces.

The operation again clearly showed that the tank armies, with their correct employment, are the basic means for exploiting the success of the fronts in a strategic offensive operation.

The art of the Soviet Command in employing aviation was primarily apparent in the massing of aviation on the sector of the main thrusts of the fronts. The basic efforts of the air armies, including the long-range aviation, were directed at supporting the advancing troops on the battlefield. In addition to conducting air battles, Soviet

aviation destroyed enemy defensive structures and annihilated enemy weapons and personnel. In cooperating closely with the combined-arms formations, it attacked the enemy night and day, in the moving up of enemy forces from the interior and breaking out of encirclement and disrupted control. The employment of the aviation formations was characterized by the centralizing of their control, by prompt rebasing and by a continuous build-up of effort in carrying out the main tasks.

The instructive feature in the employment of artillery was that in comparison with the previous operations, its densities were higher. For example, the First Belorussian Front had almost 300 guns and mortars per kilometer of breakthrough sector, the First Ukrainian had around 270 and the Second Belorussian over 230.⁽⁹⁾ Such densities ensured dependable fire neutralization of enemy defenses. In establishing the artillery grouping, the demand was observed that each combined-arms commander from the regimental commander to the army commander was to have his own artillery group the fire of which could influence the course of battle.

There was a lack of routine in planning the artillery offensive. The duration and configuration of the artillery offensive were determined considering the nature of the enemy defenses, the physical/geographic features of the terrain and other situational conditions. For the first time in the course of the war, the artillery softening up and the assault by the troops on the main axis of advance of the First Belorussian Front were carried out at night employing antiaircraft searchlights for illuminating the terrain and blinding the enemy. In the course of the operation the fronts widely employed the maneuvering of fire and the large artillery groupings for carrying out the most important tasks.

Under the difficult conditions of preparing and conducting the Berlin Operation increased demands were placed on party political work. This was aimed at preparing the troops to breach the strongly fortified enemy defenses with the crossing of water obstacles and fighting in a large city. The main task of party political work was the explanation to all the personnel of the liberating mission of the Soviet Army and the establishing of correct relations with the local population. The agitation and propaganda work were so organized that each soldier and officer clearly understood and recognized the historically important task of completing the defeat of Naziism in its own lair. During the preparatory period, new party and Komsomol organizations were established and the already existing ones were strengthened. Thus, the party organizations of the three fronts during the period from 15 March through 15 April 1945 admitted to the ranks of the Communist Party over 17,000 soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the previous fighting. As a total by the start of the operation the fronts had 723,000 members and candidate members and 433,000 Komsomol members. Among the most important measures in the area of party political work were primarily those

which were aimed at the greatest possible strengthening of military discipline, increasing vigilance and preventing the breaking of military secrecy.

As a result of this work, the Soviet soldier showed high military awareness and won the honorable right of being called a soldier-liberator.

The experience gained by the Soviet Armed Forces in the Berlin Operation is invaluable. The Army and Navy personnel can gain much that is useful from it. "In history there are not direct analogies," emphasized the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee M.S. Gorbachev, "but similar situations do arise and for this reason the fruitful experience of the past is so valuable and instructive for us."⁽¹⁰⁾ This is why we must constantly and purposefully examine the war's experience, profoundly disclose the most important patterns and trends in the development of military affairs and analyze the objective processes and fundamental factors which brought about our victory.

Footnotes

1. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 10, 1979, p 315.
2. "Vtoraya mirovaya voyna. Itogi i uroki" [World War II. Results and Lessons], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985, p 101.
3. See: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 10, pp 344, 256.
4. F.S. Pogue, "Verkhovnoye komandovaniye" [The Supreme Command], abridged translation from the English, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1959, p 450.
5. "Vtoraya mirovaya voyna. Kratkaya istoriya" [World War II. Concise History], Moscow, Nauka, 1984, p 505.
6. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuz 1941-1945. Kratkaya istoriya" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945. Concise History], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 417.
7. A.M. Vasilevskiy, "Delo vsey zhizni" [A Cause of All One's Life], Moscow, Politizdat, 1973, p 502.
8. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 5, 1965, p 37.
9. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 10, p 320.
10. "Perestroyka neotlozhna, ona kasayetsya vsekh i vo vsem" [Restructuring Is Pressing, It Involves Everyone and Everything], Moscow, Politizdat, 1986, p 33.

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Certain Features in Planning 1942 Summer-Autumn Campaign

18010011c Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press
23 Jul 87) pp 20-25

[Article by Maj Gen A.N. Grylev, doctor of historical sciences: "Certain Features in Planning the 1942 Summer-Autumn Campaign"; Anatoliy Nikolayevich Grylev ended the war as the chief of the operations section of a rifle corps. During the postwar years he worked at the Main Military Scientific Directorate of the General Staff as a senior scientific associate, he was the deputy and chief of the Military History Section and the chief of the Military Scientific Directorate of the General Staff. In recent years he has worked at the Military Academy of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces imeni K.Ye. Voroshilov]

[Text] In March 1942, for the first time in many months of hard fighting on the Soviet-German Front, a relative lull occurred, although in individual areas there was still heavy fighting. The front line which had stabilized in April reflected the enormous effort which both sides had put into the fighting during the winter of that year. It had bends and bulges both toward the enemy and in the positions of our troops. In the area of the Western Front in a large area adjacent to Dorogobuzh, a troop group of Gen P.A. Belov was operating in the enemy rear. In this situation both sides differently but with equal energy began preparations for the summer and autumn operations of 1942.

The Nazi Command, in taking advantage of the absence of a second front, feverishly collected divisions of all of Western Europe and shifted them to the Soviet-German Front. It made harsh demands on its allies, obliging them to assign as many forces as possible for the war against the USSR. As a result of these extraordinary measures, the strength of the enemy troops on our front in March-June 1943 increased by 20 divisions. The enemy by the beginning of May as before surpassed the Soviet troops in the field in terms of numbers and technical equipping.

In our nation enormous work was carried out to deploy and accumulate strategic reserves. For the first time during the Great Patriotic War, the reserves of Hq SHC began to be established by pulling troops from the operational army, although the number of troops withdrawn was still insignificant. The basic method of creating strategic reserves, as before, remained the formation of new units. However, here there were fundamentally new phenomena: the strategic reserves began to include not only combined-arms field forces and formations but also individual artillery and tank units as well as large formations of armored troops and aviation.

In recalling the planning of military operations for the Soviet Armed Forces in the summer of 1942, MSU A.M. Vasilevskiy wrote: "...There was no doubt that the enemy would resume serious operations no later than the

summer in order to defeat us by again seizing the initiative.(1) Upon the conclusion of the 1942 winter campaign, the General Staff was firmly convinced that the basic, immediate task for our fronts in the spring and the beginning of the summer of 1942 should be a temporary strategic defensive. Its aim was not only to check the thrust being prepared by the enemy, but also by a stubborn defense on previously prepared lines to undermine its strength and thereby, with the least losses for us, create favorable conditions for going over to a decisive offensive. Here no later than May-June 1942 there were plans to build up strong well-trained reserves, weapons, ammunition, tanks, aircraft and other combat equipment as well as all the necessary material resources for supporting the troops on the subsequent offensive. In mid-March these considerations with the necessary background information and calculations were to be personally reported by the Chief of the General Staff, MSU B.M. Shaposhnikov, to Supreme Commander-in-Chief I.V. Stalin.

Headquarters returned to these questions a second time at the end of March in examining the plan submitted by the command of the Southwestern Sector for carrying out a major offensive operation during May and employing the forces of the Bryansk, Southwestern and Southern Fronts. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief agreed with the conclusions and proposals of the chief of the General Staff but also ordered, simultaneously with the transition to the strategic defensive, that on a number of sectors particular offensive operations be conducted in some areas in order to improve the operational situation, and in others to anticipate the enemy in developing offensive operations.(2)

Going over to the defensive simultaneously with the conducting of thrusts on various sectors was far from the best approach, as it led to a dissipating of the forces and attention of the Soviet Command.

In accord with the adopted plan, the Karelian Front on 3 May 1942 received the mission of carrying out an offensive operation, reaching the state frontier and going over to the defensive there.(3) On the same day, the 7th Separate Army was given a directive during the month of May to reach the Svir River and capture bridgeheads on the opposite bank.(4)

For the Leningrad and Volkhov Fronts, Headquarters on 9 April approved their plan for conducting active operations in the Lyuban area.(5) On 21 April, both fronts were joined into one, the Leningrad Front.

On 22 April, the Northwestern Front received the task of encircling and then destroying the Demyansk Enemy Grouping.(6)

For the Western Front the plan submitted by it for an operation to reinforce the group of Maj Gen P.A. Belov with personnel, materiel and aviation was approved.(7)

On 20 April, the Bryansk Front received the mission of conducting an operation on the Kursk sector and capturing Kursk.(8)

On 20 March, the Military Council of the Southwestern Sector submitted a plan of operations for April-May 1942(9) and this was examined and approved by Headquarters. In accord with this the Commander-in-Chief of the Southwestern Sector, MSU S.K. Timoshenko, approved a plan of operations which commenced thus: "In accord with the instructions of Hq SHC for anticipating the enemy in initiating offensive operations and maintaining initiative in the hands of our troops, the Southwestern Sector for the period of April-May is given the following main task: capturing the area of Kharkov, conducting a regrouping of the troops and by the subsequent strike on the axes of Dnepropetrovsk, Sinelnikovo Station, depriving the enemy of the major crossings on the Dnieper River.(10) The Kharkov Operation held the central place in the designated plan.

On 13 April, Headquarters approved the decision of the Crimean Front to go over to a strong defensive. On 21 April, there followed the new directive from Headquarters which set the task of continuing the operation of clearing out the Crimea and firmly holding Sevastopol, and in cooperation with the Black Sea Fleet and Azov Naval Flotilla to prevent the landing of amphibious forces on the shore as well as the landing of airborne forces on the Kerch Peninsula.(11)

In preparing the designated offensive operations, the Soviet Supreme High Command did not neglect incoming information on the enemy's preparations for active operations. To check the enemy on the southwestern sector they began building defensive lines in the rear of the Bryansk, Southwestern and Southern Fronts.

On 21 April, a directive was issued to establish the Northern Caucasus Sector with its subordinate Crimean Front, Sevastopol Defensive Area, Northern Caucasus District, Black Sea Fleet and Azov Naval Flotilla. The following missions were set as the most important ones for the troops of this sector: not to allow the landing of amphibious forces on the coast of the Azov and Black Seas on the sectors of Rostov, Yeysk, Taman, Novorossiysk and Tuapse as well as airborne forces on the Kerch Peninsula and on the territory of the Northern Caucasus District; in the event of attempts by the enemy to advance on the Rostov-Caucasus axis to firmly hold the line of the Don River in cooperation with the Southern Front, preventing the enemy from entering the Northern Caucasus.(12) The following fact shows that Hq SHC did consider our intelligence data on preparations for an offensive against Rostov—Caucasus. Even on 14 April, in a telegram to the Commander-in-Chief of the Southwestern Sector, Headquarters emphasized the necessity of a strong cover for the Voroshilovgrad Sector. For this

in the reserve of the Southern Front there were to be eight rifle divisions and three tank brigades which were not to be employed without permission from Headquarters.(13)

In preparing for the summer engagements, all the fronts received reinforcements in personnel, combat equipment and weapons.

As of 6 May, there was a definite change in the conduct of Hq SHC, which was evidently related to the receipt of additional data on the enemy's preparations for offensive operations.

On this day, Headquarters ordered the Crimean Front to dig in strongly on the lines which they were occupying.

On 8-9 May, the Kalinin, Western, Bryansk, Southwestern and Southern Fronts received directives which demanded fewer forces to cover certain sectors of the front so as to group the freed forces in the army and front reserves and ready them to participate in the forthcoming offensive operations as well as repel the enemy counterstrikes.

Obviously, for precisely this reason Hq SHC issued the order to immediately begin developing field fortifications on the current positions using troops of the front to a depth of a divisional defensive zone (10-12 km); engineering work was to be carried out in such a manner that the battalion areas would be ready no later than 15 May 1942 not only along the forward edge but also in depth.

On the northern face of the Soviet-German Front, on 10 May the Karelian Front and the 7th Separate Army received orders to hold their lines firmly, to dig in and reinforce their defenses with pillboxes and blockhouses.(15)

Consequently, virtually all our fronts received instructions to stiffen the defense. As for the Southwestern Front, although it also had the task of organizing its defenses, it was not released from carrying out the Kharkov Offensive Operation. The Leningrad and Northwestern Fronts continued to operate in accord with the previously received orders.

Thus, the strategic plan for the summer of 1942 in its initial form suffered from a duality: it envisaged both going over to the defensive as well as conducting offensive operations on a number of sectors. This was explained by an insufficiently accurate assessment of the actual balance of forces and by overstated information on enemy losses. In addition, there was the hope that the Allies would carry out their promise and open up a second front in Europe in 1942.

But a more realistic assessment of the situation gained the upper hand and in the first 10 days of May Hq SHC adopted a more effective decision. All fronts, with the

exception of the Leningrad, Northwestern and Southwestern, received orders for a strong defense. Only the three fronts were to carry out the previously planned offensive operations in the area of Lyuban, Demyansk and Kharkov.

In this form the strategic plan to a significantly greater degree reflected the real situation. It possibly lacked only one thing, the abandoning of the offensive operations at Lyuban and Kharkov, or their more careful strategic support particularly covering the flanks of the assault groupings.

The Nazi leadership, as our intelligence reported in the summer of 1942, intended to conduct active operations. As became known, the enemy's plans were set out in the Directive of the German Supreme High Command No. 41 of 5 April 1942: "...First of all, all available forces should be concentrated for conducting the main operation on the Southern Sector in the aim of destroying the enemy to the west of the Don in order to then seize the oil fields in the Caucasus and cross the Caucasus Range."(16)

The offensive operations commenced by our troops at Kharkov and Lyuban and the defensive operation in the Crimea ended unsuccessfully. This was a consequence of a number of factors. Among these one can put: the enemy's superiority in men and weapons, our poor technical equipping and still insufficient combat experience as well as shortcomings in troop leadership on the operational and strategic levels.

The setback to our troops in the Kharkov area was particularly severe in its consequences. The High Command of the Southwestern Sector which had actively insisted on carrying out the offensive operation in this area made a number of mistakes. It poorly supported the flanks of the front's assault grouping and was slow in committing the tank corps to battle. When the enemy launched a thrust against the flanks of the main grouping, the command was late in adopting a decision to go over to the defensive.

Approximately the same mistakes were made in the operation at Lyuban. Nor was it possible to destroy the enemy at Demyansk.

The enemy, being successful in the Crimea and at Kharkov, was able to initiate a major offensive on the entire Southwestern Sector. Here also the Soviet troops were forced to go over to the defensive. As a result, our command was confronted with the need to implement extraordinary measures.

On 25 May, an order was issued to constitute the 5th Tank Army consisting of the II and XI Tank Corps, the 340th Rifle Division, the 19th Detached Tank Brigade, light artillery, guards mortar [rocket] regiments, an anti-aircraft battalion and other army units(17) as well as the 3d Tank Army consisting of the XII and XV Tank Corps,

the 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division, the 154th and 264th Rifle Divisions, the 179th Tank Brigade, as well as a number of artillery and other units.(18) The headquarters of the 58th Army was turned into the headquarters of the 3d Tank Army while the headquarters of the 5th Tank Army was formed from scratch.

On 28 May, directives were issued on the constituting of the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Reserve Armies with a deadline for them to be ready by 10 June.(19)

On 30 May, an order was issued for a major air operation using the forces of the long-range aviation, the air forces of the Leningrad, Northwestern, Kalinin, Western, Bryansk, Southwestern, Southern and Northern Caucasus Fronts and the Black Sea Fleet with the mission of destroying enemy equipment and runways at airfields during the period from 30 May through 9 June.(20) This operation was undertaken in the interests of supporting the defensive actions of our troops, primarily on the Southwestern Sector.

During the first days of June, the situation in the zone of the Bryansk, Southwestern and Southern Fronts became further complicated because the enemy, after its success around Kharkov, significantly intensified its operations.

This forced Headquarters to carry out even wider measures in the rear of our fronts fighting on the Southwestern Sector.

On 4-7 June, the 3d, 5th, 6th and 7th Reserve Armies were given the task of occupying the tactically advantageous line of: Zadonsk, Voronezh, Pavlovsk, Kletskaya, up to Verkhne-Kurmoyarskaya. On 7 June, the Northern Caucasus Front was ordered to defend the left bank of the Don from Verkhne-Kurmoyarskaya to Azov with the forces of the 51st Army. The front was to include the XIV Tank Corps positioned as the front's reserve in the area of Salsk, Belaya Glina, Tikhoretsk. In addition, in the front reserve there were to be two divisions in the area of Kropotkin and one in the area of Krasnodar. Thus, a defense of reserve armies was established based on the line of the Don. Moreover, behind this line were concentrated the 1st, 8th and 9th Reserve Armies, respectively, in the areas of Tula, Saratov and Gorkiy. Behind the Bryansk Front, a strong tank grouping was established consisting of the 5th Tank Army, the IV and XVI Separate Tank Corps.(21)

On 7 June, very important instructions were issued to the Transcaucasus Front which additionally included the 44th Army from the Headquarters Reserve. This army was to firmly cover the approaches to Baku from the north. Six rifle and cavalry divisions and the Sukhumi Infantry School were assigned to defend the main routes across the Main Caucasus Range.(22)

It is easy to see that all these major strategic measures were carried out with great foresight and purposefulness.

The experience of planning the offensive actions in the winter of 1941- 1942 and the summer of 1942 makes it possible to draw a number of conclusions.

In the first place, it was essential to clearly define the sector for concentrating the main efforts, using there the main grouping of operational forces and strategic reserves.

Secondly, for defeating the enemy groupings on each of the strategic sectors it was essential to effectively employ the forces of a number of fronts, the long-range aviation, the National Air Defense Troops and the Navy (on the maritime sectors). Partisan actions in the enemy rear also had to be appropriately employed in their interests.

Thirdly, the planning of armed combat required thorough and objective consideration of the forces and capabilities of the enemy and one's own troops, the materiel and capabilities for delivering these to the fronts, the weather conditions and the terrain.

Fourthly, in planning offensive actions, it was essential to provide measures to ensure the operational and strategic stability of our troops in the event of an enemy anticipatory offensive or counteroffensive. All these conclusions were drawn by the Soviet Command and subsequently taken into account.

Footnotes

1. A.M. Vasilevskiy, "Delo vsey zhizni" [The Cause of One's Entire Life], Moscow, Politizdat, 1976, p 203.
2. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 8, 1965, p 4.
3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 132-A, inv. 2642, file 31, sheets 173-175.
4. Ibid., sheets 178-179.
5. Ibid., folio 48-A, inv. 1640, file 179, sheet 124.
6. Ibid., folio 132-A, inv. 2642, file 31, sheets 173-175.
7. Ibid., file 41, sheets 130-131.
8. Ibid., sheets 118-119.
9. Ibid., folio 229, inv. 161, file 799, sheets 278-282.
10. Ibid., folio 251, inv. 646, file 145, sheet 181.
11. Ibid., folio 132-A, inv. 2542, file 32, sheets 84-85.
12. Ibid., file 31, sheets 83-86.
13. Ibid., file 41, sheet 165.

14. Ibid., file 32, sheets 89-95, 185-187, 193-195.

15. Ibid., folio 16-A, inv. 1640, file 18, sheet 264.

16. "Sovershenno sekretno! Tolko dlya komandovaniya!" [Top Secret! For Command's Eyes Only!], Moscow, Nauka, 1967, p 381.

