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SOVIET WAR EXPERIENCE:

A Deception Case Study

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A DECEPTION CASE STUDY

Introduction

"In contemporary conditions, when at the same time that the scale of war grows and reconnaissance capabilities also improve, it is very difficult to mask the preparations of large operations. However, to conceal their true scale, especially the direction of undertaken measures, the concept and direction of the main blow, and the beginning time of active operations...is a quite real mission, which must be at the center of attention of military theoreticians, all commanders, staffs, and political organs."

M.M. Kir'yan, Vnezapnost' v nastupatel'nykh operatsiyakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny
[Surprise in offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War], 1986

↙ Maskirovka [deception] has always been a primary consideration in Soviet planning and conduct of military operation. Combat experience has demonstrated that successful maskirovka yields surprise and hence marked advantage over the enemy.

Soviet concern for maskirovka dates to the pre-Second World War years when military theorists worked out the theoretical basis for its conduct and real measures for its implementation on the battlefield. By the late 1930s Soviet planners at front and army level were expected to employ maskirovka planning in each military operation. Specifically planners prepared extensive operational maskirovka plans which tied specific measures and techniques to a single set of deception aims.

During the initial phases of the Great Patriotic War (Russo-German War) combat circumstances associated with wholesale German success prevented widespread Soviet use of maskirovka planning. However, in 1942 when the momentum of war began swinging in the

cont.

Soviet's favor that planning began anew. As was the case in other areas it would take considerable practice before those plans would realize their full potential.

The attached document is taken from a Soviet general staff analysis of war experiences. It contains a early Soviet maskirovka plan and a critique of how well the plan worked.



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MASKIROVKA SUPPORT OF AN OFFENSIVE OPERATION

The success of an operation depends, to a large extent, on the unexpectedness of the activities. Secrecy of preparation of one's operation and inflicting a surprise strike constitute one of the most important conditions for the achievement of victory.

Practical experience shows that a plan for operational maskirovka (translator's note: maskirovka is the entirety of measures taken in order to deceive the enemy with regard to one's intentions; although often translated simply as "camouflage", this is only one of the components that makes up maskirovka) is established together with the decision-making for the operation by the command group. The sum total of measures on operational maskirovka is set forth in a corresponding plan, which is a necessary addendum to the general plan of the operation.

Included in the plan for maskirovka measures are the maskirovka missions at the individual stages of preparation and individual periods of battle, the nature of the maskirovka measures, the place and time for carrying them out, and the chiefs responsible for carrying out these measures.

Below is printed a review of the maskirovka support of an operation on the Northwest Front in July, 1942, compiled from materials of the staff of the engineer troops of the front. The material is of serious interest, and its study gives command personnel initial data for practical work in this field.

Mission of the Operation and Maskirovka Decision

From 10-22 July 1942, the troops of the 11th Army conducted an operation to penetrate the enemy defense for the purpose of completing the encirclement of his Demiansk formation.

The operation consisted of three stages: preparation of the penetration from 10-16 July; penetration of the enemy defense from 17-19 July; elimination of the enemy Zaluka formation and occupation of the initial position on the Demiansk axis from 20-22 July.

The maskirovka decision for the operation consisted of concealing the direction of the main strike in the center and on the front of the 11th Army, while, at the same time, simulating strikes on the front of the 34th and 27th Armies and concealing the transfer of troops from the front of the 53d Army (see map). The following measures were proposed to support the maskirovka plan:

concealing the movement and concentration of units in the zone of the 11th Army by means of organizing night marches, camouflaging areas of concentration, and strict observation of maskirovka discipline;

indicating a false concentration on no less than two divisions and one tank group in the zone of the 34th Army, and the same number of troops in the zone of the 27th Army;

indicating an increase of rail and automobile transport on paths leading to the false areas of concentration;

indicating an increase of artillery means on sectors of false strikes;

activating air and troop reconnaissance on sectors of false offensive activities;

organizing operation of false radio means (radio demonstration);

concealing the transfer of units from the front of the 53d Army by means of leaving behind dummy tanks, artillery and materiel after the withdrawal of the units in the areas of their deployment, and by means of indicating daily troop activity and continuing the operation of radio networks of two rifle divisions and two tank brigades;

transferring units from the front of the 53d Army only at night, in individual groups of up to a company, taking the necessary maskirovka measures.

