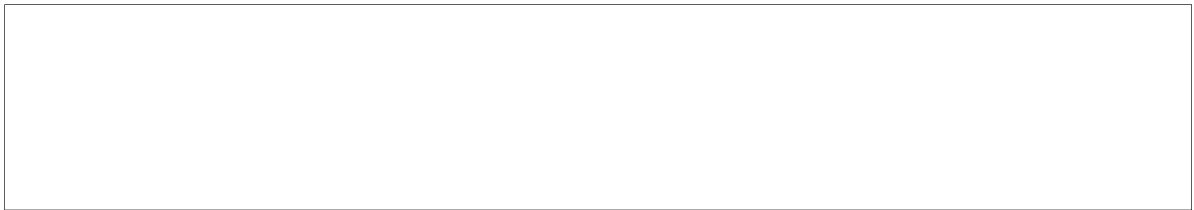


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Raising the Level of the Field Training  
of Operational Staffs

by

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Increased demands are being made on troop control under present-day conditions. Whether they can be successfully met depends entirely on the preparedness of the operational staffs and on the level of their field training, which during both peacetime and wartime constitutes the principal condition for raising the efficiency and teamwork of the control organs. Only a well-trained, coordinated and smoothly functioning staff is capable of actively participating in and providing reliable troop control. This is why the Minister of Defense in his 1967 directive on operational training emphasized the need to improve the training of control organs, to persistently raise their level of field training and to improve the methods employed by the command and staffs in controlling combat operations.

The level of field training of the staffs -- this determines the level of their training, strong skills, knowledge and capability to creatively and efficiently carry out tasks in controlling forces and means during an operation and battle. It encompasses the entire range of operational training measures, the purpose of which is to develop skills in controlling combat operations, and it constitutes the basis of the combat readiness of the operational staffs. Improvement in the field training of control organs can best be achieved by conducting training measures in the field. Here, in a situation that maximally approximates combat conditions, the operational levels of the command and staffs organize their teamwork, and the generals and officers acquire the practical skills necessary for commanding troops and for staff service.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that the staffs can acquire a high level of field training only by conducting operational training measures in the field. Troop control comprises a wide range of extremely diverse measures relating to the organization, preparation, and conduct of an operation, and staff training should therefore be varied and many-sided. <sup>Field</sup> training sessions and exercises provide only the very basic

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training of the control organs, since the level of this training is directly influenced by a number of other measures unrelated to a compulsory field exercise.

We therefore feel justified in suggesting that the improvement of the field training of operational staffs should proceed simultaneously in the following basic directions:

- raising the level of the theoretical and practical training of staff officers and generals to enable them to carry out their functional duties creatively;
- achieving coordinated and efficiently organized work;
- further improving work methods;
- improving the organizational structure and developing the technical equipping of control organs.

The above measures are interrelated and mutually complementary. Therefore, only by implementing them in an integrated manner throughout the entire staff training process can the achievement of the desired results be ensured. However, the most important measure is raising the level of the theoretical and practical training of every officer and general, for nowhere can poorly qualified officers be more harmful than in staff work.

The purpose of theoretical training is to raise the operational-tactical and military technical level of officers and generals, to teach them to think independently and creatively, and to train them for practical work in controlling the combat activities of the troops. Very diverse types and methods of operational training are employed for this purpose, but in our opinion, the most effective ones are independent work on the part of the generals and officers, seminars, scientific and theoretical conferences, papers and reports, group training sessions, and short operational problems.

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Independent work is directed first and foremost toward the in-depth study of manuals, regulations, theoretical works,



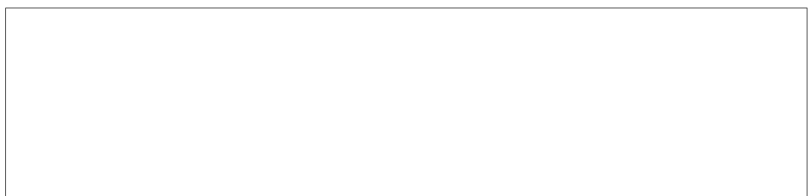
textbooks, periodicals, the experience of the last war, and postwar exercises and war games. It is implemented at the initiative of the officers in accordance with their individual plans. However, there must not be a total lack of organization in so important a matter. Judging from experience, the independent study of generals and officers, like all operational training measures, must be purposeful and entirely subordinated to the tasks of operational training; therefore, it must be highly organized and systematically monitored.