17. TsAMO, folio 132-A, inv. 2642, file 31, sheet 199.

18. Ibid., file 41, sheet 147.

19. Ibid., file 31, sheets 203-207, 881.

20. Ibid., file 41, sheets 152-153.

21. Ibid., file 31, sheet 211.

22. Ibid., folio 16-A, inv. 1640, file 18, sheets 365-366.

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Fighter "Lone-Wolf" Operations

18010011d Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press 23 Jul 87)pp 26-31

[Article by Col Yu.K. Vetrov, candidate of military sciences: "Fighter 'Lone-Wolf Operations'"; the article was written from the experience of the Great Patriotic War]

[Text] The appearance of the "lone-wolf" method of fighter operations was aided by the arming of combat aircraft with weapons to fire at air targets. Even during the years of World War I, individual ace pilots independently hunted the enemy, using complete freedom in choosing the time and area of the flights. "The aces," said the well-known Russian pilot, Ye.N. Kruten, "are not to be in the general schedule and order for patrolling but fly when they like, themselves choosing the area and can appear over the front individually. All the work of the ace is at his own initiative.(1) The actions of the "lone wolves" had a strong moral and psychological impact on the enemy flight personnel, causing uncertainty in the safe outcome of the flight even over their own territory, fettering initiative by the constant threat of a surprise attack and reducing battleworthiness as a whole. However, they were not tied to carrying out specific combat tasks in the interests of the ground troops.

In the Soviet Air Forces, the "lone-wolf" method began to be widely employed only in the second period of the Great Patriotic War, when fire aviation began to be armed with high performance aircraft (YaK-3, LA-5fn and others) and the flight personnel had gained sufficient experience in conducting air battles. Up to the war's end

the pilots made over 31,000 sorties for "lone-wolf operations" and destroyed several thousand Nazi aircraft. The effectiveness of their air battles was rather high here (an average of three or four aircraft sorties were spent for one destroyed enemy aircraft).(2)

An objective prerequisite for employing and improving the designated combat method was an absence of dependable equipment for detecting the air enemy and guiding the fighter aviation to it. As a result the fighters patrolling over their territory often were unable to intercept enemy bombers before they had made their strikes against the ground troops. It was even impossible to increase the dependable cover of our troops by shifting the patrol zones beyond the front line as the enemy either avoided them or brought escort fighters there and engaged our groups in battle.(3)

It was essential to decisively increase the activeness of the fighter aviation, to seek out the enemy oneself and anticipate its actions. For this purpose the best trained fighter pilots began to operate in assigned areas or sectors over enemy territory in which enemy flights were most probable at a given moment. The fighters independently selected the route of search, considering the time of day, the weather conditions, the activeness and tactics of the Nazi aviation and other factors. These actions were termed differently: free flight, free air combat and finally "lone-wolf operation" [lit. free hunting].

This method of fighting Nazi aviation differed from the traditional fighter patrolling in zones in the following features: the commander who decided to scramble the "lone wolves" was to a certain degree free to choose the area and time of the search, he proceeded from the existing situation on the ground and in the air and the training level of the personnel; all flights without exception was marked by particular complexity for they were executed over enemy territory individually or in small groups where enemy fighters and antiaircraft weapons were active and required the constant monitoring of the fuel supply ensuring a safe return to the airfield. Careful recruitment of the pilots and a skillful choice of the area and time of the search ensured not only the destruction of individual enemy aircraft but also the prompt detection of massed raids and the committing of the main fighter forces to battle to repel these raids.

The Air Forces Command, having assessed the potential capability of this method of action, by a special directive in September 1942 demanded that the commanders of the air armies of the fronts establish a group of pilots in each fighter air division and develop the "lone-wolf" tactics with them. The directive pointed out: "The lone-wolf fighter pilots should be chosen on a volunteer basis from the best air fighters. They should be not only courageous pilots but have an excellent mastery of piloting, be outstanding air gunners, cool-headed, circumspect and confident in themselves, their aircraft and the weapons."(4)

In 1943, the lone-wolf method was included in the draft "Manual on Fighter Aviation Operations" where they set out the principles of its employment and the basic tactical provisions for the lone-wolf subunits as worked out on the basis of generalizing combat experience. In the Manual, particular attention was given to the questions of organizing the training of the lone-wolf pilots and the making up of their subunits. Experience showed that the latter had to be organized from volunteers. Here it was essential to consider the level of their piloting and air gunnery training, the results of their air battles and character. To win the right to be a "lone wolf" was to be considered a great honor.

The lone-wolf squadrons (groups) organized in the fighter air divisions (regiments) were involved in carrying out the most complicated and responsible tasks and the range of these was gradually widened. While in 1942, these were sporadic flights by individual two-plane elements in the aim of destroying any enemy detected aircraft and conducting air reconnaissance, subsequently the lone-wolf fighter subunits became an element in the configuration of the fighter aviation forces in covering the ground troops. They met the enemy bombers at the distant approaches and by surprise attacks disrupted their battle formation, endeavoring to destroy the group leaders first of all as well as provide a continuous cover for the troops in relieving the fighters patrolling over the front line. In certain operations the troops of the fronts during the periods of the greatest Nazi air activity were covered by three waves of fighters. In the first wave were the lone-wolf groups which searched for the air enemy over enemy territory to a depth of 50-70 km. The groups were relieved every hour.(5)

Another task for the lone wolves during the years of the Great Patriotic War was disrupting enemy air movements. For example, in the Stalingrad Offensive Operation they to a significant degree helped thwart the plans of the Nazi Command to throw up a "air bridge" to the surrounded von Paulus grouping. The fighters actively searched for and destroyed enemy transports virtually under any meteorological conditions. The Nazis did not plan for this and involving the best Luftwaffe pilots in carrying out the supply tasks, lost many of them. In the 1944 Crimean Offensive Operation, the lone-wolf fighters successfully checked the air evacuation of Nazi troops from the Crimean Peninsula to Romanian territory. Their aircraft were equipped with suspended fuel tanks and this substantially increased the search time and made it possible to intercept the Junkers transports on routes running far to sea.

One of the most important missions entrusted to the lone-wolf subunits during the years of the Great Patriotic War was the combating of enemy lone-wolf fighters. This was difficult and particularly essential with the appearance in the areas of the fronts of enemy "roaming squadrons." (Udet, Richthofen and others) and manned with experienced flight personnel and equipped with

modernized aircraft. With the aid of these formations, the Nazi Command endeavored to wrest air supremacy in a certain area away from our Air Forces.

For combating the German aces, there was the practice of the simultaneous sorties by several lone-wolf groups, each of which searched in a designated sector and in detecting the enemy informed the others by the set radio signal. Target designation was worked out using a coded map.(6) The air victories clearly demonstrated how the strong enemy could be successfully beaten.

The lone-wolf tactics was based upon the covert penetration of the fighters into the distant air space over enemy territory and where at the given time flights of enemy aircraft were most probable and the personnel would feel relatively safe. The lone wolves crossed the front line in areas where the ground troops were not actively fighting (over swampy, forested or mountainous areas). Here they widely employed the camouflaging properties of cloudiness, the sun and the terrain. With the introduction of radar by the enemy, the pilots began to establish their position and endeavor to avoid the detection zones. The depth of penetration by the lone-wolves into enemy air space in the course of the war constantly increased: from 60-80 km at the end of 1942 up to 100-150 km and more in 1944. This was achieved by employing staging airfields and suspended fuel tanks and by carefully selecting the routes and flight conditions during the search.

One of the main principles in employing the lone wolves was their continuous operations regardless of weather conditions and the situation. In determining the time of the group's sortie they always considered the "daily schedule" of Nazi aviation, that is, the desire to launch the strikes (to carry out reconnaissance) at the same time of the day and to fly strictly along definite routes. In this context they frequently made group sorties of lone wolves into the areas of enemy airfields and these were timed to the moment of take-off or return of the air units based at them in order to attack the aircraft during the take-off or landing.

Lone-wolf flights were made chiefly in two-plane elements while the lone wolves hunting other lone wolves most frequently flew in flights. On the basis of generalizing the experience of operations, an optimum formation was set of two lone wolves in searching for an air enemy over enemy territory and this was a line-abreast. Depending upon the weather conditions and time of day, the aircraft in the two-plane element followed with an interval of 150-300 m. With a low-altitude flight, the wingman maintained a distance of 50-100 m above the leader and at medium and high altitudes the same was done from below. The given parameters of the formation ensured for both pilots a maximum view of the air space, the overlapping of the search sectors, the possibility of reciprocal observance of the rear hemisphere and execute a rapid turn of 90 or 180 degrees using the "all at once" method (with a change in the wingman's position

relative to the leader) or going into the attack or out from under an enemy strike. A flight fought analogously only the functions of the two-plane elements in it were separate: one was the assault group and the other the support (cover, boosting the effort in combat). The latter traveled, as a rule, somewhat above the assault group.

The altitude of flight in the search was chosen depending upon the meteorological conditions and the distance of the lone-wolf area from the front line. In cloudless weather the flight over enemy territory was carried out at an altitude close to the aircraft's service ceiling in order in the event of necessity to employ the margin for picking up speed and rapidly closing with the discovered enemy. With the presence of cumulus clouds, the lone wolves for the purposes of camouflage loitered around their upper edge or a little above while with solid and low cloudiness they remained under the lower edge at an altitude of 100-200 m.

In the lone-wolf area the search was carried out following a box pattern or by "tacking" following a course that ran perpendicular to the expected direction of the enemy aircraft and gradually shifting toward the front line. When the enemy's routes were known, the lone wolves headed straight at them. If the Nazi aircraft were not encountered, the pilots switched to searching out and destroying ground targets, chiefly trains, motor vehicle columns and individual vehicles. The lone wolves endeavored to attack trains on bridges and sections distant from stations. The attack was initially made against the locomotive and then the cars. As an example one might give the skillful actions of the lone-wolf pair under the command of Lt N. Kostyrko in the morning of a May day in 1943. The pilots during the designated time did not detect an air enemy in the designated area. The leader, upon returning to the airfield, took a decision to fly along a railroad on which they soon detected a train with two engines. The pilots attacked both locomotives straight in and damaged them. As a result the consist was halted and stood for the entire day, having blocked traffic on a major route.(7)

The air combat tactics of the lone wolves envisaged a covert closing with the enemy aircraft, surprise and rapid attacks with the opening of fire from minimum range. In order to hit the target with certainty, the famous Soviet aces A.I. Pokryshkin, I.N. Kozhedub, A.V. Alelyukhin and others fired from a distance of 50-100 m. After a successful attack the two-plane element immediately left the area. When necessary a second attack was carried out, as a rule, one-by-one (one plane attacked and the other covered) and from a different direction.

If the lone wolves spotted large groups of enemy aircraft, they immediately reported to the command post on their strength, types, coordinates and route of flight. Such information ensured prompt scrambling of the fighters on alert at the airfield as well as the committing to battle of those patrolling in zones close to the front line. For example, the lone-wolf fighters from the 240th Fighter

Division of the 3d Air Army which continuously carried out a search over enemy territory in the area of Smolensk, Yartsevo, Dukhovshchina in groups of three-six YaK-9 aircraft, on 5 September 1943 alone, detected around 200 enemy bombers flying toward the battlefield. Due to the prompt warning of the command posts and due to the efforts of the pilots themselves, more than one-half were intercepted on the approach to the front line and seven were downed.(8)

Experience shows that the success of the lone wolves in combat depended totally upon the clarity of actions and mutual understanding between the leader and wingman. The leader was the "creator" of battle and the wingman scanned the air space and provided guidance. Here he was constantly ready to cover the leader with fire or be the first to attack in order not to lose the tactical advantage over the detected air enemy. In this context the pilots prepared carefully for each combat sortie, they worked out ahead of time their actions in various situations in order to understand each other in terms of the type of performed maneuvers, changes in attitudes, hand signals and so forth. This made it possible subsequently to minimize the radio traffic which gave away the lone-wolf flight.

The training methods of the lone-wolf pilots in the aviation units were constantly improved. Initially the main training procedure was a personal demonstration by the leader to the wingman of the methods of seeking out the air enemy, achieving surprise and high accuracy of the attack. Later on they began to additionally practice detailed analyses of combat flights employing photographs of episodes in the air battles and these were recorded by the aircraft gun cameras and equipment of the ground control posts. The pilots worked out schemes of the air battles employing graphic analytical modeling considering the strong and weak points of the Nazi aircraft and their most vulnerable spots. Various tactical discoveries were checked out in the course of demonstration training air battles which were carried out over an airfield employing captured aviation equipment and in the presence of the entire flight personnel. In particular, the commander of the III Fighter Air Corps, Gen Ya. Ya. Savitskiy, took part flying a ME-109 aircraft in such battles against our best pilots.(9)

In addition to working out practical actions, the lone-wolf pilots made a detailed study of the area of the flights, paying particular attention to the characteristic linear (railroads and highways, rivers and so forth) and areal (large population points, lakes, wooded areas) markers and their positioning relative to one another, that is, anything that could provide orientation in seeking out the enemy and quickly recovering it after an air battle. A great deal of time was given to having the flight personnel study the aviation equipment and tactics, as well as the airfield data (the direction of the runway, the scheme for taking off and coming for a landing, the positions of the main parking areas and the parking areas of the duty crews, antiaircraft weapons and so forth).

The combat missions of the lone-wolf subunits were given, as a rule, by the regimental commander and sometimes also by the divisional commander. Here they indicated: the area of lone-wolf operations, the position and nature of actions of the ground and air enemy and our own troops, the procedure for conducting air reconnaissance and the procedure for transmitting intelligence data. The routes of the search, the profiles and conditions of flight, the formations and the plans of battle were determined by the pilots independently on the basis of analyzing the existing situation and the meteorological conditions.

In the aim of generalizing and disseminating advanced experience in the field forces and formations, the Air Forces began conducting tactical flight conferences where they worked out recommendations on the employment of the given method of combat and the air combat tactics of the lone wolves. Thus, in 1943, such a conference was held in the 8th Air Army, and in February 1944, in the IX Composite Air Corps of the 17th Air Army. Participating in the work of the latter were MSU A.M. Vasilevskiy, the front's commander Army Gen R. Ya. Malinovskiy and the commander of the air army, Lt Gen Avn V.A. Sudets.(10)

The effective activities of generalizing combat experience made it possible to determine the main principles for employing the lone-wolf method and these were formulated in the following manner:

- a) With the limited capabilities of the detection and guidance system, lone-wolf operations was one of the ways to improve the activeness of fighter aviation in the fight for air supremacy and in carrying out other combat tasks;
- b) The high effectiveness of actions employing this method was achieved with its continuous use and under the conditions of winning strategic and operational air supremacy;
- c) The place and time of the lone-wolf operations and the size of the groups were determined independently by the commanders in accord with the existing situation and here the actions of the lone wolves were not tied down to specific ground objectives (troop groupings);
- d) It was better to man the lone-wolf subunits with volunteers with a strictly individual approach to the selection of each candidate;
- e) The lone-wolf pilots should have high air skills and moral- psychological training and should constantly endeavor to seek out non- standard procedures in air combat tactics;
- f) The training of the lone-wolf pilots should be carried out ahead of time and effectively using special programs. The lone-wolf subunits should be armed with the most advanced aircraft, they should be constantly ready to

maneuver to other sectors with the immediate entry into battle and comprise a reserve of the commanders of the aviation formations, the field forces and when necessary the commander of the Air Forces.

It must be pointed out that the lone-wolf method was also employed by Nazi pilots, particularly in the initial period of the war, when air supremacy was temporarily on their side. They operated predominantly in the regions of our airfields, showing up there "on the tail" of aircraft returning from a combat mission in order to attack them in their landing approach and thereby minimize possible resistance. The Nazi aces entered battle only with a clear numerical superiority. If the situation did not develop in accord with the conceived plan, they immediately broke off battle and quickly returned to their territory.

Under present-day conditions, the opportunities for employing this method have substantially altered and this has been caused by qualitative changes in the aviation equipment and weapons, the control systems and air defenses. Seemingly at present the main method for fighter combat operations should be their commitment to battle upon commands from ground or air command posts following the principle that each fighter (group) is assigned to a specific target. However, in the opinion of foreign specialists, the experience of local wars has shown that it is far from always possible to realize this principle. The reason is considered to be the rapid development of electronic warfare equipment and methods. But, regardless of this as well as the difficulties of covert penetration into enemy territory and involving the appearance of AWACS aircraft and highly effective ground air defense, this method of autonomous actions for fighter aviation is recommended for use by the air force manuals of various countries.

Footnotes

1. A.N. Lapchinskiy, "Vozdushnyy boy" [Air Battle], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1934, p 41.
2. I.V. Timokhovich, "Operativnoye iskusstvo Sovetskikh VVS v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Operational Art of the Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 89.
3. See: INFORMATSIONNYY SBORNIK, Moscow, Voenizdat, No 17, 1944, p 68.
4. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 366, inv. 21852, file 1, sheet 87.
5. INFORMATSIONNYY SBORNIK, No 17, p 69.
6. TsAMO, folio 368, inv. 6476, file 557, sheet 105.
7. See: BOYEVOYE ISPOLZOVANIYE ISTREBITELNOY AVIATSII, Moscow, Voenizdat, No 16, 1943, p 18.
8. INFORMATSIONNYY SBORNIK, No 17, pp 74, 75.
9. See: A.T. Tishchenko, "Vedomyye 'Drakona'" [Wingmen of the "Dragon"], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1966, pp 16-17.
10. See: "17-ya vozduhnaya armiya v boyakh ot Stalingrada do Veny" [The 17th Air Army in Battles From Stalingrad to Vienna], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 101.

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Rear Support of 5th Army in Harbin-Kirin Operation

18010011e Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press 23 Jul 87) pp 32-39

[Article, published under the heading "Military Economy and Rear Services," by Col V.S. Bichik, candidate of military sciences, and Col (Res) N.Ye. Medvedev: "Rear Support of the 5th Army in the Harbin-Kirin Operation"]

[Text] Having completed the regrouping from the Western Theater of Operations to the Far East, the 5th Army (commander, Col Gen N.I. Krilov, chief of the rear, Col A.F. Mosyagin) by mid-May 1945 was concentrated in the Maritime Province. In advancing under difficult conditions of the mountain taiga terrain on the axis of the main thrust of the First Far Eastern Front, it was pushed through the strong enemy fortified areas. The troops at the end of the month began to study the new theater of military operations, carry out the regrouping and replenish the supplies of materiel.(1)

The work conditions for the rear bodies in the Far East and in the West differed greatly. The rear units and facilities, as a rule, were positioned in hills, forests and creek valleys. The troops had to be supplied on rugged, tree-covered and in places swampy terrain with poorly developed transport arteries. Movement off the roads, particularly during the rainy season, the overflowing of the rivers and the related flooding of significant areas of terrain was virtually excluded. The local supplies of food and fodder were very limited and could not be counted upon.

The preparation of the troops, the rear units and facilities for the offensive was carried out under the guise of exercises, covertly and observing careful camouflage. On 17 July 1945, an order was signed for the army rear services and this defined the tasks of supporting the troops in the preparations for and in the course of the operation, and on 31 July, the army commander approved the plan for organizing the rear services and logistic support of the operation.(2)

The rear boundary for the army was set along the line of Khorol, Dubininskiy, and with the organic rear, Grodekovo, Krepostnaya, Medvezhya, Kabanya, Bashlyk. The depth of the army rear area by the start of the operation was 60-80 km, that is, 2- or 3-fold less than the depth of the zones in army operations during the concluding stage of the war in the West. The divisional exchange points (DOP) were located on the line Grodekovo, further along the lateral road to the northwest, elev. 588.6, elev. 562.2. The depth of the organic rear area equaled approximately the depth of the organic rear areas in the West (12-15 km).