A plan of maskirovka measures, on the basis of which detailed plans of maskirovka support of the operation were assembled by chiefs of the engineer troops of the armies, was developed by the operations section of the front staff, together with the staff of engineer troops, in accordance with the maskirovka decision that was made.

Maskirovka work was carried out by the 40th maskirovka company and specially allotted sapper subunits. Rifle units and subunits were designated to indicate false troop concentrations.

Execution of Maskirovka Measures

In accordance with the maskirovka plan, enormous work was done in the units of the 34th Army. In order to indicate false concentrations of infantry in the regions of the 171st and 163d rifle divisions, 670 campfires were lit. For this purpose, by day, pots of non-toxic smoke were used, for which 420 smoke pots were used up. Infantry movement was simulated by forces ranging from a platoon to a company. On the edges of the forest dummy carriages were set up, up to 30 pieces in groups, and there were indicators of everyday trash in deployment areas. Three storage depots were made, with approach roads of 1000 linear meters to them.

There were 29 false fire positions and approach roads to them indicated, for which 99 dummy guns of various calibers were

constructed and set up, and 26 simulation artillery rounds were produced. In addition to this, roving guns, which, after producing 1-2 rounds, were replaced by dummies, were allotted.

To indicate false tank concentrations, 80 dummy tanks were prepared and set up. Three tractors operated in the area of concentration of dummy tanks. In accordance with the plan, four radio networks consisting of four radio stations each, and one tank radio network consisting of two radio stations were organized and operated. Work concerning netting and exchange of radiograms was carried out in the networks: in all, 352 radiograms (11,324 groups) were transmitted and received.

In the region of the Mury station, 5 empty troop trains were supplied; on 20 July a troop train was shelled from a 150-mm gun (9 shells). The movement of a column of 15 vehicles was organized to intensify autotransport on the route Valdai, Dvoretz, Semenovshchina, Iamnitsa from 2300 on 14 July until 0200 on 15 July. From 0200 to 0900 this column moved from Iamnitsa to Valdai. The same was repeated at night on 16 July. During the dark part of the day there was movement at increased distances (up to 100 meters) with switched-on light, which created the full effect of movement. Vehicles worked on the Glubottsy-Iamnitsa routes, transporting sand and gravel to repair the roads, and movement of a transport was also simulated by a designated column consisting of 29 vehicles.

In addition to this, air reconnaissance work and bombardment of battle formations of the forward edge of the enemy defense before the areas of false concentration were conducted systematically and at an increasing tempo.

The enemy reacted rather sensitively to the measures which were carried out. From 11-20 July flights of reconnaissance aviation increased sharply on the front of the army. During this time air warning posts registered 137 aircraft, of which 19 were for reconnoitering troop regions and correction of artillery fire, 97 were for patrolling above the front line, and 7 were for bombing.

Air reconnaissance was conducted by FV-189 aircraft; here, primary attention was given to the central sector and the right flank of the army. Reconnaissance of communications and the deep rear of the army was conducted by individual aircraft, the Iu-88 by day and the Do-215 by night. Enemy fighters, from whose number were noted 97 aircraft patrolling above the front line, manifested the greatest activity.

Enemy artillery raids significantly increased along the region of false concentration of units; this, over the period from 10-22 July the enemy used 4330 shells and bombs, including 488 150-mm, 2040 105-mm, and 440 75-mm shells, and 1362 81-mm mortar bombs.

Among the troops of the 27th Army, measures for disorienting the enemy were executed strictly in accordance with the plan. As a result, activity of enemy air reconnaissance intensified on the front of the army, behind which followed multiple bombardments of the areas of false halts and false troop movements. Increased flights of air reconnaissance and artillery shelling of areas of false troop concentration, and more energetic enemy activity against areas of false artillery fire positions were also observed.

On another sector the enemy was also disoriented and misled, as a result of which intensified air reconnaissance of this region, as well as an attempted reconnaissance in force of the forward edge of our defense in areas of false concentration, was observed. Following this, in the course of four days the enemy conducted artillery and mortar shelling; the areas of false infantry concentration were shelled with shrapnel.

For a twenty-four hour period, the enemy shot an average of 350-400 shells against areas of false concentration. On one of the sectors false artillery fire positions were detected by an enemy reconnaissance aircraft; following this, literally several minutes later, there followed an artillery shelling of this area, where the enemy shot off more than 200 shells.

In the 53d army, maskirovka measures basically amounted to concealing the removal of troop units from the front and transferring them to other sectors; they were carried out in accordance with the plan.

