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**STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT**

MAJ. ALLAN A. MYER

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SOVIET MILITARY  
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FOREWORD

This special report was written by Major Allen A. Myer, Class of 1975. The report highlights criticisms of the Soviet Army in nontechnical fields as expressed in selected Soviet military publications. While not conclusive in itself the report shows that the Soviet Army - like all armies - faces practical problems in training, motivation, discipline, etc.)

Major Myer was assisted by Mr. Gregory M. Victorov, Professor of Military Sciences who provided the initial research for Voennyi Vestnik, Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil, and Tyl i Snabzhenie. Mr. Vyacheslav P. Artemiev, Professor of Military Sciences (Retired) provided the initial research for Krasnaya Zvezda.

△ This report is intended as a limited pilot project. It is envisioned that an expanded report covering selected Soviet military journals for the calendar year will be published on an annual basis. ☆

  
RICHARD P. KELLY  
LTC, MI  
Commander

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## P R E F A C E

This paper examines Soviet press treatment of current shortcomings and problem areas in nontechnical fields of the Soviet Army. Although the publishing organs of the Soviet Ministry of Defense consistently project all aspects of the Soviet military in an overwhelmingly favorable light, specific areas of concern to the military leadership do filter through the censorship and propaganda screen. Virtually all print in open Soviet military journals and newspapers is highly laudatory. The reader is left with the conclusion that the Soviet soldier is a highly trained, well-motivated, fearless warrior led by exceptionally qualified leaders and equipped with modern efficient material means of combat -- the ultimate fighting machine fortified with dauntless communist dedication. This study neither attempts to disprove this image nor does it take issue with the methods of Soviet press management. It simply goes beyond the intended projection and examines a very small percentage of published criticisms.

Despite the very discriminatory selection process, the significance of the resulting data base should not be underestimated. The open Soviet press maintains a guarded posture when reporting on vital government institutions and organizations. This is particularly true of all defense and defense-related topics. The invincibility of the Soviet military force has been and remains a basic theme in daily Soviet life. Since a specific task of the news media is to portray a strong, cohesive, fully competent military force, negative comments and derogatory information in otherwise flattering articles acquire a special meaning. These published criticisms are not sins of omission or commission; rather they are deliberate. They also serve as the data base for this study.

The following open, unclassified Soviet sources have been used as the basis for this research document:

**\*\*Voennyi Vestnik (Military Herald) Issues 1-12, 1974.**  
A monthly army journal which concentrates its effort on military training, combat and combat support functions and military leadership. The primary target audience is the regular and reserve officer corps of the army.

Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil (Communist of the Armed Forces). Issues 1-24, 1974. A semimonthly military journal which disseminates Party policy and provides current interpretation of political theory, discusses political work and political organization in the Armed Forces and analyzes questions of military training and education. The primary target audience is commanders, political workers, propagandists and Party activists.

Tyl i Snabzhenie Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil (The Rear and Supply of the Soviet Armed Forces) Issues 1-12, 1974. A monthly military journal which concentrates its effort on support organizations and systems of the Rear. The primary target audience is regular and reserve officers of the Armed Forces and specialists in combat service support fields.

Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star). Issues 230-305, 1 October-31 December 1974. The daily newspaper of the Ministry of Defense which discusses general military topics and questions of international politics and national events. Red Star is intended for the general civilian population and all military members.

Source selection provides representative coverage of the major aspects of Soviet life exclusive of technical matters. Appendix 1 indicates the range of topics included in the source material. No attempt has been made to collate data from this research with any other collection effort, independent research project or with other publications. Conclusions drawn in this paper result solely from the analysis of data extracted from the above listed sources. Reference to other Soviet sources are included only in those instances when necessary to place a topic in proper perspective.