For bringing up materiel by rail, the 5th Army together with the 25th was assigned the rail spur Voroshilov (Ussuriysk), Rassypnaya Pad (on the state frontier). For the basing of the rear services of the 5th Army on this spur a rail sector was assigned some 55 km long from Lopovtsy Station to the state frontier. The army railhead was Talovyy siding.(3)

The army rear services numbered 87 units and facilities. They were echeloned to the entire depth of the rear zone. For direct support of the first echelon formations and units in the army operational configuration, close to the organic rear boundary, not far from the rail line, an artillery dump was established and on the ground in the area of Kabanya there were sections of three field dumps (fuel, food and signals). Here also were located five battalions and four companies of the road service, six first-line hospitals, an army signals repair shop and certain other rear units and facilities.

The second echelon of the army rear was assigned to support all the troops of the army and was located in the area of Talovyy siding and the nearby stations at a distance of 25-30 km from the state frontier. This included: the 105th Army Field Base (PAB) consisting of the base headquarters, 2 worker battalions and a separate service company, 13 field dumps, including 3 artillery and 1 each for the other types of materiel both for services subordinate and not subordinate to the army chief of the rear; 2 motor vehicle battalions, a motor vehicle regiment, a repair and reconstruction battalion, army repair shops of the quartermaster service and artillery supply, field bakeries, veterinary facilities. This same echelon included: a hospital base as well as the motor vehicle and tank repair facilities of the army.(4)

In direct proximity to the army rear boundary (some 60-70 km) the forces of the front rear were set up and designed to support the formations of the 5th and 25th Armies, including: 2 fuel dumps, 3 food and fodder dumps, a field veterinary station and so forth.(5) Prior to the start of the operation, the front reinforced the 5th Army with a motor vehicle regiment, 3 road battalions, a fuel and lubricants dump and other units and facilities certain of which arrived late in the Far East and were included in the reserve of the rear services chief.

Such a configuration of the rear services by the start of the operation as a whole was justified, as it made it possible to successfully carry out tasks in the course of the hostilities under roadless conditions by rapidly moving up and most mobile forces behind the advancing troops.

The army units and formations which had arrived in the Far East were severely short of weapons. A significant amount of the weapons moved in required repair. The army artillery supply chief Col L.I. Kolyada had to immediately settle the questions of bringing the troops up to strength and organizing repairs in the units. For bringing the units up to strength in weapons in July-August, the army was issued 813 guns and mortars, 2,500 light and medium machine guns, 1,000 antitank guns and 20,000 rifles and carbines. After this the weapons level in the army had risen to 90-97 percent.(6) In the formations and units there was a major shortage of motor vehicle equipment. For filling out the motor vehicle units and subunits, the front sent the army 1,036 cross-country vehicles. Due to the measures adopted by the start of the operation the army already had 5,383 motor vehicles and this was 81.1 percent of the TOE.(7)

Considering the greater scope than in the West of the operation and the complex conditions of the mountain taiga terrain, the army rear services established increased supplies of all types of materiel (see the table). For this significant transport work had to be carried out. The delivery of all types of materiel to the troops and to the army dumps was organized by the army rear staff (chief, Col G.I. Tskitashvili) which each day drew up a detailed transport plan.(8)

Planned Supplies of Materiel for Army by Start of Operation*

No.	Type of Materiel	In Troops	At Rail-heads	At Army Dumps and Rail-heads	Total
1	Ammunition (units of fire)	1.5-3.0	0.2	0.5	2.2-3.7
2	Fuel (loads)	3-5	0.5	2.5-3.0	6.0-8.5
3	Food (daily ration)	8	3	9	20

*TsAMO [Central Archives of Ministry of Defense], folio 326, inv. 5078, file 64, sheets 62, 63.

Involved in delivering supply freight for the army in preparing for the operation was the 58th Separate Front Motor Vehicle Battalion with 80 Studebakers. On 5 August this was returned to the front. In its place the army was given for the period of hostilities the 31st Motor Vehicle Regiment of 6-battalion strength with a load capacity of 1,612 tons. All the vehicles in the regiment were new and with cross-country capability. Such reinforcements helped the army rear services in promptly carrying out the tasks of stockpiling the required supplies of materiel in the troops and at the dumps and in the course of the operation to quickly

deliver the supplies to the forward units and formations.(9) Over a short period 75 consists with ammunition (1,338 railway cars) were delivered by rail to the army artillery dumps. The quick receiving of such an amount of freight required intense work by the dumps (prompt unloading, transporting and allocating of supplies to the dumps). For this purpose the rear services staff assigned 150 workers and 50 motor vehicles to each chief of an artillery dump.(10)

During the preparations for the offensive, the army and front motor transport delivered to the head field dumps and the DOP some 84,384 tons of freight including 37,402 tons of ammunition, 4,236 tons of food and fodder and 42,747 tons of other freight.(11)

Ammunition was delivered to the DOP basically by the army motor transport which was temporarily made available to the army artillery supply chief (120 vehicles). In order to accelerate the delivery of supplies to the troops, receivers from the divisions were constantly on duty at the dumps. They accompanied the motor vehicle columns carrying ammunition right up to the unloading point. Delivery was carried out around-the-clock. Vehicles arrived only at night at the DOP which were located in areas viewable by the enemy. From the DOP ammunition was supplied to the regimental dumps and firing positions of the batteries by the divisional motor transport.

Under the conditions of the mountain taiga terrain the very limited network of railroads, road support assumed particularly important significance. Two front motor vehicle roads ran through the army zone. From these the army road units equipped and maintained three army roads: two lateral and one frontal. The road units also maintained in a passable state the secondary road to Grodekovo. This was used only in dry weather for transporting light cargo, as it was designed for light loads.(13)

For the tracked and animal-drawn transport the movement of which was prohibited along the army supply and evacuation routes, the road units in parallel to the wheeled vehicle roads built special roads. On them road signs were set up and a traffic control service organized.(14) There was no network of troop roads. The troops were usually positioned in the areas of the end sectors of the army roads. The engineer units built bridges and approaches to them.(15)

The army road units had 84 vehicles (26 vehicles short) and 6 road graders. The front reinforced the army road service with 25 vehicles and 7 graders, thereby providing it with substantial help in carrying out the command's assignments. The road units repaired and reinforced all the bridges. Weak areas of the main army vehicular roads were reinforced with gravel. Each bridge-building battalion prepared 100 linear m of structures for building bridges and each road operations battalion prepared 300 linear m of corduroy road and 50 linear m of bridge

units.(16) Regardless of the extensive work in organizing road support, significant shortcomings appeared in the course of the operation. Thus, there were instances when the road service bodies did not consider all the roads built by the engineer units and subunits in the organic rear as well as their condition. In building treadway roads they did not always consider the intensity of the traffic on them. For this reason a sector of the road in the Novo-Alekseyevka area quickly became unusable. The road troops incorrectly chose the direction for linking their roads to the roads on Manchurian territory.(17)

Medical support. By the start of the operation the army had 30 hospitals with a total capacity of 12,500 beds.(18) For evacuating wounded on the ground, the medical service had an ambulance company with 56 vehicles. In order to accelerate the receiving of wounded, the divisional medical battalions were moved up to the forward units and located 4-5 km from the state frontier. Using army facilities the organic rear was to provide 6 surgical hospitals, 2 therapeutic hospitals and 2 infectious hospitals set up on the line of the DOP. Their total capacity was 1,600 beds.

The army hospital base (GBA) numbered 11 hospitals (6,700 beds).(19)

On the eve of the operation the medical service carried out extensive work to prevent the spread of local infections existing in the army's zone and this included particularly dangerous ones. All personnel were given inoculations and careful medical-epidemiological reconnaissance was carried out.

The difficult tasks carried out by the army rear services during the period of preparing for the operation required great organizational work on behalf of its headquarters bodies. During this period rear support was planned, courses were organized for various categories of the rear officers and extensive work was carried out to establish supplies of materiel to prepare the roads and position the troops and rear bodies.

Three days prior to the start of the operation officers from the army rear staff were sent to all the formations to make a detailed study and inspect the readiness of the troops for combat actions, their supply levels, the work being done to accumulate supplies of ammunition, fuel, food, fodder and other types of materiel as well as the capacity of the rear services of the field forces to continuously supply the troops in battle.(20)

As a result of the measures carried out supplies in the army on 8 August 1945 in terms of food, with the exception of meat products, groats and fish products which were four or five daily rations below the norm, had reached the established amounts. For certain types of ammunition, supplies exceeded the required by 2-3-fold and for the 76-mm regimental and mountain cannons, for the 122- and 152-mm howitzers, they were 30-40 percent below the established levels.(21) Fuel supplies

by the start of the operation were just 2-2.5 loads and were 1.5-2-fold less than in the other armies of the front.(22) This was explained by the short period for preparing many units and formations in the 5th Army for the operation. They were virtually unable to stockpile the fuel supplies required by them.

The measures conducted in the army to prepare the rear units and facilities for hostilities as a whole ensured the carrying out of the rear support tasks during the operation.

At 0100 hours during the night of 9 August, the strong forward detachments of the divisions under a heavy rain covertly penetrated deep into the enemy defenses, neutralized and sealed off its strongpoints. Since artillery softening up and support for the assault were not provided, ammunition consumption in comparison with the plan was insignificant. Troop basically consumed ammunition for automatic rifles, the 82- and 120-mm mortars as well as rounds of the 76-mm cannons from the regimental and divisional artillery.(23)

In the course of the commenced offensive, the crossing of the no-man's land (5.5 km) was a major trial for the rear units and facilities. The combat units and a larger portion of the tracked equipment crossed it across country. The supply transport was unable to advance without the help of tractors. For this reason it was decided to lay a plank treadway road here. An engineer brigade, two bridge-building battalions and a road-operating company worked on building it. Over a period of 3 days these formations built the road out of materials prepared ahead of time by the units.(24)

On Manchurian territory there was only one road in the zone of the army. The combat equipment quickly passed it, destroying many bridges, drain pipes and other structures as well as individual sections of the route by their weight. Since the enemy in retreating, as a rule, blew up all man-made structures on the roads, the advance of the motor transport columns behind the troops was extremely uneven. The length of the columns at each individual obstacle increased.

The enemy had succeeded in blowing up a bridge 377 m long across the Mudanchiang River. One of the spans (80 m) was in the water and light transports could cross over a pontoon bridge erected by the combat engineers but its carrying capacity was low, some 30 vehicles an hour. Heavy equipment crossed by raft. The bridge was rebuilt in 3 days by the efforts of the two bridge battalions.

The rear staff planned the successive moving of the army rear units and facilities behind the advancing troops. However, the bad road conditions and the rapid rate of advance of the troops did not allow the moving of the rear facilities within the planned times. The field army base and the army hospital base, regardless of the great depth of the operation and the significant increase in the supply and evacuation routes, remained in the initial

positions until the end of the operation. However, a portion of the most mobile rear forces was able to move up behind the troops under these difficult conditions.

The great difficulties in moving the hospitals led to a situation where they had to be set up on roads at points of developing "blockages." Thus, on 12 August, the 751st Mobile Field Surgical Hospital was forced to set up alongside the road without reaching its destination of Muling. On 12 and 13 August, it admitted around 600 wounded.(26)

In moving the rear units and facilities the need sometimes arose in lengthening the route, to seek out bypasses employing roads in a good passable condition. Thus, on 13 August, the five mobile field surgical hospitals were sent from Hobei to Muling along a southern bypass and not by the straight northern road, although it was half the length. The sections of the field fuel and food dumps were shifted to the Muling area and the artillery dump to the Hobei area. Somewhat later the army veterinary stations and certain other rear units and facilities were moved up to the Muling area.

By 20 August, in the Ehuojan area, 4 km to the south of Mudanchiang, the section of the PAB was set up in the field. Here were concentrated the first-line hospitals. By the end of the operation, the sections of the army field fuel and food dumps had been moved from Ehuojan to Dunhua while the first-line hospitals had moved to the area between Dunhua and Kirin.

After breaching the enemy defenses the troops carried with them exactly as much ammunition as they could transport by themselves, that is, from 0.5 to 1.0 unit of fire. The transports carrying ammunition followed behind the units, replenishing their consumption. The troop transport was supplied with ammunition from the army artillery dump which had been moved up to the Hobei area.

Due to the low ammunition consumption in breaching the first enemy defensive zone and the limited capacity of the troop transports, the artillery units left a large number of shells at the firing positions of the forming-up line. It required up to 2,500 vehicle trips to transport this to the army dumps. The army military council assigned 50 vehicles for this purpose and sent another 50 to the front. Over the 20 days, this motor transport carried all the ammunition left behind.(27) By the end of the operation the army supply level was on a high level. Thus, on 20 August, there were 6.7 and 3.7 units of fire for the 82- and 120- mm mortars, 4-4.5 units of fire for the 37- and 76-mm antiaircraft guns, 4.9 and 3.2 units of fire for the 45- and 76-mm cannons and 3.2 units of fire for the 122-mm howitzers.(28) These data show that ammunition consumption was regularly replenished even under roadless conditions.

Upon entering enemy territory, a difficulty arose in supplying the forward units with fats, tobacco and sugar. In captured supplies there were none of these types of rations and the food transports fell behind because of the "blockages" on the bad roads. By 15 August, the supply of the formations and units with food had significantly declined, although there was a sufficient amount of food products at the dumps. Difficulties also arose in the units in supplying the personnel with bread. The bakeries, both divisional and army, under the roadless conditions fell behind the troops. The rifle divisions and tank units provided 30 percent of their needs using dry biscuit and captured hard tack.(29)

The high rate of advance as well as the poorly developed network of transport arteries which forced the troops to move off of the roads led to a significant increase in fuel consumption (from three to four supplies). As a total during the operation the army consumed over 4,000 tons of fuel. In the estimate of specialists from the front's fuel service, the army in the West had never consumed such an amount of this type of materiel.(30) For organizing prompt fuel supply for the units and formations as well as for maintaining a closer tie with the troops, the rear staff had its own representatives at the sections of the fuel and lubricant dumps.

The rapid advance of the troops and the lack of roads led to a situation where the army dumps and their sections fell significantly behind the DOP. This complicated the work of the road service bodies. While in the initial position the distance of an army supply depot from the DOP was 20-25 km, by 15 August, this had increased to 175-180 km, while by the end of the operation, the length of the army military road on the sector Mudanchiang, Ningguta, Dunhua was 215 km. For servicing it two separate road operating battalions, one road construction battalion and two bridge-building battalions were employed.

In the course of the operation, certain surviving sections of the Manchurian railroads were employed to deliver materiel. Thus, by the Rear Services Directive of 27 August 1945, the front allocated two railroad sections to the army. On these they did not convert the track to the Soviet gage. Movements were made using rolling stock captured from the enemy.

The army was to advance on the axis of the front's main thrust and for it the situation with medical support was more complicated than in the other armies. The army suffered around one-third of the medical losses of the front and on various days of the operation these differed. The largest number of losses occurred during the period of heavy fighting for Mudanchiang when the enemy put up stubborn resistance to the army troops. The medical losses for the divisions were also varied and this was explained by the troop actions on the axes, by the varying degree of enemy resistance on each of these as well as by the place of the divisions in the corps battle formations during the period of the strongest enemy

resistance. Medical support was planned estimating that the army medical losses would be 5,820 men. Actually they were higher with 10,743 wounded and sick.(31)

Around 37 percent of all the wounded (a very high indicator, particularly under the difficult conditions of the mountain taiga terrain) were admitted to the first-echelon medical battalions of the divisions and the mobile field hospitals of the army, bypassing the regimental medical stations. Consequently, many men received skilled medical aid immediately after being wounded. Since the troops were fighting on individual axes, the wounded were carried (transported) to the main routes of advance of the units and formations. Here they were picked up by the regimental medical stations or the medical battalions of the divisions moving behind the units and subunits.

The rapid advance of the troops required continuous and clear leadership of their support. For this reason, the army rear headquarters in the course of the operation was moved up four times behind the advancing troops. Thus, even on the third day, the rear headquarters was moved to Hobei. For better command and communications under the staff of the army rear there were permanent officers from the rifle corps. Through them the rear staff issued the instructions of the chief of the rear services to the formations while from the corps the recent information was obtained on the supply of the divisions with materiel and on troop actions.

The experience of the rear services of the 5th Army in the course of preparing and conducting the Harbin-Kirin Operation showed that the rear units and facilities carried out a large amount of work, approximately 2- or 3-fold more than in the other armies, since almost one-third of the front's forces (12 rifle divisions out of 31) was fighting as part of the 5th Army. Considering this, the front reinforced the army with rear units and facilities and constantly provided it with the necessary aid. For rapidly delivering materiel to the troops, the front motor transport frequently delivered supplies directly to the divisions and even to the regiments, bypassing the intermediate rear elements.

In the successful carrying out of the tasks of rear support for the army troops under the conditions of mountain taiga terrain, a positive role was played by bringing the rear units and facilities closer to the troops, assigning the most mobile forces to support the first-echelon formations (units) and strengthening the army with front-level rear units and facilities.

In planning the fuel requirements of the troops they did not consider the particular features of operating the motor transport under the difficult terrain conditions. Fuel consumption was 3-4-fold higher than the planned and this led to additional difficulties in supplying the troops with gasoline and diesel fuel. Under the conditions of highly maneuverable operations, the supply of materiel and the evacuating of sick and wounded "by

transit." bypassing the intermediate rear elements proved effective and this significantly accelerated the delivery of materiel to the troops and the evacuation of the wounded to hospitals.

The road units gained great experience. Experience showed that the task of road support under mountain taiga terrain could be carried out successfully only having carefully studied all the roads existing in the army zone and the man-made structures on them, having prepared ahead of time materials for rebuilding (reinforcing) the roads and having completely coordinated the tasks of the road service with the tasks of the engineer troops and the front road units.

The experience of rear support for the troops acutely showed that for the successful operation of the rear bodies under mountain taiga terrain, cross-country transports are essential as they could move up along with the advancing troops.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 326, inv. 5078, file 64, sheets 4, 5, 10, 11.
2. Ibid., sheets 7, 62-74.
3. Ibid., sheet 62.
4. Ibid., sheets 10-14.
5. Ibid., folio 67, inv. 12020, file 532, sheet 95.
6. Ibid., folio 326, inv. 5078, file 64, sheet 14.
7. Ibid., sheets 30, 31.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., sheet 31.
10. Ibid., sheets 15, 16.
11. Ibid., sheet 31.
12. [Not in text]
13. Ibid., sheet 34.
14. Ibid., sheet 63.
15. Ibid., sheet 35.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., folio 67, inv. 12020, file 532, sheet 197.
18. Ibid., sheet 181.

19. Ibid., folio 326, inv. 5078, file 64, sheets 8, 9, 12.
20. Ibid., sheets 5, 6, 8, 9, 65.
21. Ibid., sheets 21-22, 27.
22. Ibid., folio 67, inv. 12020, file 532, sheet 203.
23. Ibid., folio 326, inv. 5078, file 64, sheets 16, 17.
24. Ibid., sheet 36.
25. [Not in text]
26. Ibid., folio 67, inv. 12020, file 532, sheet 206.
27. Ibid., folio 326, inv. 5078, file 64, sheets 20, 21.
28. Ibid., sheet 22.
29. Ibid., sheets 24, 27.
30. Ibid., folio 67, inv. 12020, file 532, sheet 186.
31. Ye. I. Smirnov, "Voyna i voyennaya meditsina" [War and Military Medicine], Moscow, Meditsina, 1979, pp 503, 504.