Indication of a rifle division concentration was produced by forces from two squads to a platoon of sappers and from one company to a battalion of infantry. A false tank brigade concentration was indicated by one sapper platoon and 3-4 tractors. To equip false artillery positions, two sapper squads and the necessary number of ordnance teams were designated as one artillery regiment.

In conclusion, the measures executed for maskirovka of the offensive disoriented the enemy, elicited on his part a series of efforts on false axes, and made it impossible for him to discover the preparation of the offensive on the front of the 11th Army, which, according to prisoners, was completely unexpected for the enemy.

PLANS OF MASKIROVKA MEASURES IN THE ZONE OF OPERATIONS OF
THE TROOPS OF THE NORTHWESTERN FRONT
for the period 10-22 July 1942

Area of Activity	Measures	Time	Who	By Whose Order
	<u>53d Army</u>			
South of Molvotitsy	Indication in this area of this location of second echelon units of the army by means of leaving behind dummy tanks, artillery, and material after withdrawing; indications of unit life; at night - campfires, auto-transport movement with headlights on at short distances; during the day - smoke, scattered everyday trash, trampled paths, construction of dummy huts, movement of individuals, groups, horse and auto-transport (in areas of former concentration).	From the moment of withdrawal of the area being occupied, with consideration so as to create a complete impression of troops being in place.	One platoon of sappers in each area, and two squads of supervisor-maskirovka experts from the 40th separate maskirovka company of the Northwestern Front.	Chief of the engineer troops of the 53d Army
	Continuation of the operation of radio networks in these areas, indicating the concentration of two rifle divisions and two tank brigades.	The same time as in the deployment of tactical formations (<u>soedinenie</u>) in place.	Communications units of the 53d Army.	Chief of communications of the 53d Army at the order of the chief of communications of the <u>front</u> .
Ostashkov	Transport of units is done	According to the	Sapper subunits of	Commanders of

<p>station and along the route of movement of units to Ostashkov station.</p>	<p>only at night in small, separate groups of no more than a company, dispersed on various roads, paths, and forest openings with concealed concentration for loading in forest areas.</p>	<p>plan for regrouping the <u>front</u> staff, the moving units and subunits.</p>	<p>rifle divisions and tank brigades and the commanders of units and subunits.</p>
<p>On the sector Kulotino, Lunevo</p>	<p>In areas of concentration and during a day's halt (away from populated points): complete and strictest observance of maskirovka discipline (concealed deployment) - lighting campfires not allowed, nor is movement by groups along roads or paths; careful camouflaging of materiel.</p>	<p>11-17 July</p>	<p>Commanders of tactical formations deployed on the indicated sector. Individual air reconnaissance aircraft.</p>
<p>Along the army road for transport and</p>	<p>Conduct of reconnaissance in force and air reconnaissance in the zone of the army.</p>	<p>Periodically, beginning from 10-17 July.</p>	<p>Commanders of tactical formations and units on order of the commander of the army and commander of the air force of the Western Front.</p>
<p>False indication of intensified transport of food for units to the area of their former concentration by</p>	<p>Transport units of the army and tactical formations.</p>	<p>Chief of the rear of the 53d Army.</p>	

Area of Activity	Measures	Time	Who	By Whose Order
evacuation on the sector Petrovshina. Molvotitsy.	means of movement of individual columns of 10-15 vehicles each, with headlights turned on, and, by day, groups of vehicles of 10-15 units each.			
Korpei, Dobrilovo	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>34th Army</u></p> Indication of false concentration of infantry by means of lighting up campfires at night and gradual increase, with time, of smoke by day.	Over the course of the entire period in which the measures are being executed.	One sapper platoon, one infantry battalion.	Commander of the 34th Army.
Kotity, Bolary, Ruch'i	(1) Intensification of infantry and transport group movement with gradual increase of activity; (2) Deployment of dummy carriages and vehicles on the edges of the forest, on sides of the road, and at crossroads; simulation of work at filling stations, representation of false depots and troop activity, with gradual intensification.	Over the course of the entire period in which the measures are being executed.	One sapper platoon, one infantry battalion.	Commander of the 34th Army.
Krutiki	Support of false artillery positions which have been created, according to the previous plan for <u>maskirovka</u> measures: deli-	Over the course of the entire period in which the measures are being carried out.	Sappers of the 163d and 171st rifle division, and ordnance teams.	Commander of the 34th Army

