

TOP SECRET

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

30 November 1978

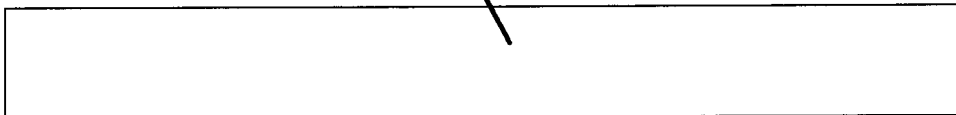
MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Some Problems
of Operational Training

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article presents a number of suggestions on how to improve the operational training of senior officers and staffs at the headquarters level of military districts and groups of forces. The authors' material is based on the training measures and exercises of the Southern Group of Forces in 1962. This article appeared in Issue No. 6 (67) for 1962.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned the CONFIDENTIAL Codeword OSSIAN.

John N. McMahon

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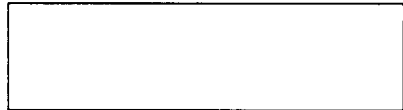




Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 19 Pages

COUNTRY USSR



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SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Some Problems of Operational Training

SOURCE Documentary

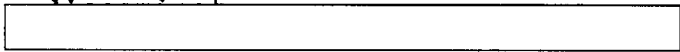
Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 6 (67) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The authors of the article, Colonels A. Andryushchenko and G. Prokopenko, present a number of suggestions on how to improve the operational training of senior officers and staffs at the headquarters level of military districts and groups of forces. The authors' material is based on the training measures and exercises of the Southern Group of Forces in 1962.

End of Summary

Comment:

After 1962 the SECRET version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970.





Some Problems of Operational Training

(According to the Experience of the Southern Group of Forces)

by

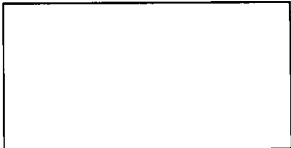
Colonel G. PROKOPENKO
Colonel N. ANDRYUSHCHENKO

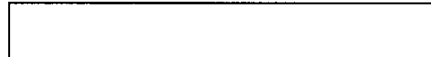
The changing qualitative status of troops and the conditions of conducting armed combat require a new approach to the accomplishment of the tasks of operational training of senior officers, generals, and staffs.

In the first place, operational training must be subordinate to the main task -- ensuring the constant combat readiness of all branches of the armed forces to immediately repel any provocations by an aggressor, to promptly deliver nuclear strikes against him, and, following that, to develop aggressive combat actions with all available forces and means on hand for the purpose of disrupting aggressive plans, seizing the initiative, and decisively defeating the enemy in short time limits.

Acquiring fundamental importance along with this is the further improvement of the methods of planning modern operations and commanding troops during the conduct of combat actions under the conditions of a missile/nuclear war. It is to the accomplishment of these basic tasks that operational training in the headquarters of military districts and groups of forces must be directed.

The planning of operational training. As is known, operational training in the headquarters of military districts (groups of forces) is planned on the basis of the requirements of the directive of the Minister of Defense of the USSR on operational training and an extract from the plan of the basic combat and operational training measures of the General Staff, as well as the instructions of the commander of troops of the district (group of forces). In working out the plan of basic operational training measures, it is necessary to know the tasks which have been set by the Minister of Defense in the order on combat and political training and to know the organizational





instructions of the commanders-in-chief of the branches of the armed forces. It is also necessary to take into consideration the special nature of the situation of the troops of the district or group, their mission according to the deployment plans, the special nature of the theater of military operations, and also the overall training of the generals and officers and the cohesiveness of the staff as a whole.