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Certain Features of Party Work in Redeployment of Aviation Combined Units and Units *1801001 If Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press 23 Jul 87) pp 40-45*

[Article, published under the heading "Party Political Work" by Col V.G. Malikov, doctor of historical sciences: "Certain Features of Work in Redeploying Aviation Combined Units and Units"]

[Text] The aviation units and formations during the years of the Great Patriotic War frequently changed airfields. During the period of the rapid advance by our troops, fighter and attack aviation was relocated every 3-4 days and the bomber every 4-5 days.(1) For example, in the Sandomierz-Silesian Operation, during the period of 12 January through 3 February, units of the II Fighter Corps and VI Guards Fighter Corps each made six moves, while the VI Guards Bomber Air Corps made four moves. In the second stage of the operation, the fighter air regiments were not at one airfield for over 2 days.(2) In the Belorussian Operation, the 159th, 979th and 163d Fighter Air Regiments of the 229th Fighter Air Division from 28 June through 14 July 1944 moved five times. In the Vistula-Oder Operation, during the period from 18 through 30 January 1945, the 165th, 721st and 739th Fighter Air Regiments of the 286th Fighter Air Division changed airfields four times; the 812th and

176th Fighter Air Regiments of the 265th Fighter Air Division, from 13 January through 5 February 1945, moved six times, while the 402d Fighter Air Regiment over this same time moved seven times.(3)

Continuous and effective party-political work played an important role in carrying out the difficult tasks of preparing and executing the redeployment. The aim of this work was to mobilize the servicemen for an organized, rapid and covert execution of the measures related to changing airfields. The content, forms and methods of this work depended upon the duration of the preparatory period, the method of redeploying the ground echelon and other conditions.

The commanders, the political workers, the party and Komsomol organizations devoted particular attention to explaining to the personnel the necessity of observing military order, discipline and camouflage rules, vigilance and the strict maintaining of military secrecy and careful preparation of the aviation equipment and weapons. The political workers and party activists acquainted the servicemen with the particular features of the designated base area and conducted measures aimed at supporting combat operations in the regiment under the new conditions. Great attention was given to establishing correct relations with the local population.

The workers from the political bodies provided great help to the party activists in ensuring continuous and highly effective party-political work during the preparatory period for the redeployment. As a rule, a majority of the officers from the political sections of the air armies, corps, divisions and air base areas were sent into the units which were to be redeployed first and carried out the most complicated tasks. They taught the communists how to employ each free moment for political agitation, they talked constantly with the aviators, they provided them with information on the combat successes of the subunits and units as well as the announcements of Sovinformburo [Soviet Information Bureau], they instructed the agitators and supplied them with the necessary literature and newspapers.

Thus, a group of officers from the political section of the 13th Air Army headed by Col D.G. Shanshashvili, in working in the air regiments which had been ordered to redeploy, gave great attention to providing practical aid to the squadron commanders in mobilizing the personnel to successfully carry out the set combat task. The officers shared their experience and advised as to what measures had to be incorporated in the squadrons party-political work plan for the redeployment period as well as how to supervise their execution, and how to work with the flight commanders and technicians. They demonstrated how instruction meetings should be conducted with the agitators and how to better utilize the forces of the party aktiv.(4)

With the receiving of orders from the command to redeploy, the political sections of the aviation formations heightened their activities to the greatest degree. As a rule, the work plan of a division's political section for the period of redeployment provided for the placement of the political workers, the members of the party and Komsomol bureaus by trains as well as the measures to mobilize the personnel for prompt and organized arrival at the designated airfield with the highest state of combat readiness. For example, the work plan of the political section of the 9th Fighter Division in July 1944 included the following: a meet of workers from the political section and the deputy regimental commanders for political affairs on the tasks of party-political work for the redeployment period, the procedure for placing the party and Komsomol aktiv, the communists and Komsomol members by rail cars during the period of traveling in the train; talks on the subjects: "Strictly Maintain Military Secrecy," "The Military Oath—The Sacred Law for a Soldier of the Soviet Army," as well as instruction sessions of the agitators, readers and editors of combat leaflets; party and Komsomol meetings and general meetings of servicemen as well as separately for the flight personnel to discuss the redeployment tasks; reviews of the political and economic state of the base area and the forthcoming actions, talks on standards of conduct and vigilance.(5)

During the preparatory period for the redeployment, meetings with the flight, engineer and technical personnel and agitators were usually conducted separately. Under favorable conditions it was also possible to hold party and Komsomol meetings.

This is precisely how they proceeded in the aviation units of the X Fighter Air Corps in 1944. The chief of the corps political section, Col A.P. Mitachkin, set the task for the deputy regimental commanders for political affairs and for the party and Komsomol organizers to strengthen party influence on the men and involve all the personnel of the flight and ground parties.

In the units during the preparations for the redeployment, Komsomol meetings were conducted with the agenda "Tasks of the Communists (Komsomol members) during the redeployment period." The unit commanders and their deputies for political affairs gave reports during them. The communists and Komsomol members adopted sound decisions aiming the personnel at the clear and organized execution of the redeployment as well as the prompt and effective fulfillment of measures to support the combat work.(6)

Very essential was the question of the deployment of forces of the party and political apparatus during the redeployment period. As a rule, one of the political workers from the regiment was included in the advance team leaving for the new airport. He was to organize and conduct party-political work with the military aviators, directing this at ensuring the most rapid equipping of the airfield, communications, medical reconnaissance, food

and housing for the personnel and vigilant security of the airfield. Usually in the team left at the airfield, depending upon its size, was one of the regiment party workers or a party member who was entrusted with conducting political work and assisting the chief.

The deputy regimental commander for political affairs during the redeployment period was most often in the flight group. This was explained not so much by the fact that a majority of the personnel was in the latter as by the fact that the success of the redeployment was determined precisely here. The flight group was made up in such a manner that immediately upon arrival at the new airfield, without waiting for the ground specialists, it would be possible to commence carrying out combat tasks. The Zampolit [deputy commander for political affairs] helped the command in this work. He participated in recruiting the technical specialists which should travel as part of the group, in providing technical supplies for it, and allocated the forces of the party and Komsomol aktiv in such a manner that the squadrons had party and Komsomol organizers or their deputies and ensured the moving of the required cultural and educational supplies.

In the course of the preparations for the redeployment, significant effort was made to explain the necessity of great vigilance, circumspection in the air and a readiness to repel enemy air attacks, as well as strict observance of the established redeployment procedure and the rules for camouflaging the aircraft at the new airfield.

The political workers and party activists gave great attention to the personnel traveling in the ground party. In the redeployment of it by rail, party-political work was organized by the chief of the party and his zampolit appointed by the order of the regiment's commander. The persons in charge of the respective cars and the agitators took an effective part in this. The work was aimed at maintaining high political morale among the personnel, vigilance, exemplary discipline, organization and order. The party and Komsomol organizations worked to have the communists and Komsomol members set an example in carrying out their missions, the precise observance by the personnel of the rules for traveling by any type of transport, as well as protecting and safeguarding the property and combat equipment in loading and unloading. With a rail redeployment for the military aviators they conducted political information sessions, various talks, the reading of magazines, newspapers and literary works, they taught military songs, organized performances by the amateur artistic groups and provided games of chess, checkers and dominoes.

Thus, in the redeployment of the 862d Airfield Maintenance Battalion in August 1944, the political workers, the party and Komsomol activists and the subunit agitators systematically spoke with the personnel on the international and domestic situation of the country as well as on the situation on the fronts. Because of the extended period of traveling, political exercises were

held for the soldiers and NCOs. For the officers lectures were given on the subjects: "Political Results of the 3 Years of the Great Patriotic War," "The Perfidious Strategems and Methods of Nazi Intelligence Bodies" and "To Multiply the Formation's Combat Traditions."

On the way the personnel celebrated Aviation Day. At one of the halts, a report was given devoted to this holiday. Then the members of the amateur artistic group gave a concert.

A radio was provided in the train and this made it possible to effectively provide the men with the Sovinformburo releases. The battalion club issued to the subunits checkers, chess, dominoes, magazines and pamphlets and this significantly aided in the reasonable organization of free time. At the major halts, volley ball matches were held between the subunits.(7)

The commanders and political workers were concerned that during the redeployment there be no violations of military discipline, that is, missing the train, drunkenness and so forth. They explained the requirements of the military oath, the law on responsibility for absences without leave, and monitored order during the halts (permission was given to fetch hot water only to soldiers assigned for this, a procedure was established for warning on the departure of the train and so forth).

Great attention was given to satisfying the material and everyday needs of the personnel en route, and particularly organizing meals and medical services. Due to the concern of the commander and the political workers, the men, as a rule, received three hot meals a day and had an opportunity, bath, change their undergarments and press their uniforms.(8)

With redeployment of the ground party by motor transport, they pointed vehicle commanders and warning and air observers. The political workers provided the drivers with the appropriate instructions which gave information on the particular features of the roads in the given area as well as other data. These instructions were also employed in political education.(9)

The commanders and political workers gave great importance to selecting the agitators of the motor transport subunits and vehicle columns. As a rule, they were appointed from among the communists and Komsomol members as well as men who had distinguished themselves in carrying out combat tasks. For example, in the motor company of the 45th Airfield Maintenance Battalion they selected eight agitators who had been awarded orders and medals and had the "Distinguished Driver" insignia.(10)

The agitators played a major role in educational work during the trips. They informed the men about major events in the nation and abroad and explained the leading role of the Communist Party in defeating the enemy, in the successes of the Soviet Army in combating

the Nazi aviators and the importance of aviation in this. All of this helped to mobilize the drivers to promptly deliver the freight to the new airfields.(11)

At the brief halts and rests, talks and political information sessions were held on the subjects: "Iron Discipline and Organization—An Indispensable Condition for Successfully Carrying Out the Tasks During the Redeployment Period" and "Disdain for Death Gives Rise to Heroes and Ensures Victory."(12)

After redeployment the commanders and political workers gave great attention to the housing and meals of the personnel, to logistic support for the ground and air defense of the airfield, to establishing shelters for the personnel and equipment, to camouflaging the airfield and aircraft, as well as to studying the air and meteorological situation in the combat area. The regiment's zampolit, the party and Komsomol organizers were concerned with organizing logistic support and cultural services for the military aviators and they maintained contact with the command and party political apparatus of the rear units.

The activities of the club of the 46th Airfield Maintenance Battalion in December 1944 can serve as an example of the skillful execution of cultural and educational work in the aviation units at a new airfield. The club regularly showed films. Its workers and the party-Komsomol aktiv made up posters and stands and helped the amateur artistic collectives and provided the men with political literature and fiction, musical instruments and table games.(13) The club also had a motor vehicle. In it they installed movie and radio equipment and there was a mobile library which in addition to books had newspaper files, and albums of newspaper cuttings on the combat successes of the Soviet troops, the rear workers, on the international situation and so forth.(14)

Upon arrival at the base airfields in each aviation regiment assistant librarians were appointed and these issued political literature and fiction to the subunits. As a rule, the libraries of the airfield maintenance battalions had up to 2,500 copies of various literature.(15)

Certain political sections from the aviation base areas (RAB) established special agitation and concert brigades for serving the personnel of the regiments and aviation equipment units. In this regard of interest is the work done in the second half of 1944 by the agitation-concert brigade of the 28th RAB and consisting of 26 men: the agitator of the RAB, two club chiefs and the best members of the soldier amateur artistic group. A specially equipped club vehicle was assigned to the brigade.(16) Upon arrival at a new airfield, the chief of the vehicle put up on panels the Sovinformburo summaries and a geographic map showing the front line with small flags, and played records. Lectures were given and seminars held in the airfield maintenance subunits and aviation regiments.

During a month of work, the agitation-concert brigade visited 7 new airfield stations, served 12 aviation units and gave 25 amateur artistic concerts. The personnel of the units and formations had high praise for the brigade's work.(17)

At a new airfield the political workers gave primary attention to increasing the moral-political and psychological preparation of the personnel for combat actions and to maintaining the aviation equipment and weapons in constant combat readiness. For example, after the redeployment of the 253d and 33ed Fighter Air Regiments and the 137th Airfield Maintenance Battalion, the political section of the 106th Fighter Division recommended for this purpose that party meetings be conducted with the agenda: "The Tasks of the Communists in Strengthening Vigilance and Combat Readiness of the Unit." In addition, help was provided to the political workers, the party and Komsomol aktiv of the 253d Fighter Regiment in organizing ideological indoctrination for the personnel. Meetings were held for the military correspondent aktiv on the importance of the wall newspaper in carrying out the new battle task and for the commanders, party and Komsomol organizers and agitators from the subunits on the organization and execution of mass agitation at the new base.(18)

The commanders, the political bodies, the party and Komsomol activists achieved high effectiveness in party-political work carried out at the new airfield between sorties. As a rule, the flight personnel returned from combat strongly impressed by the just executed air attacks and strafings against the enemy. The pilots, particularly young ones, having reported to the commander on carrying out the mission, experienced an insurmountable need for sharing their feelings and impressions, to analyze the actions of a comrade and discuss combat tactics. In many regiments at the new base airfields they set up special dugouts where the pilots could talk and dispute. Here they hung up maps showing the situation on the fronts. Here also the party and Komsomol workers acquainted the pilots with the most summaries of Sovinformburo and held talks on the combat successes of our troops and the heroic work of the Soviet people in the rear. All of this had a positive effect on increasing the political morale of the men and gave rise to a desire to re-engage the enemy.(19)

The active, purposeful party-political work to support the redeployment of the aviation units and formations during the war years helped to strengthen the offensive drive, it increased combat morale, it indoctrinated hate for the enemy and mobilized the personnel for a final defeat of the Nazi invaders. The experience of carrying out this work is of lasting importance. A thorough study of it and creative employment considering modern demands are an important condition for further improving and raising the effectiveness of party-political work in the area of strengthening the combat readiness of the Air Forces.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 217, inv. 1260, file 949, sheet 65.
2. Ibid., folio 218, inv. 287405, file 4, sheet 69.
3. Ibid., folio 243, inv. 2914, file 16, sheet 159.
4. Ibid., folio 35, inv. 11252, file 14, sheet 263.
5. Ibid., folio 20026, inv. 1, file 81, sheets 32-34.
6. Ibid., folio 20543, inv. 1, file 113, sheet 79.
7. Ibid., sheets 79-80.
8. Ibid., sheet 78.
9. Ibid., folio 32, inv. 11318, file 177, sheet 41.
10. Ibid., folio 35, inv. 11252, file 24, sheets 25-26.
11. Ibid., folio 217, inv. 1260, file 959, sheet 163.
12. Ibid., folio 39, inv. 11499, file 78, sheet 24.
13. Ibid., folio 368, inv. 73642, file 12, sheet 143.
14. Ibid., folio 217, inv. 1260, file 949, sheets 6-9.
15. Ibid., sheet 9.
16. Ibid., folio 705, inv. 132105, file 5, sheet 61.
17. Ibid., sheet 62.
18. Ibid., folio 20157, inv. 1, file 167, sheet 48.
19. AGITATOR I PROPAGANDIST KRASNOY ARMII, No. 4, 1946, p 36.

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Combat Actions of XX Guards Rifle Corps at Akhtyrka

18010011g Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press 23 Jul 87) pp 46-51

[Article, published under the heading "Mastery and Heroism" by Col (Ret) N.N. Gladkov: "Combat Actions of XX Guards Rifle Corps at Akhtyrka"]

[Text] The Kursk Battle has been widely treated on the pages of military history literature. However, a number of battles in the final stage of the Belgorod-Kharkov Offensive Operation is little known to the reader. These, in particular, should include the fighting to the southeast

of Akhtyrka conducted in August 1943 by formations from the XX Guards Rifle Corps of the 4th Guards Army.(1)

* * *

Regardless of the extremely difficult situation developing for the Nazi troops on the Soviet-German Front in the second half of August, the Nazi Command made another attempt to halt the offensive of the Soviet units on the Kharkov sector and hold Kharkov in its hands. The enemy's plan was to make a strong thrust from the Akhtyrka area against the troops on the right flank of the 27th Army on the general axis of Bogodukhov and emerge in the rear of the assault grouping of the Voronezh Front. For the counterstrike, the enemy by 18 August had concentrated in the Akhtyrka area and to the west of it the 10th Motorized Division and the Motorized Division SS Grosse Deutschland, as well as units of the 7th, 11th and 19th Panzer Divisions, the 51st and 52d Separate T-VI Heavy Tank Battalions and four regiments of assault guns. The Panzer Division Totenkopf was moved up for a thrust from the region to the south of Akhtyrka.

In knowing of the counterstrike being prepared by the Nazis, Headquarters Supreme High Command [HQ SHC] decided to strengthen the Voronezh Front. From the Headquarters Reserve the front received the 47th and 4th Guards Armies. The 47th Army was given the task together with a portion of the forces of the 40th Army to launch a thrust from the north into the flank and rear of the enemy counterstrike grouping. The 4th Guards Army consisting of the XX and XXI Guards Rifle Corps and the III Guards Tank Corps received the task of moving up into the threatened area into the zone of the 27th Army and prevent the enemy from advancing to Bogodukhov.

The offensive of the Nazi troops on the Bogodukhov axis commenced at 0830 hours on 18 August after strong artillery softening up and massed bombing raids. Using its numerical superiority in tanks, the enemy during the day was able to drive up to 24 km in depth on a narrow sector of the front of the 27th Army. On the very same day from the area of Bolshaya Rublevka (to the south of Akhtyrka) the enemy launched a second thrust against the troops of the 27th Army on the axis of Kolontayev using the forces of the Panzer Division Totenkopf.

During the first half of the day of 18 August, the basic burden of the fighting against the counterattacking enemy tanks on the Akhtyrka axis rested on units of the 166th Rifle Division of the 27th Army. The enemy breached its defenses and by 1400 hours had reached the line of the Ilichevka, Osetnyak Sovkhoz and somewhat later its tanks broke through to Kaplunovka.(2) The front's command took immediate measures. In accord with the order of Army Gen N.F. Vatutin, the Commander of the 27th Army, Lt Gen S.G. Trofimenko, launched a thrust from the south into the flank and rear of the enemy which had broken through using the forces

of the IV and V Guards Tank Corps and the 147th Rifle Division which were in the second echelon. The active operations of these troops tied down a significant portion of the enemy advancing forces and prevented it from continuing the counterstrike.

At this time the 4th Guards Army (commander, Lt Gen G.I. Kulik) had moved up to the combat area and they began deploying on the line of Veseloye, Novaya Odessa. The first to reach the designated area was the XX Guards Rifle Corps (commander, Maj Gen N.I. Biryukov). To the left and somewhat behind the XX Guards Rifle Corps was the XXI Guards Rifle Corps (commander, Maj Gen P.I. Fomenko). Also on the march was the III Guards Tank Corps of the field force (commander, Maj Gen Tank Trps I.A. Vovchenko).

In accord with the instructions of the commander of the 4th Guards Army, the XX Guards Rifle Corps was to take up a defensive line by 1500 hours on 19 August. The configuration of the corps was double-echelon. On the defensive in the first were the 7th and 8th Guards Airborne Divisions and in the second the 5th Guards Airborne Division. The 7th Guards Airborne Division consisting of the 18th, 21st and 29th Airborne Regiments, the 10th Guards Artillery Regiment, the 8th Guards Separate Antitank Battalion and the 466th Mortar Regiment of the RVGK [Reserve Supreme High Command] which had been attached from the army reserve deployed along the line of Veseloye, Prokopenko(3) (see the diagram). The 8th Guards Airborne Division occupied its battle formations on the line of Prokopenko, Novaya Odessa. It consisted of the 22d, 25th and 27th Guards Airborne Regiments and the 9th Guards Artillery Regiment and the 7th Guards Separate Antitank Battalion.

The second-echelon 5th Guards Airborne Division which was deployed behind the boundary of the 7th and 8th Guards Airborne Divisions included the 1st, 11th and 16th Guards Airborne Regiments and the 6th Guards Artillery Regiment as well as the 13th Separate Antitank Battalion.

The 8th Guards Airborne Division under the command of Maj Gen V.F. Stenin was the first to engage the enemy. On 19 August at 1730 hours, its units, upon orders of the Commander of the 4th Guards Army, attacked the Motorized Division SS Grosse Deutschland which had around 100 tanks and over 50 armored personnel carriers with infantry. Fierce fighting broke out. The artillery and mortar troops from the right flank 27th Guards Airborne Regiment of the formation with accurate fire broke up the Nazi battle formations and thereby supported the successful liberation of Ilichevka Sovkhoz.