Area of Activity	Measures	Time	Who	By Whose Order
	very of dummies equalling up to two artillery regiments (various calibers): careful maskirovka of operating artillery fire positions.	Over the course of the entire period in which the measures are being carried out, with a increase in activity with time.	Army sappers and tank crews.	Chief of the army auto-tank troops and chief of the army engineer service.
Bol'shoe Zamosh'e. Lobanovo	Indication by dummies of tank concentration, with delivery of up to 75 dummy items; indication of tank motor noise.	11-15 July	Units of the 171st and 163d rifle divisions	Commander of the 34th Army and Air Force of the North western Front
Boiary, Korchei, Lobanovo. Dobrilovo	Activation of operational and air reconnaissance on the sectors of the 171st and 163d rifle divisions.	11-15 July	Army communications troops	Chief of communications of the army by order of the chief of communications of the front
Army rear of the 34th Army	Indication of work of radio stations of two rifle divisions and one tank group	10-13 July	Central Military Transport Directorate	Chief of Staff of the Northwestern Front
	Bringing up false troop trains from Valdai station to Mury station. 3-4 trains per day. Intensification of auto transport along army roads	13-15 July	Army transport means	Chief of the rear of the 34th Army

Area of Activity	Measures	Time	Who	By Whose Order
Pustoborovo, Iasnaia Poliana, Tullitovo, Bol'shoe Volos'ko	<p><u>27th Army</u></p> <p>Intensification of movement from the rear of the subunits by groups of up to a company, with strings of transports; intensification of auto transport toward the front</p>	Daily, from 10-18 July	Units deployed along the route of movement	Commander of the 27th Army
	<p>Indication of false infantry concentration, transports, and transportation by the following means: at night - by lighting campfires, movement of the autotransport (with headlights switched on) in small groups; during the day - by smoke; by deployment of dummy carriages and vehicles, and materiel openings and on edges of forests, in meadows, near crossroads; by intensifying movement of personnel along roads and paths in the area of concentration, with gradual increase in the overall formation to up to two rifle divisions.</p>	10-18 July	Units deployed in this area, enlisting sappers of the units and supervisors from the 40th separate <u>maskirovka</u> company	Commander of the 27th Army
Antipovo, Upper Khmelevo	Activation of work for transporting means across the Pola and Lovat' Rivers	Over the course of the entire period	Sapper units servicing the crossing	Chief of engineer troops of the 27th Army

Area of Activity	Measures	Time	Who	By Whose Order
	Construction of no less than two false crossings across the Pola and Lovat' Rivers	By 10 July	Sapper units of the 27th Army and one platoon of the 40th <u>maskirovka</u> company as supervisors	Chief of engineer troops of the 27th Army
Filoshkino. Kozlovo	Construction of false artillery fire positions with simulation of two artillery regiments by means of setting up false artillery trenches, dummy ordnance, and approaches to the artillery positions	11-14 July	Sapper units and teams of artillery units deployed in this area	Artillery commander of the 27th Army
Area of the forest south of Pustoborodovo	Indication of false tank concentration by means of constructing dummies, simulating the operation of motors (by tractors), setting up approaches to the concentration area, indication of caterpillar tank tracks	11-14 July	Army sappers and tank crews	Chiefs of engineer service and auto-transport troops of the 27th Army
Bol'shoe Volos'ko. Iasnaia. Poliana. Parfino	Simulation of operation of a radio station of two rifle divisions and one tank group	11-14 July	Communications units of the 27th Army	Chief of communications of the 27th Army by order of the chief of communications of the <u>front</u>
	Fight aviation patrol over the area of concentration	12-15 July		Commander of the <u>front</u> Air Force

Area of Activity	Measures	Time	Who	By Whose Order
and intensification of bombing of the forward edge of the enemy defense in the zone of the 84th and 182d rifle divisions	Activation of reconnaissance in force on sectors of the 84th and 182d rifle divisions	11-17 July	Division and regiment commanders	Commander of the 27th Army
In the areas of actual concentration and on the paths of the approaches to them	<p data-bbox="782 1470 806 1612"><u>11th Army</u></p> <p data-bbox="833 1276 1233 1720">Movement of units at night; during the day, movement only on forested terrain and along the sides of the road, using the forest as cover; the area of concentration should be under careful maskirovka; campfires should not be lit, no smoke should be allowed, and there should be no group movement by day in open areas; materiel at stops should be camouflaged by material on hand</p>	During the entire period of concentration	Commander of tactical formations and units	Commander of the 27th Army