Thus, for instance, in planning operational training in the Southern Group of Forces in the first years of the existence of the headquarters, primary attention was devoted to working out matters of cooperation among directorates and departments and to organizing the staff of the group as a whole. The planning of operational training in the Southern Group of Forces is always carried out with due regard for the nature of a mountainous and wooded theater of military operations, as well as the special situation of the troops, where they are separated from the probable enemy by the territories of neutral states. Besides that, the field headquarters in the process of operational training may be training as the field headquarters of a front, while as far as the volume of practical tasks to be accomplished every day goes, it does not exceed the limits of an army headquarters. It is especially necessary to take this circumstance into consideration, since it introduces substantial changes into the operational training plan and affects the subject matter of the training program.

Different military districts (groups of forces) have their own specific peculiarities, which naturally have a definite effect on the planning of operational training, mainly on its subject matter.

It is very important that in the operational training plan measures be allocated with due regard for their being conducted evenly in the course of the year. An operational training plan should not be excessively overloaded, since in this case measures are prepared hastily and their results become worse. Besides that, when the plan is encumbered with a large number of measures, the staff of the district (group of forces) will not be able to fulfil one of its most important functions -- instructing subordinate staffs and troops, monitoring their activity, and giving practical assistance on the spot.



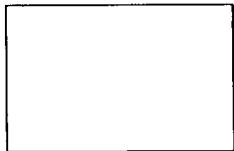


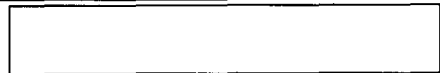
The operational training of generals and officers can be carried out every month by allocating two or three days to it or by the method of assemblies which are conducted usually two or three times during the year for five or six days each. The experience of the Southern Group of Forces has shown that it is more expedient to conduct officer training sessions by means of assemblies. But this does not apply to study sessions in Marxist-Leninist training; lectures and seminars in this should be conducted monthly.

Assemblies make it possible to ensure good attendance and also to achieve more organization in the training process. Thus, for instance, in the winter training period, attendance at study sessions conducted in the officer training system in the headquarters of the Southern Group of Forces came to 96 to 97 percent. But when officer training sessions were conducted monthly, attendance was considerably lower.

When conducted in assemblies, the quality of study sessions, as a rule, will be higher than when study sessions are conducted on separate days. This is explained by the fact that the materials for assemblies are prepared ahead of time with greater care and with the participation of nearly all the command personnel of the district (group of forces). Besides that, with this kind of organization of operational training, generals and officers are given more time and opportunity to work independently on increasing their own military and political knowledge, as well as to offer practical assistance to troops and staffs in their training.

The operational training plan, as experience shows, may consist of the following documents: brief instructions on organization and methods, a calendar plan of the conduct of the basic measures, a program and calculation of the hours of operational training, a monthly plan of the fulfilment of the program in the operational training groups, and a list of the officers in these groups. To it are usually added a plan of the development of training methods material for combat and operational training during the training year, a plan of combined measures to be carried out with the armies of the Warsaw Pact countries, etc.



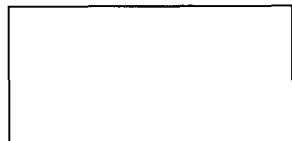


Let us briefly examine the content of each of these documents.

The instructions on organization and methods should not repeat the content of the directive on operational training. It should be mentioned in them what it is necessary to give primary attention to during the training year on the basis of the requirements of the Minister of Defense of the USSR and the inherent peculiarities of each military district (group of forces). In addition, it is necessary to indicate in this document how the operational training is to be organized: the basic methods and techniques of the training sessions, what training groups are to be established, who is to work out training methods material (for operational and tactical training groups) and in what time periods, and the procedure of keeping records and accounts for operational training. In the first section of the calendar plan, all the measures pertaining to the given district and the time limits for carrying them out are extracted from the appendix to the directive on operational training and the order on combat training.

The second and third sections of the plan are worked out with due regard for the time limits for carrying out the measures by higher staffs. Here it is very important that all the training measures for the training of generals, officers, and staffs be carried out gradually from the simple to the complex, and that they be directed towards the accomplishment of the main tasks -- ensuring a high level of combat readiness of troops and staffs under modern conditions.