## PRAPORSHCHIK

On 1 January 1972, the Soviet Army initiated a new personnel program which created a new rank - the praporshchik. In conjunction with the new Soviet universal military service law of 1968 and coupled with the reintroduction of the EME extended Service Program in May 1973, these new programs are intended to modernize the enlisted seniority system and to attract more and better qualified leaders and technical specialists to enlisted careers. In relation to the U.S. military grade structure, the transliterated term praporshchik is a rank which combines the warrant officer and super-enlisted grade systems. Procurement is from the enlisted ranks. Praporshchiks are assigned to special or technical units as station chiefs, technicians or instructors. They also fill leadership positions as unit first sergeants and platoon commanders. The Soviet press habitually refers to the praporshchik as "the closest assistants of the officer corps." The perceived importance of this new rank was highlighted in January 1973 when the Soviet Minister of Defense, Marshal A.A. Grechko was the keynote speaker at an "All-Army Conference of Praporshchiks." His appearance at the conference focused attention on the new rank and demonstrated the military's concern for the success of the program.<sup>1</sup> However, during 1974, the praporshchik did not receive any dramatic press treatment. This comes as no surprise. The program is still in its infancy and experiencing growing pains. Until the military leadership feels that the praporshchik concept is truly functional, press treatment will be low-key. Yet it is clear that significant growing pains exist, both in training and in utilization.

Training of praporshchik candidates is accomplished at academies located in each of the 16 military districts of the Soviet Union. Comments from the field provide an insight into current shortcomings:

"Recently, some people are paying little attention to selection criteria for praporshchik candidates--- Some candidates are being accepted with an insufficient educational background, with a low performance record and with low moral qualities... Commanders are more concerned with filling quotas than with meeting quality requirements."<sup>2</sup>



An instructor at one of the academies complained in Red Star that praporshchik candidates are not completing homework requirements as a result, "their schoolwork has been slipping."<sup>3</sup> Classroom problems were also mentioned by MG V. Mosyaikin. Noting that the "Praporshchik rank is beset with problems of a political training nature," he concluded that,

"The education level of praporshchiks is lower than that of officers and commanders have not adjusted teaching methods. Some Praporshchiks still have not grasped theoretical foundations."<sup>4</sup>

Then, in an editorial, Red Star reported that "a number of praporshchik candidates have been dismissed from schools in several military districts."<sup>5</sup> Job performance indicators similarly testify to the growing pains of the new rank.

\*\* "There is more trouble with praporshchiks than with sergeants... New praporshchiks are better technicians than leaders, but they are needed as leaders."<sup>6</sup>

\*\* "Some praporshchiks improve their professional development slowly, do not require high performance from their subordinates, and some violate military discipline."<sup>7</sup>

\*\* "A good many praporshchiks serve as company first sergeants and platoon leaders. They include many former enlisted men and NCO's. Naturally, they sometimes are short on command and method skills. They also have limited life experience."<sup>8</sup>

This blunt assessment seems to portray an important, new manpower program undergoing normal problems of implementation. Despite advertisements to the contrary, it is clear that the praporshchik has not been a quick fix. Modernizing the enlisted grade structure and simultaneously effecting qualitative improvement in technical skills and leadership capabilities of the enlisted ranks remain a long-term process.

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<sup>1</sup>"Vsearmeiskoe soveshchanie praporshchikov i michmanov" (All-Army Conference of Praporshchiks and Midshipmen) Krasnaya Zvezda, 31 January 1973, p.3.

<sup>2</sup>Major General V. Mosyaikin (Deputy Chief of Political Directorate, Turkistan Military District) "Stanovlenie praporshchikov: Problemy, poiski, opyt" (The Making of Praporshchiks: Problems, Search, Experience) Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil. Number 16 (August 1974), p.46. The need to improve selection criteria was also voiced in an unsigned article in Red Star on 20 October 1974. "The performance of praporshchiks indicates that selection criteria needs to be raised." "Stanovlenie praporshchikov" (The Making of Praporshchiks) Krasnaya Zvezda. 20 October 1974, p.3.

<sup>3</sup>LTC V. Vugin (Instructor, Military Academy, Kiev) "Vse zavisit ot propagandista" (Everything Depends on the Propagandist) Krasnaya Zvezda. 9 October 1974, p.2.

<sup>4</sup>Mosyaikin, p.43.

<sup>5</sup>"Shkoly praporshchikov i michmanov" (Praporshchik and Midshipmen Schools) (Editorial) Krasnaya Zvezda. 14 November 1974, p.1.

<sup>6</sup>Colonel V. Kalinin "Praporshchik - prezhdе vsego, komandir, spetsialist." (The Praporshchik - First of all, a Commander, a Specialist) Voennyi Vestnik Number 11.1974 p.100.

<sup>7</sup>"Stanovlenie Praporshchikov" p.3.

<sup>8</sup>MG A. Nekrasov "Rastet masterstvo praporshchikov" (Praporshchiks Improve Skills) Voennyi Vestnik, Number 9.1974 (September 1974), p.63.



## POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE ARMY

The Communist Party leadership has developed a complex but highly integrated system of political control which seeks to penetrate every aspect of army life. The system, designed to strengthen the political reliability and loyalty of the military force, is composed of two parallel hierarchies which operate side by side with the professional military command. Both hierarchies interact with the military chain of command but remain as separate entities with their own independent chain of command. The first which may be called punitive, consists of the military department of the KGB. Operating through so-called special or counter-intelligence sections, it is principally oriented to the prevention of political dissidence and disloyalty in the military. Since no mention of this hierarchy is made in open press sources, it falls beyond the scope of this study. The second hierarchy which may be called political, consists of the Political workers and the network of Party and Komsomol organizations. Control is centered in the Main Political Administration (GPU) which functions both as a part of the Ministry of Defense and as the Military Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Its responsibilities embrace all propaganda and educational activities in the army, including the supervision of Communist Party and Komsomol organizations. The general tasks assigned to these military party organizations are defined by formal statutes and include:

1. Educating the military in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism.
2. Reinforcing discipline.
3. Mobilizing personnel to fulfill tasks in political and military training.
4. Mobilizing personnel in the impeccable execution of their military duty and strict compliance with orders and directives issued by their commanders.

From these specific tasks, it is clear that the political leadership expects the carefully structured political hierarchy within the armed forces to play a leading role in the context of force reliability and military preparedness. However, demonstrated performance and structure effectiveness have received harsh criticism during



1974. Senior military officers repeatedly describe relatively widespread deficiencies in political affairs and ideological training. Ranging from the usual minor administrative irritants of inaccurate reporting practices and lax inspecting procedures to critical problem areas of disinterest and unsatisfactory job performance, the image projected is that maintenance of an effective political arm within the military structure requires constant attention and substantial investment of monetary and manpower resources. Commenting on the core of the system, the individual military Party member, Lieutenant General I. Repin, First Deputy Chief of the Political Directorate, Soviet Ground Forces reports that not all is well:

"We still encounter military personnel who do not honor the lofty title of Communist, who do not justify that title with deeds. There are also some Communists in the military who participate little in the discussion, elaboration and implementation of party decisions and who show a passive attitude in personnel training and indoctrination."<sup>2</sup>

Another Soviet general, while addressing a similar theme, seems to exhibit anger when assessing the state of political affairs:

"The Party has many members who do not act against the forces of inertness, against members who act only with old methods or perform perfunctorily... We have those who do not match words with deeds... We have those who substitute tedious organizational work with noise..."<sup>3</sup>

Problem areas discussed by Soviet authors touch upon nearly all aspects of political life of the Soviet soldier. Fifty-one articles reviewed in this study mention specific unsatisfactory job performance indicators. A further breakdown shows that twelve areas fall well below Soviet expectations. These are:

Lack of interest/poor attitude	26	adverse	comments
Job performance not goal-oriented	22	"	"
Required actions not being accomplished	12	"	"
Insufficient control measures by higher Party organs	11	"	"
Absence of a sense of responsibility	10	"	"
Completed Plans not acted upon	10	"	"
Improper internal organization	9	"	"
Lack of Initiative	9	"	"

Poor coordination between political and military components	8	adverse	comments
Shortcomings in propaganda activities	7	"	"
Insufficient attention to detail	5	"	"
Low criteria for selection of political activists	4	"	"

These adverse comments from the field are, at times, vivid accusations and colorful print.

\*\*\* "Particular concern is called to the fact that some reports do not give honest estimates of negative results. And sometimes reality is decorated, and truthful affairs hidden."<sup>4</sup>

\*\* "Some party workers are running from their responsibilities."<sup>5</sup>

\*\* "Too often, people worry more about the form than the substance of political work."<sup>6</sup>

\*\* "When questioned as to his poor performance record, one party member gave this explanation, "I didn't complete the first assignment and they never gave me a second assignment." In a neighboring unit, the party organization had similar problems. "An investigation revealed that in the party organization headed by Major A. Khristoforov, only 38% of the members had received and completed their assignments."<sup>7</sup>