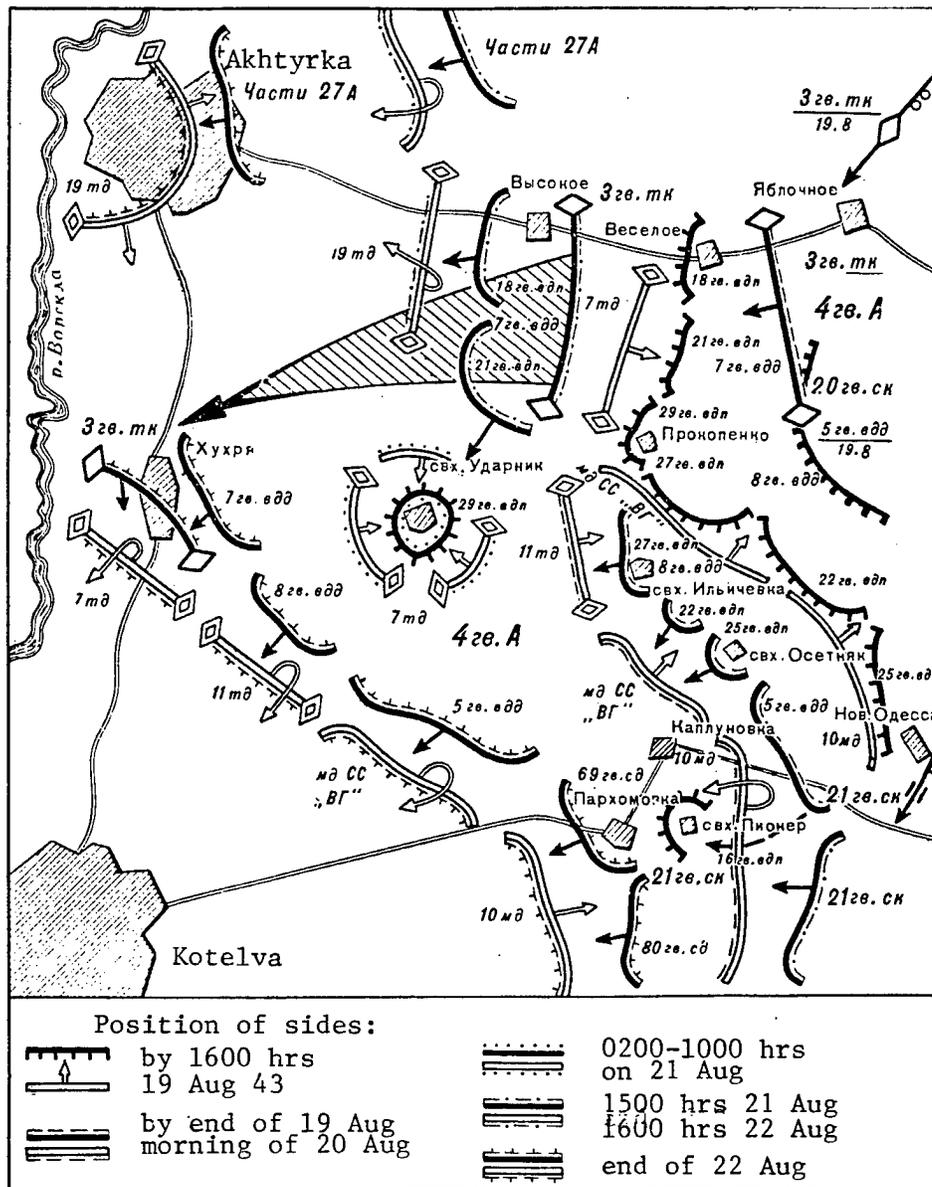
The fighting on the left flank of the division was stubborn. Here a battalion of airborne troops from the left-flank 25th Guards Airborne Regiment of the Division under the command of Capt S.N. Ivlev distinguished itself. When the danger of the subunit's encirclement arose, the battalion commander together with his

zampolit [deputy commander for political affairs] moved forward and led the airborne troops. The attack of the guardsman was so strong that the enemy submachine guns began to retreat in panic. Capt S.N. Ivlev was wounded, but did not leave the battlefield and continued leading the battalion. Also fighting courageously were the men from the second battalion of the 25th Guards Airborne Regiment under the command of Capt V.M. Bykov. In the course of a decisive counterattack, the airborne troops of this subunit captured Osetnyak Sovkhoz.

In the evening of 19 August and the night of 20 August, the airborne troops of the 7th Guards Airborne Division under the command of Gen M.G. Mikeladze fought stubbornly against the enemy 7th Panzer Division. Regardless of superiority in tanks and assault guns, the enemy was unable to advance to the east. The men of the antitank artillery and antitank riflemen let the enemy combat vehicles come within range of direct firing and destroyed them with accurate fire, while the airborne troops with small arms fire cut the infantry off from the tanks and caused it great damage. The guardsmen boldly engaged the tanks which had broken through, destroying them with antitank grenades and Molotov cocktails.

In the morning of 20 August, the corps received the orders: with the forces of the 7th and 8th Guards Airborne Divisions and cooperating units of the III Guards Tank Corps with support from the attack aviation of the 2d Air Army, to launch a meeting attack against the advancing enemy grouping reinforced by units of the 11th and 19th Panzer Divisions which had been committed to battle.

The enemy put up stubborn resistance, endeavoring to prevent the advance of the Soviet troops. For this reason, in order to boost the force of the thrust by the first-echelon formations, the corps commander, Gen N.I. Biryukov, committed the corps second-echelon to battle, the 5th Guards Airborne Division of Gen V.I. Kalinin. Its 16th Airborne Regiment under the command of Maj F.M. Orekhov at the end of the day of 20 August received the mission of outflanking Kaplunovka to the south and checking the advance of the enemy motorized units until the approach of the division's main forces. In carrying out the outflanking maneuver, the airborne troops encountered stubborn resistance from the Nazis. Having engaged major enemy forces in battle, Maj F.M. Orekhov decided to move up 50 submachine gunners headed by his zampolit, Maj N.P. Lapshin in the direction of Pioneer Sovkhoz located near Kaplunovka. In moving up in darkness into the enemy rear, the detachment of N.P. Lapshin destroyed an enemy battery and captured the sovkhos. Figuring that a significant number of our troops had moved up into the rear, the Nazis began to hurriedly retreat from the forward edge. Thus, the energetic and bold actions by a small group of submachine gunners led to a significant tactical success. Taking advantage of the confusion in the enemy ranks, subunits from the 25th Guards Airborne Regiment of the



Combat Actions of XX Guards Rifle Corps at Akhtyrka (August 1943)

8th Guards Airborne Division and the arriving 1st Guards Airborne Regiment of the 5th Guards Airborne Division completely cleared Kaplunovka of Nazis.

breaking through the battle formations of the 18th (commander, Lt Col Z.T. Derziyan) and 21st (commander, Lt Col V.M. Bogdanov) Guards Airborne Regiments.

Regardless of heavy losses, the Nazis did not abandon their aim of breaking through to Bogodukhov. At the end of the day on a narrow sector of the front in the area of the 7th Guards Airborne Division, the enemy had concentrated up to 40 tanks, a regiment of motorized infantry and with air support attacked the division's units. But the guardsmen on this sector of the front boldly engaged the Nazis, destroying their combat vehicles and personnel. Thus, the enemy did not succeed in

Taking advantage of a certain enemy passivity on the division's left flank, Gen M.G. Mikeladze decided to counterattack with his forces of the 29th Guards Airborne Regiment and improve the situation of his troops. At 0230 hours on 21 August, after a heavy 15-minute intense shelling by all the division's artillery, the guards airborne troops under the command of the regiment's commander, Maj G.V. Kochetkov, quickly broke into the Udarnik Sovkhoz which was 15 km to the southeast

of Akhtyrka, they captured this important enemy strongpoint and caused the enemy heavy losses.(4) Unfortunately, there was not enough time to reinforce the achieved success as dawn had broken. Recovering from the surprise night attack, the Nazis quickly again went over to the offensive. The enemy undertook particularly strong assaults against the 1st and 2d Battalions of Guards Capts I.P. Chekhov and Ye.S. Gudimenko which were defending on the northwestern, western and southwestern outskirts of the sovkhos. In continuing the offensive, the enemy began to outflank the northeastern outskirts but was unable to break into the sovkhos from the rear. Subunits from the 3d Battalion under the command of the experienced officer, Maj N.P. Tarakanov, successfully took up the defenses along the eastern outskirts of the sovkhos. In continuing to attack, the Nazis enveloped the sovkhos on all sides and began to close the ring of encirclement. The men of the regiment steadfastly defended the occupied lines and skillfully drove off the Nazi assaults. Particularly distinguishing themselves, were the antitank gunners and artillery men from the antitank battery of the regiment who were in the battle formations of the 1st and 2d Battalions. They boldly let the enemy tanks and armored personnel carriers come to within a range of 100-150 m and then with accurate fire from antitank rifle and guns destroyed them. The airborne troops of these subunits also fought decisively and boldly. With small arms fire they cut off the Nazi infantry from the tanks and armored personnel carriers and destroyed the enemy soldiers and officers. As a result of the heavy 3-hour fighting, the men of the regiments had hit and set afire nine enemy tanks, including two Tigers, 1 Ferdinand assault gun and had knocked out more than 150 enemy soldiers and officers.(5) Here one Tiger and a Ferdinand assault gun had been destroyed by the fire of antitank rifles at a distance of 15-20 m.

In losing combat vehicles and personnel, the enemy did not break off the assaults. In repelling one of them, Maj G.V. Kochetkov was killed. The commander of the 3d Battalion, Maj M.P. Tarakanov, took over command of the regiment. The thinned ranks of the battalions had a difficult time repelling the continuous attacks of the SS troops. The ring of encirclement grew tighter and tighter. The situation was extremely difficult. Nazi tanks with motorized infantry broke into the northwestern outskirts of the Udarnik Sovkhos, squeezing the companies of the 1st Battalion and coming within 150-200 m of the command post where the unit's guards colors were kept. A company of submachine gunners, a reconnaissance platoon and all the personnel of the regiment's staff took up an all-round defense, holding back the superior enemy forces. In the developing situation it was essential to save the regimental colors at any price. Maj M.P. Tarakanov ordered that this task be carried out by the regiment's senior physician, Capt Med Serv M.I. Medvedeva, MSgt A.D. Yuryev and two submachine gunners. The group was given the task: under the cover of

machine gun and mortar fire to break out through the enemy ring of encirclement and deliver the colors to the division's staff which was on a hill 1 km to the east of the Udarnik Sovkhos.

In covering the standard bearers, a 120-mm mortar battery and machine gunners of the 3d Battalion opened up heavy fire against the enemy. The group began to quickly move off from the regiment's battle formations to the east. It succeeded in reaching a small grove, breaking out of the encirclement and delivering the regiment's colors to the divisional staff.

During these events, the commander of the 7th Guards Airborne Division, Gen M.G. Mikeladze, and the commander of the artillery formation, Lt Col A.F. Koval, being in the positions of the 21st Guards Airborne Regiment, prepared to break through the enemy ring which was squeezing the 29th Regiment. In accord with the elaborated plan, the RVGK 10th Mortar Brigade which had arrived to reinforce the division at 1000 hours on 21 August carried out a heavy 10-minute intense shelling of the enemy battle formations. Subunits of the 21st Guards Airborne Regiment together with the 8th Separate Antitank Artillery Battalion of the formation, with support of tank troops of the III Tank Corps went over to the offensive and by 1100 hours had broken through the enemy defenses and linked up with the 29th Regiment. The major strongpoint of the Udarnik Sovkhos had been held by the courageous Soviet soldiers. Here the enemy had suffered heavy losses, but the 29th Guards Airborne Regiment was also short of many guardsmen.

During the night of 22 August, the 69th and 80th Guards Rifle Divisions of the XXI Guards Rifle Corps moved up and deployed to the left of the XX Guards Rifle Corps, and in the morning of 22 August, the 4th Guards Army resumed the offensive. Again fierce fighting broke out to the southeast of Akhtyrka. Enemy motorized formations put up stubborn resistance to the Soviet troops, fearing that they would reach the Vorskla River in the Kotelva area and capture the crossings set up on it. However, all the enemy's attempts to halt the advance of the left-flank army divisions were unsuccessful.

During the second half of the day of 22 August, the III Guards Tank corps also launched a thrust in the direction of the population point of Khukhrya. As a result of this the Nazi 19th Panzer Division was forced to retreat to the southern outskirts of Akhtyrka, while the 7th Panzer Division, resisting stubbornly, began to retreat to the southwest.

The 27th Army which was to the right, in continuing the offensive, initiated combat in the northeastern part of Akhtyrka. The enemy's plans to break through to Bogodukhov were not carried out.

Over the 5 days of fierce fighting, the enemy Akhtyrka Panzer grouping suffered heavy losses, with 180 tanks and assault guns hit and burned up.

The successful actions of the airborne divisions from the XX Guards Rifle Corps in the course of the meeting engagements to the southeast of Akhtyrka became possible to the rapid deployment of the units of the 7th and 8th Guards Airborne Divisions and to the skillful configuration of their battle formations. An important role was also played by the prompt commitment of the second echelons to battle, by the flexible maneuvering of the men and weapons, by the ability to fight in an encirclement, and carry out rapid envelopments and counterattacks. Of exceptionally great importance were the steadfastness, stubbornness and mass heroism of all the corps personnel and the successful leadership of combat actions by the commanders of the airborne and artillery subunits and units.

In the course of pursuing the enemy and in advancing decisively, the corp troops widely employed outflankings and envelopments of the enemy strongpoints.

In assessing the actions of the XX Guards Rifle Corps and the 7th Guards Airborne Division in this fighting, MSU G.K. Zhukov has written in his memoirs: "In the fierce engagement for Akhtyrka, the formations of the XX Guards Rifle Corps under the command of Gen N.I. Biryukov and units of Gen M.G. Mikeladze particularly distinguished themselves...."(6)

Footnotes

1. The XX Guards Rifle Corps included the 5th, 7th and 8th Guards Airborne Divisions brought up to the TOE of guards rifle divisions using men of the airborne troops. In August 1943, the author of this article was appointed chief of staff of the 7th Guards Airborne Division.

2. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 381, inv. 8378, file 253, sheets 1-2.

3. Ibid., folio 1316, inv. 1, file 7, sheet 220.

4. Ibid., sheet 223.

5. Ibid.

6. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Recollections and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, Vol 1, 1974, p 190.

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184th Rifle Division's Role in Kaunas Operation 18010011h Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press 23 Jul 87) pp 52-55

[Article by Lt Col G.A. Ostreyko: "On the Frontiers of East Prussia (The 184th Rifle Division in the Kaunas Operation)"]

[Text] On 1 August 1944, the 5th Army of the Third Belorussian Front in the course of the Kaunas Operation liberated Kaunas,(1) a most important enemy defensive center.

The 184th Rifle Division of Maj Gen B.B. Gorodovikov was part of the XLV Rifle Corps (commander, Maj Gen S.P. Poplavskiy) fighting on the left flank of the army. In successfully continuing the offensive, the division captured the population points of Poleshkyay, Vayveryay and the highway and rail junction in the area of Mauruchay Station and this contributed to the encirclement and defeat of the enemy in Kaunas. In capturing the station, the division destroyed 9 enemy guns, 44 machine guns and over 500 enemy soldiers and officers.(2)

In pursuing the retreating enemy, the formation advanced to the border of the Sheshupe River. Over a period of 24 hours in fighting their way forward to 40 km, its units by the end of 2 August had reached the area of Blyuvishkyay, Pilvyashkyay.(3)

The enemy endeavored to check the advance of our troops. On 3 August, opposite the 262d and 297th Rifle Regiments of Lt Cols V.P. Yurkov and A.I. Vodovozov the enemy undertook three counterattacks, each of them up to an infantry company with 10-15 tanks strong. These counterattacks were driven off. On the same day, an infantry company with 10 tanks twice counterattacked the subunits of the 294th Rifle Division of Col N.N. Kolchak from the direction of Zhvirgzhdaychyay, but without success. By the evening of 3 August, the line of Adomishkyay, Blyuvishkyay, Pilvyashkyay was reached by the 159th Rifle Division of Maj Gen N.V. Kalinin which was part of the XLV Rifle Corps, as well as the forward units from the main forces of the LXXII and LXV Rifle Corps,(4) and the reinforcement subunits of the 958th Self-Propelled Artillery Regiment and the 696th Antitank Artillery Regiment.(5)

In the morning of the following day, after artillery softening up and air strikes,(6) units of the 184th and 159th Rifle Division resumed the offensive. By the end of the day, they had reached a defensive line of Lukshyay, Zhvirgzhdaychyay, Chichnay. Less than 20 km remained to the frontier of East Prussia.(7)

In order to halt the Soviet troop offensive, the Nazis initiated decisive measures. In the areas of Sintautay and Grishkabudis, the 549th Infantry Division and up to 200 tanks and assault guns had been concentrated. In the

sector of Franzbuhl, Zhvirgzhdaychyay, these forces with strong air support launched a counterstrike in the boundary of the LXXII and XLV Rifle Corps which had achieved the greatest success, in the aim of surrounding and destroying our troops in the Pilvyashkyay area.(8)

It was particularly hard for the men of the 294th and 297th Rifle Regiments of the 184th Rifle Division and their neighbors to the right, the men from units of the 63d Rifle Division of Maj Gen N.M. Laskin.

In having a triple superiority in forces on the given sector, the Nazis intended to break the fighting morale of the Soviet troops with continuous assaults. But their plans did not succeed. Our men did not flinch. There were fewer than 40 men in the 1st Rifle Company of the 294th Rifle Regiment. It was led by the energetic and strong-willed commander, Capt Ye.I. Maikin. As a rifleman, a squad commander and then a subunit commander, he had fought on the various fronts of the Great Patriotic War since 24 June 1941. He had been wounded four times. For personal courage he had been awarded the medal "For Valor."

On that August day of 1944, the officer and communist Ye.I. Maikin clearly and firmly directed the actions of his subordinates. In repelling the very first assaults, the subunit's personnel destroyed three Nazi tanks and several-score Nazis.(9) The men stubbornly defended themselves subsequently. The enemy's attempts to destroy the company were not crowned by success.

Stubborn fighting was also underway in the sector of the 4th Rifle Company. When the company commander was severely wounded, the subunit was headed by the platoon commander Lt A.A. Filosofov. By that moment just 27 men remained in the company. The men vowed not to allow the enemy to pass and kept their vow. They destroyed several Nazi tanks and armored vehicles as well as scores of enemy soldiers and officers. The Kom-somol member Lt Filosofov set an example of careful and skillful actions. As a youth of 19, in 1943, he completed the Novgorod-Volynskiy Infantry Military School. During the year on the front, he showed himself to be an intelligent and brave platoon commander who repeatedly demonstrated both outstanding physical training and a knowledge of the procedures of hand-to-hand combat. Then on 5 August, Lt A.A. Filosofov in the course of repelling one of the assaults, using an antitank rifle destroyed a tank and in hand-to-hand fighting killed seven Nazis and captured three, including an officer.(10)

For several days, the 184th Rifle Division conducted defensive battles and each day was a new trial for it.

On 7 August, in the sector of the 297th Rifle Regiment, German tanks succeeded in breaking through its battle formations. To eliminate the breach, the 262d Rifle Regiment, which was in the division's second echelon, was committed to battle. With support from the men of the 616th Artillery Regiment of Maj K.N. Medyanov,

the personnel of the 297th Regiment hit seven tanks and the 294th Regiment hit four. The remaining enemy armored vehicles turned back.

In the second half of the day, a large group of enemy submachine gunners and 25 tanks began an assault in the sector of the 1st Battalion of the 616th Artillery Regiment from the direction of the village of Tupiki. The 2d Battery of communist Lt F.D. Dmitriyev was in a critical situation. The Nazi tanks were advancing on the subunits from three sides. But in this extremely complex situation our artillery troops did not hesitate.