In the Baltic Military District, for example, the purposefulness of the theoretical training is demonstrated by the study of operations conducted on a coastal axis and of questions of raising the combat readiness of the troops. Of course staff officers also study many other urgent problems of military art, but the above topics of study have been the dominant ones for a number of years. Independent work in the staffs of the military district and army is directed, monitored, and assisted by conducting examinations and by carrying out individual assignments in working out theoretical problems and subsequently discussing them. Essentially, seminars supplement independent study, deepen the knowledge of the participants and broaden their operational-tactical outlook, and thus promote a uniform understanding of the theory and practice of operational art. They should be conducted systematically by experienced instructors and held monthly, not only during officer training courses.

Scientific and theoretical papers and reports are now widely disseminated. They are produced twice a month at the level of the headquarters of the military district and of the armies, and once a week in the departments, directorates, and services. They are without doubt helpful: they promote a better understanding of complex theoretical problems and a greater knowledge of combat equipment, and they make it possible to constantly follow the development of new combat means, branch arms and branches of the armed forces, and new methods of employing them in a battle and operation.

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Short operational problems are conducted within the system of individual training in all courses of instruction for military district command personnel, in officer training courses, when staff training is being checked, and also at other times. The





advantages of short problems are obvious. Although they can be worked out and conducted in a short time, they make it possible to gradually accumulate knowledge, to progress from the simple to the complex, to follow the development of each officer, and to promptly detect and eliminate shortcomings.

In our opinion, both short operational problems and seminars offer an extremely dynamic, flexible, and effective method of training staff officers, and each should occupy its proper place in the operational training system.

It is essential not only that the theoretical knowledge be increased but also that the practical skills of the generals and officers doing staff work be improved. They must not only know how to draw up documents and make necessary operational-tactical computations by employing means of mechanization and how to operate the communications means, but they must also be able to do so quickly, accurately, and clearly. In other words, they must achieve total mastery. A situation cannot be allowed where the training of the officers of the operational staffs consists merely of teaching them to draft the exact same type of combat document over the course of many years. This practice is harmful and does not conform to the main principle of staff work -- the wide-scale interchangeability of officers.

Practical skills are best acquired in staff training sessions and exercises, during command operational war games, and during demonstration, experimental, and other types of exercises. However, they will be maximally effective only if the staff generals take a thoughtful approach to their work and constantly endeavor to display initiative and creativity. The working out by the military district staff of the graphic document form for the first front missile/nuclear strike is an example of the harmonious work of the entire collective. The initiative of the military district officers was supported in the staffs of the armies and divisions.

The process of improving the practical skills of subordinates should be continuous and should progress in sequence from the simple to the more complex. It should not necessarily be limited only to staff training sessions and exercises. 50X1-HUM solving of short problems is of great benefit when all the officers are handed a situation map and told to draw up one or





another combat document within a given time limit without referring to any textbooks.

When staff officers participate in troop training exercises, especially in those that involve field firing, they acquire practical skills in the planning of combat operations. The actual launching of missiles, field firing of artillery, tanks, and small arms, and aviation bombing, increase their competence in fully working out such problems as the planning and delivery of nuclear strikes and the organization and carrying out of preparatory fire and fire support, as well as the organization of cooperation between the combined-arms (tank) large units and units and the rocket troops and aviation.

Periodic courses of instruction are an excellent method of training staff officers. As a rule, however, they are held jointly with the officer training courses even though it is known that staff work has its own specific character and its own principles and work methods, which can only be studied in special courses. It is desirable to allocate for these special courses not only the main category of officers from operational staffs, but also those from the tactical level. In 1966 the first course of this type was held at the army level under the direction of General-Major A. T. Altunin. The results obtained were extremely encouraging.

To a very large extent the level of the field training of the operational staffs is determined by the level of preparedness and the amount of teamwork of the staffs as a whole. To control means to command men efficiently, to unite them in the cause of achieving the overall tasks and objectives, to organize their work wisely, and to coordinate and focus their efforts on the fulfilment of worthwhile tasks. Separate and joint training sessions, operational and command-staff exercises and war games, and special and experimental exercises largely promote the achievement of this.