For example, in the Southern Group of Forces for the 1962 training year, the following basic measures were planned (in addition to the measures carried out by higher staffs and the central directorates of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR): one operational assembly for the command personnel of Group Headquarters, two six-day commanders' assemblies for the generals and officers of the operational training groups, two three- to four-day combined staff training sessions on terrain with communications means, two two-day individual staff training sessions on maps, two command-staff war games on maps with motorized rifle and tank divisions, one short exercise with the command personnel of Group Headquarters, five training sessions





on secure troop control, and one military science conference of the Group.

One of the most important measures of the 1962 training year was a front command-staff exercise. It was conducted according to the plan of the General Staff under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact countries. In the exercise the ability of the field headquarters of the Group to plan a modern operation quickly and efficiently and exercise firm troop control during its conduct was tested.

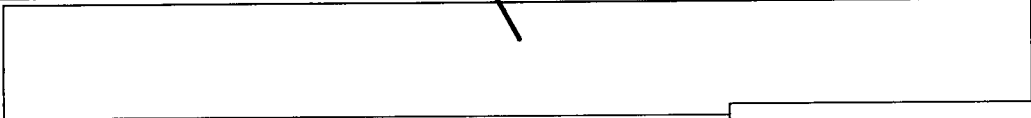
In this exercise the most important problems of a modern operation were studied. Therefore, the planning of all the other training measures of the year were, to a certain extent, subordinated to the accomplishment of this main task.

By way of preparation for the front command-staff exercise projected for April, Group Headquarters planned one operational assembly (in February) at which were conducted a two-stage command-staff war game on the same theme on maps, one combined (in March) and one individual staff training session (at the beginning of April), as well as training sessions on secure troop control.

We believe that such a volume of measures provided for by the operational training plan is normal and, as experience shows, affords the opportunity of ensuring the high-quality development of training methods materials, good attendance at the study sessions, as well as a thorough mastery of theoretical matters by the trainees.

In drawing up the operational training program, it is necessary to make a calculation of the hours, i.e., to determine how many training days and training hours are allocated for the study sessions as a whole, as well as the types of training, and to work out the subject matter with a brief description of the content of each subject and an indication of the methods of study and the time necessary for this.





In the subject section of the program, the subject matter and duration of the combined and individual staff training sessions are given.

In order to ensure the purposeful preparation of generals and officers for the study sessions, it is also advisable to draw up a schedule of these in the assemblies in advance.

A monthly calculation of the training time for studying the matters in the program should be an integral part of the operational training plan. This document is drawn up on the basis of the total time allocated for operational training.

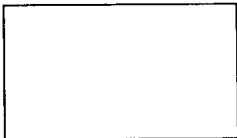
A detailed calculation of training time by months makes it possible to distribute measures evenly throughout the year and for the chiefs of directorates and departments to plan the appropriate special training of officers.

Also being entered into the operational training plan, as has been indicated above, is a list of the generals and officers of the training groups. In the experience of the Southern Group of Forces, for the study sessions on operational training in the headquarters of a district (group of forces) thirteen such groups can be established.

Group No. 1: The director of the group is the commander of the district (group of forces); the deputy director is the first deputy commander. Included in this training group are all the members of the Military Council, the deputy and assistant commanders, the chiefs of branch arms and services, and also the commanders of formations (commanders of large units).

The director of training group No. 2 is the chief of staff of the district (group of forces); the deputy director is the deputy chief of staff. Included in this group are the chiefs of directorates and departments subordinate to the chief of staff, the chiefs of staff of the branch arms and services, and also the chiefs of staff of formations (large units).