As telling as these excerpts may be, they still do not disclose the most critical problem area in the field of political affairs - that of political education and indoctrination. In terms of adverse press disclosures, this area has been the target of severe criticism by a broad sector of the military leadership. The effort to mold the Soviet conscript into a model soldier, instilled with a Party-defined communist ethic, proudly appreciative of the Soviet heritage and motivated with a deep sense of moral responsibility toward his service obligations, is a continuous and costly process. It seeks to influence attitudes and behavior according to precise Party definitions. Propaganda is used widely and the soldier is saturated with radio broadcasts, newspapers, lectures, discussion groups, films, TV



programs and reading groups; all of which are designed to convey the appropriate perception of the Soviet role in world affairs, recount the glorious traditions of the "Great Patriotic War" and to inspire the individual soldier to assume his place in a greater Communist destiny. However, formal political classes serve as the principal ingredient in the diverse mix of indoctrination techniques. All Soviet soldiers are required to attend political classes—two two-hour classes per week augmented by periodic seminar sessions, guest lecturers and round-table discussions). In garrison and in the field, political education remains an integral element of all training schedules. But, again, performance falls far short of standards. It is not a question of inadequate programs, force structure, organization or resource allocation. These elements seem to be more than adequate. The problem is one of quality rather than quantity, a lack of interest rather than a lack of programs. As one Soviet writer explains, "political education suffers from a lack of creativity, initiative and aggressiveness. Political training is stilted without reference to today's tasks... It is all connected to negligence and to deficiencies in individual discipline"<sup>8</sup> An analysis reveals that of thirty seven articles which specifically address deficiencies in political education, eleven subject areas are currently viewed as conspicuous weaknesses.

Unsatisfactory instructor preparation for Class Presentation	13	adverse	comments
Poor quality of instruction	12	"	"
Lack of interest/negative attitude - instructors	10	"	"
Lack of interest/negative attitude - students	9	"	"
Insufficient time devoted to political education	6	"	"
Insufficient study of original sources	5	"	"
Lack of supervisory control	4	"	"
Insufficient training aids	4	"	"
Not relating to current requirements	3	"	"
Outdated teaching methods	3	"	"
Lack of research material	2	"	"

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<sup>1</sup>"Rules of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" adopted by the XXII Party Congress, 30 October 1961 and amended by the XXIII Party Congress, 8 April 1966, Article 65.



- <sup>2</sup>LTG I. Repin "Tvoi partiinyi bilet" (Your Party Card) Voennyi Vestnik Number 9 (September 1974) p.5.
- <sup>3</sup>LTG M. Sobolev (Chief of Directorate for organizational-party work, GPU, Soviet Army) "Sila partiinoi raboty v deistvitelnosti" (Strength of Party Work in its Activity) Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil. November 5 (March 1974) pp.21-23. In the same article, LTG Sobolev recounts the results of an inspection of a motorized rifle division party organization headed by Colonel G.F. Mosevkin with this summary, "When reviewing the Colonel's plans, everything appeared to be in excellent condition. Party political measures were planned to support the tasks associated with combat readiness. However, much of the plan remained on paper or was being carried out with little effort and insufficient preparation. Their work suffered from a common character - not addressing the main problems which needed the party's attention and strength." p.23. One can only surmise the fate of Colonel Mosevkin.
- <sup>4</sup>Colonel V. Lomov "Puls Zhizni" (The Pulse of Life) Krasnaya Zvezda. Issue 251 (25 October 1974), p.3.
- <sup>5</sup>LTC D. Timerkhanov (Chief of unnamed Division Political Department) "Politrabotnikam PODRAZDELENII-vnimanie i Pomoshch'" (Attention and Help to the Political Workers of Units) Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil Number 9 (May 1974) p. 32.
- <sup>6</sup>LTG S. Bobylev (Chief of Political Directorate, Leningrad Military District) "Partiinoe Sobranie-Kollektivnyi Vospitateli Kommunistov" (The Party Meeting - Collective Educator of Communists) Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil. Number 23 (December 1974) p. 52.
- <sup>7</sup>LTC M. Amelichkin (Inspector, Political Directorate, Group of Soviet Forces in Germany) "Kazhdomy Kommunisty - Konkretnoe Delo" (To Every Communist - A Specific Pursuit) Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil. Number 4 (February 1974) p. 47.
- <sup>8</sup>Colonel N. Pilipchuk "Propaganda Boevykh Traditsii Na Polit-zanyatiyakh" (Propaganda of Combat Traditions in Political Studies) Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil, Number 8 (September 1974), p. 70.