Separate staff training sessions in our military district headquarters are conducted at the level of departments, directorates, and staffs of branch arms and services; jo50X1-HUM exercises, which include field exercises and the use of communications means, involve the participation of the entire military district (army) headquarters. Staff and operational





command-staff exercises are conducted in the field under the direction of the military district command. The staffs of the armies and of individual large units are usually allocated to take part in them, and in a number of cases troops are allocated as well.

Operational war games on maps play an important role in the training and the organization of teamwork of the operational staffs. They enable generals and senior officers to develop skills in quickly and thoroughly assessing the situation, to make correct decisions, and to develop their operational thinking, volitional qualities and the language of command. The ability to concisely and clearly draw conclusions from assessments of the situation, to make a proposal for employing one or another branch arm in an operation, to competently issue orders or assign tasks -- this is a very valuable quality in a staff officer and general and one which must be continuously cultivated.

Experience shows that when war games are properly organized not only the command personnel of the military district and of the army but also the primary personnel of the operational staffs can and should participate in them. This promotes the organization of teamwork in the work of the command and all the main levels of control. Staff officers gain useful experience in preparing the data used to make the decision, in drawing up the decision, in making various calculations, in drafting combat documents within a short time limit, and in settling questions of cooperation.

Integrated special exercises are conducted for the purpose of organizing the teamwork of the individual levels of control in the military district. They provide an opportunity to work out in detail the problems involved in controlling the rocket troops and the forces and means of air defense, aviation, and the rear; problems of setting up communications, of combating radioelectronic means; etc.

However, the diversity of forms of training cannot alone improve the field training of the operational staffs. Actual results can be achieved only if all the indicated measures are carefully organized and carried out on a high methodological level. During exercises and war games a critical, complex fluid situation must be created which would promote the



development of initiative and creativity in the trainees. The command and staffs should be placed in the position in which they may find themselves at the beginning of a war, while the forces of the sides, their combat readiness, their supply situation and their operational position should conform to the actual situation on the day of the exercise.

It is most desirable to conduct two-sided and two-level and three-level exercises and war games, since the methods of conducting them and their composition complicate the operational situation, increase the responsibility of the commanders and executors, and at the same time promote the organization of teamwork between the operational and tactical levels. To ensure continuity of control, some of the division staffs allocated for operational war games and exercises must be trained at an organizational level that is one step higher than their own. For example, for a number of years the staffs of some of the divisions in the military district have been allocated to take the place of the army organization in front command-staff exercises.

Since the scale of the exercise and the categories of participants have increased, there is a danger that the exercise will be overburdened with a large number of training problems. This can be avoided if these problems are strictly differentiated and a considerable portion of them are worked out in special exercises.

Solving the problems involved in further raising the quality of the field training of the operational staffs does not depend solely on improving the training of staff officers and on organizing the teamwork of the staffs, but also on improving the style and methods of their work.

The main requirement of command and staff work is that it must respond quickly to the situation and immediately affect the course of events. Therefore, any improvement in their style and methods must take the form of reducing the amount of time spent on the most important, labor-consuming processes of controlling combat operations, which constitute the basis for the practical activities involved in the preparation and conduct of operations. Foremost among them are making the decision, drawing it up, assigning the troops their combat tasks, planning the operation,





and collecting and collating data about the situation.

Our experience shows that at the time the commander makes the decision he is usually well acquainted with the situation and foresees possible future developments in it. In connection with this, a few brief reports from specialists on individual questions, or an exchange of opinions with the primary responsible personnel is usually sufficient for the commander to prepare and make his decision.

The decision must be drawn up at the same time that it is made. Parallel to this, the front staff and the chiefs of the branch arms and services transmit the combat tasks to the troops. It is the practice of our staffs to transmit tasks to subordinate troops in the form of brief preliminary instructions sent via technical communications means. In some instances the tasks are assigned orally by the responsible personnel and subsequently confirmed in written combat documents.

It is also advisable to begin planning the operations at the same time that the decision is made. Even while the command is in the process of working, certain elements of the plan of the operation are plotted on the map in the staff, and when necessary, the chiefs of the branch arms and services are called upon to do this. Thus, planning is simultaneously carried out on a broad front at both the operational and the tactical levels.

The planning process at all levels should also be hastened by shortening and simplifying the planning documents. We have done a considerable amount of work along these lines in recent years, but nevertheless operational plans are still quite bulky. Obviously, though, we must return to this problem another time.