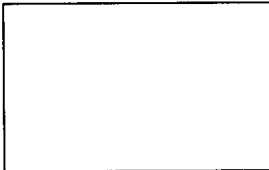
The remaining groups may be formed with the following composition: No. 3 -- operations directorate, military science group, senior officers of the combat training directorate, topographic department; No. 4 -- intelligence directorate

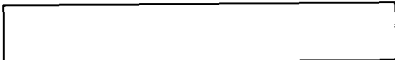




(department); No. 5 -- communications department;
No. 6 -- directorate of the chief of rocket troops and artillery;
No. 7 -- directorate (department) of missile and artillery
armament; No. 8 -- officers of the chief of air defense troops;
No. 9 -- staff of engineer troops; No. 10 -- directorate
(department) of tank armament; No. 11 -- motor vehicle-tractor
service; No. 12 -- chiefs of departments, their deputies, and
senior officers of the staff and services of the rear services
directorate; No. 13 -- senior officers and officers of
departments of the rear services directorate.

The documents which form the appendix to the plan may be
worked out according to the following form:



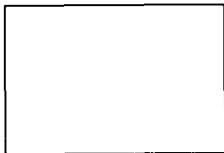


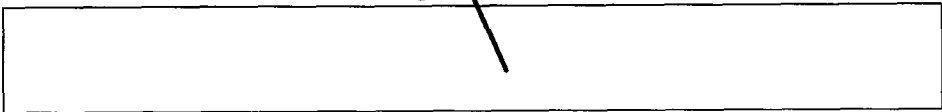
a) Plan of Development of Training Methods Materials for Operational and Combat Training in the Training Year

No.	Designation of Measures	Conducted By	Conducting Time	Preparation Time	Prepared By	Responsible for Preparation	Remarks
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Operational Course for Generals and Officers

1	Lecture, Topic No. 1: "Preparation and Conduct of a Front Offensive in the Initial Period of a War under Conditions of the Employment of Missile/Nuclear Weapons"	Commander, Southern Group of Forces	5.2	25.1	Operations Directorate	Chief of Operations Directorate (rank, name)	
2	etc.						





b) Plan of Combined Measures for Operational and Combat Training of the Southern Group of Forces and the Hungarian People's Army

No.	Measures to Be Conducted	Who is Allocated	Who Conducts	Conducting Time	Remarks
1
2

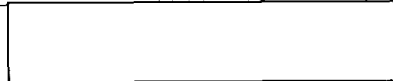
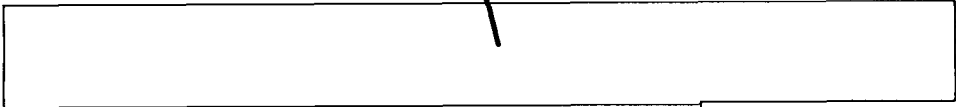
Those, in our opinion, are the most advisable contents of an operational training plan which are intended to ensure the increase of the military theoretical knowledge of generals and officers and the purposeful training of staffs.

Let us dwell in somewhat more detail on the calculation of the hours and the method of conducting the study sessions on operational training.

In the operational training plan of the Southern Group of Forces, much time is given to the study of the problem of an offensive operation of a front and the employment of nuclear, chemical, and missile weapons, as well as the new combat equipment and armament available among the troops.

For studying the organization, armament, methods and nature of enemy actions, and also for studying the combat properties of the nuclear and chemical weapons of our own troops, five hours of lecture and seminar study sessions were planned for each, taking into consideration that these problems would be worked out further in a front command-staff exercise, two combined training sessions, one individual staff training session, and also in troop exercises. However, the experience of the exercises and war games conducted showed that not all of the generals and officers have a firm knowledge of the combat properties and capabilities of nuclear and chemical weapons, nor of the troop organization of the enemy or his combat equipment, especially the tactical-technical specifications of his armament. In connection with this, certain corrections were introduced into the calculation of hours. For instance, to study nuclear and





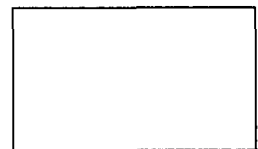
chemical weapons an additional 12 hours were set aside, and to study the enemy, five hours. These changes were reflected in the schedule of the August commanders' assembly for the generals and officers of the field headquarters of the Group of Forces.