## APPENDIX 1: Content Review of Soviet Sources

1. Voennyi Vestnik (Military Herald). A monthly journal, published by the publishing house of the Ministry of Defense. Published since 1921. In 1960 scope of journal was expanded when TANKIST, The Artillery Journal, The Military Communicator and The Military Engineer Journal were incorporated into Military Herald.

**Target Audience:** Regular and Reserve Officers of the Land Forces and Candidates at military service schools.

**Purpose of Journal:** Explanation and interpretation of activities of the Communist Party and Soviet Government in the following fields: Military force development, theory and practice of land force combat, the roles of each arm of the army in combat, methods of instruction and education of military personnel, and familiarization with the tactics, armament and experience of foreign armies.

### Contents - Issue 1-12, 1974

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Number of Articles</u>
1. Editorials and articles on general political and military subjects	18
2. Personnel, Deeds, Reflections (WW II history)	19
3. Tactical Training (Motorized Infantry and Armor)	62
4. Development of Young Officers	10
5. Theory of Tactics	34
6. Airborne Forces	21
7. Military Schools	11
8. Political Education & Party-Political Work	13
9. Missiles and Artillery	40



<u>Topics (Cont'd)</u>	<u>Number of Articles</u>
10. Air Defense	27
11. Individual Weapon Training	10
12. Engineer	20
13. Communications	17
14. Chemical	17
15. Other Socialist Armies	11
16. Articles on Armies of the West	14

2. Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil (Communist of the Armed Forces). A semimonthly military-political journal published by the publishing house of the Ministry of Defense under the supervision of the Main Political Administration (GPU) of the Army and Navy. Published since 1920 under various titles with the current title established in 1960.

Target Audience: Commanders, political workers, propagandists (information specialists) and Party and Komsomol activities.

Purpose of Journal: Dissemination of Marxist-Leninist theory and policies of the Communist Party, discussion of questions regarding the building of Communism and political work in the Armed Forces, information concerning the victories of the Soviet people, successes of other socialist states, problems of the world communist movement and the revolutionary battle of workers of nonsocialist countries, as well as information relative to military training and education.

#### Contents - Issues 1-24, 1974

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Number of Articles</u>
1. Editorials	28
2. Political Training of Officers	22
3. History of World War II	8
4. The economic plans of the Soviet Union	17
5. Military Education	43
6. Work of Political Organizations in the Military	40



Topics (Cont'd)

Number of Articles

7. Work of Komsomol Organizations in the Military	36
8. Ideological Work	37
9. Leadership by Political Activists	26
10. Other Socialist Armies	11
11. The International Political Scene	19
12. Others	34

3. Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star). A daily military and general political newspaper published by the publishing house of the Ministry of Defense. Published since 1924.

Target Audience: All military servicemen and the general civilian population.

Purpose of Newspaper: Discussion of events in the Soviet Union and abroad, to inform the reader of various aspects of current military science and policies of the Communist Party regarding the military, to publicize past military victories and to discuss general military topics and questions of international politics.

4. Tyl i Snabzhenie Sovetskih Vooruzhennykh Sil (The Rear and Supply of the Soviet Armed Forces). A monthly journal published by the publishing house of the Ministry of Defense. Published since 1939.

Target Audience: Regular and Reserve Officers of the Soviet Armed Forces, specialists in combat service support fields and candidates at military service schools.

Purpose of Journal: Explanation and interpretation of activities of the Communist Party and Soviet Government in the following fields: policies of the Communist Party, the status of military, political and specialized arms of the Soviet Armed Forces, methods of instruction and education of personnel, as well as activities of support organizations of the rear.

Contents - Issues 1-12, 1974

Topics

Number of Articles

1. Editorials and Articles pertaining to the decisions of the XXIV CPSU Congress and efforts for their fulfillment	19
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<u>Topics (Cont'd)</u>	<u>Number of Articles</u>
2. Current economic plans of the Soviet Union	18
3. Military, Political and Specialized Training	39
4. Military Service Schools	5
5. Junior Officers, Praporshchiks, NCO's and the question of leadership	31
6. Medical Service, Finance, Quartermaster, Troop Garrisons and the material well-being of the Force	43
7. Rear Supply Warehouse and Depot Operations	12
8. Komsomol Activities	5
9. Lines of Communication, Transport and Technical Services	45
10. Technical Information	6
11. World War II History	13
12. Other Socialist Armies	7