Experience shows that the basic operational planning document is the plan of the operation, which is set forth on a map with brief explanatory notes. The main elements of the commander's decision are shown on this map, primarily questions of the organization of the employment of missile/nuclear weapons, aviation, and airborne landing troops; the combat tasks of the troops; methods of destroying the opposing enemy; and also the most important matters of the cooperation of all forces and means.

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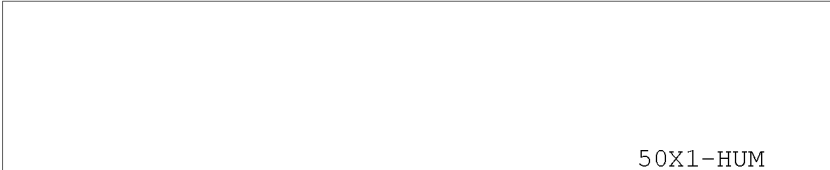


The detailed planning of the employment of the branch arms and services and also the matters of providing support for the operation must, in our opinion, be shown on the maps of the appropriate chiefs of the branch arms and services. They should be allowed to exercise a reasonable amount of independent initiative in resolving these matters.

At the same time the entire existing information reporting system must be radically improved and regulated, for it is based on strict compartmentation, and data sent through the command-staff channels, whether it is sent up from below or vice versa, must pass through numerous levels. This system of obtaining information has long been obsolete. Reporting must now be implemented in such a way that the most important information, first and foremost data on nuclear means of attack and the radiation situation, should be transmitted by the collective call method simultaneously to all command levels in approximately the same way that warning is carried out in the air defense forces.

Information should also be passed more quickly within field headquarters. That the staff officers of different branch arms, services and the rear should receive data on the situation separately is intolerable. A great deal of time must be spent in order to collect all the necessary information in the operations directorate.

Experience shows that the improvement of the work methods of the operational staffs is closely tied to the wide-scale introduction of means of mechanization and automation into control processes and to the changing of the organizational structure of control. At present, technical means of control are being widely used within the rocket troops, aviation, and the air defense system. With few exceptions, however, means of mechanization and automation have not yet been sufficiently utilized in operational staffs. For this reason the effort to reduce the time required to organize and prepare operations is proceeding slowly and any success achieved is primarily the result of severely overburdening the personnel of the control organs. Any minimal changes that have already been made in the organization of the staffs basically amount to a reduction in the number of generals and officers in them. This is hardly the way to achieve mobility in staff work. It would make more sense to

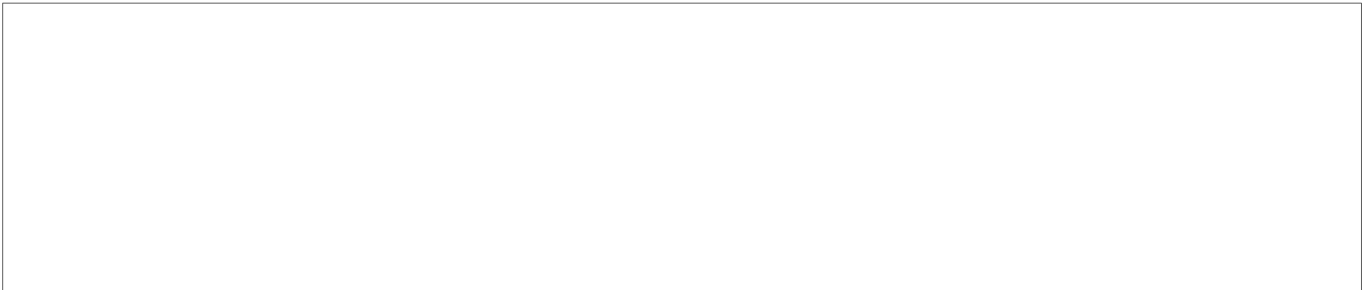




first establish the necessary organization of the control organs, and then reduce the personnel on the basis of mechanization and automation.

Without examining this problem in detail (it merits discussion in a separate article) let us only mention that the organization of the operational staffs should be viewed primarily as the establishment of those control posts that have been provided for in our official guides. The field headquarters of the front and of the army must be structured as though they are made up of control posts so that in time of war, when necessary, they could be deployed quickly to carry out their assigned tasks.

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