However, it is not just a matter of the number of hours devoted to studying the above-mentioned items. We are firmly convinced that one of the basic reasons for the hazy knowledge in this area consists in the fact that the very method of studying the topics and problems is imperfect and does not correspond to the level of training of the generals and officers. Let us clarify this idea in a little more detail.

First, study sessions in operational training, as is known, are conducted in the form of lectures, seminars, small-group exercises, short operational problems, etc. Taking into consideration that most generals and officers have not only a great deal of practical experience in working with troops but also solid theoretical training, at least in the scope of an academy program, one should not, in our opinion, overemphasize lectures. It is necessary to improve their quality, getting away from setting forth well-known principles in a general form, and to stress the innovations that are being introduced into the theory and practice of the conduct of operations by the development of nuclear weapons and other means of combat, by the improvement of the organization of troops, etc.

Second, as is known, the practice still continues of working out for the leader of a seminar activity or small-group exercise a sample methods outline or variant of the solution, which not uncommonly becomes the property of the trainees.

In our opinion, the time has come to decisively put aside such standards and stereotypes, since they do great harm to the quality of operational training. Trainee preparation for the study sessions usually ends with familiarization with the methods outline or the variant of the solution. We believe that in preparing for study sessions it is necessary that every general and officer, be he leader of the study sessions or a trainee, work independently. For it is acknowledged by everyone that the firmest knowledge in any area of learning is achieved only by independent work.





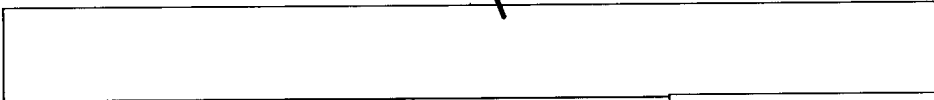
Third, in order to elevate the role of independent work and the quality of operational training, it is necessary to change the method of conducting study sessions, primarily seminar study sessions. It seems to us that the practice existing now, where the plan of a seminar basically amounts to the plan of a given subject that is submitted for discussion as a whole, is out of date and does not justify itself. This is explained by the fact that it is hardly possible in the course of one seminar to discuss a large number of items in depth. Therefore, to conduct a seminar better, only the most important points of a subject should be defined and submitted for discussion. It is necessary to draft a plan of the seminar in conformity with this. On some subjects it is possible that not one, but two study sessions will have to be conducted.

In preparing training methods material for study sessions in the field or in class, it is advisable to work out a more detailed plan of the conduct of these study sessions, a map of the concept, the task, and a map of the initial situation, as well as exercise scenarios (depending on the subject and scale of the study session) typewritten or prepared on a map. For class study sessions it is better to give written exercise scenarios, since this makes it possible to improve the quality of the graphics of the officers and to perfect their skills in properly transferring a situation onto a map. During the conduct of study sessions in the field, exercise scenarios can also be given orally by the director. In emphasizing all these matters, we are not in favor of excessive reliance on small-group exercises. In the system of operational training, as the Minister of Defense requires, command-staff and war games on maps should be practiced more extensively.

Besides the enumerated recommendations pertaining to the method of preparing and conducting study sessions, in our opinion it is necessary to enlarge the role of the independent work of generals and officers and to radically improve it, which will, above all, afford the opportunity of acquiring firm knowledge in different areas of military theory. For this it is obviously necessary to improve the overall organization and, most importantly, exactingness from top to bottom.

In all staffs, for instance, it is advisable to develop special programs annually and present them to every officer and





general with a precise indication of what it is necessary to study and know during the year on the questions of nuclear and chemical weapons, etc. This will undoubtedly have a positive effect on the military-theoretical and military-technical growth of officers and generals and will make it possible for the commander and staffs to more purposefully monitor the progress of independent work and the quality of the study by the generals and officers of the matters assigned them. For the same purposes we propose establishing a systematic method of examinations on the matters to be studied. Till now, as is known, examinations have been conducted very rarely but they have always given positive results.