Upon orders of the battery commander, the crews quickly turned their guns toward the advancing Nazis. The battery hit two tanks moving in front with the first two rounds at a distance of 400 m. The motorized infantry advancing behind them turned back. But at this time the main tank grouping appeared from the left. This time three of them were destroyed and the remainder went into reverse. Soon thereafter Lt F.D. Dimitriyev ordered his subordinates to shift fire to the right, where another five tanks had appeared from a grove. Two of them were hit by the battery. Having lost seven tanks and scores of submachine gunners, the Nazis retreated to the village.

For courage and heroism shown in this fighting, Lt F.D. Dimitriyev was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Until 14 August, the 184th Rifle Division steadily repelled enemy assaults on the line of Zhvirgzhdaychyay, Blyuvy, Materny, Sloboda(11) and then on the morning of 14 August, after a 25-minute artillery softening up, went over to the offensive, launching a thrust on the axis of Kudirkos-Naumiyeystis. Having driven the enemy from its trenches by rapid attack, units from the division on 16 August reached the area of the populated point of Voytishki located 6 km from Kudirkos-Naumiyeystis and captured Voytishki.

The Lithuanian town of Kudirkos-Naumiyeystis and the town of Schirwindt which was located nearby on the territory of East Prussia were covered by a large bend in the Sheshupe River as well as by a dense network of fortifications and obstacles and this greatly complicated the task of capturing Kudirkos-Naumiyeystis.

In making his decision, Maj Gen B.B. Gorodovikov considered that the Sheshupe, in approaching Kudirkos-Naumiyeystis from the east, turned sharply to the north. This opened up extensive opportunities for an offensive against it from the south. It was best to launch the other strike from the northern side, as the mission demanded that the troops reach the river to the north of the town.

The plan was approved by the commander of the XLV Rifle Corps, Maj Gen S.G. Poplavskiy and by the commander of the 5th Army, Col Gen N.I. Krylov. The units began intense work to prepare for the offensive. Maj A.I.

Yudenzov, Capt D.A. Bakumenko and other officers from the political section who were in the regiments provided substantial aid to the commanders and political workers in the subunits of the 184th division in mobilizing the personnel to successfully carry out the pending tasks. In evaluating the enemy and its defenses, the information provided by the young Lithuanian patriot Kostus Glikaswas was very important. Risking his own life, he made his way through the enemy battle formations to the positions of the 2d Battalion of the 297th Rifle Regiment of the 184th Division and described the passages through the minefields, the position of firing points on the forward edge and deep in the enemy defenses(12) and this greatly contributed to the success of the advance by our units and subunits.

Nothing could stop the offensive drive of our troops. Each subunit of the 184th Division burned with a desire to reach the cherished line of the frontier. The first to achieve the goal was the 2d Rifle Company of the 262d Rifle Regiment which was under the command of Sr Lt A.G. Dudkin, a participant in the Battle of Stalingrad. It broke through the wall of fire deep into the enemy defenses in the area of Sloboda. The enemy threw 12 tanks and up to 300 Nazis against the 1st Battalion of this regiment. The company of Aleksandr Dudkin cut the infantry off from the tanks, causing it great losses. The tanks were destroyed by our artillery. At the dawn of 17 August, the company of A.G. Dudkin had fought its way to the frontier and dug in.(13) At the same time, the frontier had been reached by the 2d Battalion of the 197th Rifle Regiment headed by the communist, Capt G.N. Gubkin, also a veteran of Stalingrad. His path to the Sheshupe had not been easy. The last kilometer had been particularly difficult. *Pravda* was to write that when the battalion went into the assault, the Nazis, in trenches dug in front of the road, put up strong resistance. Mines exploded, the nervous chatter of submachine guns and bursts of machine guns pressed the soldiers to the grass, cannons firing from the territory of East Prussia raised dirt into the air and left smoking craters. The soldiers crawled over the dew-wet grass, then jumped up and rushed forward. Then they crawled again. Each of them realized that he would run, walk or crawl across the last kilometer of our land.

The company commander Vasilij Zaytsev shouted at the top of his voice:

“You can touch the frontier, comrades. Forward!”

Then a “hurrah!” floated across the entire field, the fire became stronger and the pace more confident.(14)

A fierce battle raged for several hours for a small farmhouse on the bank. The very idea that the war had rolled from the Volga to the Sheshupe forced the Nazis to fight with unprecedented fierceness. When our men entered the farm, it had been almost completely destroyed and burned out.

The battalion quickly approached the frontier. Ahead was the 4th Rifle Company. It included a squad of the Komsomol member Viktor Zakabluk. It was the closest of all to the Sheshupe.

Just several-score meters remained until the river when Sgt Ali Rzayev who was carrying a submachine gun in one hand and a red flag in the other was wounded in the foot by a mine fragment. Falling, he shouted: “How many miles I have walked and all of a sudden...” Then, looking around, he shouted to the soldier Voloshchuk who was running to the frontier:

“Here! Come here...take this red flag, carry it to the frontier and put it there...I will know that our land has been cleared in my sector.”

When the squad reached the frontier, Voloshchuk carried out the order.

Reaching the frontier after the battalion of G.N. Gubkin was the 1st Battalion of P.I. Yurgin from the 294th Rifle Regiment. Fighting courageously and skillfully were the men of the 2d Company of Sr Lt V.D. Yevdokimov, one of the youngest company commanders not only in the 294th Regiment but in the entire 184th Rifle Division. Raised since 1938 in the family of one of the drivers of V.I. Lenin, P.S. Kosmachev, Yevdokimov in July 1941 had joined the People's Militia. In 1942, in excelling in the fighting at Moscow, he was accepted in the infantry school. After completing it, he participated in the liberation of the village of Lenino, Goretzkiy Rayon of Mogilev Oblast as well as other population points in Belorussia. In July 1944, the 20-year-old platoon commander, candidate party member, Sr Lt V.T. Yevdokimov, had been promoted to a higher rank.

On 17 August, in order to avoid excess losses, Yevdokimov in approaching the frontier split the company into independent groups. Outflanking the enemy, the men of the subunit drove the Nazis from the trench in the area of the border post No. 56 and dug in. For courage and heroism, for skillful command of a company in the course of the Kaunas Operation, Sr Lt V.T. Yevdokimov was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.(15)

Moving up to the Sheshupe, behind Yevdokimov's company were the remaining subunits of the 262d Regiment and the other units of the formation. Having destroyed 23 enemy tanks, 3 armored personnel carriers, 5 guns, 6 mortars, 9 motor vehicles and 1,058 soldiers and officers in the course of the fighting,(16) the 184th Rifle Division had completely carried out the set task. It was the first among the troops of the Third Belorussian Front to reach the frontier of East Prussia. Over 3 years previously, in July 1941, on this very same sector of the front, the 184th Division had been one of the first to take the blow of the enemy encroaching on our land. And here it was again, preparing to defeat the enemy on its own territory.

For courage and heroism and for skillful leadership of subordinates in the course of the Kaunas Operation, 12 men from the 184th Rifle Division were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. These included Maj Gen B.B. Gorodovkirov, Col N.N. Kolchak, Maj G.N. Dudkin, Capt Ye.I. Mazikin, Sr Lt V.P. Zaytsev and Lts A.G. Dudkin and A.A. Filosofov.

The desire to more quickly free the homeland of the Nazi invaders, the skill and courage of the commanders and political workers and the mass heroism of the men determined the successful arrival of the units and subunits of the 184th Rifle Division at the frontier of East Prussia. Having repelled all counterattacks in the course of the offensive, the formation cleared this sector of Soviet land of the enemy. Wholehearted dedication to the Communist Party, love for the socialist motherland, hate for the enemies and a profound belief in the triumph of a just cause led the men through all the hardships to the victory awaiting them.

Footnotes

1. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 4, 1977, p 125.
2. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 1435, inv. 1, file 25, sheet 28.
3. Ibid., file 4, sheet 167.
4. The corps were under the command: Maj Gen A.I. Kazartsev for the LXXII, Maj G.N. Perekrestov of the LXV. The LXV Rifle Corps fought on the right flank of the 5th Army.
5. TsAMO SSSR, folio 320, inv. 5047, file 629.
6. The Kaunas Operation involved units and formations of the 1st Air Army (commander, Col Gen Avn T.T. Khryukin).
7. TsAMO, folio 1435, inv. 1, file 25, sheet 4.
8. Ibid., file 4, sheet 169.
9. Ibid., folio 33, inv. 793756, file 29, sheet 6.
10. Ibid., file 50, sheet 203.
11. Ibid., folio 1435, inv. 1, file 25, sheet 8.
12. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 16 August 1965. After the war K.V. Glikas became the chairman of the Kolkhoz imeni V.I. Lenin, Shakyayskiy Rayon, Lithuania.
13. TsAMO, folio 1435, inv. 1, file 25, sheet 13.
14. *Pravda*, 26 August 1944.

15. After the war, Vladimir Timofeyevich completed the Military Academy imeni M.V. Frunze and since 1950 has been a senior instructor at the Military Academy imeni V.I. Lenin. Candidate of military sciences, professor. Since 1987, Col V.T. Yevdokimov has been retired.

16. TsAMO, folio 33, inv. 793756, file 11, sheets 273-274.

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Fifty Years Since Start of Anti-Japanese War of Chinese People

18010011i Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press 23 Jul 87) pp 56-61

[Article, published under the heading "In Foreign Armies," by Col A.S. Savin, doctor of historical sciences: "Fifty Years Since the Start of the Anti-Japanese War of the Chinese People"]

[Text] The policy of conquering China and all East Asia was adopted by the Japanese ruling circles after the bourgeois revolution of 1867-1868. V.I. Lenin wrote about Japan: "This is a bourgeois state because it itself has begun to suppress other nations and enslave colonies..."(2)

At conferences of the military-political leadership in 1907, 1918, 1923 and 1937 and which were headed by the emperor and set out the direction of Japanese foreign policy and strategy, Russia (USSR) and the United States were set as the probable enemies.(3) The Japanese government considered the seizure of China to be the prime action in conquering the Asian-Pacific area. "In order to conquer the world," wrote the Prime Minister G. Tanaka, "we should first conquer China."(4)

By 1937, Japanese troops had occupied Korea and the following Chinese territories: Manchuria, the provinces of Hobei, Shansi and Chahar, while certain units of the Japanese Army numbering around 10,000 soldiers and officers were stationed in North China, protecting "Japanese interests."

The foreign political and strategic goals of Japan were clarified at confidential government sessions on 7 and 11 August 1936. In the top secret document "The Course of Japanese Foreign Policy" adopted by the Cabinet, the chief probable opponent was the Soviet Union. The military might of Japan, stated the document, should be such as to "oppose any armed forces which the USSR could field and use in the Far East" and "launch a decisive blow against the Russians at the very outset of the war."(5)

The capture of China was considered in Japanese military-political circles to be an important condition for preparing an attack on the Soviet Union. This can be seen from a telegram of the Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army H. Tojo and sent on 9 June 1937 to the Army General Staff and the Defense Ministry. Its text was approved by Prince Hashimoto who had arrived in Manchuria to inspect the Kwantung Army. It stated that an attack on China in the aim of securing the rear of the Kwantung Army was desirable before initiating military operations against the USSR. "In accord with our strategy of preparing for a war against the Soviet Union and, in assessing the situation which has arisen in China," stated the telegram, "we feel this situation to be the most favorable for directing our forces to destroy the Nanking regime."(6)

In this context, on 11 July, the War Minister, Gen H. Sugiyama, requested an immediate mobilization of 15 divisions, the necessary resources, weapons and supplies for these formations, permission to initiate an extensive offensive in the area to the north of the Huangho River and simultaneously the initiating of an offensive operation in the Shanghai area. Sugiyama asserted that in this instance the China problem would be ended in 6 months.(7) On the same day the Cabinet sitting in a reduced session (prime minister, ministers of foreign affairs, finances, war and navy) took the decision for immediate mobilization.(8)

The intention of the Japanese military-political circles was, in using the domestic political conflict in China and the support of their allies, to quickly seize China, without letting the war reach a clash with the Great Powers.

The Japanese militaristic circles, in being guided by the idea of a "lightning war," planned to conduct offensive operations against China for a period of 3-5 months. The strategic plan for the war envisaged in the first stage, in July-August 1937, that the Japanese Armed Forces would capture Peking and Shanghai and the formation of two isolated fronts, Northern and Central, and then by convergent thrusts to unite the fronts and capture the Chinese capital of Nanking. In the second stage, after the capture of the cities of Kwangchow (Canton), Shantow (Swatou) and Siamen (Amoy) in South China, the plan was to create a Southern Front, link up by meeting thrusts of the Southern and Central Fronts and capture the south of China. Then the Japanese Command planned to break the lines of communications linking China with French Indochina and Burma by a push from the Kwangchow and Nanking area to the west. Moreover, there was to be intense bombing of the cities in West China. All of this, in the opinion of the Army General Staff, should lead to the rapid surrender of China.

A particular feature of the conduct of the operations in China by the Japanese Armed Forces, was the gradual, stage-by-stage commitment of the formations to battle immediately after their mobilization and shifting from

other areas. Without having initially a sufficient amount of forces to carry out an offensive operation, the Japanese troops took staging areas and strongpoints while the command announced its intentions to hold peace talks. During the talks the Japanese representatives endeavored to split the Chinese political groupings and organized a propaganda campaign in the aim of justifying their actions. At the same time the arriving units and formations took up positions stipulated by the operation's plan and prepared for an offensive which commenced, as a rule, by surprise, before the conclusion of the talks.

At the beginning of the Peking-Tientsin Operation, after the "incident" at the Lukouchiao [Marco Polo] Bridge, the Japanese 5th Infantry Brigade (10,000 soldiers and officers, 30 guns, 28 tanks with the support of 20 combat aircraft), dispersed along the stations of the Peking-Tientsin Railroad, quickly occupied strongpoints in their positions. While waiting for reinforcements, the Japanese Command on 8 July announced the start of talks, demanding punishment of the Chinese officers "guilty" of the outbreak of conflict at Lukouchiao Bridge and the withdrawal of all Chinese troops from the zone of the Peking-Tientsin Railroad.(10)

Notified of the arrival of reinforcements (3 brigades), the Japanese Command intensified combat actions. With the support of tanks, it endeavored to take the Lukouchiao Bridge. Since the Chinese troops drove off the Japanese attacks and forced them to retreat to Fangtai Station, the Japanese Command resumed the "talks" under the cover of which the Japanese troops in this area were regrouped and readied for an offensive.

The Kuomintang Command in North China had the 29th Army (37th, 38th, 132d and 143d Infantry Divisions). On the territory of Shansi, Shensi, Suiyuan, Ninsya and Henan Provinces there were also the 37th, 51st, 57th and 67th Armies and in the western part of Henan there was the 1st Army.(11) However, Chiang Kai-shek was in no hurry to regroup his forces and establish a single front against the Japanese invaders. For this reason the Japanese troops were opposed only by the 29th Army (40,000-50,000 soldiers and officers) the units of which were scattered along a front over 500 km long from Nankow to Tientsin.(12)

After the arrival of units of the 20th Infantry Division and the 1st and 11th Composite Brigades in the conflict area, the Japanese troops broke off the "talks" and went over to an offensive against Lukouchiao. The Chinese 37th Infantry Division dealt the enemy a major setback, however the commander of the 29th Army ordered a retreat from the area of Lukouchiao and then left the front. The command of the 29th Army and the main staff of the Nanking Army were removed from the leadership of military operations. Soldiers and a portion of the officers from the 29th Army at their own initiative continued the resistance relying on the active support of the local population.(13)

By 25 July, the Japanese Command had concentrated in North China 3 infantry divisions and 2 composite brigades with a total of over 40,000 men, up to 120 guns, around 150 tanks and armored vehicles, 6 armored trains and up to 150 aircraft. From individual battles and clashes the Japanese troops went over to carrying out an operation on the Peking—Tientsin axis.(14) On 26 July, Japanese troops surrounded Peking on three sides and threatened the only free line of communications of the 29th Army, the Peking—Hankow Railroad. At the same time, they commenced a storming of Peking and Tientsin. Chinese troops (units of the 37th and 132d Infantry Divisions) and the city's population defended courageously, but under the pressure of superior enemy forces, on 30 July, began to retreat to the southwest. On the following day Tientsin was abandoned.(15)

The actions of the Chinese troops during the period of the Peking—Tientsin Operation showed that the Kuomintang Command was avoiding a decisive resistance against the aggressor. Here one could feel the consequences of the anticommunist policy of the Kuomintang reaction, and the Civil War in the nation which distracted the attention and forces of the people from the Japanese aggression.

Having concluded the Peking—Tientsin Operation, the Japanese troops continued to advance in the aim of capturing important lines of communications such as: the Peking—Suiyuan, Peking—Hankow, the Tientsin—Pukou Railroads and the Lunghai Railroad as well as the Nankow Fortified Area covering Changchiakou (Kalgan) and which was on the boundary of four provinces (Shehe, Hobei, Shansi and Chahar). Having commenced the offensive on 4 August against Nankow and without achieving success, the Japanese troops on 12 August employed chemical toxins. On 22 August, the Japanese repeated the chemical attack. Chinese troops suffered heavy losses. On 31 August, the enemy captured the entire Nankow region.(16)

In conducting the operation to capture North China, the Japanese Command landed assault troops in Central China in the Shanghai area. Street fighting raged for 10 days. The Japanese shifted several other infantry divisions into the Shanghai area. The fighting continued with varying success. On 12 October 1937, in the Liuhe-Liuhan area, the Japanese Command employed chemical weapons, disabling around 2,000 Chinese soldiers and officers of whom more than 500 perished.(17)

At the beginning of November the Japanese Command constituted a separate army (several divisions) and on 5 November landed it in Hangchow Bay in the rear of the Chinese army defending Shanghai. The Chinese troops retreated and on 11 November, Shanghai was in Japanese hands. On 13 December, the Japanese captured the capital of China, Nanking.(18)

The course of the hostilities in China in 1937 showed that the Japanese strategists had miscalculated. They did not consider the ability of the Chinese people to resist aggression, the possibility of establishing an anti-Japanese front and the effectiveness of Soviet aid to China. Their offensive operations were drawn out. The Japanese Command lost 5 months capturing Peking, Shanghai and Nanking with the adjacent areas and an equal amount of time linking up the Northern and Central Fronts.(19)

Only in the autumn of 1938 did the Japanese Command begin operations in the south of China, capturing Kwangchow on 22 October. Five days later, a Japanese grouping some 240,000 strong, advancing from Nanking up the Yangtse with the support of 180 tanks and 150 aircraft, captured Wuhan.

The experience of the fighting in China showed that the basic method of conducting operations for the Japanese Command was to have the mobile troop groupings, with air support, breach the front on a narrow sector along a route of railroads and highways and rapidly surround the enemy. However, the Japanese troops, as a rule, succeeded in avoiding encirclement. Regardless of the mass destruction of the peaceful population and prisoners of war and the use of chemical weapons, resistance by the Chinese armed forces increased. The Chinese formations and units established defensive lines on the axes of advance of the Japanese troops, they knocked out railway lines and highways and flooded individual areas of the territory. Also employed were counterattacks which slowed down the enemy offensive. While at the start of the war the rate of advance of the Japanese units was 10-20 km a day, in the Wuhan Operation (August-October 1938), this did not exceed 1-3 km. During the first year of the war, the Japanese troops advanced 1,100 km while in the first half of the second year, less than 300 km.(20)

The formations, units and detachments of the 8th Army and the new 4th Army led by the Chinese communists caused evermore tangible harm to the aggressors. Due to the actions of the 8th Army in the Pingsinkwan area (Shansi Province), the 5th Infantry Division of the Kwantung Army suffered substantial losses. The New 4th Army conducted successful partisan operations in the lower courses of the Yangtse River and in the area of lakes to the north of Nanking and to the west of Shanghai.(21)

The Japanese plan for a "lightning war" against China was thwarted. Of significance in preventing the nation's surrender were the position of the CPC, the steadfast struggle of the armed forces led by it against the invaders and the formation of anti-Japanese military bases on occupied territory in the enemy rear. The resistance to Japanese aggression was also aided by the consistent and principled course of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] and the Soviet government aimed at

assisting in creating and maintaining a unified anti-Japanese front among all the patriotic forces of China. The moral and material help to China from the USSR played an enormous role in thwarting the plan for a "lightning war." Soon after the attack by the Japanese militarists on China, on 21 August 1937, a Soviet-Chinese Treaty on Non-Aggression and trade agreements were signed and in accord with these the USSR was to provide China in 1938-1939 with a significant amount of weapons and combat equipment.