For example, conducting examinations in the staffs of military districts and groups of forces and armies twice a year, at the end of the winter and summer training periods, will, in our opinion, be even more advisable. In the staffs of corps and divisions, such examinations should be conducted four times a year, i.e., every quarter, while in a regiment, battalion, company, and platoon -- at least once every two months.

It should be mentioned that the proposed method of conducting study sessions does not follow the academy forms of training officers and generals and may not be fully acceptable for the students of military academies, where there are special conditions determined by the makeup of the student body and the training curriculum. But for the professors and instructors of academies and military schools this method of conducting operational training sessions is, in our opinion, perfectly suitable.

Improving the forms and methods of the operational training of generals and officers by promoting the extensive development of their independent work and the increase of their knowledge of military theory will also ensure an increase in the combat readiness of troops and staffs.

The composition of the staff of the directing body. In the practice of the conduct of operational training measures, the staff of the directing body is often made up of persons in secondary positions. In the process of developing training methods materials for exercises or war games, and during the conduct of the latter, they are not in a position to





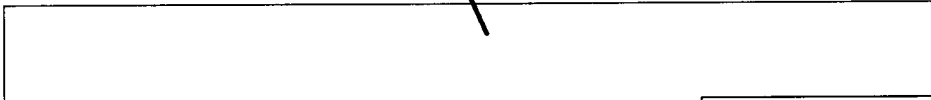
independently decide matters pertaining to the use, on the scale of a front (army), of any one branch arm in an operation. These officers turn to their superiors for consultations, thereby partially or completely violating the secrecy of the development.

It seems to us that the staff of the directing body must be formed according to a different principle. Thus, for example, when the commander of a district (group of forces) is conducting a combined staff training session on terrain with means of communications or a war game on maps, in the composition of the staff of the directing body there can be chiefs of directorates, departments, and services. In this case, in the exercises their deputies will act in the role of the corresponding chiefs of directorates, services, and departments of the field headquarters of the front.

When conducting a front command-staff exercise, it is advisable to include the chiefs of the main directorates, services, and departments in the composition of the staff of the directing body, while the chiefs themselves will in this case act in the corresponding roles of players (trainees). This method of forming the staff of the directing body will, in our opinion, make it possible to improve the development of materials and, besides that, train and prepare the deputies of the corresponding chiefs of directorates, services, and departments for a higher grade. This will also ensure the more organized, purposeful, and instructive conduct of the exercise or staff training session.

In examining this question, it is also necessary to emphasize that under the conditions of the Southern Group of Forces, based on our experience, it is also advisable to include in the staff of the directing body the officers of the appropriate staffs of the operational formations of the Hungarian People's Army, since these staffs nearly always act in the role of trainees in the operational training measures that are conducted. The presence of officers of the Hungarian People's Army in the composition of the staff of the directing body affords the opportunity to improve the cooperation of the two fraternal armies and permits better treatment of matters requiring a joint solution during both the preparation and the conduct of the exercises. With this, we endeavor to include in the staff of the directing body officers who know the Russian language. It seems that this measure in all respects deserves





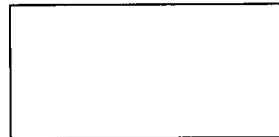
the attention of other groups of forces and military districts.

The composition of the staff of the directing body should not be too abbreviated (as it often is), excluding from it, for instance, a few officer specialists of the branch arms and services. A directing-body staff of limited strength is not in a practical position to role-play the situation well enough for all the services and staffs of the branch arms of a front (army). Thus, in one of the combined staff training sessions conducted on terrain with communications means, there were no officers in motor transport service, tank armament, and some other specialties in the composition of the staff of the directing body. As a result, this led to the fact that during the training session considerable difficulties were encountered in building up the situation.