During the first engagements, Chinese Armed Forces lost all their aircraft, tanks, artillery and combat ships. Due to the support of the USSR, China not only held out under the blows of the Japanese troops but by mid-1939 was able to virtually reestablish its armed forces.

At the request of the Chinese government, at the end of 1937, the first group of Soviet military advisors arrived in this country and they worked on the central staffs and headquarters, schools as well as under the commanders of the military areas.

By mid-February 1939, some 3,665 Soviet military specialists were working in China and participating in the fight against the Japanese invaders.(22) In Singkiang (Kulja) there was an air force school where Soviet specialists trained Chinese pilots. From February 1938, Soviet volunteer pilots were actively involved in fighting against the Japanese invaders. They caused heavy losses to the enemy aviation, maritime transport and ground troops. Some 14 Soviet pilots who defended the skies of China were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.(23)

More than 200 Soviet volunteers gave up their lives in the struggle for the liberation of the Chinese people. On an obelisk in the city of Wuhan is inscribed: "The memory of the Soviet pilots will live in all eternity in the heart of the Chinese people. Let this noble spirit of proletarian internationalism inherent to the working class always develop and strengthen the fraternal unbreakable friendship of the Chinese and Soviet peoples."(24)

The Soviet Union, loyal to the international principle of defending the victims of aggression, decisively supported the appeal of China in the international organizations for providing it with aid and applying collective sanctions against the Japanese invaders. The defeat of the Japanese troops at Khasan and the Khalkhin-Gol River eased the struggle of the Chinese people, instilling confidence in a final victory.

The Chinese leaders recognize the enormous importance of the diverse support for China from the Soviet Union. The head of the government, Chiang-Kai-shek, commented that "no nation in the world with the exception of the USSR can help China" and expressed "infinite gratitude and recognition" of the Chinese people for this support....Mao Zedong in December 1949 said: "From

the start of the war of resistance no government of any imperialist power provided us with real help. Only the Soviet Union provided us help with its human, material and financial forces in large amounts."(25)

Deliveries of Soviet Military Equipment and Weapons to China*

Name	1938	1 August 1939	Total
Aircraft	565	420	985
Tanks	82	—	82
Guns	817	500	1,317
Motor Vehicles	700	850	1,550
Tractors	30	—	30
Machine Guns	6,325	7,700	14,025
Cartridges (million)	64.5	100.0	164.5
Shells (million)	1.4	0.5	1.9
Bombs (thousand)	65.8	16.5	82.3

* "Istoriyavtoroy mirovoy voyny 1938-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 2, Map No 7.

As for England and the United States, they did not undertake measures to thwart the aggressor and restricted themselves to a verbal condemnation of Japan, a hypocritical expression of sympathy for China and other diplomatic gestures designed basically to placate public opinion. Without providing serious aid to China, the Western powers at the same time significantly increased deliveries of strategic materials to Japan. They were endeavoring to satisfy the interests of the Japanese military at China's expense in order to subsequently direct the brunt of Japanese aggression against the USSR.

The Japanese aggressor, suffering significant losses, was forced to revise its plans for a "lightning war" and shift to a strategy of maneuvering and waiting, building up forces and strengthening its positions in order subsequently to make best use of the international situation in Europe.

Footnotes

1. [Not in text]
2. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 25, p 262.
3. "Daitoa senso kokan sen shi" (Official History of the War in Greater East Asia), Tokyo, Vol 31, 1970, p 31.
4. "Istoriya voyny na Tikhom okeane" [The History of the War in the Pacific], translated from the Japanese, Moscow, Izd-vo Inostrannoy Literatury, Vol 1 "Aggression in Manchuria," 1957, p 338.

5. TsGAOR [Central State Archives of the October Revolution], folio 7867, inv. 1 (the Tokyo Trial), file 482, sheet 136.
6. D. Bergamini, "Japan's Imperial Conspiracy," London, 1972, p 685.
7. "Taiheiyo senso e no miti" (The Path to the Pacific War), Tokyo, Vol 4, 1963, p 9.
8. Ibid., Vol 4, p 10.
9. "Daitoa senso kokan....," Vol 8, 1967, pp 412-414; Vol 18, 1968, pp 52-58, 99-114, 154-175.
10. B.G. Sapozhnikov, "Kitay v ogne voyny (19310-1950)" [China in the Flames of War (1931-1950)], Moscow, Nauka, 1977, pp 87-88, "Taiheiyo senso e no miti," Vol 4, p 12.
11. B.G. Sapozhnikov, op. cit., p 87.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., pp 89-90.
14. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 2, 1974, pp 36-37.
15. B.G. Sapozhnikov, op. cit., p 90.
16. Ibid., p 92.
17. "China Handbook, 1937-1943," New York, p 219.
18. "Istoriya voyny na Tikhom okeane," Vol 2, "The Japanese-Chinese War," 1957, pp 154-155.
19. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy....," Vol 2, pp 36, 37, 39.
20. A.Ya. Kalyagin, "Po neznakomym dorogam: Vospominaniya voyennogo sovetnika" [Over Unknown Trails: Memoirs of a Military Advisor], Moscow, Nauka, 1969, p 257.
21. B.G. Sapozhnikov, op. cit., pp 93-94.
22. "V.I. Lenin i sovetskaya vneshnyaya politika" [V.I. Lenin and Soviet Foreign Policy], Moscow, Mezhdunarodnyye Otnosheniya, 1969, p 164.
23. ISTORIYA SSSR, No 3, 1972, pp 106-112.
24. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy....," Vol 2, p 74.
25. "Istoriya Kitaya s drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dnei" [The History of China From Ancient Times to Our Days], Moscow, Nauka, 1974, p 377.

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U.S. Strategic Aviation Operations in Korea, Vietnam

18010011j Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press 23 Jul 87) pp 62-67

[Article, published under the heading "Local Wars," by Col (Res) V.K. Babich, candidate of military sciences: "U.S. Strategic Operations in Korea and Vietnam"; the article was written from materials of the foreign press]

[Text] Strategic aviation has taken an active part in the local wars started by the American imperialists in Korea and Southeast Asia. This aviation was assigned a primary role in the "scorched earth" tactics employed by the aggressor on the territory of the freedom-loving countries.

As is known, the war in Korea commenced on 25 June 1950. After several days American B-29 strategic aircraft made the first bombing strikes against the industrial centers, airfields, ports and lines of communications of North Korea. The aim of the bombing was to prevent the moving of reserves of the Korean People's Army (KPA) to the front line, to seal off the combat area and create good conditions for an offensive by the South Korean and American troops. The tactics employed here was designed for an absence of counteractions by air defenses and was called "range" tactics.

The transport arteries connecting the west and east coast of North Korea and which basically carried the KPA and foreign troops ran through a narrow mountain gorge. The American Command planned to cause slides by bomb attacks and thereby block the shipments. However, regardless of the fact that a large number of bombs was dropped in several group raids, this was not possible. The failure forced the Americans to focus the efforts of the strategic bombers on destroying bridges and areas of communications running on open terrain. Intense air raids against them also did not bring particular success. Traffic on the routes halted for not more than 1 or 2 days, as the local population which had been mobilized for repairs quickly rebuilt the destroyed facilities.

Then for increasing the effectiveness of the B-29 raids, they began employing 450-kg Reason guided bombs. After the release of the guided bomb, the navigator watched it in an optical sight, being guided by the smoke trail created by a tracer. Also having the target in the field division, using commands over a radio control line he adjusted the trajectory of the bomb's fall until the moment of explosion. Due to the fact that the guidance of the optical bombs was impossible with limited visibility or cloudiness, the crews operated only under visual flight conditions. This did not make it possible to realize the principle of continuous air operations in the interests

of the ground troops and thereby achieve substantial results. For this reason the use of guided aviation weapons in Korea was classified as experimental by American specialists.

On 1 November 1950, several groups of B-29s launched raids against dumps, freight yards, highways and bridges. Then followed a massed raid by 79 bombers against Sinuiju, a communications center on the frontier with China. A particular feature of the raids was the massed employment of incendiary bombs by strategic aviation (some 32,000 bombs were dropped in one of them).(1) The given bombings showed that the air aggressor had moved from isolating the combat area to actions over all North Korean territory.

However, starting in November 1950, the KPA began receiving MIG-15 jet fighters and large-caliber anti-aircraft guns which could provide effective fire up to an altitude of 7,500 m. This was immediately felt in the results of hostilities. In November alone, the defenses downed 8 B-29 aircraft.(2)

At the beginning of December, the American Command decided to conduct an air operation in which the chief role was assigned to strategic aviation. It was planned to launch strikes against 173 objectives. During the first raid, 48 B-29 aircraft bombed 8 targets, releasing a total of 354 tons of bombs.(3) The air raids according to the operation's plan were to continue for 6 months. Groups of 40-70 bombers operated in close formation and covered by large numbers of fighters. The flights were made beyond the range of the anti-aircraft artillery. However, it was impossible to prevent losses, as North Korean fighters operated successfully against the strategic bombers. For example, in October 1951 alone, they destroyed 5 B-29 and damaged 8.(4)

By the end of 1951, the bombing results were assessed by foreign specialists in the following manner: the flow of freight along the lines of communications which had been subjected to continuous raids had declined.(5) Nevertheless, the U.S. Air Force Command in Korea debated the advisability of daytime group raids and reached a decision to switch the strategic aviation to individual nighttime operations against important stationary objectives. The change in tactics was also aided by the introduction of the Shoran medium- and close-range radio navigation range-finding system and the installation of the appropriate in-flight equipment on the B-29. The pilots were able to carry out bombing under semiautomatic flight conditions along an orbit running across the target. However, the new method substantially restricted the opportunities of the crews to come in against the designated targets from any direction and maneuvering on the bombing run.

The main efforts of the strategic bombers were focused on destroying bridges which possessed a radar contrast and could be detected with the aid of in-flight radars. But the width of a majority of the bridges did not exceed 2.5

m and the circular error probable in bombing using the Shoran system was 150 m. Nevertheless by assigning a large number of aircraft for the bombing, for example, in May 1952, 66 spans on 10 bridges were destroyed as a result of 143 direct hits.(6)

The switch to nighttime individual operations somewhat reduced the level of strategic air losses from air defenses employing visual methods. At the same time the abandoning of the daylight group raids had a negative effect upon the results of carrying out the combat mission as a whole. The insignificant rise in the accuracy of the strikes as a consequence of the individual actions of each crew did not compensate for the reduced number of bombs dropped.

Night bombing raids were carried out against not only bridges and other lines of communications. During the winter of 1952 and the spring of 1953, the bombers regularly struck supply centers on all the territory of North Korea as well as the KPA troops. In these instances they employed primarily the "scorched earth" tactics. In the course of one of the air operations to seal off a combat area and lasting 5 nights running, American bombs dropped around 970 tons of antipersonnel fragmentation bombs on the North Korean troop positions and the artillery firing positions (objectives located in the frontline zone and completely indistinguishable at night from a high altitude).(7)

Over the 37 months of the war in Korea, the bombers from the American bomber Command made a total of around 21,000 aircraft sorties, dropping more than 167,000 tons of bombs. According to the data of the foreign press, losses were 34 B-29 aircraft.(8) The operating methods of the strategic bombers, in comparison with the period of World War II, had changed little. It was reaffirmed that success in carrying out a combat mission depended upon all-round support as the heavy bombers which were not as fast as the KPA fighters could not successfully defend themselves independently from fighter attack. "The main lesson drawn in this war is a new affirmation of the correctness of long established and tested concepts. The most substantial and important conclusion from the experience obtained must be considered the fact that it is impossible to replace quality by quantity: this is true both in terms of individuals and in terms of equipment."(9)

U.S. Strategic Aviation also participated in the struggle against the South Vietnamese patriotic forces and in the air war against North Vietnam. The first raid by B-52 bombers against installations in South Vietnam occurred on 18 June 1965. The raid was made against a piece of terrain with dimensions of 2 x 4 km and on which there was an assumed concentration of detachments of the Liberation Army (from 1969, the People's Liberation Armed Forces). Subsequently, the intensity of operations by strategic aviation based on Guam in the Pacific continuously grew: by the end of the year over 1,500 aircraft sorties had been made.(10)

The number of bombers in the groups involved in the raids varied from 3 to 30. A majority of the missions was carried out by 12-18 aircraft which flew in a "flight column" formation. Fighters were not assigned for covering them en route and in the target area. Depending upon the weather conditions, the linear distances between the flights were from 20 to 50 km and the intervals between the aircraft in the flights up to 150 m. However, after two midair collisions the intervals were increased to 300-400 m and the network of electronic devices monitoring strategic aviation flights over South Vietnamese territory was significantly expanded.(11)

The flight to the target was carried out at an altitude of 8,000-10,000 m and at a speed of 800 km an hour. Approximately midway from Guam to South Vietnam the bombers were refueled in air. The fuel was supplied from the KC-135 tankers based on Okinawa. In approaching the shoreline, the altitude of flight was reduced to 7,000 m and speed to 740 km an hour. The aircrafts in the flights opened up into 1-minute time distances. In order to exclude the possibility of falling into a zone of fire by small-caliber antiaircraft artillery (MZA), the B-52 crews did not descend below 7,000 m. Depending upon the configuration of the designated cover area, the bombs were dropped in a salvo or a line. The low accuracy of the bombing was compensated for by the large number of bombs dropped. The total time the crews were in the air considering the maneuvering in the combat area was 12 hours and this was supported by two midair fuelings.(12)

From the end of 1965, the U.S. strategic aircraft began to be involved in carrying out tactical missions. The first major operation where the ground troops had a great need for help from the heavy bombers was the actions to lift the siege on the interventionist camp in Pleiku. Regardless of the unusualness of the mission requiring high precision in employing aviation weapons, the Air Force Command did not deviate from the principle of aerial bombing.(13) Subsequently the bombers were also assigned to "work over" entire areas in which their flights were monitored by a tactical aviation command center using the available radar facilities.

With the aim of sealing off detachments of the South Vietnamese liberation army and interdicting the delivery of reinforcements to them, B-52 bombers in 1966 began to attack the border areas of North Vietnam. However, the 12 hours of flight time spent by each crew in carrying out this mission cost too much as the expense of one B-52 combat sortie was estimated to be an average of \$32,000.(14) Moreover, urgent requests from the ground troops required a shortening of the time to carry them out.

For these reasons a portion of the strategic bombers was shifted to the Utapao base in Thailand. The distance to the targets was reduced by 3-4-fold. Aircraft flying out of Utapao boarded less fuel and more bombs and were not refueled in air, making two or three sorties a day with a crew change.(15)

For shortening the time required to respond to the requests of the ground troops, the U.S. Strategic Air Command assigned several aircraft as "quick response forces."(16) Zones were established close to the combat area and bombers patrolled in these for a certain time. Their crews maintained contact with tactical aviation control centers and these received requests for support from the troops. Having received the target coordinates, the operator of the ground radar guided a B-52 to it and at the moment it reached the calculated release point gave the command for the start of bombing. Here the pilots, as a rule, did not visually observe either the designated target or the bomb impact points. The results of these strikes, according to the admission of the command, were low. Experience showed that the principle of attack operations is inadmissible for the strategic forces. For this reason the bombers continued to operate basically from their own bases after full preparation of the crews for each sortie.

In the course of escalating the air war against North Vietnam, the intensity of strategic aviation operations continued to rise. In 1967, B-52 aircraft made an average of 186 aircraft sorties weekly and subsequently this rose to 300. By the end of 1968, the total tonnage of bombs dropped reached 750,000 tons.(17) Here the aggressor did not change its tactics characterized by range methods of launching the strikes. This was caused by the absence of strong resistance from air defenses, by the daily raids of small groups, by actions under visual flight conditions in daylight, and by the execution of area bombing from open formations.

The first major raid on the central areas of North Vietnam by heavy bombers was carried out on 16 April 1972. By July there had already been 164 such raids.(18) At this stage U.S. strategic aviation had to combat what were modern air defenses for that period. The performance of the bombers did not guarantee success in a clash involving guided antiaircraft missiles and the MIG-21 fighters covering Hanoi and Haiphong. For this reason the B-52 aircraft were supplied with radar warning equipment, the power of the jammer transmitters was increased and the air frame reinforced in the aim of being able to carry out long flights at low altitudes.

The Americans involved large forces of tactical, carrier-based and special aviation in supporting the operations of the strategic bombers. Fighters sealed off the North Vietnamese airfields, set up screens on the routes of flight of the strike groups and provided direct escort for them. The fighter bombers and carrier-based attack planes neutralized the air defenses in the target areas, carried out feint operations (four aircraft in a close formation produced the same blip on the screens of the ground radars as one B-52) and conducted fire reconnaissance, attacking newly discovered air defenses and attacking airfields (individual F-111A fighter bombers 60-90 minutes before the start of the raid).(19) The reconnaissance aircraft conducted general air reconnaissance on the eve of the day of the bombing and follow-up

reconnaissance of the targets several hours before the attack as well as the monitoring of the results of the attack. Jammers from patrol areas set up interference (active and passive) against the radars of the air defense system several minutes before the bombers entered North Vietnamese air space. The movement of the aircraft in the combat area was controlled from airborne command posts patrolling over the Gulf of Tonkin.

The bombers continued operating in flight column formations but did not open up for attacking the target but rather executed so-called "carpet bombing" whereby each flight successively increased the strike area.(20) As a result an entire strip of destruction was formed. According to official data of the U.S. Command in Saigon, from April until the end of 1972, some 1,200 strikes were made and 32,600 tons of bombs were dropped on a triangle with an area of 15,600 m² formed by the cities of Hanoi, Haiphong and Tan Hoa. In the course of Operation Linebacker-2 (massed bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong on 18-30 December 1972), each day up to 100 strategic bombers participated in raids which were made in "waves": by two or three groups with a break of several hours.(21)

According to the data of the American press, by the end of the year 17 out of the 205 B-52 aircraft participating in the raids had been lost.(22) The losses suffered forced the U.S. Air Force Command to switch the strategic aviation completely to nighttime actions and significantly boost its combat support. Here the greatest difficulty was in organizing cooperation of the bombers with the diverse auxiliary forces as this required effective detailed planning and precise implementation of the elaborated plans. Also difficult was the task of executing a joint flight by groups with different tactical missions.

However, regardless of the change in the situation and the increased resistance from air defenses, no adjustments were made in the formations and bombing methods. Due to a lack of experience of operating under the developing conditions, the principle of an economic expenditure of forces was not maintained. The weapons employed had not undergone substantial changes since the time of World War II.

In the assessment of the foreign press, strategic aviation in local wars carried out predominantly tactical missions and this placed increased demands on its mobility and on maintaining cooperation with the ground troops. However, the involvement of the B-29 and B-52 bombers in carrying out these missions was viewed by the Americans as a requisite measure related to the insufficient strike power of tactical aviation aircraft. The crews gained experience in overcoming the resistance of modern air defense weapons, particularly surface-to-air missile systems, but no fundamentally new methods of combating them were worked out. The flight personnel mastered nighttime flights at maximum range with mid-air refueling. Here the organization and execution of mid-route refueling were worked out for the first time.

In the course of the combat, skills were gained in organizing and realizing tactical cooperation of the strike groups with fighters, fighter bombers, reconnaissance aircraft and ECM aircraft. Joint actions according to a single plan required a precise allocation of efforts in terms of place, time and lines. Carrying out of this task was entrusted to a specially established airborne command post.

Experience showed that it was not always possible to achieve the set goals by these methods even when designed to destroy every living thing in a certain territory. According to the data in the journal AVIATION WEEK, during the period from 1965 through 1971 (not counting the last year of bombing), American aviation dropped some 11.8 million tons of ammunition (some 22 tons for each square mile of territory) on Indochina, and this was double the total tonnage of bombs dropped by it during World War II and the Korean War.(23) However, no foreign observer averred that the long war in Southeast Asia was won by the aggressor.

Footnotes

Strategic aviation is a component part of the air forces of certain capitalist states (the United States, France and others); a component of the strategic offensive forces based upon bombers having large cargo capacity and range and which are capable of attacking strategic targets deep in the enemy rear ("Voyennyy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar" [Military Encyclopedic Dictionary], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1986, p 710.

1. J. Stewart, "Vozdushnaya moshch—reshayushchaya sila v Koreye" [Air Power—The Decisive Force in Korea], Moscow, Izd-vo Inostranny Literatry, 1959, p 101.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p 102.

4. Ibid., p 108.

5. Asher Lee, "Vozdushnaya moshch" [Air Power], translated from the English, Moscow, Izd-vo Inostranny Literatry, 1958, p 60.

6. J. Stewart, op. cit., pp 106-109.

7. Ibid., p 114.

8. INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW, No 6, 1977, p 1066.

9. J. Stewart, op. cit., p 115.

10. AIR UNIVERSITY REVIEW, No 2, 1968, p 12.

11. MONTREAL STAR, 22 May 1969.

12. AIR UNIVERSITY REVIEW, No 4, 1968, pp 2-15.
13. "Congressional Record, Senate," No 45, 1972, p 456.
14. AEROSPACE DAILY, No 3, 1973, p 19.
15. TIMES, 24 June 1973.
16. "Congressional Record, Senate," No 43, 1972, p 19.
17. AIR FORCE, No 11, 1968, p 19.
18. Ibid., No 9, 1972, p 53.
19. INTERAVIA, No 1138, 1973, p 2.
20. AVIATION WEEK, No 18, 1973, p 88.
21. TIME, No 2, 1973, p 4.
22. ASTRONAUTICS AND AERONAUTICS, No 5, 1972, p 23.
23. AVIATION WEEK, No 17, 1972, p 353.

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Sixtieth Anniversary of Chinese People's Liberation Army

18010011k Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87 (signed to press 23 Jul 87) pp 78-82

[Article, published under the heading "Military History Dates," by I.N. Volozhanin: "Sixtieth Anniversary of the Formation of the Chinese People's Liberation Army"]

[Text] 1 August 1987 marks the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). Established and led by the CCP, the PLA played an important role in the revolutionary movement of the Chinese people. Of great importance for the formation of the PLA was the involvement of the Chinese communists in the organizational development of the National Revolutionary Army (NRA) of South China, the government of which in 1923 was headed by the outstanding Chinese revolutionary democrat Sun Yatsen. Of great significance in the training of the military cadres of the CCP was the military school at Huangpu (Whampoa) established in 1924 close to the city of Kwangchow with active Soviet aid.(1) In accord with the agreement reached, the Soviet government granted the Kwangchow government financial aid and weapons and sent to this school military specialists who passed on the rich combat experience of the Red Army to the Chinese instructors and officer candidates.

The reactionary coup carried out in 1927 by the right wing of the Kuomintang was a major testing for the CCP. As a result of the counterrevolutionary actions by the Kuomintang reaction and its desire not to permit the communists to have an influence in the NRA ranks, a new political situation arose. The CCP was confronted with the task of establishing an independent armed organization which was truly popular in character and which could bring the cause of the Chinese revolution to a victorious conclusion.

1 August 1927 is considered to be the day of the founding of the PLA and at this time in Nanchang (Jiangsi Province), under the leadership of Zhou Enlai, He Lung, Ye Ting, Zhu De and Liu Bocheng, a revolt occurred which involved over 30,000 soldiers and officers of the former Kuomintang troops.(2) The Nanchang revolt marked the beginning to the revolutionary armed struggle of the Chinese toilers under the leadership of the CCP.

In contrast to the troops of the reactionary Kuomintang and the armed groupings of Chinese militarists, the PLA was organized as a new type of army defending and protecting the interests of the Chinese working people. Precisely this ensured its broad base for recruiting for its ranks. The socialist future was a dependable guide in the combat activities of the CCP Armed Forces.

Of great importance for an understanding by the CCP of the role of the military factor, for organizing its armed forces and for elaborating a military policy were the practical aid and advice of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] as well as the other communist parties. This, certainly, in no way plays down the importance of the independent search and struggle of the Chinese communists against ideological hesitation and confusion and various errors, including on the questions of the leadership over the organizational development and combat activities of the army.

In actuality prior to the formation of the PRC, the history of the development of the PLA was directly linked to all the tribulations in the revolutionary liberation struggle of the Chinese people which developed in a semicolonial and semifeudal country. The objective difficulties in the forming of the CCP Armed Forces were a consequence of the relative weakness and small size of the proletariat which should become the central core of the revolutionary army. This is why an improvement in the social composition and most importantly the development of active political indoctrination and propagandizing of revolutionary ideals among the soldiers and commanders were a vitally important necessity for strengthening the PLA. The party organizations established in the army units and subunits became the main force in the struggle for high proletarian awareness and discipline of the personnel and against anarchism, laxness and other negative phenomena.

Modern Chinese historiography establishes four main periods which the PLA went through in its development: the period of the agrarian revolutionary war (August 1927—July 1937); the period of the war of resistance against the Japanese invaders (July 1937—September 1945); the period of the nationwide liberation war (September 1945—September 1949); the period of socialist revolution and socialist construction (from October 1949 until the present).(4)

The strategy and tactics of the Chinese Red Army (the name given to the PLA during the agrarian revolutionary war), as a rule, were set by the CCP leadership considering the particular features of the political situation in China as well as the balance of class and military forces and foreign policy factors. At the start of the first stage, the main task for the Red Army was to hold and broaden the territory of the revolutionary support bases. In 1930-1933, the Red Army repelled four major punitive expeditions by the Kuomintang troops.(7)

In 1934, due to the difficult situation which developed as a result of the 5th offensive by significantly more numerous and better armed forces of the Kuomintang Army, the CCP Central Committee was forced to take a decision to abandon the support bases in Central and South China and shift its troops to other areas. In fighting their way into the northern part of Shensi Province (the town of Yannan) along an extraordinarily difficult route stretching over 12,000 km, the participants of the march (subsequently it was called the long march) showed numerous examples of true heroism and courage (one has merely to mention the well-known heroic episode in the crossing of the Daduhe River). The Long March demonstrated the military art of the future PRC marshals such as Zhu De, Liu Bocheng and other communist military leaders. The Chinese Red Army showed that it was a battleworthy military force which the numerous counterrevolution had to take into account.

The attack of Japan on China on 7 July 1937 created a new situation in the country and accelerated the formation of a united anti-Japanese national front. An important ideological prerequisite for uniting the efforts of the CCP and the Kuomintang was the acceptance by the Chinese communists of the historic decisions of the 7th Comintern Congress and their elaboration of a new military-political course.(8) "We have only one way out, a nationwide war against the Japanese invaders..." stated the appeal of the CCP Central Committee of 8 July 1937. "We will defend the homeland until the last drop of blood!"(9) The main formations of the Red Army were reorganized as the 8th Army while the partisan units in Central China became the new 4th Army. Both armies became part of the national armed forces, while maintaining their independence of actions. According to data given by Chinese historians, over the 8 years of the anti-Japanese war, with the support of the broad popular masses, the CCP Armed Forces conducted over 125,000 battles and engagements, put out of service over 1,714,000 enemy soldiers and officers and liberated a

significant portion of the nation's territory with a total area of over 1 million km² with a population of 130 million persons. Over this period the number of troops controlled by the CCP increased up to 1.2 million persons and the people's militia up to 2.2 million persons.(10)

In defeating militaristic Japan, the Soviet and Chinese peoples fought, as was pointed out in a report at a ceremony dedicated to the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee M.S. Gorbachev, "in a close combat alliance."(11) An act of revolutionary internationalism is the name rightly given in the PRC to the aid provided to the Chinese people by the Soviet Army in defeating the million-strong Kwantung Japanese Troop Grouping in Manchuria in 1945. The surrender of the main force of Japanese militarism led to the liberation of Northeast China, Inner Mongolia and neighboring Korea. The CCP troops, having received support from the Soviet Union, gained strength in Manchuria which was turned into a political, economic and military-territorial base of the Chinese revolution.

The Manchurian military-revolutionary base played a special role in the further strengthening and successful combat of the PLA during the period of the nationwide liberation struggle of the revolutionary forces of China. In this important period of the destiny of the nation, the PLA troops were guaranteed a strong rear in Northeast China. Of enormous significance for increasing the battleworthiness of the people's army was the transfer to it by the Soviet side of captured Japanese weapons. In the second half of 1948 and the beginning of 1949, the PLA conducted three decisive engagements of the Civil War which determined the outcome of the struggle in China. These strategically important operations of Liaoshen, Huaihai and Beiping-Tienjin, led to the loss by the Kuomintang of over 1.5 million servicemen and this was 42 percent of the total size of its army.(14) The size of the PLA during those years continuously grew and by mid-1950 was over 5 million men.

The defeat of the Kuomintang troops and the downfall of the Chiang Kai-shek regime ensured a transition of power to the hands of the people and the formation of the PRC. A new, socialist period commenced in the organizational development of the armed forces. At the end of 1949 and the beginning of 1950, the PLA concluded the defeat of the Kuomintang troops and liberated South and Southwest China. In 1950-1953, Chinese volunteer servicemen participated in the war in Korea against the American aggressors and their Seoul puppets. Together with the Korean People's Army, they fought for the liberty and independence of the Korean People's Democratic Republic.

The necessity of defending the victories of the Chinese revolution in the 1950s raised the question of the complete modernization of the nation's armed forces, the

establishing of the appropriate defense potential and primarily a military-industrial base which could meet the army's requirements. During the period from 1950 through 1963, with the participation of the Soviet Union, around 100 major defense industry enterprises were built and put into operation in China and these were capable of producing weapons and military equipment meeting the demands of those times.(16) With the active involvement of Soviet military advisors, a fundamental reorganization was carried out in the Ground Troops, an Air Force and Navy were organized along with air defense troops, artillery, armored, engineer and railroad troops, signal and chemical warfare troops, as well as special units and subunits.

Particularly marked shifts in the organizational improvement of the PLA occurred in 1955, after introducing a system of compulsory military service and monetary pay for servicemen as well as military ranks and the awarding of orders and medals to outstanding soldiers and officers. During these years, new military command bodies were established, the military administrative divisioning was improved, military regulations and manuals were worked out, and the level of military training and military scientific research rose.(18) Life showed that while these processes were not devoid of individual errors and flaws, they did occur in the general direction of worldwide military-technical development and helped strengthen the security and defense capability of the PRC.

The process of the organizational development of the PLA was seriously disrupted at the end of the 1950s, although, according to evidence of the Chinese military history literature, this organizational development "although in a winding manner did move forward and develop" until the mid-1960s.(19) However, the Cultural Revolution which lasted an entire decade, according to the present Chinese official estimate, caused "an unprecedentedly severe blow to the organizational development of the army."(20) As is known, during this period the PLA became an object of a fractional struggle in the Chinese leadership. The deviations to the "left" in domestic and foreign policy not only had a negative impact upon the military-technical state of the PLA but also led to a serious warping of the political orientation among the Chinese servicemen and population. The "leftist" extremism was one of the reasons for the exacerbation of Chinese military-political relationships with neighbors, including the socialist countries. An extreme manifestation of this exacerbation was the military clashes along the Soviet-Chinese border.

After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the elimination of the extreme leftist grouping (the so-called Gang of Four) the members of which held high party and military posts, a transitional stage began in the life of Chinese society and this was tied to a desire of the broad masses to overcome the negative consequences of the Cultural Revolution and resolve acute national economic and social problems.

At the same time the end of the 1970s in China was marked by certain contradictions and clashes which were also apparent in the military-political area. The use of armed force by the Chinese leadership in 1979 against Vietnam was in stark contrast to the incipient turn of the CCP toward a more realistic policy within the country. The invasion by Chinese troops into the territory of the neighboring state not only caused a negative response in the world community but also gave rise to numerous complicated moral problems in the PLA itself.

The first half of the 1980s was full of significant changes in the organizational development of the Chinese Armed Forces. At the 12th CCP Congress, the idea was reinforced of their complete modernization and arming with modern weapons and combat equipment.

The PLA at present is one of the largest armies of the world and it possesses its own nuclear missile potential. According to data in the foreign press, the size of the PLA on 1 July 1985, that is, at the moment Beijing announced a cutback in the army, was 4 million men. The main components in the regular PRC Armed Forces are the Ground Troops (around 3 million men), Air Force and Air Defense (490,000 men) and the Navy (350,000 men). There are over 150,000 men in the Strategic Rocket Troops which recently became an independent service.(21)

As has been announced by representatives of the PLA Command, at present the task has basically been carried out of reducing the size of the Chinese Army by 1 million men. Judging from statements published in the Chinese press by party and military leaders of the PRC, this cutback to a significant degree was dictated by a desire to eliminate the excessive "inflation" of the command bodies, rear services and other noncombat elements of the army as well as to seek out additional means for technical modernization of the PLA.(22)

A reduction in the gap in the quality of the weapons between the Chinese Army and the armies of the developed states is considered to be one of the most important tasks in the military area.

Among the changes being undertaken in the PLA a central place is held by improving the structure of the army and command bodies, improving the training of the command personnel, increasing the level of combat training of the troops and further developing military science and the theory of military art. For example the large military districts were reorganized and the number of these was reduced from 11 to 7.(23) New formations for the PLA have been established in the form of combined-arms armies. In the opinion of the PRC military leaders, these correspond better to the requirements of modern warfare than do the army corps which comprised the basis of the Chinese Ground Troops.(24)

Particular attention is being given to improving the training of the military personnel and developing military science. The measures in this area are viewed by the Chinese leadership as "strategic transformations" pointing to the future, that is, establishing a basis for the PLA at the end of the current century.(25) In 1985, a decision was taken to organize a National Defense Academy which at present is becoming the main base for training middle and superior-level military personnel as well as a scientific research center for the PLA in working out the questions of military theory. The system of higher and secondary military schools which was destroyed during the years of the Cultural Revolution has been rebuilt and strengthened and at present it numbers approximately 100 academies and schools.(26) The Chinese press has announced that these measures have made it possible to noticeably increase the educational level of the army personnel and at the same time bring about its "rejuvenation." RENMIN RIBAO has written, for example, that "one out of every two commanders of the inferior level presently has a higher or specialized secondary education, while 8 years ago it would have been difficult to find one such man among every 100."(27)

In considering the definite lag of the PRC in economic and cultural development, the Chinese leaders in recent years have endeavored to a certain degree to employ the material and technical capabilities of the Army in resolving one or another national economic problem. The PLA was entrusted with the task of training so-called "dual-purpose specialists," that is, to train soldiers during their service not only in a military specialty but also a related civil specialty and increase their general educational level. According to information in the Chinese press, in recent years civilian professions have been acquired by over a million Chinese servicemen, and in 1986, this training in the army involved over 900,000 men.(28) The PLA personnel is also participating in conducting propaganda and indoctrinational work among the population.

At the same time, the PLA Command has not concealed the presence of serious unresolved problems in the Army both those remaining as a heritage of the Cultural Revolution as well as the new ones which have arisen in the process of carrying out the socioeconomic and military reforms. The Chinese leadership has been particularly concerned by the political passivity of a portion of the servicemen and the "ideological unpreparedness" to accept new phenomena in the life of Chinese society and the Army and for the penetration of bourgeois ideas and concepts into the nation in conducting the Open Doors policy.(29) In this context recently significant emphasis has been put on the ideological indoctrination of the servicemen in a spirit of belief in the correctness of the course selected by the CCP and the necessity of "firmly adhering to the socialist path" and fighting against "bourgeois liberalism."(30)

The Chinese leadership has constantly emphasized that the organizational development and modernization of the PLA are being carried out and in the future will be

carried out in accord with the policy of "relying on own forces." At the same time, it continues to show an interest in maintaining military ties with the United States and the other capitalist states. The international ties of the PLA with the armies of a majority of the socialist countries remain broken and tense relationships survive with some of them. Quite obviously the normalization of these relations and the overcoming of past attitudes on the basis of mutual consideration of the interests of the parties conform to the aspirations of all peoples.

The 60th anniversary of the PLA is being celebrated in the PRC under the conditions of extensive changes which are being carried out by the Chinese workers under the slogan of "socialist modernization." Along with them the Soviet people pay tribute to the soldiers and commanders of the PLA who fought unstintingly for the national and social liberation of their people.

Footnotes

[Editor's Note: Several footnotes were not published in the original text. The numbering was therefore inconsistent, e.g. #2 is immediately followed by #4].

1. See: "Noveyshaya istoriya Kitaya, 1917-1970 gg." [Recent Chinese History, 1917-1970], Moscow, Mysl, 1972, pp 74-79.

2. See: "Zhonggo renmin zefangjun jianshi" [Concise History of the PLA], Beijing, 1982, p 4.

3. [Not in text]

4. See: "Kratkaya Istoriya NOAK" [Concise History of the PLA], p 2.

5. [Not in text]

6. [Not in text]

7. "Noveyshaya istoriya Kitaya" [Recent Chinese History], pp 137, 152.

8. See: PROBLEMY DALNEGO VOSTOKA, No 4, 1986, p 112.

9. Quoted from: "Noveyshaya istoriya Kitaya," pp 172-173.

10. "Zhonggo renmin...," p 47.

11. M.S. Gorbachev, "Bessmertnyy podvig sovetskogo naroda" [An Immortal Feat of the Soviet People], Moscow, Politizdat, 1985, p 14.

12. [Not in text]

13. [Not in text]

14. "Zhonggo renmin....," p 64.
15. Ibid., p 67.
16. O. Vladimirov, "Sovetsko-kitayskiye otnosheniya v sorokovykh—vostidesyatykh godakh" [Soviet-Chinese Relations in the 1940s-1980s], Moscow, Mezhdunarodnyye Otnosheniya, 1984, p 320.
17. [Not in text]
18. See: "Zhonggo renmin....," pp 77-78.
19. Ibid., p 81.
20. Ibid.
21. "The Military Balance 1985-1986," by the International Institute for Strategic Studies; AIR FORCE MAGAZINE, February 1986, p 91; RENMIN RIBAO, 29 October 1984.
22. See: HONGQI, No 15, 1985, pp 4-6.
23. See: RENMIN RIBAO, 14 June 1985.
24. See: Ibid., 26 January 1987; HONGQI, No 10, 1985, p 5.
25. See: RENMIN RIBAO, 27 February 1986.
26. CHINA DAILY, 2 April 1986.
27. RENMIN RIBAO, 8 September 1986.
28. RENMIN RIBAO, 28 July 1986.
29. RENMIN RIBAO, 26 February 1987.
30. Ibid.

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VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL No
8, August 1987**
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Publication Data

*18010011m Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 8, Aug 87*

English title: MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

Russian title: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL

Editor: A.G. Khorkov

Publishing house: Krasnaya Zvezda

Place of publication: Moscow

Date of publication: August 1987

Signed to press: 23 July 1987

Copies:

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