The directing-body staff to be set up in a front command-staff exercise, or during the conduct of a combined staff training session on terrain with communications means, in our opinion, should include as a minimum, besides the chief of staff of the directing body, an operations and intelligence department (four to five men) and officer specialists (one officer from the staff of each branch arm and service). Altogether in the composition of the staff of the directing body there may be 18 to 20 men, not counting the workers of the secret part of the role-playing groups and the umpire organization.

Removal of the operational training department from the composition of the operations directorate of the staff of the district (group of forces). According to its purpose and functional responsibilities, the operational training department of the operations directorate of the staff of a district (group of forces) in practical activity, as we know, occupies itself mainly with the planning of the operational training of generals, officers, and staffs, with monitoring of the organization of training in the headquarters of a district (group of forces), with the development of training methods materials for operational training measures, and also directly with the implementation of these measures.

Experience shows that, for a considerable part of the time, the operational training department works immediately under the direction of the chief of staff or the commander of the district





(group), bypassing the chief of the operations directorate. This is explained by the fact that most of the matters to be decided by the operational training department, especially when developing training methods materials for operational exercises, war games, and staff training sessions, must be kept in strict secrecy from the trainees, including the officers of the operations directorate. As is known, the operational training department prepares the critique of exercises and training sessions, in which are noted the shortcomings in the work of the trainees, including the chief of the operations directorate. It turns out that the chief and officers of the operational training department during exercises and games are, as it were, above their own superiors, acting in point of fact in the role of representatives of the higher staff. But, insofar as this phenomenon is temporary and after the exercise the operational training department again returns to the immediate subordination of the chief of the operations directorate, certain conflicts can arise.

In our opinion, by virtue of what has been set forth, it is advisable to remove the operational training department from the operations directorate and subordinate it directly to the chief of staff of the district (group of forces). In connection with this, in peacetime there can be, as it seems to us, in a district (group of forces) not an operations directorate, but an operations department according to the presently existing tables of organization, excluding the operational training department.

The connection between operational training and tactical training of troops. In our opinion, these matters deserve definite attention on the part of the command personnel of districts and groups of forces. In the practice of operational training, just as in the practice of troop training and indoctrination, the fulfilment of appropriate training programs is carried out from the simple to the complex, i.e., in a definite order, and this is provided for in the plans and schedules drawn up, of course, separately for operational and tactical training.

But, in a number of cases, operational and tactical training can be combined. Let us assume, for example, that in a district (group of forces) it is planned to conduct a combined staff training session on terrain with communications means or conduct





a front command-staff exercise. In the final stage of the exercise, or during its conduct, it is quite possible to include a divisional or regimental exercise with troops. There is nothing wrong with this, and the utility will be great both for the troops themselves and for the operational staffs. The staffs of the districts and groups of forces will have an opportunity to try out certain operational-tactical norms on the troops in a realistic and practical manner, research new questions of tactics and operational art, control troops, get to know them better, etc. And the troops will be performing against the background of a definite operational situation. Under the conditions of the Southern Group of Forces this ought to be practiced all the more, since here there are opportunities to carry out the above-mentioned measures with the participation of the troops of the Hungarian People's Army.

As long as the headquarters of some districts (groups), in regard to the volume of everyday practical tasks to be accomplished, do not go beyond the bounds of an army headquarters, in the development of the subject matter of operational training the study of a number of tactical subjects should be stipulated for officers and generals studying in operational training groups, as this will permit them to competently render practical assistance to troops in the organization and conduct of tactical and command-staff divisional and regimental exercises and will prevent a gap between operational training and the tactical training of troops.

In the present article we have set for ourselves the goal of exchanging experience on the problems of the organization and conduct of operational training measures and also of expressing a number of suggestions which, in our opinion, can improve the system of training of generals, senior officers, and staffs.

